

[Conversation in a Park]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Wayne [Walden?]

ADDRESS 51 Bank St., NYC

DATE October 24, 1938

SUBJECT [Conversation in a Park - Union Square?]

1. Date and time of interview October 19, 1938
2. Place of interview Union Square NYC
3. Name and address of informant Gus, Slim, Noisy, Bronx Looney, Redeye, Mack, Ben - and others who were neither so articulate nor convincing.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

(1) [???] [?] [?][?][?] W. Walden 94410 Conversation in the [?] What Marx Meant

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[Scene?]- A forensic assembly engrossed [?] in a dispute, the sound of which *1 at intervals [moderate in tone*1], frequently rises to a crescendo audible to every occupant of the park benches. As the sound of [?] argument swells it drown drowns the drone of ordinary conversation, causing many a loungeer to reluctantly forfeit his seat and draw closer to the embattled protagonists.

Within the arena, surrounded by a dense crowd of curious onlookers, may be glimpsed the gesticulating flushfaced and perspiring center of attraction, the embryo of a new society. Some of [?] the contestants, while not averse to the circumfusion of their propaganda for the education of a larger audience than are [?] immediately gathered [?] [?] and not [?] to risk, occasionally cast apprehensive eyes in the direction from whence a belligerent "bull" may be approaching. A constant stream of people flow by, some to pause [?] listen a moment, significantly shake their heads, grin at one another and pass on. Now and then a strolling flapper inquisitively strives to peer into the center wherein the esoteric nucleus of the crowd is wrangling, listens with sadly uncomprehending face, grows suddenly scornful, sweeps the crowd with an appraising glance to mince along in quest of less garrulous and more gainful [?] entertainment .

Pestering bootblacks , resentful of so few nickles from such an array of unshined shoes, assuage their disappointment by intermittent catcalls and other cacophonous noises. Venders of pretzels, socks and sundry articles of merchandise shuffle by paying scant heed to the assemblage. Previous efforts to sell their wares has taught these "petty bourgeoisie" the unprofitableness of essaying business with humans preoccupied with abstract speculations, hungering for what cannot be appeased by pretzels. I am here presenting the foreword that was written to conservation in the Park [?] about 10 years ago I heard and tried to put forth the argument.

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L [Wayne Walden?]

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Oct. 21, 1938 [2530?]

Subject- Conversation In A Park or Union Square Argument

Time- Today , and conjecturally tomorrow.

Informants- Gus, Slim, Noisy, Bronx Looey, Redeye, Mack, Ben, and others who were neither so articulate nor convincing. A

Gus:- Naw, you got me all wrong. If you aint ain't got the historical perspective, and you got to consider this historically as Marx— C

Slim:- (interrupting) Just a minute, just a minute. Now when you produce a surplus—

Gus:- I know all that 'bout producing a surplus, but Marx specifically says in the foist volume of Das Kapital—

Slim:- Wait a second, wait a second; didn't Marx show concerning this very point, that the value of a commodity is—

Gus:- Sure he did, but listen and I'll tell you. The trouble with you guys is that you—

Slim:- Only as we understand the economic mode prevailing in any given society can you —

Gus:- For Christ's sake , aint ain't that what I been tellin' you? Historically now, from the time of—

Slim:- I'm listening , but get down to facts. Marx never contended—

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Gus:- Who the hell's denying it ? but But you lose sight of the fact that the value of a commodity is determined by---

Slim:- Alright, all-right; but there's a distinction between labor and labor power and Marx insisted---

Gus:- You're tellin' me! Listen wont won't you, and get it right. Marx held that as the Capitalist system reached---

Slim:- You jump around like an old woman; didn't Marx specifically say---

Redeye: You said it, but the bushwah aint goin' ain't goin to set back and---

Gus: Marx held, now get me right,- Marx held that historically the---

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Noisy: But in the first place, how in hell you---

Gus: Marx held that as the proletariat, which he termed distinctly as the instrument for---

Slim: But stick to your argument: Marx said you can't jump ahead of the machine, which means---

Noisy: Say didn't Charlie Marx predict that-well, for instance, how about---

Redeye: Naw, you got it twisted. Your You're thinkin' of Plato, a bushwah who wanted to

Bronx Looney: But the cata- / but the categorical imperatives of Plato aint ain't yet been knocked out. For instance---

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Noisy: Hey Looney, is it right you found out there aint no Santa Claus ?— and that you aint ain't goin'—

Looney: Aw , quit trying to be funny. If I was as wise as you are I'd go and—

Noisy: Gimme a cigarette somebody - anybody - any / kind of cigarette—

Ben: When did you ever buy a pack of cigareetes. / I been a feedin' em to you since— -

Mack: Say, will you mental featherweights pipe down 'stead of disturbin' a philosophical argument with a lot of— -

Gus: (meditatively puffing a bummed bummed cigarett) Now take that bird lecturing last night-if ever a guy was balled up on economics-no wonder there's so many dumb—

Ben: Say, wasn't he a pain in the neck ? Imagine him saying that the Hegelian philosophy was—

Gus: If the guy hadn't made such a fool of himself when he tried to dodge my question he'd a—

Looney: Say, Gus, maybe you can tell me, but isn't the basis of Plato's position the basis of —

Gus: Why if that bozo had ever read Spinoza, or even Kant, let alone Joseph Dietszgen, / he would of —

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Conversation in the Park.

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Redeye: [?][?][?][?][?][?][?] [?][?][?][?][?][?] How 'bout this guy Spengleraint Spengler-aint he a bushwah ? He's now predicting [?] or anyhow hes he's doing a lot of calamity howling that is supposed---

Gus: Yeap Yepp , Spengler hass em has 'em dizzy now, just as they're getting over the headache caused by Einstein's relativity, / and next they'll be---

Jack: 'Nother yahoo was-Oh , what was his name ? -he wrote a book or something and---

Noisy: I'm writing the Great American novel. She's goin goin' to be a masterpiece, boy, " how to be happy though hungry " . Then I got another, which will be " How to be pretty though pregnant " gimme Gimme a cigarett and I'll let you see the picture of a broad I ---

Ben: That's the trouble with him ; it aint the class struggle so much as the skirt-struggle ! -listen to him and you'd---

Noisy: Where d'ye get that noise ? Why , you poor fish , if you had a got---

Mack: Tie a can to that stuff, will you - and for Christ sake keep your trap closed a minute. / And have you got the price of a cup of coffee?...

Gus: Take Slim there-where he falls down as a sound Marxian , as he thinks he is,is when he says that---

Slim: I didn't say any such a damned thing. What I did say, was that Lewis H. Morgan, when he differentiated---

Gus: But your contention is a priori, a priori for this reason. Beginning with primitive communism---

Slim: But how you goin' / explain the--- -

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Gus: But that aint ain't what I'm drivin' at-if you'll keep your bazoo out of it a minute and lemme explain I'll—

Noisy: Silence, everybody-go ahead and perform Gus-the floor's yourn. / Tell 'em that one 'bout the— -

Ben: Why dont don't you go and take your beauty nap? really Really , that guy dont don't know whether Christwas crucified-or struck by a switch engine. A more— -

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[md;]

Gus: For instance, according to Spencer, and I agree with him that evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant— -

Noisy: [?][?][?][?][?] I tried a whole week to learn that to Ben here, but the poor fish would get all— [?] Slim: But what the hell's that password to the hobo college got to do with what I was saying? That the trouble, when I— -

Gus: Yes sir, Spencer agrees with me pretty well-an indefinite incoherent homogeniety to a definite coherent heterogeniety; and— -

Noisy: Listen to that , would you! Did Charlie Marx get that off his chest, or was it Schopenhauer ? A guy 'at can pull that kind of stuff— -

Mack: The screws in your head, Noisy, are rattlin' again; you— -

Jack: Wasnt Wasn't that guy, Spencer, in the can during the war ? If I aint ain't mistaken he was in the same cell as me for awhile and—

Noisy: Oh please, let me shake your hand! Wot a man. Wot a man!

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Ben: Who? Him or Spencer—or do you mean me?

Slim: (to Gus) What you was saying about evolution is taken for granted, but even a child would know—

Jack: But what has evolution got to do with the question ? it It seems to me if a guy wants to believe his grandpap was a monkey, why—

Gus;: Well, from the looks of the old gink he must a been-but as Huxley answered Bishop what's his name—

Slim- As for Spencer, I suppose his [?] position was logical enough for the time he wrote, but—

Gus: Why, hell, even Aristotle—

Looney: Aristotle ? somebody Somebody was tellin'me 'bout him-lemme see; wasn't he [?] the —

Slim: [?] All I can say is, as Engles says, that changes in the mode of production mean— -

Jack: But to get that said production, you gotta be organized for it, / and until you get—

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Slim: Who doesn't know that ?— but who's talking about that anyway ?/ What I'm trying to point out is—

Noisy: Did you ever hear this one? There was an Irishman went into a resturant, and he—

Mack: Aw , can that chatter , will you;/ / you're buttin buttin' in on a philosophical discussion with a lot of—

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Noisy: So is your old man. / What the hell you—

Gus: See, that's the way it always goes. / Here [?] I I been trying to tell you guys something , and that's ths way it always goes; / you run off the mouth on a lot of immaterial, irrelevant and—

Redeye: Goes to show what I been saying— the workers need —

Looney: This winter will show 'em. / Statistics show that a hard winter is coming and maybe that'll wake some of 'em up and—

Gus: Ah , ha, our old friend Karl again! I dont don't give a damn what you say, you got to come around to that old bird just the same. / I was arguing with a buck the other day, and I was pointing out what Lester F. Ward— [?][?][?][?][?]

Looney: There was a smart man—when he wrote an ode to a skylark—he was a deep thinker alright, you can't get away from— -

Gus: Well, anyway I was tellin' this buck, see, that—

Ben: Say I know a good one about a buck, it seems—

Slim: (to Gus) Now , getting back to where we was, when you produce a surplus—

Gus: Just as I was tryin' to tell you while ago - just as Thornsten Veblin says — if you got the historical perspective, you— (etc, etc., etc.) Wayne Walden: I'm not sure that the foregoing is folk-stuff (folklore) but - anyway its a fairly faithful recording of an actual “conservation” as I heard it in Union Square, New York City. D

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NEW YORK

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FORM D Extra Comment

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DATE

SUBJECT [Conversation in a Park - Union Square?] I am not sure that the foregoing is “folk-stuff” or folklore — but it is a fairly faithful recording of an actual “conservation” as I heard it in Union Square, New York City.