

Minutes of REB Meeting of Jan. 17, 1984

Present: All, including Diane as sitter-in and Mary Joan by special invitation.

Agenda: I Further Concretization of Perspectives Flowing from the Expanded REB of Jan. 1; II. Report on Ongoing Activities and Correspondence by Mike; III G&W

I. Raya began her report on the Concretization of the Perspectives flowing out of the Expanded REB on Jan. 1 with the new classes which will start with her lecture in Detroit on Feb. 5 (to be taped for all other locals to then have for their first lecture as well);

Let's see what is new in, say, this suggested title for the whole series -- "The Other America in International Ideas of Freedom and the Black World." Whether or not we then include some paragraph in our publicity, like the one in the Syllabus, the three points that, to me, are so central as to pervade all classes, no matter how each local further concretizes it, insofar as who will be main presenter and who will give the supplemental report, are these:

1) Marxist-Humanism as a Body of Ideas -- and I emphasize body because that is what shows that the phrase articulates mental/manual unity.

2) The specificity needed for this year, 1984, as the Orwellian year we are trying to transform into opposite, must make inseparable the reality of today as the objective situation and the reality of our ideas as the subjective situation. A different way of presenting the same thing, which has a direct connection to our latest work, Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, is to focus on its most distinguishing formulation in Chapter 11 -- "revolution in permanence" as ground for organization. Frankly, I fear that this has been handled so abstractly that its test in actual organizational growth as well as test of our own individual self-development are lost.

3) The importance -- indeed, inseparability -- of N&L as paper from organization (and vice versa) is of extraordinary importance for Detroit because Detroit has been the home of N&L. It will retain its importance when we move to Chicago, not only in itself but because this is the home for the Marxist-Humanist Archives. Here is what I mean: Not only is Marxist-Humanism not separated from state-capitalist theory (indeed, it is presented in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection as Part I, 1941-54, of Marxist-Humanism), but it contains material also from the period 1937-39 that includes both the Spanish Civil War and the Moscow Trials -- and this year we've actually gone as far back as to the 1920s, both in the interview with Cedric Robinson and in the Tamiment interview.

In a word, objective-subjective turns into a world division of the tendencies throughout the world that were born with the actual, first proletarian, 1917 Russian Revolution. This is something that, shows that the part of the title "and the Black World" includes, at one and the same time, the concretizations of 1984, WWI and Lenin's Great Divide in 1914, and

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what is wrong with the very latest on Black Marxism -- not alone in books but in the shattered Grenadian Revolution. (I may even write on this in the next Theory/Practice column, because it is fantastic to think that so untheoretical have we become that the "committee-form of organization" likewise keeps enshrouded the indispensable "revolution in permanence" for organization.)

Raya then took up the way in which each individual M-Hist has been thinking seriously of what the reorganization of the Center means in their own reorganizations: Of the full-time Marxist-Humanists in the Center now, Olga, Eugene, Mike and Lou will all be going to Chicago, while Jim has written me a very serious letter discussing his perspective for remaining in Detroit to help in the Detroit local's development as a true sub-center. Kevin, as we know, will also be moving to the Center. And -- whether in the discussion today, or in their own letters to me -- I expect that before I have to start working on the Convention Call, I will have heard from everyone, Raya continued. But the most important point on which I wish to end this question is that for each and all of us, whether moving or staying, the final decisions will not be possible until after the series of classes have been held, as that preparation for revolution that actually decides each individual's reorganization and relationship to that Marxist-Humanist body of Ideas which, as the Archives show, was born before it got its name.

In one very fundamental way, that expression "before it got its name" underlines also why our latest work, RLWLKM, first now needs a very substantial new set of ads. That is to say, just as in dialectics return means a great deal more than return to the beginning, since such a return to where we started includes within itself a whole life's experience so that the enrichment makes one see what one never saw at the beginning, in embryo, and, on the other hand, creates a category of that first beginning.

Take the 1949-50 pamphlet. Nothing makes me sadder than the fact that our original projections for 1983, which included that pamphlet as related to the Marx centenary, could not come to fruition before that year ended. We absolutely never had a more critical year financially -- which made it impossible to publish it that year. At the same time, I cannot escape my own responsibility for the failure to publish it by now; altogether too many deadlines made it impossible for me to finish my part in the pamphlet. I do hope that the new publication date of 1984 will be what Lenin called "bacillus" for revolution from Irish Rebellion to Russian Revolution, so that Spring 1984 is, indeed, the dialectical leap forward -- and that we can find sufficient volunteer additional finances to make that pamphlet a reality by then. This, too, will help round out both the special sub-center character of Detroit, of Archives, of the 1949-50 birth of the "movement from practice" before it got concretized and universalized as a philosophic category "before it got its name."

(Raya also had drafted the new paragraph she wished to add to RLWLKM on p. 160 -- which will be sent out to the locals, together with a letter from her on it at a later date.)

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January 18, 1984

Dear Friends:

Add to the fact that on the very first day of this year -- which we are aiming to transform from an Orwellian year to a Marxist-Humanist preparation for revolution -- we gained a new young member, Gary, we now have a report that still in the first month of this year the Salt Lake City local has gained a new member, John. Both as activist and as anthropologist (which gains special importance with Marx's Ethnological Notebooks), John is sure to prove the todayness and extension of the Marx centenary year into 1984. We welcome him warmly.

Gary's last letter already reports that he has organized a discussion group on current events. No doubt, because they will be discussing those events along with News & Letters' presentation of the Marxist-Humanist view, those five members of Gary's group will see philosophy as inseparable from the objective events of 1984. Indeed, the issue of N&L coming off the press now is so new that the old members of N&LC will likewise see something totally new. Just look at it. On the very first page you will see two new columns, with a new logo for Workshop Talks designed by Inez, and the new logo for Black World designed by Lou and Alan.

The international aspect of the correspondence in the office likewise points both organizationally and philosophically to all our tasks that flow from the Expanded REB and the projected move. Thus, there is a letter from Nigeria that in asking for relations with us, credits what they call "your British office" -- specifically Lydia -- as the one who got them interested in us. For that matter, a letter from an old contact in London is interested in getting a copy of our Guatemalan Revolutionaries Speak pamphlet to reprint statements in his publication of an anthology of native peoples' statements. Whether it is Neda's correspondence with Pilar in India or Diane's new correspondence with contacts right here, everything in our work during this period when we prepare for our classes reflects organizational growth. Indeed, the best activity right now in Detroit is what happened this week at the Black Studies program on Martin Luther King at WSU. As you will see from the discussion at the REB, it was not only that the turnout was unusually large for this campus, and the discussion animated at the various sessions, but that Lou was on the main panel, and Diane introduced one of the films, with others being able to take the floor and talk with participants at the lit table -- which made the experience one which became a true local activity and opened wide many new doors for future relations with these participants, beginning with our own classes that will begin with Black History Month on Feb. 5.

Please read and discuss the REB minutes which all revolve around Further Concretization of Perspectives Flowing from the Expanded REB, beginning with a new suggested title for the classes:

"The Other America in International Ideas of Freedom and the Black World" -- a series of 8 classes in the Marxist-Humanist Body of Ideas

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Raya stressed the importance of the phrase "Body of Ideas" from three different points: 1) The necessity to not separate the objective from the subjective; 2) the specificity of the year 1984 and its direct relationship to Chapter 11 of RLWLMQ; because "revolution in permanence" as ground for organization illuminates our uniqueness in not stopping at the rejection of the party-to-lead with the committee-form, but making that inseparable from philosophy and organization. The new title, which includes Black World Month, is not merely because we are starting the classes in Black History Month, but because the totality of the Archives has disclosed that in fact, from the beginning of Black Marxism in America with its direct relationship to the Russian Revolution, to today, what Marx calls "history and its process" makes no distinction between yesterday and today for the future.

I should have also mentioned regarding the correspondence this week the fact that for the first time, the North American Labor History Conference which is held annually in Detroit has invited N&L to submit papers. Andy will prepare an abstract around the 1949-50 strike, as a participant in that historic event. Also related to that 49-50 strike, but in fact as a result of activities in 1983, both Andy and Olga have received answers to separate letters they had written to the young woman who had initiated an invitation for a talk to their group in West Virginia. What is evident is her interest in both the labor struggles and in Women's Liberation.

Finally, you will have enclosed in the Express Mail packages being sent out, a P.S. to the Footnotes of the PPL on the events in Grenada, which is to be stripped into all copies of the new pamphlet on Grenada. (Please add this para. to the bottom of p. 16 of that PPL.) I want to make very clear why, instead of merely changing footnote 1, to correct the so-called "error", I decided to let footnote 1 stand and to make a category of the fact that my "error" was because I found it inconceivable that relations between leaders and between leaders and ranks was so void of theory that such a serious break in outlook had not been revealed to anyone outside of the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement. I consider it so crucial to discuss this in full that I intend to write a new Theory/Practice column on Grenada -- and in fact I may use it as a preface to the new edition of the Afro-Asian pamphlet that L.A. will be producing.

Yours,

KAYA

Table of Contents for Lecture I

Dialectics, Dialectics, Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin,
and Marxist-Humanism

Introductory

The ominous Reagan year, 1984, and his imperialist invasion of Grenada, which we certainly must continue to oppose, must not, however, make us lose sight for a minute of the fact that the murder of Bishop came from within Grenada's own revolutionary party, headed by Austin and Coard.

Part I: Marx's Todayness and the Meaning of the Structure of Marxist-Humanism's Marxism and Freedom: the Movement from Practice

Part II: The Two World Wars and the Two Great Divides in Marxism: Absolute as New Beginning and the 1982 Edition of Philosophy and Revolution

It wasn't sufficient just to oppose World War II at the moment of the Hitler-Stalin Pact: New Emerging Forces of Resistance and Revolt

Part III: As Marx's "New Moments" in his final decade leave a Trail to the 1980s, the compulsion from Today's Crises and our Unfinished Tasks make imperative a Return to the Beginning: Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

February 1984

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1/11/84

Personal

Dear Jim:

The reason this letter is designated as "personal" is that, in your brilliant letter of the 8th, an error, (or, more precisely an omission) has crept in which, at one and the same time, makes it impossible for me to read it at the REB (although I will report on it without passing it around) and shows that your original interpretation of "who" failed at the very point of concretisation. If you had been concrete, you could have answered the very question you raised.

Reread the last two sentences of your 3rd par: "I think we really have something here.....how can we work out becoming sub-center after July without an intellectual or a Black...."

Now concretise the name, Andy, as what he is: intellectual, experienced in JFT breakup from start and soon to be raw with pamphlet on 1949-50. And while "experienced" is not as applicable to Black comrade, Tommie or not only not "raw", but is the very element you point when you concretise both the new from Grenada meeting and the ones Diane & Tommie brought and "renew our concentration on unemployed, esp. poor & Black women." In addition, therefore, to my including these two, I mean focusing on what you have to begin with after July on way to sub-center, I then bring in two new points as I concretise your profound, dialectical sentence in next par.: "But one thing can flow from the classes into the transition period after July is the view that the "process" through the Trilogy can be seen in the step-by-step developments in the JFT and in M-Hism & in the objective situation....Although ACOT is a shining ex. of the power of negativity, wouldn't seeing "process" in the whole of the Archives show the power of negativity" throughout?"

Indeed. That's where the 2 new points come in for 1st I ~~intend~~ intend to point to Archives "in embryo" in 1st talk, and ~~Andly~~, the final (8th) talk I intend Mike to devote entirely to Archives. Indeed, I'm considering making you there a supplement to ask questions which you would follow up sometime before convention with actual visit to WSU Archives in the co. of Mike or Eugene.

Furthermore, do ^{not} ~~not~~ ^{Mary} forget ~~my~~ from Ann Arbor which, "at once", establishes ~~GM~~ as sub-center. You must also not forget those 2 words in your sentence that I underlined "through" Archives and "in" step by step developments which means we better take serious, and not just with classes, but in all organisational work that disregard 25 Years pamphlet.

With John and/or Olga I'll probably also send suggestions for classes--and not forget as I believe in your ~~past~~ thoughts you did not consider and that is that EACH TALK BY EXPERIENCED IS FOLLOWED SAME NIGHT BY A NEW MEMBER SUPPLEMENTING IT.

Trust this helps some.

Yours,

16159

8 January 84

Dear Raya,

This letter is just to let you know in writing that I want to remain in Detroit after the center is moved to Chicago. At the same time that's said, several things come to mind which have to do with this local's perspectives between now and July, and from July into the coming period.

Overall, there's no doubt that membership growth would help spell out what Detroit would be able to do as subcenter. At least in that respect, we won't know what we have until after the classes and new friends who will be attending them. Hopefully the attendance we had at the meeting on Grenada last month indicates a real periphery if not growth. Rebecca is a high school student whom Tommie and Diane met at the Ann Arbor Peace encampment. She took our side in the debate over whether Tommie and Diane would be allowed to speak in a workshop. Maurice is a Black Wayne State student whom Lou met while teaching. I don't think we have elicited enough from him though he is interested enough to have come to two ACOT classes at WSU and dropped in the office a couple of times. Jessie is a Black worker at Rouge Steel who is one of the militants involved against the contract concessions there. Although he has come to the office a couple of times and gave a story for the Aug-Sept N&L, his interest had been trade unionist, until he came to the meeting on Grenada and said how much he liked it. Finally Sandra-- I don't know where we stand with her since she missed the last two crucial meetings after the one on Grenada. Besides the questions you raise about the disunity of theory and practice in looking at Grenada, the ramifications of Reagan's retrogression I hope will make even more people interested in an organization which practices that unity of theory and practice.

Who those people may be has to do with the things that make this city what it is. Thus, I hope we can renew our concentration on unemployed, especially poor and Black women, and on the anti-war movement, especially in Ann Arbor where we had two meetings that were well attended in the fall. I think that your discussion of how Correspondence moved to Detroit is another way of saying how we answered that question "who?" concretely. But who didn't really become subject until two years later and CD became editor. I think we can really have something here if we can answer "who" as concretely though it will no longer be center. Yet, in order to do that, how can we work out becoming subcenter after July without an intellectual or a Black comrade who is experienced?

Perhaps it's hard to see what we can do with Archives since they are such a well-kept secret still. But one thing that can flow from the classes into the transition period after July is the view that the "process" through the 70s can be seen in the step-by-step developments in the JFT and in M-Hism and in objective situation that span the years between specific publication dates. Although ACOT is a shining example of the power of negativity, wouldn't seeing "process" in the whole of the Archives show the "power of negativity" throughout?

In any case, I'm looking forward to working out perspectives more with you this Thursday.

Yours (full of anticipation) Jim

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