

January 30, 1984

Dear Friends:

Now that I have finally got to rewrite paragraph 3 of page 180 of Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, it becomes important to study it, both in relationship to the classes as a whole, and in relationship also to Chapter 11, and from an opposite point of view in relationship to the Appendix to Chapter 11. Here is what I mean:

The whole question of the new paragraph in regard to both property form and production relations illuminates the question of how the last decade of Marx's life relates to the Grundrisse. The illumination was cast mainly by Marx's multilinear view which showed that -- East or West, proletariat or peasantry, Oriental despotism or communal form -- Marx's focus always was human development in various historic periods, which never departed from his "absolute movement of becoming." What made this especially urgent for our age -- and is what I was focusing on in these additional paragraphs I have been adding -- was how it showed that the opposite point of view, i.e. Engels unilinear view of human development, related to the whole question of why Engels, in skipping over so-called "Asiatic mode of production" narrowed the Woman Question.

While I was altogether too tired of arguing with Trotsky to single out for study the Appendix to Chapter 11 (on Permanent Revolution), the truth is that this can greatly help the classes to see not only Marx's "revolution in permanence" as it developed both on the question of the revolutionary role of the peasantry and as ground for organization -- but how Trotsky's underestimation of the peasantry and vanguardism in organization has rendered the movement tone-deaf to Marx's dialectics of revolution.

Errors have a way of becoming a threshold to truth. The break with Trotsky certainly paved the way for our return to Marx's Marxism. The re-examination of Trotsky's errors will aid us now in projecting Marxist-Humanism when we include this as integral to our classes. As a matter of fact, it happens that the last page of the Appendix to Chapter 11 and the new paragraph I have written for p. 180 tie in closely with each other. Study them as one element and please include in the Syllabus for reading for Lectures 7 & 8 both the new paragraph and this letter.

Yours,

Raya

16161

The following addition to Rosa Luxemburg, Lamer's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution is a re-writing of para. 3 on p. 180 into three new paragraphs:

In the 1850s, for example, what inspired Marx to return to the study of pre-capitalist formations and gave him a new appreciation of ancient society and its craftsmen was the Taiping Revolution. It opened so many doors to "history and its process" that Marx now concluded that, historically-materialistically speaking, a new stage of production, far from being a mere change in property-form, be it "West" or "East," was such a change in production-relations that it disclosed, in embryo, the dialectics of actual revolution.

What Marx, in the Grundrisse, had defined as "the absolute movement of becoming" had matured in the last decade of his life as new moments -- a multilinear view of human development as well as a dialectic duality within each formation. From within each formation evolved both the end of the old and the beginning of the new. Whether Marx was studying the communal or the despotic form of property, it was the human resistance of the Subject that revealed the direction of resolving the contradictions. Marx transformed what, to Hegel, was the synthesis of the "Self-Thinking Idea" and the "Self-Bringing Forth of Liberty" as the emergence of a new society. The many paths to get there were left open.

As against Marx's multilinear view which kept Marx from attempting any blueprint for future generations, Engels' unilinear view led him to mechanical positivism. By no accident whatever, such one-dimensionality kept him from seeing either the communal form under "Oriental despotism" or the duality in "primitive communism" in Morgan's Ancient Society. No wonder, although Engels had accepted Marx's view of the Asiatic mode of production as fundamental enough to constitute a fourth form of human development, he had left it out altogether from his analysis of primitive communism in the first book he wrote as a "bequest" of Marx -- Origin of the Family. By then Engels had confined Marx's revolutionary dialectics and historical materialism to hardly more than Morgan's "materialism."