

October 19, 1983

Dear Friends:

Please read the REB minutes concerning our preparations for the Nov. 6 Memorial Meeting for Charles Denby, which we are striving to make a political-philosophic-personal tribute to our editor. We will continue to print his name as editor throughout the Marx centenary year as: Charles Denby, Editor (1955-1983). His column, Worker's Journal, will also be retained on page one for these two months, since the November issue will print his statement to the Constitutional Convention and the December issue will carry excerpts from his autobiography, Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal. Judging by the first responses to the Appeal, it is clear that our readers have already begun to create a new title for our Sustaining Fund, calling it "The Charles Denby Fund to assure the continuance of News & Letters". It is a fact that there has never been a more urgent need for Finances and we suggest the locals, in their follow-up to the Appeal, follow the direction of these subscribers -- which is what we will also do in the first-class-letter follow-up to be sent out directly after the November issue is mailed out.

The REB minutes will also inform you about what was the final discussion on "Carrying Out the Decisions of the Constitutional Convention and their Ramifications" -- Andy's presentation on his draft for the pamphlet on the 49-50 Miners General Strike and Raya's presentation on her Appendix for that pamphlet.

The mail has been especially good: 1) Praxis International has accepted my paper on Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Liberation delivered in New York last month, which shows that even so "empty" a conference, once it is officially academic, can lead to positive results if we pay attention not to the conference organizers but to individuals we are able to meet there. In this case it was the Yugoslav Marxist-Humanist who will make the article as available in the East as in the West.

2) I have just received an invitation from a Gramsci-Luxemburg conference scheduled for Hamburg in 1985, which will create an opportunity for me to write and possibly for Kevin to attend.

3) The most definitive bibliography of Hegel for the years 1802 through 1975, published in 1980, and containing no less than 900 pages, has three listings for Raya Dunayevskaya. Without being able to include the paper for the HSA Conference which was not published until 1980, it does list Telos, Praxis, and Philosophy and Revolution, itself.

4) New York has invited Lou to be their guest speaker at a public meeting the first week of December, which will permit him also to attend the Africa Studies Conference in Boston where Kevin will also try to take full advantage of his review of the trilogy in Africa Today.

5) Peter is scheduling a trip not only to the Bay Area but to our newest local in Salt Lake City. Chicago has sponsored a meeting to hear the treasurer of the Black Consciousness Movement, and reports that the UIC study group is resuming with several new participants. We have also heard from the British Marxist - Humanists on their activities since the Convention.

6) Finally, Dave Wolff has called to say the typesetting for the Constitution will be here by the end of the week. The greatness of that news is that in the ten pages of this Constitution we present the totality of what we stand for, which ensures the growth of our organization. Yours, RAYA

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REB MEETING of OCTOBER 18, 1983

Present: All, with Diane as sitter-in

Agenda: I. Preparations for Nov. 6 Memorial Meeting and Nov. Issue of N&L; II. Pamphlet on 49-50 Strike; III Ongoing Activities; IV. G&W

Rava reported, also very briefly, on the plans for the front page of the November issue, in particular the article she is writing on Denby's life and work, and how that has changed her plans to re-edit her letter on "Revolutions and Philosophies" as an introduction to a new series she had envisioned on strictly philosophic letters. She has now decided not to re-print that letter in such a re-edited form because, when she began to work out what the article on Denby would include, she felt it was precisely some of her experiences with Denby that illuminated how a worker understands philosophy. As an example of what she was thinking about, she told the REB how it was Denby who was responsible for the form in which Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks appears as Appendix in the first edition of M&F. It was when RD was discussing with Denby both her translation of Lenin's Notes and the sections from Hegel she had reproduced alongside those Notes that Denby said he "didn't understand a word" of Hegel but he "understood Lenin perfectly" & that RD decided intellectuals could easily hunt up the Hegel sections on their own, and that she would let her translations of Lenin's Notes on Hegel stand for themselves. It was experiences such as this that RD said she felt could be the concluding section of her article, and which she will first now be able to start working out.

Handwritten note to Dave R., Chicago

10/25/83

Dear Dave:

This, I'm sure you know, has been a most difficult week for me. Whereas CD's death has naturally affected us all, no ^{one} knew him since 1948, had not only a very special M-H relationship but personal, ~~but~~ none but me has had a philosophic experience. It is this that, for the first time, I take up more fully in the N&L lead which I just finished. Somehow I wished to tell you of this ahead of time and look forward to tell you more when you come here for the CD memorial.

Perhaps because you once were a member of a group under CLRJ's influence that suddenly I feel an urge for this "extra" note. You no doubt have heard before that when CD chose me instead of CLRJ in the JFT spirit, we were especially happy since we feared that Black would win over "Hegel."

But the details that I now tell are not directly related to Black but to philosophy, precisely because, without it, no revolution will not end midway as not only a "1/2 dialectic" but a 1/2 way, i.e. an aborted revolution. So, here are the "details" -- 1st (3/5/53) came Stalin's death and CD wanting a serious political analysis instead of being overwhelmed at that particular time, with supposed indifference to political events as the women on the line were exchanging recipes.

2nd (3/19/53) came not only my analysis but announcement of how 1920-21 trade union Russian debates affected 1953 workers on prod. line where wkrs CD reported were "offering" their foreman to take place of Stalin -- all of which was completed in "black on white" in April.

3rd I tried reading VIL's Philosophic Notes to CD as VIL write, i.e. with Hegel quotations. The Hegel quotation CD said meant nothing to him ~~or~~ but VIL everything. His proposal that I publish VIL only -- and merely indicate exactly where they could find the sections VIL was commenting on was exactly that form I did publish VIL's PN in M&F.

The reason I wanted to call this to your attention is that it isn't only workers but intellectuals who stay away from philosophy on the excuse they "don't understand" whereas workers who are serious revolutionaries do not follow Mao's dictum about "power comes from the barrel of a gun." And now that I more than ever think of "returning home" (Chi.) I wanted, for reason of future, not "remembrance of things past," ^{to} speak of Nov. 6th ahead of time.

How are you? What is new? Looking forward to seeing you --

Yrs,

Raya

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