

IN LIEU OF REB MINUTES of Feb. 14, 1983

Dear Friends:

As distinct from all other "In Lieu of REB minutes", this abbreviated report of REB minutes is the type of Letter of the Week that needs to be discussed and not just read. The reason that this first point on the agenda begins with a discussion is that this is actually the "educational". That is to say, what we often say theoretically but don't practice often enough is that, as against the "party-to-lead" concept, we have established the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, not only as philosophy but as ground of organization. One of the greatest, i.e. most original, contributions of RLWLKM is Chapter 11, "Philosopher of Permanent Revolution Creates New Ground for Organization." We alone have seen that in Marx's Critique of the Gotha Programme. We alone have therefore done nothing short of carrying through Marx's theory of permanent revolution from the first moment he said it, when he broke with bourgeois society, 1843, through the whole 40 years of the rest of his life. And we, alone, have made the summation of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution as so opposite to Marx's theory of revolution-in-permanence, that the critique of post-Marx Marxists will bring all of them down on our heads. To prepare for that by constantly developing the positive features of our challenge to post-Marx Marxists, and make them realize that we aren't "skipping over" all the contributions and "strategies" of Marxist revolutionaries, we have made it a principle in RLWLKM that the critique is for revolutionaries only -- Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky. In a word, we aren't the least bit concerned with revisionists or those state-capitalists who call themselves Communists. We are concerned with how someone who was Marx's collaborator and certainly not only never betrayed, but without whom we would never have had Volumes II and III of Capital -- Engels-- nevertheless failed to grasp Marx as a totality, theoretically and practically. Very clearly it was not for not wishing to "follow" Marx. Rather, it was that the objective stage had changed and Marx himself, being the creative mind that he was, was still sensing so many new moments, that what he called "marginal notes" in 1875 was the only way he could capture those new moments before death overtook him. The very hard task, then, of recreating Marxism through following generations, got limited to a very specific strategy of revolution, and one successful revolution -- Russia, 1917, with no theory worked out for "WHAT HAPPENS AFTER?"

In the specific case of the REB meeting of Feb. 14, which we are here summing up, what preoccupied us was how to unite in most concrete terms the theory and practice of the national tour, centering around not only RLWLKM, but, inseparable from, at one and the same time, the Marx centenary and what we have just voted for, unanimously, the motion to transform this year's Plenum into a Constitutional Convention. It is for this reason that we decided, in planning for the national tour, that the preliminary view of this year's Perspectives be worked out at the very end of the tour, in Los Angeles, before even the return to the Center. And it is for this reason that everything from organizational growth resulting from working with others, to the new that will confront us in the Constitutional Convention, be the ground for all the locals.

Thus, the first point on the REB agenda was "New Aspects of 'Working with Others' in Relation to the Tour and the Book", and had no less than eight reports. The first and most important was Lou's report of the Black Conference he had just attend-

ed in Washington, D.C. The REB considered it so important that Lou was asked to write it up in full to send to all the locals, and to prepare an article on it for the next issue of N&L. I hope that what follows, though extremely abbreviated, will give you a whiff of its importance, especially how much a single Marxist-Humanist can do, once there is no separation in our minds between theory and practice, the national tour and the book, as well as the individual discussions that will be followed for that Black dimension that is so important to us. Thus, though he was alone and no status whatsoever at the Conference, and no right to have a lit table, Lou participated in no less than four sessions, taking the floor at some length in three, sold \$28 in literature from his satchel, and was the only one from the Conference who found the time, in between all the sessions, to participate in the student protest rally that was going on in the same hall. Moreover, he returned with a request from two different professors for a lecture by RD, as well as promises from two different universities to order the Archives for their libraries. In the brief stopover in NYC on his way home, he established relationships as well with a former Black woman activist and two other intellectuals -- one Haitian and the other South African.

The second report that continued the principle of "working with others" was by Mike, who had been invited to participate in a class in "Marxism and Christianity" in Detroit, where \$26 in lit was sold, and we were asked to bring the lit back for the other classes in the series. The professor had also extended an invitation (Olga will accept it) for us to speak at his regular university class in Marxism. Mike reported that the greatest interest came from those in the class (many of whom were nuns) who had personal contact and experience in the Latin American freedom movements; he later reported the special interest shown by those who have received our new bulletin on Guatemala, articles from which are now being reprinted in several other journals with credit to N&L.

Olga, who gave the third report, brought the REB up to date on the several new lectures that have been added to RD's tour, and the especially good work that Ted is doing in Salt Lake with the media coverage (including one major TV broadcast). She felt that what best summed up the identity of a local's view of the tour with the Center's view was what Peter had written: "Our 'commemoration' of the Marx centenary will have meaning if it entails meeting a number of new periphery who will want to join us, first, for the May 1 meeting in L.A. and second, the constitutional convention." What best sums up the genuine interest in Marxist-Humanism's unique contributions is the call Mary got from Slavic Studies at Berkeley, who no doubt suddenly woke up to the importance of the Andropov article, and who asked to co-sponsor RD's talk to the Feminist Alliance -- and the chance to meet "informally" with faculty and students of Slavic Studies.

The fourth report was made by Andy, who, having been the first to get a lecture for RD, and in so unexpected a place as West Virginia, will spend a full week there, several days before and several after RD's appearance on the campus. He hopes it will result in getting some of the miners to the lecture.

Eugene reported on the three Michigan lectures, with a fourth promised at the end of the month. A leaflet prepared around this week of the tour will be enclosed here.

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Suzanne, reporting on the WL class, said that the way the reports were framed at the REB, all in relationship to the book and specifically the tour, gave a new point of departure for their own class on Part II of RL, WL, KM. The lecture in Windsor for IWD would especially be a place where new friends could be met who would wish to start the study of the new book with us. Neda reported that this was exactly what had flowed from her experience in Ann Arbor where she had just spoken on the book, and found interest not only in reading but in an possible study group around it there. She will speak on IWD in L.A. on four different platforms, and at a Middle East Conference at Ann Arbor when she returns.

The last report and conclusions by Raya centered around the three letters she had received from vary varied types of scholars -- one Hegelian, one specialist on Germany, and one Russian exile who specializes on the Asiatic mode of production -- all of whom disagreed with her, but recognize the new book as so important a new ground for scholars as well as Marxists that, in disagreeing with her conclusions, they nevertheless concluded that the new book has opened so new a stage in the studies and concepts of the Marx centenary that they felt that all have things to "learn from the book." The reason she wanted to begin with these letters was to stress our own view -- that is, ^{the} our own concept of Marx's Humanism and new moments, when related to the contemporary world, is exactly what has to be spelled out by us in this period. As a matter of fact, it isn't only the reports heard at the REB which reflect the ramifications that the new book has already produced, but Mike's report on correspondence, which included new sales of the trilogy everywhere from Panama to Saskatchewan and from Australia (where the Thesis 11 journal is publishing both excerpts from the last Perspectives Report and a review of all three books) to Yugoslavia (via Detroit). The latter order was most unusual because the letter this American received from Yugoslavia, asking for the book, came by sheer coincidence to someone who knew Olga from Post Printing and decided we would know how she could get a copy. Mike said the trilogy of revolution was exactly what permitted him to have presented all of Marxist-Humanism in a 15 minute period to the class he had addressed.

The other point that was discussed was, of course, News & Letters, now going to press as well as future issues. For this very special Marx centenary issue Olga volunteered to write the Editorial on Youth and Education in the horrible retrogressive stage of Pragmatism, naturally set in the absolutely opposite view of Marx on revolutionary education. The Marx centenary issue will, of course, be sent out widely to special-lists and all locals are asked to create their own such lists as well. So inseparable is the centenary from the book and from the contemporary scene of class struggles that Malcolm, who just returned from Montreal where we asked him to go when the general strike of public employees broke out as the Quebecois asked to join the Second International, not only came back with an exciting report for the paper, but had placed the new book in two bookstores, sold two new subs to N&L and established new correspondents.

Any other letters on the tour will not come from me, as I am declaring myself "off-limits" in order to prepare for the very busy scheduled tour, which begins exactly where the new American roots of Marxist-Humanism sprouted in the General Miners' Strike in West Va. in 1949-50.

Yours, RAYA

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