

To the REB:
Dear Colleagues:

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new
visit Nov. 3, 1986
for org. growth
why this time

In thinking about what part of Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy I will be able to give a whiff of to the REB when I return Dec. 1, and at the end of the year in the sum-up, I become more and more conscious of the very near-disappearance from our vocabulary of the phrase "organizational growth". The fact that we totally opposed the old radicals' "recruitment mentality" should not (I repeat should not) exclude organizational growth for Marxist-Humanists. The very opposite is the case. The deeper we delve into philosophy the more urgent (as well as inseparable) organizational growth become. Indeed, the dialectic of philosophy-- and I have been doing a lot of deep diving into it-- has opened an altogether new vista to organizational growth.

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For example, though we have a right to be very proud of the fact that we feel the very content of our publications, be it paper or pamphlets or book itself, created room for the self-development of those who read or even just hear of our ideas, we cannot be satisfied with that flash of identity in their outreach to us. The fact that they themselves must have thought of similar ideas to extend their outreach, the experience of the shock of recognition from someone so far away-- from South Africa, from the Philippines, from Malta, from Haiti, from South Korea, or for that matter from Minnesota or Wellesley, Mass, does not concretize the idea of freedom from identity to the concrete absolute of Marxist-Humanism.

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I believe that what has been happening instead about the near-disappearance of that phrase "organizational growth", is that "self-development" has very nearly become a substitute for "organizational growth". Self-development would not need to be put in quotes if it was not thought of just as an internal phenomenon, but an external one, that would have every new friend feel that it means his/her self-development, and that not as ego, but as part of the creation of a totally new human being, of a new society.

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The genius of Hegel was nowhere more universally concrete than when he called Dialectics in all its forms as well as its content and notion the methodology-- the methodology of process and solution. On the other hand, Hegel had called the type of methodology that takes something for granted nothing short of "barbarism". This is not my phrase; it is Hegel's. I think we need a lot more labor, patience and suffering of the negative.

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But in fact that is not the crucial point. The crucial point is self-discipline, an absolute imperative for intellectuals. With self-discipline is the clarity that is to exude from brevity. For example, when we first began, the rule for letter-writing in the office was that to the outside no letter was to exceed one page when we first got to know someone. And all of it was to be concrete whether it dealt with a particular point or the universal.

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Take the question of footnoting in books. If I were in academia, the footnotes would be ten-fold what they are. As it is, not only for the masses who have no time to go, so to speak, through endless books, brevity is necessary for the intellectuals who get completely wallowed in reading for its own sake, for erudition-- for anything except the point at issue which is what what is happening in a person's life and how that is influenced, or related to, or abolished by, what is happening in the world

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Now then, when it comes to the workshop classes-- and that is what also holds for the paper-- the real crucial point is reaction to the objective situation, the speed with which you can react to it, have an attitude that is not just instinctual, but thought-out, through which you explain the fact along with its meaning. That didn't happen very often in the workshop/classes I first tried to establish last year, did it? I hope it will not be so in the new classes, by over-burdening it with prepared statements, except for the main report and one sub-report. That is why I made meaning so central, indeed the great divide between the 1980s and 1960s when I spoke at UIC on Oct. 30.

In a word, what is new in both the classes and in the new type of paper is the inter-relationship between objective when that objective is both the current and the archival past, and the subjective, when that is both Marxist-Humanism "in general", and the specific M-Hist who singles out a specific theme in the Archives. It is that inter-relationship which will motivate REB preparations for both the sum-up at the end of the year and the first new issue of the 8-pager in January.

The reason this letter is being sent to you now is that the deadline for the December issue will be Nov. 20. It prompts me to make three proposals:

1) That we should not have a compressed schedule for the Dec. issue, so that we can take full advantage of our last 12-pager.

Whereas we have discussed the biweekly for a whole year and more, what appeared in the paper was minimal. It is true that Eugene as Managing Editor has been making a trip to all locals. For the last part of the trip-- mid-November-- to the West Coast, he will be joined by Peter, who will have come from Salt Lake City. (SLC is no longer a local, but I felt that Andrew's activity there was important enough to have the REB bear the responsibility for this departure from the norm.)

2) It is crucial that we have some "free time" the month of December so that we can think about what has been happening since our Convention in September, and how that will affect our Perspectives for the rest of the year. Indeed, the year-end REB meeting is going to be a very different type of meeting because, instead of being an expanded REB (which generally means the REB invites the NEB), that will not be the case. Instead, I propose that this year it be the REB and the Chicago local, precisely because the greatest responsibility will, of necessity, fall on the local at the Center-- Chicago. Because both Christmas and New Year's fall in the middle of the week, we will meet Saturday, Jan. 3, from 10 AM to 3:30 PM.

3) Finally, I thought that it is important for me to appear in that last 12-pager in two ways. Firstly, on page 1, with an Editorial announcement of the meaning of our going to an 8 page biweekly. Secondly, now that the Nov. issue published excerpts from Adrienne Rich's review, I believe my letter to Rich should appear in the December "Theory/Practice" column.

Please send a copy of this letter to the members of the NEB and one copy to each local to be read out.

Yours,
Raya

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Nov. 3, 1976

To the RES:
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