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Peter then turned the floor over to Rava for her SUMMATION of the day's discussion:

When you have heard such reports as we heard today, it's wrong to say you have been too abstract. But here is what I mean by saying that it was still not concrete enough. All the things we are saying we will now do, now that we have the new book -- those things are what we should have done the year before. There isn't a single thought that can't be turned into a simple abstraction when you don't consider the audience, and when you don't consider what you are criticizing, and then make a generalization about something. For example, I said something important on brevity, and now I'm scared that brevity will now be made a cliché, criticizing that which shouldn't be criticized. Inez says at editing sessions that the articles are too long, and picks Sheila's article on youth reviewing WLDR. Yet here is the first time WLDR was focused on youth. Why didn't we first say what we would do with that article? Yes, some articles are too long, but you have to be concrete, and Sheila's was the first, and a first can be long. You think you are being concrete, but it's abstract, because it forgets the audience -- the youth. We do need to be disciplined and brief -- RVs get our view across in a few lines, if they are concrete.

When we said what was good this year and what was bad, several things were disregarded. Take Diane's review of Isabel Allende's book. That was tremendous. Not only because the book was great -- on the level of The Three Marias, who made a category of the international WLM, and dared to say that all literature was "one long letter to an invisible other" -- but because the review is itself a real achievement. It is so important to single out the new that you have to be sure not to forget to single out what in the past is now contemporaneous -- as with the Spanish Civil War at the time of Bitburg. Don't think, that because I have paid so much attention to the new, as in Absolute as New Beginning, that the Essence isn't essential. You can't get to the Absolute unless you understand the Essence. Lou took up in his Discussion Article, paragraph 143 of the Smaller Logic, where Hegel ridicules other philosophies. The situationists in France said "all is possible"; Hegel laughs at that idea, and says that if everything is possible, then everything is also impossible.

The conclusion he reaches is that "[The] sum total of the elements in actuality, which, as it opens itself out, discloses itself to be necessity."

Now, which part of the actuality are you going to see as necessary, as your jumping-off point to the Absolute? It isn't easy to answer, but if you answer it wrong, you are going to the abyss of nothingness. Take CLR James and what happened in Grenada. If you make an abstraction of actuality and necessity, it becomes the sheerest opportunism. He writes an article on Grenada, and it is forked-tongued. He is opposed to everybody; he is for everybody; he is for spontaneity; he is against spontaneity. There was a revolution in 1979; no, it wasn't a revolution ... And how does he explain the thousands who came out and took power? Well, it's like this: the Caribbean doesn't really have a capitalist class, or really any kind of class. So taking power wasn't an overthrow. Everything becomes "leadership." He says the people need a leader, and you have to do something for them. They don't need theory; they need "plain facts." Reagan knew about plain facts. He ordered a plain invasion of Grenada. Reagan knew that there had been a revolution, and because he is the greatest retrogressionist, he ordered the invasion.

The U.S. invaders captured documents, and the documents showed what the New Jewel Movement leaders were discussing. They were discussing how many people could go with Coard on a trip to Russia. And this is the level of the argument, - when Coard had Bishop arrested. Now if CLRJ is right, and the revolution really wasn't anything, then how does it happen that 20,000 people come out after Bishop is arrested and free him? In James' piece, he admits he is bringing in the invasion rather late, because, he says, "I am not one to believe that everything is a question of the super-powers." So what is the answer? Again, it is that people need a leader! Is that what he fought about with Eric Williams?

Now what are you going to do with that analysis? This is a Marxist? His conclusion is that the Caribbean shows that the masses can, and do, revolt. But it isn't a question of theory; it is "hard facts." The Caribbean is so wonderful -- but what is it? Go back all the way to Black Jacobins. Did he write it because of "Caribbean uniqueness?" No, he wrote it as a Trotskyist and he had a good position on world revolution. Yes, Ha was in the Caribbean, but the masses in revolt were African slaves, belonging to the French Empire. Toussaint L'Ouverture was treated as an African and he took it as an African. And CLRJ in 1938 presented him as an African. By the 1950s, the Black dimension is being hailed as the concept of Negritude. (And you should read the great critique of it by the Kenyan poet, Ngugi wa Thiong'o.) But now in the 1980s, James revises all his analyses. Suddenly, Caribbeans are the center, not Africans. Marcus Garvey is Caribbean. Senghor is African but really he has absorbed Europe and has the Caribbean too. James is the next enemy of the African revolutions. His perspectives include Prof. Hill's 10-volume project on Garvey, which Hill dedicates to James. After all, James has united Western civilization and the Caribbean. What did James ever do for Garvey except to call him a fascist?

What I wanted to hear more of in the discussion was concretely what you are going to do on the day after the Plenum ends. For example, the 30 Years Retrospective of N&L will be very important. And the new edition of FFSADT -- we can dedicate it to the memory of Denby ...

Plenum summary, p.12

By now I don't even like the word "projection." If it isn't concrete, if projection of Marxist-Humanism isn't the building of the Marxist-Humanist organization, then it isn't projection. Or "practicing dialecticians" -- you can be one if you know how to build the organization. Otherwise, forget it. That is true whether on RVs, or the Black dimension, or Perspectives, or the classes. And that is why we need a bi-weekly.

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