

Minutes of REB Meeting of July 12, 1983

Agenda: I. Report on Organization, Nationally and Internationally by Mike; II Report on Ottawa Conference by Bob; III. On-Going Activities: 1. Andy on West Virginia 2. Raya and Mike on Correspondence IV. G&W

Raya The report was magnificent because it was both concrete and universal. I believe it was the first time we've spoken on what were the organizational and philosophical differences between Marx, Lasalle, Bakunin, Blanqui. Let me begin with Jim's question on book and chapter 11. It isn't only that we had book and chapter 11, but who else has tried to work this out. It is only with the very last section on the 1980s View with the combination of the challenge to post-Marx Marxists and the challenge to ourselves that we put forth philosophy as ground for organization. In what Mike developed we are learning something new about Marx. The IWA wasn't Marx's international. The Communist League was in a certain sense more Marxist than IWA. But after CM Marx needs to work out the economics. But when he does that with CCPE (1859) he now writes we will have biggest blow to bourgeoisie. But he is not satisfied with political action alone. The greatness of Critique of Gotha Program in addition to all the other great things was that it was after IWA, after 1875 edition of Capital after he had argued with Bakunin on centralization and decentralization. Yes he liked Blanqui, but did not leave it as conspiratorial group but as masses in motion. What was he fighting with Lassalleanism in CGP, was that it was a national program. On autonomy--The women have their trouble with it, but they have trouble because they have no banner to raise. They got so stuck in phenomenology. I had wanted RL 1910 as high point of book, but RL stuck with that stinking corpse of the 2nd International. Honeycutt in her work on German women is great, but she stopped with 1910-12. Why? Because Zetkin had autonomy. But 2nd Int. gave it to her because she wasn't challenging them, just popularizing. So when they got ready to remove her, she hadn't built on philosophy. Autonomy can be used to hide the fact of no philosophy and thus no totality. Unless you have totality, better to stick with "coalitions" on activity. On Mike's suggestion for amendment, you can't rewrite history. We didn't establish News and Letters as a Marxist-Humanist organization in '56. We will put M-H organization but we will put it somewhere else. Remember how Marx did not want to rewrite Communist Manifesto. Even M&F it wasn't until the preface written in 1957 that we singled out who we were. When you raise autonomy separate from philosophy it is just looking for an excuse for avoiding philosophy. Centralization and decentralization only valid in context of philosophy. What Andy said on book and convention is correct, but we can't leave it just as book, because book's greatness is that it is tied to the objective situation.

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