

REB MEETING OF JULY 29, 1985

Agenda: I. Report by Peter Mallory on "Philosophy and the Practice of Finances", and Discussion; II. Reports on Youth by Diane and Ida Fuller, and Discussion; III. Reports on Women's Liberation by Neda and Suzanne, and Discussion; IV. Motion on Aug. 3 REB and Communications; V. G&W

Raya spoke on the form for the report to the Plenum, when what was new in the report this year was that having to talk on philosophy meant concretizing it on one subject -- finances. Each one, without exception, this year has to become a practicing dialectician. The objective situation is what defines what each one feels responsible for -- the urgent need to defeat Reaganism in the face of what it is doing in South Africa, in Central America, everywhere at home and abroad. (Raya developed what outreach would mean at this historic point, taking up specifically the suggestion Eugene had made on "adopting an issue" but stressing that the key would be not a date, but a subject. She will report this, as well as the relationship to the trips projected next year to Mexico and Spain as well as India, in the letter to the locals.)

Raya said that both reports were so comprehensive, but in a sense, also diffuse, that there is no time to discuss all the points here. What was great about both Diane's and Ida's reports was that they did not divide activity from thought. What was missing was organization in the sense of limiting the concrete to what can be accomplished, what is projected as immediate, what has a date. The one thing they both agreed on was the attitude that Ida Fuller's review of the fourth book needs more follow through. Indeed, it is more relevant now than when written because of the delay of the publication of Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution. It is that which makes me say that, even though I agree with Diane's proposal to reproduce three articles to use as packets, we have only one that we would reproduce as a "pamphlet"; that one is Ida Fuller's review and it would not appear by itself but together with either some activity articles of the past or some yet to be written. It should have a date -- no later than January 1, 1986. Along with it, what is great because it is concrete and new is that we are now going to have a Youth N&L Committee at UIC. What else is new on organization is the follow-through necessary on the Chicago Youth Panel we had.

Raya. Because the latest information that we just got about the WL meeting in New York may make it appear that the critique I'm about to give is directed only to them, I want to stress right away that this critique is what I feel is lacking in the whole of the WL-N&L Committees. It is the underestimation of what is unique about Marxist-Humanism, and where it is not just the equivalent of the maturity of the age. It is true that it is because of the maturity of the age -- and maturity does not mean that we live a century after Marx -- that it is easier for us to see the problem and to get new impulses from our age. But that is when the task begins, not ends.

The new instincts we get from these impulses are by no means the Absolute, which it took us quite some time to work out. I was glad Raya began with the objective situation and the UN Conference on Women, which was done after seeing my analysis of it in the Perspectives. But even the objective situation, as crucial as it is to measure one's thought against

it, is not the Absolute. It is the working out of that relationship, the new unity of theory, practice, and the objective situation, that first begins -- i.e. demonstrates -- Marxist-Humanism. Since I'm a very concrete person, and since the immediate perspective is the new book -- and, even though it has been reviewed by us, I am not confident that we will sell it as founders of Marxist-Humanism -- let me tell you exactly why I did not follow chronology in that book. Frankly, I did not trust that anyone would see the 1950 article on the miners' wives as anything more than an "activity" article. And you could even prove you were right, since I did not then know and had not created the term, Marxist-Humanism. That is why a retrospective view was necessary. That is why I began with the 1969 article, which is where I created the category of "Woman as Revolutionary Reason as well as Force." Once the reader knows this new category, he/she can see how unusual, how as instinct, one could write and single out miners' wives although they were not in the mines themselves. This is what has to be done in projecting and not just articulating the word, Marxist-Humanism. Even more true is it that what is needed is the methodology, the dialectics, of the concept of totality. That was Lukacs' greatest contribution, the thing that lives to this day, unfortunately, among intellectuals as a reigning category. It is exactly what is wrong. Totality, if it means an adding up of all the factors you can think of, is at the opposite end of our contribution -- Absolute Idea as New Beginning. When we talk about finally seeing Marx's Marxism as a totality, with the publication of the Ethnological Notebooks, it is not because we have now added up everything he wrote (we will always be finding one more new work we haven't seen before). Rather, it is because the latest -- Marx's last decade which we have characterized as a trail to the 1980s -- has proven what we have declared from the start: that Marx had discovered a whole new continent of thought and of revolution, and that what the young Marx brought out in 1844 on the Man/Woman concept, is what he reiterated and projected in a totally new way in the last years of his life in the study of what we now call the Third World. To this day I have not seen a serious study and discussion of the Introduction/Overview of the new book -- which we have had since last August, and which is why I built the Dec. 30, 1984 presentation on the Dialectics of Revolution.

(Raya concluded by pointing out that the REB does not entertain motions to accept either the Youth or the WL reports, since both are autonomous organizations, and these are not REB reports.)

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