

Minutes of REB Meeting, Feb. 6, 1984

Present: All but Eugene, on assignment; Diane as sitter-in

Agenda: I. Organizational Report by Raya and Mike; II. N&L -- Lead and Editorial; III. Finances - Olga; IV. G&W

I. Raya said she wished to begin this point on the agenda very concretely, on the first class we had just had in Detroit, because if we are serious about Chapter 11 -- that is, on seeing philosophy as ground for organization -- we have to practice it seriously. The first REB after that first class has to discuss what it means in relation to Marxist-Humanism as a "body of ideas", so that any report of that class is not only what happened or what we must follow through on, both of which we must certainly discuss. It is not separated from what we are emphasizing in these class -- what body of ideas, as unity of mental/manual, means. And what it means that we said we will not discuss the specific moves that are involved in making Chicago the Center until after the classes are completed. Even when we do discuss that, at the end of the classes, it does not mean that the decisions as to who moves or who stays where is a decision that remains forever...

Raya then referred to Mike's Letter to the Locals of Jan. 31, in which he had presented two ways the locals were preparing for the classes: 1) our own study, and 2) gaining an audience for the special first class by Raya. Raya said she wished to add a 3rd point to those two -- the conception of that first class she had given as an overview for the whole series, so that whoever gives the final lecture will return to that beginning to look at it anew.

II. Raya said that she had been impressed with what Bob had brought into his discussion at the first class on the question of the Japanese workers and the attempts to impose the Japanese capitalist methods on the American workers, and would like him to develop some of that in an Editorial for the next issue on the degradation of the conditions of U.S. labor to the position of labor in the so-called backward lands. It would be a different kind of Editorial, which has to take for granted that everybody already knows about all the concessions U.S. labor has been forced to accept -- what we would want to stress is that these concessions are not temporary and that they spell out the actual destruction of the unions.

February 7, 1984

Dear Colleagues:

You no doubt are aware of the uniqueness of this specific series of classes which aim to present, at one and the same time, Marxist-Humanism as a body of ideas in which, though the trilogy of revolution is its center-point, it is so as a unit, and therefore the concrete spelling-out of our body of ideas is likewise as a unit. Which is why we included in each lecture references to both ACOT and N&L, both individual pamphlets and the 25 Year History. Because it is of the essence to have that pervade all classes, I, as you see from the REB minutes enclosed, proposed that the first Lecture, as an overview of the whole series, is what we must return to when we reach the last lecture. The reason this is emphasized is the whole question of methodology, and why the first lecture was named: "Dialectics, dialectics, dialectics", not for purposes of being either repetitious or musical but in order to stress that this type of self-development, self-determination, and self-reaching-into-the-future, changes and becomes the task for each generation to work out for itself from Hegel/Marx, from Lenin in the period 1914-17, to our own Marxist-Humanism beginning with the Second World War, though our contribution for the period -- the movement from practice to theory, was not made until the masses themselves were on the historic stage in the 1950s.

It is as important not to jump to the conclusion before you ever go through the process as it is to have an indication of it when it is only an embryo. This may not seem to have a concrete relationship to the proposed move to Chicago, but, in fact, to have some-one, either before the end of the classes want to have all the answers, or to consider the classes so "ordinary" as to ^{have} other classes running concurrently with it, is, to me, a double misunderstanding, as if only Detroit were involved in the move, rather than seeing that each and every one is involved. It is to fail to take seriously that the philosophy of revolution-in-permanence as ground for organization demands the practice be daily.

Please read carefully the REB minutes to see how Mike's organizational report on the activities everywhere, from our at-large members in Kentucky and D.C. to each and every local, develops this concretely.

The paper now going to press -- for which the deadline is February 16 -- will feature a composite Lead by Eugene on Central America and the in-person report on Nicaragua from a friend in Los Angeles. Bob will write the Editorial on Labor, in which the relationship of the backward steps against U.S. workers is seen in the context of the conditions of the Japanese workers. You will also see in the REB minutes some new ideas Suzanne presented for the WL Page.

Finally, the REB minutes also include a critical report on our Finances at the half-way point to the next convention, which the organizer of each local will be responsible for discussing with each local member.

Yours,
Raya

P.S. Because the Contents Page for the first lecture is so important and there was an error in the Introductory paragraph, a new page is being run off to distribute to all the classes.

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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 ranks.

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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March 7, 1984

To the New York NEB:
Dear Colleagues:

You may or may not have thought that the REB, in discussing the final class in Detroit, was discussing only the Center. But the real reason I emphasized "very, very important" in that paragraph of the minutes of the Feb. 29 meeting, was to remind everyone that the Convention this year will be held two months earlier than usual, which meant that the Call would be issued as early as April 7. Put otherwise, it meant that all the classes were to end that week, since the classes themselves were directed to be ground for the Convention's Perspectives. Evidently that was not a point for consideration when the New York local set its dates for the series. It is true that we allowed quite a bit of leeway to each local as to when and how they would conduct the classes. But it has always been a principle that, once we have the Call for the Convention, that gains priority over all else. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ This has been a principle not only in general but very specifically for what becomes the Perspectives for each Convention, and never more than for this year's Convention, because nothing short of a move of the whole Center is involved.

Moving the Center does not only concern Detroit and Chicago but the whole organization and, indeed, every individual in it.

In one respect, without thinking of any relationship to this problem, the fact is that Lectures 7 and 8 were combined in my outline lays the ground for my present suggestion: that these last two lectures, indeed, be combined as one. Dialectically when I made up the Syllabus the reason I combined the two was that the whole question of Summation as New Beginning, of theory and practice as not just a unity but a new relationship, is what has permeated Marxist-Humanism from the very start. It is seen in the readings I proposed for these two lectures. Whether it is the readings in MAR, in PAR or in BLMLK, the direction is the relationship of philosophy to action in each historic period, so that the new forces of revolution that appear, as well as the new perspectives set for concretizing those forces as Reason, lead to the Marxist-Humanist organization called News & Letters. That remains the reason for including the Constitution in that series, and it will remain the direction for the Perspectives and the move.

Here are two alternatives that I suggest: One would be that in combining Lectures 7 & 8, you eliminate supplementary reports and, instead, have two main reporters. The other would be to have one main reporter and two supplementary reports. It is up to you, but under no circumstances can it be discussed as if it were only a New York local question or out of the context of the calendar for the Convention.

Yours,

Raya

Phil. L. Ray
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P.S. I have decided to send a copy of this letter to the other regional NEBs, who may also have the question of combining the last 2 lectures on their agenda. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

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