

MINUTES OF REB MEETING, FEB. 27, 1986

Present: All but Suzanne, excused.

Agenda: I. Archives Report -- Mike, supplemented by Raya II. Discussion. III. Proposal for Lead in April on Haiti. IV. Correspondence and Ongoing Activities Olga plus discussion on trip to NY and Mexico

Raya supplemented on 1958-59. The todayness of philosophy -- history and the significance of Archives--are the two reasons that I am limiting myself to 1958-59. The relationship of these two first appears in 1958, though we didn't seem to be conscious of it until the new discovery of the old by Mike. No sooner was M&F off the press with its declaration in the very first paragraph that it -- "aims to re-establish Marxism in its original form, which Marx called 'a thorough-going Naturalism, or Humanism.'" -- than I evidently decided to make an outline of what we now know as the Marxist-Humanist Archives. Actually, even then it had involved, not as extensively as now,

documents prior to 1941. I am not however interested in the stretch of years it covers. Rather, the distinctive mark of Marxist-Humanism has always been the grasp of continuity and discontinuity, with Marx's Humanism. Thus, I made translations of previously untranslated writings of Marx: the 1844 Essays, Marx's original final chapter of Vol. I which he didn't publish, as well as excerpts from Vol. IV. The 1844 Essays that I was translating, Ryazanov had translated into Russian, and described them as preparatory work for the Holy Family. Thus consciously or unconsciously establishing the myth of Marx and Engels as one, for the Holy Family would later be known as a "joint" work.

Here is what I say in my Introduction to Volume 12 of the Archives: "The whole question of the relationship of any ongoing events with the past, the very concept of Archives, depends on the two opposite words -- continuity and discontinuity. Whereas only great divides in epochs, in cognition, in personality, are crucial, and may be related to turning points in history, no discontinuity can really achieve that type of new epochal 'moment' unless it has established continuity with the historic course of human development.

"Naturally, the significance of Archives for any Marxist-Humanist has, as ground, what we learned from Marx's Archives, especially from the writings in his last decade including the Ethnological Notebooks, which were first transcribed in 1972. It cast a totally new illumination both on Marx's multi-linearism as it relates to his studies of pre-capitalism and indeed the whole course of human development"

I don't know whatever the REB did in 1958 with my first outline. Bessie was in Europe, especially Italy, where she was working to get me a publisher for M&F and reporting on the Italian s-c conference.

(It would take the fact that the turbulent 1960s reached its highest point and then perished before the first handing in of the Archives we now know to WSU in 1969.) What happened however in the objective situation in those two critical years did not stand still. Quite the contrary. On the one hand, there was the beginning of the African Revolutions and on the other hand the Sino-Soviet Orbit was on the eve of becoming a Sino-Soviet rift, with Mao, with his strange combination of administrative mentality and guerrilla fighter, presenting himself as the "true Communist" to the Third World, indeed the whole world.

Evidently I began writing endless letters to the European comrades who held a state-capitalist position, (Indeed it included others like Chaulieu who were opposed to both poles of world capital.), calling for an international conference around De Gaulle's coming to power and the imperative necessity to reorganize Marxist groupings. An international conference was called in 1959 in Milan, and I brought to it both N&F and the newly published Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions. While they opposed the Humanist philosophy as if it were Marx when he was young and Hegel-tainted, they did accept the idea that the discussion should continue, for which Damen arranged for a special section of Prometeo in a different color, to contain material from the International Center for Correspondence. I did visit other countries, especially Britain, where a Marxist-Humanist group was established by Harry McShane. It is there in 1959 that I also met and was sponsored by some African groups with whom I continued to correspond and they made possible my 1962 African trip.

While the European trip did not appear in N&L, it is now well documented in the new additions.

Indeed the new Archives are just as imperative for us to study carefully, as for any of the libraries we are trying to sell it to.

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