

draft thesis

The Turning Point

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I Capitalism on the Rampage and the Self-Imprisonment of the Intellectuals

Outside of an armed counter-revolution, capitalist crises in the USA have never revealed such reactionary forces at work as presently with the Goldwater primary victory in California. When the economy was in utter collapse during the Depression, American capitalism could still produce a Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a leader who would save it by "reforming" it, rather than a Hitler who would drive it to destruction by the attempt to conquer the world. Yet, now, when profits are at their highest, American capitalism produces a Goldwater whose stand on every question of the day, from open shop to "state's rights", from opposition to the UN to insane recklessness in the use of the A-bomb, makes him the reflector of the Birchite organization which has helped him capture the Republican Party. The unrehearsed speech and quiet manner of this gentleman may, to the gullible, offer a contrast to the disciplined, fanatic Far Right which refused to turn from its neo-fascistic course even after the climate for murder it created in Dallas did, in fact, result in the assassination of President Kennedy.

No doubt, if Goldwater does become the Republican candidate, the politics of trying to win will compel him to tone down some of his wildest statements. That will change nothing in the objective situation which brought this terrifying phenomenon about. When, a year ago, the ex-Secretary of Agriculture in the Eisenhower Administration spoke at a banquet honoring the founder and leader of the Birchites, the arch-reactionary Robert Welch, who had called President Eisenhower a "dupe" of the party-card-carrying Communists, it appeared that no fantasy could top that one. Yet today General Eisenhower himself, who was sufficiently "internationally-minded" to command the Allied Armies, who had been President of the United States and for it and "for the UN" brought the Korean War to a conclusion, who "of course" represents the "moderate mainstream" (whatever that is) of the Republican Party, has himself been captured without a single Birchite "inaccuracy" having been retracted, much less any Red shot having been fired. The "elder statesman" whose home is near the battlefield of Gettysburg has helped prop up the one Northern "leader" who is acceptable to the Southern racists. Again, it will not matter if, at the last minute, the General comes out for an alleged moderate. The General's reactionary bias is clear enough. His nightmares against "federalism" are on a level with the racists who are reliving "the glory" of the Confederacy battlefield not merely 100 years behind the times, but from the safety of their police states.

No need to travel behind the Iron or the Bamboo Curtains to see totalitarianism at work. All one has to do is go down to Mississippi. There he will see not any "ordinary" totalitarianism at work. There all the fascistic inhumanity is piled upon monolithism, as witness the many laws rushed through the unanimously-voting, identical two-party legislature to legitimize the counter revolution against "Freedom Summer." There the climate for murder is nothing

new; lynchings have never ceased because they are very nearly a way of life of the murderous state.

It will not do to console ourselves with the statement that Goldwater "can't win". That may very well be true, but the phenomenon will not thereby disappear. While the Goldwater victory in California is a Birchite victory, Goldwater defeat at the polls will not be a defeat of that reactionary organization. McCarthyism, well-heeled though it was, was a non-organization phenomenon. It wreaked sufficient havoc in American life, but, on the whole, McCarthy was a man without an organization. The Birchites are an organization that has not limited its infiltration to the Republican Party. On the contrary, not only is it a polarizing force for all other fanatic hate groups from the KKK to the Far Right youth organizations, not to mention either the tiny Nazi Party on its fringe, and that madman Gen. Edwin Walker within its organization; there is also, at the heart of the Republican Party, General Eisenhower, and ex-Secretary of the Treasury Humphrey -- even as, in the Democratic Party, the Dixiecrats head all of their important Congressional Committees. Thus it is not only the Birchites and other hate groups; it is the Republican Party itself that is rotten to its core, even as it is the Democratic Party itself that has always found it possible to live with the Dixiecrats.

Nor does it matter that Goldwater makes that Texas conservative, President Johnson, look like a veritable radical, thus assuring his return to the White House. At the same time the Johnson Administration's relapse into the Dulles-Eisenhower foreign policy holds throughout Southeast Asia, not to mention the unswerving support to military regimes in Latin America and apartheid South Africa. As for the Johnson policy "at home", we can be sure that as soon as the elections are over, the talk of the "affluent society" will once again predominate over "the war on poverty."

The crisis in the United States is a reflection as well of a world crisis, a new stage in automated state capitalism that first came on the scene in France in 1958 with the rise of De Gaulle to power. Nor is the ennui now limited to Europe or the United States, but extends to India. Nehru's death was, unfortunately, more symbolic of the unfinished state of the revolution than it was of the state of independence from British imperialism Nehru helped win. Long before his death, we analyzed the Indian situation. In the Political Letter on the Sino-Indian war we stated: "Strangest of all blindfolds is the one that covers Nehru's vision. Now that his 'neutrality' principle lies as shattered as Bandung's 'Five Principles of Co-Existence', co-authored by himself and Chou En-lai, he has suddenly discovered that Mao wishes 'to destroy the Indian way of life'. He rolls that phrase off his moral lips as if it were some class-less phenomenon instead of so class-ridden and contradictory a chain over so unfinished a revolution that the strains and stresses in the Indian body politic gave Mao the illusion he could have as easy a victory within India as the military victory on its borders. The fact that the invasion, instead, united India as a nation should give no illusions to Nehru that the masses will forever be satisfied with a sham freedom and no bread...

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"It is true that he is still holding out one hope of not completely falling into the orbit of Western imperialism by counting on Russian aid, but insofar as the Indian masses are concerned, does it really matter whether it is the Russian or the American nuclear orbit? Even as a foreign policy, a military line is a derivative, rather than a determinant, of the class relations within the country. IN THIS LIES THE DANGER THAT INDIA MAY STILL CAPITULATE EITHER TO COMMUNIST TOTALITARIANISM OR TO A MILITARY CLIQUE."

Nothing has changed with the death of Nehru and the coming to power of Shastri. He may have less illusions about Mao, but is even more steeped in "the Indian way of life" without intending in any fundamental way to alter either its class-caste composition or dependence on British-US imperialism.

A parallel with capitalist Europe will help illuminate the situation created by the Birchite capture of the Republican Party. On the face of it, the Adenauer-De Gaulle Axis was a stillbirth. But this has not eliminated the fact that it is there to be activated at some other time, or the fact that it is a symbol of the perennial reappearance of neo-fascist groupings in France and in Germany. As a result, the more the Communists lose, the more they gain. Thus, buried in some obscure corner of a lengthy article on the East German youth festival was the note that a thousand (or thousands, the article wasn't very precise on the point) of West German youth participated. One can imagine how little prosperous West Germany has done to capture the imagination of the youth trying to reshape a world they did not make for them to forget the hated Berlin Wall erected by East German Communist totalitarianism, snub its nose at West German "prosperity" and attend, instead, the East Berlin Youth festival. Anything, no doubt, to get away from the never-ending series of revelations of ex-Nazis in high places.

In the US the face of reaction is being molded anew in the counter-revolution against the Negro Revolution, in the revolt against "Federalism" not alone "for state's rights" but for capital's attempts to return to the open shop. In one sense there is nothing new about this combination of the ideology of big Northern capital and the old Southern plantocracy. In another sense everything is new. The middle class, corrupted by 20 years of post World War II "prosperity" and 10 years of post-Korean War brainwashing, whether McCarthyite or simply "apathetic", has produced a new progeny: the uneasy, fragmented, reckless, college-educated sons and daughters. Fascinated and horrified by the ability of the automated machine "to think", these new young intellectuals want to be sure to align themselves with power -- the state as well as the machine power, the "intellectual" as well as the capital power of Automation. In a word, they want to be "in on the kill" in the hope that they will not disappear with "the disappearance of the labor force." They have no time to reflect on the new barbarism, be that of automated production or possible nuclear holocaust. They are in too great a hurry to align themselves with the new barbarism. Gold-water has become their hero against all they deplore from labor unions to the Negro Revolution.

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Faced with these varied forms of reaction, the white liberals that are swept finally into the freedom struggles of the Negroes fail to recognize that a Goldwater is more than an enemy of civil rights, that fascism can arise in "democratic" America, that such a phenomenon must be fought at its root -- its state-capitalist root with its concomitant administrative mentality -- and this can be done only by uniting white labor and Negro freedom fighters with the need to construct a new social order.

Never was there more need for theory, and never less comprehension of it.

Old radicals are not much help here to the new freedom fighter. From the Social Democrats who follow the State Department line and ask the Negro leadership to show its "responsibility", no matter what the pressures of the living mass movement, to the Trotskyists who have remained practical "revolutionaries" but theoretically tailend everyone from Mao to Malcolm X, these leaders who are perennial theoretical tailenders can hardly be expected to break new ground for theory.

Were acceptance or rejection of an underlying philosophy a mere intellectual exercise, it would, of course, be preferable to plunge into activity, more activity, and more activity. But this is not the question. Far from it being a matter of theory vs. activity, it is the lack of theory which diverts spontaneous activity into safe channels, which fails to use it as the source of new theory, which lacks the vision that could unite a philosophy of freedom with the movement for freedom. This is not said because Marxist-Humanism has not been accepted as the philosophy. It is said because the American intellectual's ignorance of Marxist-Humanism is a reflection of ignorance of what theory, any theory, is. As though "the past never was", the petty-bourgeois intellectual has turned his back on history. His self-imprisonment in the present moment has blinded him to the relationship between theory and history. History, as past or present, has not discharged theory from its responsibility to transcend the status quo, to disclose the pull of the future, to seek out world parallels and connections. The self-imprisonment in empiricism is only the counterpart of the complacency that "fascism can't happen here."

As Hegel had long ago seen, the generation that has not participated in the elaboration of theory, and has thereafter not returned to the process of its becoming, but satisfied itself with beginning and ending with the results previously achieved -- whether that be of Kantianism or Hegelianism (or, we may add, pragmatism or Marxist-Humanism) -- only succeed in turning past achievements into nothing more than "a pillow for intellectual sloth." No matter how valid the historic reactions of empiricism against scholasticism, for example, unless something new was drawn from experience, some new generalization which allowed a plunge into freedom -- and world history, to Hegel and to Marx, was a history in the progress of the consciousness and achievement of freedom as a new human dimension -- empiricism was bound to reduce experience

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to a chaos of sensation. So today's petty bourgeois intellectuals, too easily satisfied with a piecemeal elaboration of policy, are bound to reduce the direction mass action is to take to a question of which corner are we to meet on to begin the march to city hall. No wonder the Freedom movement is now experiencing a "crisis of tactics."

II. Freedom Summer, the Civil Rights Bill, the Need for Philosophy

The real issue will, of course, not be decided at city hall or the election booth. The real battle has already begun between the unarmed Freedom Fighters, now augmented by the participants, white and Negro students, in the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, and the armed UNfreedom rulers in that state within a state, the benighted "sovereign" jungle called Mississippi. The reactionary forces will not change their lynch plans with the passage of the Civil Rights Bill; they have nearly a century of experience in subverting the Constitution, have for a decade made a mockery of the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation, have now made up their minds that they can count on the Federal Government for no serious action against them, They will nevertheless take the initiative in showing that the status quo has become intolerable to them.

This is the new feature, that the status quo which is intolerable to the Negro revolution, is, from the opposite end, also intolerable to the counter-revolution. That is the significance of the Wallace invasion of the North as well as the challenge to the Democratic Party in the South. (Were it not for the minorities -- Negro, Jewish, other -- Wallace could have won the delegates from the regular Democratic state machine in Maryland.) And that is the significance of the Golwater Republican primary victory in California. The counter-revolution is on the move. Under the whip of the counter-revolution, it becomes imperative that the revolutionary forces act on a grander scale than either by piecemeal legislation or even great demonstrations that yet lack an underlying philosophy that is total in its outlook and goal.

Thus it is not only a question of enforcing the Civil Rights Bill, which Governor Wallace, speaking for the Confederacy, has said "can't" be enforced -- that is to say, that they are ordering their state troopers not to enforce. Nor is it only a matter of knowing that the Civil Rights Bill will not "solve" the Negro question. The question is what to do about it, and that "doing" is not limited to actions but extends to thought, to a strategy flowing from a philosophy which recognizes the social system which has brought these intolerable conditions about. For this reason it is impossible to rest content even with the fact that the momentum will not allow for diversions until a fully integrated society is achieved. The point is that no fully integrated society can be achieved under capitalism and for the young intellectual Left, which knows that, to choose this moment to reassert its vaunted pragmatism by asserting

the new direction will not arise from "prescriptions of logic and ideology" is to ensure its own self-imprisonment.

It is true that, in contrast to the upheavals of the 1930's when labor struggles challenged capitalism at the point of production and stirred the intellectuals to interest in "doctrines", and a great event like the Spanish Revolution, put every "ism" to the test, the Negro Revolution of the 1960's seems very nearly outside production and led by those who accept "the system". Nevertheless, the spontaneous actions can neither be identified with the adult leadership, nor can there be a "guarantee" that its further development will be channeled -- self-development of a movement has its own logic, its own dialectic, which brooks no outside interference. We who have been in this movement from its beginning, who have participated in all its major activities, from the 1961 Freedom Rides into Mississippi, through the picket lines in the North, to the completion of the full circle with participation in Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964, must bring to the fore Marxist-Humanism both in its many-sidedness and in its concretization as relationship between theory and practice.

At this moment, white labor struggles have by no means achieved the sweep of the Negro Revolution, but strikes have been spreading throughout the country. They are not as yet coordinated, but they are challenging, since this is contract negotiation time and conditions in the shop are so bad that even the labor bureaucracy now speaks about the need to change these conditions as taking priority over the fake "profit sharing plans" they heretofore espoused. With the picket line before GM which demanded upgrading of Negroes, a new stage was opened in the relationship of white to Negro at the point of production, where the Negro worker well appreciates labor solidarity. There is, moreover, the never-ending crisis in coal, and the rank and file activities of coal miners for full employment, especially in Appalachia, in Hazard, Kentucky.

It is not that the young intellectual Left fails to see the need for a confrontation with the capitalist system itself. As one youth from Chester, Pa., expressed it, "We are faced by a society which refuses to yield." It is on this question that the young and adult leadership collide. To try at this time to say it is only a question of a division on tactics is to put on blinders just as the road ahead opens up wide.

It is true, as Rev. King says, that "The best way to defeat an army is to divide it. Negroes as well as whites have compounded confusion and distorted reality by defending the legal approach and condemning direct action, or defending direct action and condemning the legal approach." The two approaches are not contradictory, and both tactics are needed. When, however, Rev. King proceeds, in a roundabout way, to criticize New York because it doesn't accept inundation with his underlying religious motif, he is in fact criticizing the movement's reaching out for a total philosophy. Here is what he writes in his latest book, Why We Cannot Wait: "Approximately 5% of the total Negro population

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went willingly to jail (in the South). Were that percentage duplicated in New York City, some 50,000 Negroes would overflow its prisons. If a people can produce from its ranks 5% who will go voluntarily to jail for a just cause, surely nothing can thwart its ultimate triumph." Does insistence on extending the struggle to economic issues, whether that be rent strikes or trying to impel white labor to united action, in any way thwart "ultimate triumph"? The racist action of the AFL-CIO plumbers in Brooklyn, New York, on the one hand, and the use of some Negroes as strike breakers in Hillsdale, Michigan, on the other, surely are a great deal more divisive than differences within the civil rights movement.

It is not a question of "mobilization" -- a great deal more than 5% is involved, deeply involved, in the civil rights struggle in New York. The question is: for what purposes? Under what banner? And under these circumstances to have the young intellectual Left likewise limiting discussion to devising tactics, and reducing dialectical logic to a question of "prescriptions", immediate prescriptions, is not alone to imprison oneself, but also to create the climate both for the communist usurpation of the banner of "the socialist alternative to capitalism", and usurpation of the Freedom Now banner by a racist party out to lead the "backward masses". For both of these tendencies, though they have a "philosophy", are expert in hiding it, while parading out, endlessly, one issue at a time, then moving over to "multiple" issues, but never, never openly stating that in fact they are opposed to genuine self-determination by the masses themselves, or facing the question of what happens after "victory": how then to assure that power will not reside in a new bureaucracy and, above all, how now to do away with the elitist conception of having decision-making in other than the hands of "the leaders."

Of course, there is a compulsion to thought that comes from objective needs. Of course, thought changes with changing objective conditions. But, depending on which side of the production process you are, and what you represent in the pull of the future, different class interests tug at you. It is this which compels a reassessment of the new, a search for the link of continuity with Marxism.

Just as it is no accident that the present leadership of the civil rights movements find the Gandhian links, rather than the native Abolitionist links, more compatible with their own attitude to "the system", so it is no accident that the young intellectual Left revels in its pragmatic origins. The struggle for the minds of men must begin with a dialogue with the participants in the freedom movement who have themselves reached a turning point in the objective movement and therefore a turning point in their own self-development. It is necessary to jump off from the starting point; it is necessary to jump off, but not into unchartered waters.

III. Why Philosophy? Why Now? The Need for the New Book

Nearly 20 years after the end of World War II -- a full generation has grown up! -- and yet look at our "new", nonfascist world: 20 years after the British Empire began its dissolution with India winning its independence; 15 years after Tito broke from Stalin, and Mao won power in China; a decade since the end of the Korean War and true deStalinization was begun by the East German workers, who first put an end to the myth of invincibility of Russian totalitarianism -- a new stage of freedom which was climaxed in that orbit by the 1956 Hungarian Revolution; some 7 years since a whole new world was opened by the African Revolutions that so enveloped whole continents that even in the mightiest imperialist empire -- the United States -- Cuba tore away free, not to mention the Negro Revolutions right within this country; all these world-shaking events, and yet, and yet, capitalism is still so firmly in the saddle that it can exude a new form of reaction. In Europe there is DeGaulism; in the United States, Goldwaterism; the Sino-Soviet conflict signifies, not a break from state-capitalism but within it, for the domination over the new third world of newly independent countries aspiring to establish themselves on new foundations. During the same period, the Cuban Revolution was so diverted from its humanist channels that Cuba is now hardly more than a satellite of Russia. Far from acting as a beacon for the whole of Latin-America, as it did in the first year of revolution, it now, as in Venezuela, offers so shabby an alternative to Betancourt "democracy" and undiminished American imperialist domination, that the Venezuelans rejected Fidelismo. Must we then in the United States nevertheless fall victim to the gravitational pull of pseudo-revolutionism -- Maoism, Trotskyism, Fidelismo, "pure" CP'ism? This, indeed, is the only alternative when one looks for escape, instead of true liberation, which can only be achieved where there is a unity of the movement of liberation and the philosophy of liberation.

We have reached a turning point. The turning point in our life and times requires not so much a return to the French Revolution of 1789-93 (the highest point of the epoch of revolutions which gave birth both to the machine age and the Hegelian dialectic), as a look at the post World War II period.

Just as it was no accident that in liberated France after World War II Hegelian dialectics and Marx's humanism became the urgent questions of the day, so in our day the answer to: What Now? rests in the rediscovery of Marxist-Humanism. It is not necessary, in order to expose the void, to return to the death of Lenin and the disarray in the Marxist movement. The need for a philosophy is felt by others than Marxists. While it is true that the Humanism of Marxism was made a question of the day, indeed, a question of life and death by the Hungarian Freedom Fighters who spoke in Marxist terms, it was raised as poignantly by the African revolutionaries who spoke, instead, of "Negritude", independent African socialism. Humanism, has now become the imperative for the Negro Revolution, for the young intellectual, white and Negro, who sees that "the power structure" will not let it be, and yet considers it sufficient to meet each situa-

tion as it arises without having any "preconceived notions". In order to grasp the need for an underlying Marxist-Humanist philosophy, however, what is necessary is to see philosophy not only "in general", but most concretely and profoundly as the link in the forward movement of humanity. Even for seeing the fork in the road ahead, it is necessary, first of all, to clear away the intellectual debris, the "undogmatic", no less than the "dogmatic".

A piecemeal policy is incapable of disclosing the historic link, the continuity in the struggle for freedom, much less anticipate the future course of revolution as it overcomes the counter-revolution that has always appeared at critical moments just when victory seemed in sight. Lessons of history cannot be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders while one continues to live only for the moment. Unfinished revolutions have ever been the source for the new breath the old class society draws to keep on existing. Sometimes it even appears as "new" -- as the democratic Weimar Republic did when compared to the Kaiser regime that preceded it. Yet July (Kornilov's attempted counter-revolution) was not just a date on the calendar, nor only a Russian phenomenon that intervened between February (overthrow of Tsar) and October (workers' state). February would never have "gone on" to October without the Bolsheviks. As in Germany in 1919, the Russian Revolution would have been beheaded by the counter-revolution just beneath the surface that rose to the surface on all sides to challenge the workers' power that had been achieved.

History is full of examples of "dead" societies that live on, only to exude a new reaction. Between the defeated 1923 German Revolution and triumphant Nazism a whole decade passed, but the seeds of counter revolution were present in the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and in the first Nazi beerhall putsch, which failed in the early 1920's but was also not transformed into any new October. Theory is needed not only to discern the counter-revolution, but to overcome it. History may repeat itself, but a missed revolutionary moment perishes into the old decadent society.

When Hegel complained that philosophy had not responded to the challenge of the French Revolution, he didn't mean that it would have done so if thought "corresponded" to reality. He meant thought too would have to transform reality. It is this, just this, principle of dialectic which Marx drove beyond the limits of philosophy when he wrote: "Philosophers have interpreted the world. The point is to change it." Far from this meaning only material change, it meant change also in consciousness, in thought, in the minds of the "educators" as well as those "to be educated." From the moment when Marx first stated that in 1845, to the last breath of life he drew in 1883, it would be hard to find a division between his theory and his practice, a let up in either the development of theory or in participation of revolutionary class struggles, national and international. His theory lives after him because it not only reflected the period in which he lived, but our own period. We all know that:

(1) By introducing the wage laborer into economics, Marx transformed it from a science of things dealing with profits and wages, to one of production relations, concerned with laborers and capitalists at the point of production.

(2) By introducing Man into Hegelian dialectics, which had concerned itself with development of consciousness and self-consciousness, Marx put an end to the dehumanization of philosophy.

(3) By making the masses the subject of history, he did away with the utopianism of socialism, the bringing in of an "ism" by utopian planners from the outside, instead of seeing the masses themselves reshaping history from the material foundations to its ideas. Only the whole is the truth.

(4) For the Humanism of Marxism, man as creativity became the point of departure and the point of return, the transformed reality and the insight into the future. This was so not only for the young Marx, nor only for the mature Marx to whom, as Merleau-Ponty succinctly expressed it, "economics was reintegrated into history, rather than history being reduced to economics." As Marx reshaped Capital under the impact of the American Civil War and the struggle for the shortening of the working day, theory itself was transformed from an intellectual debate to a reflection not only of the class struggles, but of the pull of the future. Only a creative theory can end the division between mental and manual labor, can anticipate the reign of freedom, can, by uniting thought and action, assure freedom's being.

The relationship of thought to freedom hit Lenin with such extraordinary force when the Second International proved impotent in the face of the challenge of World War I that this greatest of all realists wrote excitedly, idealistically, approvingly, this paraphrase of the mystic Hegel: "Cognition not only reflects the world, but creates it." And indeed this became not just an ideal, but the actual preparation for the Russian Revolution. Without such an underlying philosophy, Lenin could not have written "State and Revolution" and made this both the preparation for revolution and the foundation for what happens afterwards to assure the needed breakdown of the division between mental and manual labor, if ever a truly new society was to be created.

This much, and more, Marxism and Freedom established, but the fact that the historic continuity was lost with Trotskyism was only implied in that work. The new book will "correct" this, that is to say, make it explicit. It is true that Trotskyism, having failed to become a polarizing force for any new Marxist regroupment, there was no necessity in the 1950's to destroy all its pretensions to historic continuity. With the Sino-Soviet conflict out in the open in the 1960's, however, Maoism is exercising a gravitational pull on the left, and Trotskyism which is tailending it, is just the non-Stalinist whitewash needed to make Mao's "uninterrupted revolution" and Trotsky's "permanent revolution" the way to "revolutionary seizure of power" as if our whole state capitalist age wasn't proof that willingness to take power and class collaborationism are no longer opposites. Moreover, for the purposes of the civil rights movement in the U.S., the revolutionary sound is heard above the underlying class collaborationism and therefore can act as a polarizing force for the intellectual left which thinks it can live very well without a total philosophy. The theoretic destruction of Trotskyism has become a necessity because in our life and times there is a danger that the whole forward movement of humanity will once again be stopped in midpoint.

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The further digging into philosophic roots, the réformulation of this philosophy of freedom for our epoch in ever new forms can be done only by us. This is not only a question of the present state usurpers of Marxism, or the pretenders to Marxist continuity. The harder problem is that neither Marx nor Lenin could have, in the concrete, seen the problems of our age. This is our task. Therein lies the uniqueness of Marxist-Humanism. Just as it is no accident that six weeks before the East German workers tore down the myth of Communist totalitarian invincibility, we concretized "the Absolute Idea" for our age by showing that the movement is not only from theory to practice, but from practice to theory, and this decided the structure of Marxism and Freedom, so the concretization of "the second negativity", that is to say, not only the overthrow of the old but the creation and continuity of the new, will determine the structure of the new book. No one else has even posed the working out of a new relationship of theory to practice demanded by our age. The reestablishment of the Humanist and Abolitionist roots of Marxism, which were the goals of Marxism and Freedom -- and which were concretized on the American scene by American Civilization on Trial, and on the world scene by the chapter on Mao in the new edition of Marxism and Freedom -- must be extended so that both organizationally and philosophically the spontaneous movements on a world scale can rediscover the missing link, the historic continuity with the freedom struggles and once and for all have freedom be, individually, socially, totally.

Philosophic thought leads from immediate experience to its historic structure via the principle of freedom. That which united Marx with the Abolitionists during the Civil War, with the Irish in the struggle for self-determination, with the Communards in the Paris Commune, will then reveal itself into the what now for our age. Organizational responsibility for theoretic positions is a prerequisite for the discernment of the new dimensions of history.

IV. Conclusions: Organizational Responsibility for Theoretic Positions and Immediate Perspectives

The activities of the organization, past, present and future, will be dealt with in separate reports, not only on organization and the paper, but also the Marxism and Freedom paperback, the projection of a new pamphlet "A Doctor Speaks", as well as the finances without which neither the organization nor the paper, much less the pamphlet, can be carried out. We will not go into the details of any of these projects here, but it is necessary to draw some political conclusions which will affect our functioning in all these fields over the next two years.

(1) First of all, the organizational responsibility for theoretical positions is something that not only characterizes the News & Letters Committees as Committees, but the functioning of News & Letters Committee members in all other organizations. This will be especially true in our future functioning in civil rights, and labor organizations, where functioning as Marxist-Humanists

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will mean that we will be projecting philosophic and political analyses along with the actual activities in which we participate. In a word, the generalization to be drawn from any activity, as it is discussed by the relevant organizations, will be made by us openly on the floor wherever possible.

(2) We ourselves must be more concretely aware of what organizational responsibility for theoretic positions means, not only in our present development, but what it has always meant historically. Marx began with a philosophic theoretic total outlook, but had to depend on other tendencies in building proletarian organizations, whether that was on a national scale or international. Lenin built a separate tendency, a separate organizational form, for what became a tendency. That is to say, no theoretical positions had been established to distinguish what later became Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the time (1902-3) when he developed his vanguard party. Trotsky never even bothered to put his permanent revolution thesis as the basis for his new party, satisfying himself with the idea that his was "true Leninism". In the 1940's, when we first theoretically broke with Trotskyism and elaborated the theory of state-capitalism, that state-capitalist tendency nevertheless did not take organizational responsibility for its theory by consummating any break from Trotskyism in an organizational way. Even when a break was forced upon the tendency in 1951, there was no public face to the tendency's existence until 1953, and even then it did not become the underlying theory of the paper that did appear. Only with the establishment of News & Letters in 1955 did the founding group take responsibility both for the workers' paper and the assignment for restating Marxism for our age. When we consider that in the case of the original state-capitalist tendency more than a full decade intervened between its appearance in theory and any independent organizational form for it, while in the second case, that is to say, when as Marxist-Humanists we took organizational responsibility for our theory and Marxism and Freedom was completed in 18 months, you get an idea both of the impact of organizational responsibility for theoretic positions on the actual functioning of an organization, and its theoretical development. No group can compete with us in the concretization of theory, whether it is in the form of pamphlets written by workers, such as Workers Battle Automation ; or in the form of the story of activists in the civil rights movement, as Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves ; or in concretization of theoretical positions like American Civilization on Trial and the Afro-Asian Revolutions.

In a word, in contrast to the 1902-03 period, where party building meant organizational discipline of intellectuals, today, the Marxist-Humanist basis of organization and organizational responsibility for theoretic positions is the way, the only way, of expanding theory itself.

(3) What is needed now, in the competition of ideas, is to be in the market-place of ideas, and that market-place is the metropolis of New York. Just as the reason that determined the move to Detroit in 1955 was to be where the source of ideas is -- where the proletariat is, in the industrial center -- so for the new book, the necessity is to be among the intellectuals, to compel them to face Marxist-Humanism. The center remains Detroit, but New York must become more than a local. The REB therefore proposes that a sub-center be established in New York. The convention itself will spell out how to achieve this, who will be asked to move, and the consequences of the resulting new relations.

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(4) The News & Letters Committees, especially its leadership, spells out the organizational responsibility for theoretic positions by making sure that the national chairman, who is to write the new book, is to have a minimum of four continuous months away from any organizational responsibility. This is to begin the day after the convention.

(5) Finally, and centrally, the youth work is to be concentrated where it came to be on its own. It is no accident that the one place where a Marxist-Humanist journal was published regularly on a college campus (and thus a theoretic basis was laid for organizational activity) is also the place where there were the greatest sales of our literature, and where the most work was done in the civil rights movement. In contrast to the standing youth committee, whose work was rather haphazard, the Los Angeles youth work was consistent, original, and truly youth. Therefore, despite the fact that the editing of the Youth page must continue to be done in the Center where the paper is published, L.A. now becomes the center for youth work, and those aspects of youth work which concern other areas cannot be done without full consultation with the L.A. youth. This of necessity will affect the youth representation on the REB, which the Convention will deal with, even as it will make explicit what this means in relation to the new book.

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