

RD
May 23, 1985

Dear Anne:

As, I'm sure you know, I've been "back in harness" ever since the March 21 lecture on Archives and the latest additions to them, and the April 18 lecture in Chicago. Perhaps I should have added "more or less in harness" -- but in the fundamental sense of thought activity as well as organizational activity (as if the two could be separated) there is no "more or less"; it is the actual preparation for the Call and the Plenum itself. It is this that makes all of what I say very, very crucial for locals as well as leaders -- and none are more urgent for me than New York.

Both because New York is not just any cultural center, but the place where the fourth -- and I still fear the least understood-- book, Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future, is being published. Though the introduction to it has been around for a long time and in it I made very clear that it is not just a collection of essays over 35 years, which should be evident from the fact that every single one of the four parts stretches pretty much over the entire 35 years. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ That is the whole reason for my not following some simple chronological order. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ At the same time, it is not just the topic itself but the Dialectics of Revolution that is heart and soul of the whole and each part. In a word, I have not felt a response from our ~~NY~~ Marxist-Humanists that grasps that in ~~the~~ the projection of the book, or why we keep insisting that, as of the last Convention, ~~the~~ the last part of Perspectives on "not by practice alone" is not last year's, but our continuous, task.

New York's so-called strategic locale makes this ~~so~~ crucial and yet something has happened there that worries me. Would you please answer me, and not briefly or hurriedly, to tell me what are the facts of the local and its leadership? What is it that you are doing? I know that ever since the REB made it important to break with the ~~REB~~ New York Peruvians, and in a certain sense your strongest periphery, a void has been created. But I considered that a challenge and that is what I did not feel was caught. ¹ For example, where are you most active now? ² What has happened to the WL periphery? ³ Has there been any serious attempt to establish Marxist-Humanism away from the Workman's Circle? ⁴ What has happened to the Black periphery? ⁵ What, if I may permit myself to seem to naive as to ask, has happened to "personal friends"? ⁶ What about the relations within the NEB? ⁷ What about the relations with the REB? ⁸ What serious outreach is made in order to create a totally new ground for my Fall trip? ⁹ We certainly cannot wait for the actual Plenum to make decisions concrete. ¹⁰ For example, just the simple matter of the kind of ads we have usually bought that connect my lectures in N.Y. with a new publication (in this case it would be the new fourth major work) -- needs an almost two months lead-time, to get the ad in, in time.

¹¹ First of all, the ads I'm projecting -- NYRB, The Nation, The Guardian, and you should also probably think of the Village Voice -- would set us back over \$1000

16428

and we would want to ask for special contributions to that right now. Secondly, the local would need to act towards it, not as if it were just for "intellectuals", but realize that any discussion of Ideas (with a capital I) is not just for intellectuals but for workers as thinkers, which is, after all, our position ever since we were established. Which doesn't mean that each one doesn't look at his current or former friends or total strangers that are proletarians or Blacks or W/Lers of the new kind, i.e., searching for an entire different philosophy than they have been following. Thirdly, and in a certain sense most important, it is urgent not to be subjective about any self-critique; and at all times, before one opens his/her mouth, it is urgent to have in mind what was the last Perspectives adopted at the last Convention and what is now being projected in preparation for the next Gathering. What I'm trying to say, Anne, is that the expression "Reaching for the Future", in the fourth book, is not just an objective matter but a subjective one when subjectivity means what we have said it means, that is to say, not just Subject but ~~dialectical~~ dialectical Philosophy.

(5)

July - 17
 Subj
 July 17

I don't know how to say that the communication has not been very good when I want to stress that it's not a question of just which letters have been answered quickly, or whether all points that were projected "from the field" were paid equal attention to. (6) Instead, there should be a serious study of what wasn't answered and why the person receiving the letter is getting that "inattention" to a point he/she thought was the most important. For example, we have tried to make it clear to the locals that we think so much of helping New York that though we are very strapped for help here, we sent first Eugene, and he was lucky enough to come just when a new youth stage was emerging on campus. (7) And we are planning for Kevin to come not just for a weekend but from July 20 to August 10; and of course we are projecting a trip by myself at a time when we the books will surely be in hand.

after Fall
 pl

Finally, I'm enclosing a copy of the proposed REB meetings for the next two months that the REB will be discussing at our next meeting on June 3.

Yours,

R

P.S. Perhaps I should have also said something that is very minor, and doesn't really affect the things that concerned me in this letter, about that seemingly irrelevant letter to Cal. Sometimes, it's very important to disregard all that disturbs someone on his way out of the movement. But I wanted to show the NEB how you can disregard totally what the person raises and instead talk about what really did affect the reader. In this case, I was so impressed that his parents had been in the Congo that I wanted to ask him some questions, whether or not he's interested.