

REB Meeting - July 8, 1964

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Present: All but Louise, on temporary assignment in California  
Agenda: I Stewardship of Leadership; II Checkup of assignments for paper, and work on  
Bulletins in office; III Good and Welfare

#### I - STEWARDSHIP OF LEADERSHIP:

Revert heretofore our stewardship of leadership reports either related to election of REB (which is of course natural and will occupy the Executive Session this time too) or revolved around a single leader as "symbol" of what was needed. Neither of these points of departure, however, is our problem today.

Contrary to consideration of the self-development of any individual REB member, we wish here to consider the leadership as a whole, both its responsibilities and activities in general, and the specifics of its relationship to a set line of perspectives over the next two years. A whole new section in the main thesis, The Turning Point, is now entitled "Organizational Responsibility for Theoretic Position." I will not repeat here what is stated in the thesis itself, either in relation to the historic background of a half century ago, or to the more immediate past in Johnsonism. It is sufficient to be aware of the fact that MEL committee, from the start, neither separated MEL from M&F, nor both writings from the organization. Nevertheless we have barely tested our right to leadership by relating each convention's ~~MARKS~~ perspectives to our daily activities, and we have grown soft by being concentrated in a single center where the whole, rather than the individual, "stood for the leadership." In a word, we have, so to speak, lived off each other rather than being "cast adrift" and been compelled to find shore on our own. I wish to come to grips with the problem of leadership on 2 levels: 1) 9 years of existence of MEL; and 2) this year's M&F paperback and serious preparation for new book as it affects our organizational perspectives and test of leadership.

Nine years ago, when we began, we made 2 decisions: 1) because I had to go away to write M&F, a managing editor for MEL had to be at the center, and Saul moved to Detroit from N.Y. 2) because we were small, not to divide our forces, we moved Johnny and I<sub>2</sub> to the center, while Ig and Louise returned to LA from N.Y. Only twice after that did we have to ask people to relate their personal lives to stages of development in the organization: (1) because of Autoction and W.Va. not being ideal for sailing M&F which was off the press, as well as for purposes of strengthening the center, O. and A. were asked to move to Detroit. (2) while Louise's moved was not as urgent, it proved very valuable, not only as to work in the office, but outside, as witness B's new membership, the work in SNCC, and the lecture at the Jewish center.

Getting 100% is a pretty good "average" and ought to entitle our next move to be taken on our work.

It is true that we have neither a 1905 nor a 1917 nor even a general strike to bolster our claim to Marxist continuity, and yet the nuclear age makes the historic moment of Marxist-  
Feminist reconstruction truly just a moment that we have either to rise up to, or sink into the dustbin of history, if not off the face of the earth altogether.

History has bestowed on us a greater burden theoretically, for (1) in contrast to Lenin, we begin with a 40 year void; and (2) philosophically he unfortunately left a dual heritage; while (3) in contrast to Trotsky, we have neither the advantage of his 1917 role, nor the delusion that vanguardism needs no theoretical originality so long as the physical continuity is there; (4) so that besides being opposed by all, absolutely all state powers, there is the not-so-easily disproved "idealistic" scutlings of "Marxists". Finally and above all, (5) we really do have literally to dig new grounds because even Marx stopped at a certain part in Philosophy of Mind which is just where we must begin OK UNCHARTED ROADS. --In the 1953 letters on the Absolute Idea. So much, so vary much we stand for -- and I don't mean only the one person who caught the philonophic link because it would have been impossible, absolutely impossible, to do either before the mass pavement made the time ripe or the organi-  
zation did not only take responsibility for this theory, but itself helped expand it.

And yet, we cannot disregard the softness that has appeared among us, as is shown in the move of individuals to some areas irrespective of the needs of the organization in other areas. We can

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We can no longer disregard this trend. An organization doesn't get steered by stealth, but in the crucible of fiery experience or cold calculation or philosophic passion.

The new stage of steering must begin here and now, and show itself at the Convention. I wish to say that Johnny's statement at the last REB inspired the new section in the thesis on organizational responsibility for theoretic positions; his test will come when he acts on his words. CD was absolutely right at the last REB when he exposed the old radicals' cynicism in saying, "Don't worry about me, on the day of revolution I'll be with you on the barricades," but in doing the opposite, that is to say, they ran to get positions with Reuther. It is true we have had no such cases of opportunism. Nevertheless, we must have a more creative carrying out of a political line than heretofore. In the present case the need is to establish a sub-center in New York.

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