

R&B Meeting - July 8, 1964

Present: All but Louise, on temporary assignment in California  
 Agenda: I Stewardship of Leadership; II Checkup of assignments for paper, and work on  
 Bulletins in office; III Good and Welfare

**I - STEWARDSHIP OF LEADERSHIP:**

Revert Zarofore our stewardship of leadership reports either related to election of  
 R&B (which is of course natural and will occupy the Executive Session this time too) or  
 revolved around a single leader as "symbol" of what was needed, Naitin y of these points of  
 departure, however, is our problem today.

Contrary to consideration of the self-development of any individual R&B member, we wish  
 here to consider the leadership as a whole, both its responsibilities and activities in general,  
 and the specifics of its relationship to a set line of perspectives over the next two years.  
 A whole new section in the main thesis, The Turning Point, is now entitled "Organizational  
 Responsibility for Theoretic Fecitien." I will not repeat here what is stated in the  
 thesis itself, either in relation to the historic background of a half century ago, or to  
 the more immediate past in Johnsonism. It is sufficient to be aware of the fact that N&L  
 committees, from the start, neither separated N&L from N&F, nor both writings from the organi-  
 zation. Nevertheless we have barely tested our right to leadership by relating each convention's  
 perspectives to our daily activities, and we have grown soft by being concentrated  
 in a single center where the whole, rather than the individual, "stood for the leadership."  
 In a word, we have, so to speak, lived off each other rather than being "cast adrift" and  
 been compelled to find shore on our own. I wish to come to grips with the problem of leader-  
 ship on 2 levels: 1) 9 years of existence of N&L; and 2) this year's N&F paperback and  
 serious preparation for new book as it affects our organizational perspectives and test of  
 leadership.

Nine years ago, when we began, we made 2 decisions: 1) because I had to go away to write  
 N&F, a managing editor for N&L had to be at the center, and Saul moved to Detroit from N.Y.  
 2) because we were small, not to  
 divide our forces, we moved Johnny and Lopez to the center, while Ig and Louise returned to LA  
 from N.Y. Only twice after that did we have  
 to ask people to relate their personal lives to stages of development in the organization:  
 (1) because of Automation and W.Va. not being ideal for sailing N&F which was off the press,  
 as well as for purposes of strengthening the center, O. and A. were asked to move to Detroit.  
 (2) while Louise's moved was not as urgent, it proved very valuable, not only as to work in  
 the office, but outside, as witness B's new membership, the work in SNCC, and the lecture at the  
 Jewish center.

Betting 100% is a pretty good "average" and ought to entitle our next move to be taken  
 on our work.

It is true that we have neither a 1905 nor a 1917 nor even a general strike to bolster  
 our claim to Marxist continuity, and yet the nuclear age makes the historic moment of Marxist-  
 Komanist reconstruction truly just a moment that we have either to rise up to, or sink into  
 the dustbin of history, if not off the face of the earth altogether.

History has bestowed on us a greater burden theoretically, for (1) in contrast to Lenin,  
 we begin with a 40 year void; and (2) philosophically he unfortunately left a dual heritage;  
 while (3) in contrast to Trotsky, we have neither the advantage of his 1917 role, nor the  
 delusion that vanguardism needs no theoretical originality so long as the physical continuity  
 is there; (4) so that besides being opposed by all, absolutely all state powers, there is the  
 not-so-easily disproved "idealistic" scutlings of "Marxists". Finally and above all, (5) we  
 really do have literally to dig new grounds because even Marx stopped at a certain part in  
Philosophy of Mind which is just where we must begin ON UNCHARTED ROADS. --In the 1953  
 letters on the Absolute Idea. So much, so vary much we stand for -- and I don't mean only  
 the one person who caught the philosophic link because it would have been impossible,  
 absolutely impossible, to do either before the mass movement made the time ripe or the organi-  
 zation did not only take responsibility for this theory, but itself helped expand it.

And yet, we cannot disregard the softness that has appeared among us, as is shown in the  
 move of individuals to some areas irrespective of the needs of the organization in other areas.  
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We can no longer disregard this trend. An organization doesn't get steered by stealth, but in the crucible of fiery experience or cold calculation or philosophic passion.

The new stage of steering must begin here and now, and show itself at the Convention. I wish to say that Johnny's statement at the last REB inspired the new section in the thesis on organizational responsibility for theoretic positions; his test will come when he acts on his words. CD was absolutely right at the last REB when he exposed the old radicals' cynicism in saying, "Don't worry about us, on the day of revolution I'll be with you on the barricades," but in doing the opposite, that is to say, they ran to get positions with Reuther. It is true we have had no such cases of opportunism. Nevertheless, we must have a more creative carrying out of a political line than heretofore. In the present case the need is to establish a sub-center in New York.

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