

MINUTES OF REB MEETING, APRIL 9, 1985

Present: All but Mike, excused, ill; Jane as sitter-in

Agenda: I. Ramifications of March 21 and March 22 and the New Book --- on how to practice "Not by Practice Alone" concept; II. The John Dwyer Collection; III. May issue of N&L; IV. Correspondence and Ongoing Activities.

I. & II. Raya combined these two points in her presentation: Because we must always make our point of departure the new concrete, concrete as a Universal, and not merely concrete to a particular activity, but a relation to Marxist-Humanism in the specific stage of the new book, and the new cognition which comes with singling out Dialectics of Revolution, as the concretization of what I've been talking about since the last Convention and the final section of our Perspectives on "not by practice alone", let me say at once that, at the present moment, everything is related to what each individual in every local would do for the book, in their own context of activity.

Take, for example, the Order Blank for the new book. When I saw the quote that was used for the ad, which begins with the uniqueness of Women's Liberation in our age, I immediately said that should have been half of a sentence. That part of the uniqueness of the WL of our age we have repeated endlessly, and understand so well, as if it were truly an Absolute, that we take for granted what we absolutely shouldn't take for granted, what is NEW, and that is what we should not take for granted, the concretization of it at the very specific stage of the new book, which took off, as its point of departure, from what I established at the last convention, when I wrote "Not by Practice Alone". In a word, we all think we understand theory, philosophy; in fact, our new logo in the paper is Theory/Practice. In truth, we do not practice that at all. Therefore, instead of that ad, I propose that we take out either from my speech of March 21 or from the Introduction/Overview of the book, the following: "In this Marxist-Humanist collection of essays, the dialectics of revolution range from the 1905 Russian Revolution and its ramifications in the 1906-1911 Revolution in Iran; to the November 1917 Russian Revolution and its international impact; to the beheaded 1919 Revolution; as well as to the revolutions in our own era, especially those in the Third World."

Or take the meeting for ourselves after the March 21 events, on March 22. We have not really reported on it, and that is wrong. But what I want to give here is not a report of the whole meeting, but just the remarks I directed to Michelle, that no matter what it was that was in her paper for the National Women's Studies Conference, the focal point should be the new book. She said she took that for granted. I wanted to stress it again, however, because it equally applies to Terry who managed to get on another panel without submitting an abstract -- or, for that matter, to Urszula as well, who will be going to the Conference to help. To put it briefly, it applies to all of us; and we cannot wait until the day after the book is published, but the day before. Olga can take up what specifically the publication date means for us financially -- but I do not want to separate the finances from "not by practice alone". I understand that Jane suggested at the last Chicago local meeting that Marxist-Humanists could help with the initial payment that will be due before our next National Gathering, by buying a certain number of copies as pre-publication sales. We have done this

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with each new book, precisely because we did not separate what each individual felt responsible for from the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism as a whole. In this specific moment, it is the singling out, in the whole philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, of "Dialectics of Revolution".

That is why I have combined I with II, the John Dwyer Collection. (Raya read the Introductory Note John had written, and made a point that the Collection could have been more specific in the reference to the RD Collection by pointing to the pages of his work in that Collection. She wants to consult with Mike and John on some differences in the cataloguing of the items included in John's collection. The Introductory Note and the listing of the collection will be sent around to all the locals later.)

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April 10, 1985

Dear Friends:

This week the REB centered its attention on what had been the focal point of the March 21 meeting and its ramifications, both as to what flows philosophically from the speech on the "Dialectics of Revolution" and what concretely this means in projecting and selling the new book without waiting for the day of publication. Thus, a critique was made of our not reporting the March 22 meeting in Detroit, where we made the first preliminary summation, especially what was implicit in my turning to Michelle and pointing out that, no matter what her paper for the NWSA meeting was on, she must make the new book her point of departure. She said that was exactly what she had intended. To me this meant the full understanding of totality or summation as new beginning, which we have stressed ever since the Marx Centenary lecture tour. In fact, what I was stressing on March 22 was that this focus on the new book holds true for all at the NWSA, not because it is WL but because WL can be made the concrete force for showing the dialectics of revolution is central for all forces as Reason. This is what we mean about learning how to project Marxist-Humanism philosophically not as an abstraction, but very concretely. We can do the same thing no matter where we are, whether in the factory or in academia. The other reason it is so appropriate to do it at a WL meeting is that the expression we have always used about the uniqueness of WL in refusing to wait for the "day after", illuminates the task of all revolutionaries.

Please note that the John Dwyer Collection at the WSU Archives is now open to the public. It's important for us to begin studying those documents, because the 1930s is missing from my Collection except for the years with Trotsky, whereas it is present in John's collection as CIO organizer, as SP member, as the break with the SP in coming to Trotskyism because of the Spanish Revolution and his work on the Lincoln Brigade. What is missing in his Collection, but is very much present in mine is John's documents written as he joined the JFT and after. In his Introductory Note he merely refers the reader to my Collection. I want to make that more concrete in his own collection, but I will have to consult with both John and Mike on how to do that. In a few weeks you will receive copies of John's Introductory Note and the list of contents of the Collection. You will then be able to find ways to relate it to all our activities today.

You already know that the May issue of N&L will contain the Lead on South Africa by Lou. We have asked Mike to write an Editorial on the present situation in the U.S. Please note that because we have so much work at the Center again, it is imperative to meet the deadline rigorously -- APRIL 18.

Two special points in the REB minutes you will have to read in full there. First, is the motion the REB passed asking all members who can, to pre-pay for three copies of the paperback and one copy of the hardcover of the new book -- in time for the first payment due the publisher, in July.

The second is the creativity of Gary, who when he was in Ohio, left notes in various library books, instructing the readers how to contact the author of M&F, P&R, RLWLM, and many other works, by writing to the Chicago address of N&L. It got results. What kind of creativity can you come up with for the new book?

Yours, Raya

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