

REB MEETING of APRIL 4, 1984

Present: All; Diane as sitter-in; Laurie by special invitation

Agenda: I. Report by Lou on Third World Conference; II. Report by Raya on End of Classes in Detroit and Relationship of the Classes to: a) '49-'50 Pamphlet as expressed in Peter's letter, b) three new publications as expressed in Olga's last class, and c) move to Chicago; III. Draft Call and Discussion; IV. Report by Mike on Ongoing Activities and Timing of Next three issues of N&L

I. Lou reported on all three aspects of his week in Chicago: our participation in the Third World Conference; the Class at the Local; the talk on campus. The turnout for the Third World Conference was relatively small, about 100, which was not surprising given the prohibitive cost of the registration, etc. Turnout to the two workshops we addressed was good: 25 to hear Kevin's on Tanzania; 15 to hear Lou on Garvey and Marxism. One of those on Kevin's panel who is active in work around BCM bought considerable lit and we will continue the discussion with him. Best from those at Lou's workshop was a Jamaican woman with whom there was especially good discussion about Grenada. Best question was from one who asked at end: "What is Marxist-Humanism?" Over \$50 in lit was sold over the three days, which is good under the circumstances. The most interest came in the full day devoted to Grenada, but there were considerable overtones of Stalinism present and Lou tangled sharply with several of the professors when it became evident that the Left is dealing with Grenada by what amounts to a defense of Coard and insistence that main point is anti-U.S. imperialism, while refusing to face the issue of counter-revolution coming out of revolution. Two other professors approached Lou afterwards, outside, to say they agreed and appreciated his intervention, but when the question of conflicts within the New Jewel Movement came up on the floor at their own sessions later, declined to "go into it." Dave Park also took floor and spoke strongly on revolutionary ideas that do not stop at national boundaries.

At our own class at the Local there were very few non-members present, but the attendance at the UIC meeting the next day was excellent -- and almost all of them from our work, not from Black Studies Dept. which had been a co-sponsor. Of the 30, most were Black, especially Black women, but there were also several white students, one of whom stopped later to talk further to Lou. At least 15 signed the mailing list to continue discussions with us.

Diane supplemented very briefly, limiting her report to the way Manley, who was the keynote speaker at the Third World Conference, not only did not mention Grenada in his talk, but so totally stayed "in the market place" on the question of imperialism that he wound up saying that the reality of the objective situation means the Third World has to cooperate with the multi-national corporations!

II. Raya: The reason I asked Lou to make his report before I either drew the summation of the classes in Detroit to its relationship to the move, as well as before reading the Draft for the Call, is due, not simply to knowing the latest news of our activities, but because the letter we just received from Dave in Britain shows the new obstacles we will meet because the Left refuses to face the reality that out of the revolution in Grenada came counter-revolution, before the U.S. invasion. It reminds me of the 1930s, when the Stalinists swallowed everything from the greatest Moscow Frame-up Trials to Stalin's

16172

pact with Hitler, and yet got thousands to follow them in calling the Trotskyist opposition a "counter-revolution." We certainly will not give in to any such recurrence of Stalinist glanders even when it parades as Third World liberation just because it correctly opposes U.S. imperialism, any more than we gave in to the counter-revolution coming from religion, like Khomeini. At the same time, however, we do want to see when there is a revolutionary opposition coming from the masses even when it has come with bourgeois electioneering. That is where the Black dimension shows the opposition in a way that we can single out the revolutionary element. I'm referring to Jesse Jackson's campaign, within the confines of the Democratic Party. The fact that he had 80 % of Chicago's Black voters and 90 % of those in New York City shows it to be a movement, and that movement is not out for liberal politics but for liberation. As for Jesse Jackson, let's remember Lenin's intense interest in the Garvey Movement without having any illusions about Garvey as a personality. The whole point is knowing how to present Marxist-Humanism as a body of ideas that is deeply rooted in masses in motion. We certainly will have great obstacles in our attempts for organizational growth in this election period, but we must also know how not to confuse Jesse Jackson's politicking with the masses following him.

The way it relates to the end of the classes is the fact that the greatest thing we have gained from these classes is our own self-development. We really do know how to be a walking body of ideas now. The first result of that new self-confidence is the manner in which we function in solidarity committees, whether they be on South Africa or the Black dimension here; whether that be in the Latino groups or anti-nuke; whether that be in Women's Liberation or labor conferences. That is why, even before the classes ended, Peter's letter which related the Classes to the '49-'50 pamphlet continues to be so important in our summations. We will print it in the first pre-convention discussion bulletin. Olga, in her summation of the whole series of classes, extended this relationship of the classes and our coming perspectives to the three new publications -- the Miners General Strike pamphlet, the new edition of the Afro-Asian pamphlet, and the reprinting of Raya's article on Women's Liberation from Praxis. Though we have not gained the organizational growth from the classes that we had hoped for, the truth of the matter is that the extension of ideas in each of the classes did create a periphery, did create literature sales, and in fact this is especially true where our members were new members-at-large, like Gary in Ohio/Kentucky and Rob in D.C. -- or a new small local like Salt Lake City where non-members sometimes outnumbered the members at classes.

One other feature of the classes that is important to note was the form of having supplementary reports which made the classes in our trilogy integral to our pamphlets and N&L as well as to activities.

In a very important sense the classes have not ended. That is to say, they so directly continue to be the ground for the M-Hist body of ideas that already we have decided on separate bulletins for pre-convention discussion. Thus: 1- Mike's report, "When Archives are Not Past but Living; the Direct Relationship of Marxist-Humanist Archives to Marx's Humanism, which Created 'Revolution in Permanence as Ground for Organization,'" will become a separate bulletin and be reissued later by the Detroit local, when it is no longer Center but remains the Home of the Archives. 2- Another report, Susie's, which

REB, April 4, 1984 -- page 3

was supplemental to Mike's and which related the Archives to one force of revolution -- the WIA -- will be included in the pre-convention bulletin issued by our WL-N&L Committees. 3- This year for the first time the PTC will also issue a special bulletin, which will include Mary Joan's supplementary report to Olga's, in which MJ focused on the Black dimension through all four volumes (MJ was able to show the sample of the new bound volume not yet off-the-press); this bulletin will, of course, record the summation of the year by Eugene, chairman of the PTC.

Even where there seems to be no direct relationship to the move to Chicago insofar as each one being a walking body of ideas for Marxist-Humanism, there are, in fact, lessons to be learned for the Chicago move. I'm referring to the fact that Lecture 6 in Detroit, on the "Movement from Practice" was the one that had three reporters, all of them Youth. I singled that point out at the class itself because it had not been planned as a youth meeting, but once that was so it was clear that our concept of "a new generation of revolutionaries" was present in Marxist-Humanism.

Finally, insofar as the classes^{are} ground for the move to Chicago, the fact is that at the final class in Detroit, I felt it important to go back to Chapter I of P&R on "Absolute Idea as New Beginning" in Hegel, especially in relationship to Phenomenology of Mind. The specific point that showed that the "Self-Thinking Idea" is not some mystical abstraction that has no relationship to reality much less to live forces of revolution as Reason is the manner in which I divided the whole work of so many different stages of Consciousness -- Self-Consciousness, Reason, Spirit, Religion, Absolute Idea -- into just two parts: 1-Up to the day of revolution (and I mean the French Revolution) and 2- What Happens After? This is of the essence, not just for a Marxist interpretation of Hegelian dialectics, but it has extreme urgency and todayness for us right now. Heretofore, we have always spoken of counter-revolution coming out of the revolution as being the significance of the word "after". Now, in Chapter I of P&R the reference is not to Stalin, but what happens after is the new doors opened after one gains a mind of his own, and it is this which is so important for us in the ideological battles today. Indeed, that is why, instead of leaving the Call for Convention as a separate point on the agenda tonight, I want to read the rough draft for the Call now -- after which we will have Discussion on all three points.

III. Raya read the Rough Draft, and Discussion followed. (The Call is being sent out together with these minutes.)

16174