

Jan. 11, 1983

Dear Friends:

Both yesterday's regular REB meeting, centering around the next issue of M&L on the Marx centenary, and the Expanded REB Jan. 1, 1983, which re-created Marx as a totality, not only on the question of "trilogy of revolution", (i.e. how the dialectics of revolution disclosed itself in M&F, P&R, and RLWIKM) but also as something that each and every one of us needs to work out by practicing "individualism which lets nothing interfere with its universalism, i.e. freedom", are more easily said and written about than done. Nevertheless, that is exactly the task that we must all meet before and after the national tour as preparation for the national gathering on Labor Day weekend. That is so because we are now challenging the entire post-Marx Marxism. It is not that the proof of that will reflect itself in some historic mirror. Rather, it is that the immediate, urgent rush upon all so-called Marxists is to celebrate that Marx centenary by degrading it to a celebration. Therefore, may I please call to your attention what we did in 1970 when the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth and the 200th of Hegel's co-incided. We were certainly oppressively aware of the fact that we couldn't, numerically, compete with what the Stalinists were doing to pervert that anniversary, especially when it comes to philosophy. Nevertheless, precisely because we were well-armed theoretically we were able to appear both to what was then the New Left philosophic journal, Telos, and to the super-academic HSA as the true exponents both of Marx's and of Hegel's revolutionary dialectic. Moreover, that chapter on Lenin appeared in Praxis in Yugoslavia. In a word, it was no longer possible, as it had been in the 1950s when M&F came out, for the Communists and Rubel to appear as the only contenders to be expounders of Marx's Marxism.

A "coincidence" helped us this year to stop them from playing their game of making me into a non-person by the fact that, being a woman, and it being both the centenary of Marx and International Women's Day in March, I have been invited to everything from Third World conferences to IWD days to speaking on Marx's greatest theoretical work, Capital, as it was further developed in Marx's new moments.

The one point that still seems to be hidden, and that, ironically enough because it seems so obvious, i.e. so familiar as to be taken for granted, is the need for action, philosophy as action without which the meaning of the immediate is just not visible whatsoever. For to get the meaning one must know how to elicit its profundities from the actual movement from practice that is itself a form of theory.

Along with this letter you will be getting both the presentations and the minutes from the Expanded REB which also contain the proposal for transforming the Plenum into a Constitutional Convention, which you should now please vote on.

Yours,

Raya

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REB Minutes of Jan. 10, 1983

Present: All, plus Felix Martin, Co-editor, and Diane as siter-in
Agenda: I March issue of N&L as special Marx Centenary issue, and
as continuation and further development of the Jan-Feb. issue which
will carry the expanded "Who We Are" statement and project "Trilogy
of revolution"

II Further Ramifications of the Expanded REB of Jan. 1, 1983

III Ongoing Activities: Report by Mike

IV G&W

I Eugene reported on the ad to go into this issue of the paper
which would announce the special Marx centenary issue as both a con-
tinuation of the Jan. issue resulting from the Expanded REB Jan. 1, 1983
and at the same time disclosed a development and ramifications of the
Marx centenary, as well as the "trilogy of revolution":

"Watch for the

special Marx centenary issue. 1) By Karl Marx. For the first time in
English, the paragraph omitted by Engels from Marx's French edition
of Capital. 2) Excerpts from RD's report, Marxist-Humanism, 1983: The
Summation as a New Beginning. 3) Mike Connolly analyzes Marx's Ethno-
logical Notebooks, still unknown a decade after their final transcription
4) A dialogue between the two N&L editors-- Charles Denby and Felix
Martin: a 1980s view on Marx, Labor and Marx's Humanism. 5) The devel-
opment of Marx's view of the Black dimension: from the Jamaica rebellion
and John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry to the EN, by Lou Turner.

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Eugene was also stressing the fact that under no circum-
stances should we leave out the activity articles which are most im-
portant. At the same time he informed us that the youth column will
have Sheila on women and the 1905 Iranian Revolution; and Diane would
write the WL column on Black women and revolution. And of course we
will have ads that are always political-philosophic statements; they
would this time advertise three books as a "trilogy of revolution".

Mike developed the importance of the RV's, not alone as reflected
from what comes in spontaneously from non-members, but how a new col-
umn gets created when a new theoretical work is present. For example,
this time we could have a double column of RV's with a head as: "New
theoretic preparation for revolution". Olga likewise developed the
question of RV's and how important it is to make sure that Marxist-
Humanism is reflected both objectively and subjectively.

Raya thought

that it was important that these developments of the new in the Marx
centenary issue are also seen as a continuation of what the Jan. issue,
under the impact of the Expanded REB, had begun. Two points in par ti-
cular were crucial. One was the manner in which the invitees were
thought of, that is to say, by having as a unit not only those who have
lived through all three books, but the youth who may have just joined
us, the essence being that RLWLKM is the summation which makes all
equals so that the projection of M-Hism evokes a response from non-mem-
bers and creates ground both for membership growth and has worldwide
ramifications. For that matter, the new brochure that the WL brought
out reveals that in that area too, we concentrate on the new, espe-
cially in this Marx centenary year, when both the old politicians and
the "new" anthropologists equally live in the 19th century and treat
Marx and Engels as one at a time when all proof is available to the
opposite.

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When you couple that with the special motion that was proposed at the Jan. 1 Expanded REB on the transformation of the plenum into a Constitutional Convention, we can really feel the excitement that the newest member as well as the old will surely be seen on the ground floor of Marxist-Humanism, 1983. The key to everything is that "individualism which lets nothing interfere with its universalism" needs practice by everyone this crucial year. (Paya also singled out several of the old issues of N&L. For example, Jan. 1962 had the special supplement on Mao; Feb. had the special article on the role of women in revolutions, on Natalia Trotsky; May 1962 had the article from Africa as well as WL. In a word, 1962 was both the Africa year and long before WL was a movement, we had raised that question. On disarmament, which we called the "grand illusion" (TV, p.5), it was clear that we had opened a new stage.)

1963 is especially crucial for us now because that is when we serialized ACOT and whereas the title for it was the Emancipation Proclamation, 100 years after, its subheading still holds: "the still unfinished revolution".)

Raya said she needed to return to the question of the youth, not just as the invitees to the special REB, but because, also, she was most surprised that the youth were not as vocal as she hoped they would be on Jan. 1. After all, the hope was not based on mere wishful thinking but because it is precisely the latest work, as a summation of the whole past-- both the "trilogy of revolution" and all the pamphlets that issued from it-- which has created the type of ground for the new (the one who just joined yesterday; indeed the one who's first thinking of joining tomorrow) "feel every bit at home" and ready to make his/her contribution. I trust no one is taking this as mere flattery. I'm referring to nothing less historic and imperative than the actual fact that for 100 long years after Marx had died not even the greatest of revolutionaries and direct collaborators with Marx, from Engels and Mehring to Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Ryazanov have not caught the new moments in Marx's last decade. Think of it please. Where they didn't dismiss Marx as very nearly senile in that period ("a slow death"); where they didn't consider that the popularizations such as Mehring's (as did Luxemburg); where they did honor it as a "bequest" as did Engels, they nevertheless were so much removed from Marx's genius that they didn't have the slightest conception of what Marx had achieved in that last decade, and that, I must admit, was because they were so arrogant because they were alive and he was no longer with them that they felt they could just write him off as "past".

So, dear youth, you have the opportunity that none others ever had to see Marx as a total-ity, to work out those four new moments, and, above all, to make your own individual historic contribution that measures up to Marx's universality. I therefore would like to end with a very simple thing, and that is to ask Jim to please address a letter to the youth where he once again stresses why so many youth were invited to the expanded

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WER: why I made a category of that question that they were as important to that meeting as those who have lived through all three books, and why, not as any sort of flattery I insist that they are crucial to organizational growth, to philosophic development and that this is a truly historic opportunity to be on the ground floor for Marxist-Humanism, 1983. Look again in the mirror, not the ego mirror, but the historic mirror.

IV G&M

Meeting convened 7:00 PM; Adjourned 9:45 PM

REB MEETING, JANUARY 23, 1983

Present: All but Denby, excused; including Felix Martin. Diane as
sitter-in.

- Agenda: I. Relating Part III of the New Book to WL with the coinci-
dence of March for IWD and the Marx centenary.
II. The Marx centenary issue related to National and Inter-
national tours.
III. Ongoing Activities and future issues of N&L.
IV. G&W.

I. Raya said that the reason she wanted to relate all points of the agenda as one, and what related all three points, was the the future in the present, not as prophecy, but as the energizing principle that makes it possible to elicit what comes both from practice and from theory, when that "energizing principle" is Marx's concept. Thus, it is not just the coincidence of the month of March as both the Marx centenary and IWD, but the actuality of the new book which makes it possible to relate, as of at once, Part III to both Part I and Part II. For example, the relationship of philosophy and reality where dialectical methodology's disclosure of the contradictions both in thought and in fact reveal the totality of Marx's Humanism as a new beginning. For example, take the very first years of Marx's break with bourgeois society, 1843-44. In his first Essays there is no separation between economics and philosophy; private property is opposed not merely in favor of another form of property but as an opposition of "to have" to a "to be"; the dominant class-struggle, far from excluding other struggles, at once named itself "a new Humanism" because he there dealt with a most fundamental relationship of Man/Woman. It is this which has led us to call Marx's philosophy of revolution a new discovery of a whole continent of thought and of revolution. Moreover, this is not the young Marx alone; it is exactly this which reappears, fully developed, in the last years of his life so that everything from predicting the possibility of a revolution in Russia ahead of the technologically advanced West to seeing the "feminine ferment" for revolution throughout history, even as his opposition to religion, is not just an against but the total freeing of the human being as the maker of history. It is this which permeates Part III, and it is this which so tightly connects with Rosa Luxemburg as revolutionary theorist and activist that her unknown feminist dimension surfaces not as separate from but integral to the restructuring of society on totally new human foundations, which is the aim of today's WIN.

It is from the vantage point of this kind of totality that we have to look at all the concrete events in the organization. Thus, even the orders that came into the office from the Anthropology Conference names were new in that they were accompanied by requests for copies of our Constitution, and there was no division between "politics" and "philosophy." There are new developments in our WL-N&L committees in all the locals, whether that is seen in the new WL group in LA that is beginning a study group around the new book as preparation for the tour there -- and that is also true in the Bay Area, where they have chosen a magnificent title for my lecture to the Feminist Alliance: "On the Marx Centenary -- Marx's Relevance to Women's Liberation, the Black Dimension and the Third World Today"; or whether it is seen in the fact that Suzanne's paper on Luxemburg and Margaret Fuller as hidden from philosophy will be presented in Ohio, or in the excellent WL meeting in Detroit last week which will result in a new bulletin with Neda's presentation reproduced in full.

I have already been thinking of the issues of N&L from now right through to the Convention in relation to all the new activities. The March issue will be a very special one revolving about the centenary and we have already announced the many special features that will hold. I kept thinking of so many others for that issue that it is clear some may have to be for later issues, and will actually be better then. Thus, I have asked Andy to prepare a review of a new book on Debs, which would be excellent for a May issue that could be a special on "Labor"; and June might become a special on "Woman's Liberation" if we could have a report of what develops on the tour, as well as something around Suzanne's meeting in Ohio. And I've asked Malcolm to write on the Québécois and the 2nd Int'l. The Black dimension has become a very special concentration and becomes directly related to the Marx centenary, both from the note I received from the Black professor at UCLA who had sent me a report in the London Times about there being no less than 80 International Conferences devoted to the centenary, and from the work Lou has been doing at Ann Arbor which is resulting in a lecture to be sponsored by the African Studies Dept. (Indeed, one Black professor there expressed surprise that RD was not herself "Third World.") It now appears that I will be speaking on the "Third World" in Urbana, Ann Arbor, Los Angeles, and Berkeley.

It becomes more and more important for us to have a new edition of American Civilization on Trial off the press by June, which can be announced at the same time that we announce our Convention Call. That means that we must place a March deadline on all ideas for the new Introduction we will print; Lou has been asked to submit a draft for such a three-page Introduction by then.

Finally, Raya said that page 5 of the Jan/Feb N&L just off the press, with the First English translation of Rosa Luxemburg's essay on Martinique and our new "Who We Are" statement, is so great and deserves such special circulation that she wished to propose that we issue between 500 and 1000 extra copies of it, to which we would append special ads for both a sub to N&L and the new book, and send it out to many different audiences, beginning with special concentration on addresses in all African countries.

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