

Mike
3/2/87

The REB mins. for 1987 did not live up to the Jan. 3 Expanded REB either in philosophy "atself" much less in what was in the Bulletin which had reproduced the letters ~~was~~ between myself and non-Marxist Hegel scholars. Part of this was due to the diversion I felt by ~~the~~ detailed description of the events of the letter ~~to~~ ^{about} Irv, that is to say it sent such a chill over me that I simply left the whole discussion out of the mins. With the result that not only was the philosophy missed, but those like Mike who spoke well at the meeting, were left holding the bag.

Therefore, the main blame is mine, and not just for not reporting, but for being so intent on stressing the priority of NGL's first biweekly issue, that I put that as the first and longest point on the agenda, which in turn meant that when I finally ~~got~~ ^{got} around to writing "Talking to Myself" on Jan. 21, it sounded abstract because it didn't seem to have a connection with the 1/12/87 mins.

This brings me to the whole point that something has happened to the REB meetings. Even when we do have some special point, it doesn't have the much longer view of the objective as well as the philosophical situation. In the Jan. 26 REB mins. Lou opened the discussion on the letter I sent to the REB on Black History Month. It still sounded as if it were a discussion of just what to do with the paper rather than the uniqueness of MHism on ~~the~~ the whole question of the Black dimension long before our birth, since our birth as NGL, and the philosophic consistency before we actually spelled out our philosophy as MHist. I mean what is the moment in the 1920s of those opposites that nevertheless have an affinity of a very strange kind-- Marxism and Gerveyism-- in the structure of American history from its birth. I believe ~~is~~ it is this, precisely this, that can explain both the fiasco in NY vs P and many others in relationship to shying away from saying MHism is the Marxism of our age.

The next two meetings of the REB, Feb. 9 and 23, especially Feb. 23, brings this out again. By this I mean the sigh of relief, I'm sorry to say, that I suddenly feel is going on in the organization when we do things that are fairly good, have greater participation in discussions, than when the subject is straight phil-

10860

osophy, so that by the Feb. 23 meeting, the REB becomes barely more than a PTO. That cannot happen just because we are a biweekly. This is an organization, (and must grow) not just a paper. This is a body of ideas, not just a matter of facing current events of 2 weeks, that can fit into the space of 8 pages. A body of ideas does not mean something for an "educational" meeting, but the one that tests you -- and I mean THE test, not just of being able to produce a biweekly, but of growing in members by not letting go the need of visiting and discussing with those who are not yet members in so challenging a manner that they want to lead that kind of life that is called by the strange phrase "self-determination of the idea". That is to say, ideas and acts upon the person talked to as they are acted upon by the person visiting. Is each one really spending a day each week on that?

By now we have only six months till the Plenum to show what we have gained both as members and as periphery with focus on America. Since we have no such revolutionary situations as what are coming to us from abroad, we therefore must again return to our uniqueness, our originality, our historic significance. Above everything, how to transmit this to others? It's the transmission to others that is the test of yourself, and you need to ask yourself at the end of the meeting: did I really answer his/her question in the manner in which it would have meant something to her life, or was I transmitting an abstraction. For example, could I have said, instead of in such and such a year this idea happened to RD, could I have said, what you told me about the conditions in your shop/office/home brings out the whole question of relations with others, and it is that which preoccupies at a time when?

Finally, the dialectic of organization, like the dialectic of negativity, means that you always ask yourself what is the opposite of this event, this thought, this relationship? When you look at ~~the opposites~~ the opposites ask yourself further whether it's the opposite of the same coin or the absolute opposite.

10861

Whether I'm at the meeting or not, the REA must see to it that organization is never off the agenda, so that the ~~work~~ outreach to others has to examine ~~its~~ its results by ~~measuring~~ how our horizon is expanded. That holds true as well for the paper, not only in outreach, but in interiorization.

10862