

Transcript of Talk by Raya Dunayevskaya: "Philosophy and Revolution: New Stage of Thought
or New Form of Revolt?" -- March 27, 1977

Good evening.

Let's take a journey, a journey of discovering a new stage of cognition. It is not anywhere as easy to recognize a new stage, a new way, of knowing, as it is to recognize a form of revolt, and that is especially true in relationship to the youth -- and somehow they never stop revolting! And at this particular moment, if there's anything that's really haunting capitalism, a real spectre haunting all of capitalism throughout Europe and Africa and everything -- it's Paris 1968. Not because Paris 1968 succeeded -- unfortunately it didn't -- but it was so close to being a near-revolution, that they now see Soweto, and they see CUNY, and they see the London occupations -- and not only a general occupation, but the fact that on the whole it's really the Third World students who are leading it. And in Greece. And in Turkey. And it's endless. And who would think that just because Portugal isn't mentioned this time, that that's exactly what the capitalists don't fear -- because even though they succeeded in stopping the Portuguese revolution, they have not destroyed it, and they are scared to death that it will reawaken, as it is sure to do.

Now it is true that the main fault of why we don't recognize a new stage of cognition, and work it out, is due to intellectual laziness, but it's not only that. Because the truth is that as much as we are enthused over the new forms of revolt, practice by itself, like theory by itself, is one-sided -- and it's only the unity of the two that would mean that you not only have a revolt, but a successful uprooting of everything that is old. So that even though we blame the intellectuals mainly -- and they have a lot of trouble, and I will show you some of the trouble -- it isn't true that therefore you say, The proletariat and everything it does will make it, or the Women's Liberation and everything it does, or the Blacks who are the vanguard -- it isn't true that they are going to succeed if they do it without a new philosophy of revolution.

Now when we call the intellectuals "lazy", it doesn't mean that they sit in academic chairs, that's not at all what we mean -- cause some of these intellectuals are so damn busy that they promptly become leaders to mislead; so by laziness we don't mean that they don't do anything. We mean that they don't do what they should be doing -- and it's a very difficult task. For example, we say we must have the unity of both the movement from practice and the movement from theory; now even if you recognize that movement from practice that's itself a form of theory -- not many intellectuals recognize that movement from practice, but even if you do -- your work first begins, it doesn't end, by saying, "Oh well, now I'm the theoretician and you're the proletariat, and let's get together." Because you have to recreate the dialectic for your own age, for your own period, for trying to make the revolution be, and not just slip by. It's not easy either; this is really hard labor. What Hegel called "seriousness, suffering, patience, and labor of the negative" first begins after you have recognized the movement from practice, and recognized your own one-sidedness in theory, and tried to recreate the dialectic.

And see how rare are ages of new revolutions. Strictly speaking, that comes about once a century -- and nobody lives a century! Now what is our age? By our age I mean the age of revolutions that began with the Industrial Revolution, the American Revolution, the French, the intellectual, the social -- everything was redone between 1776, 1789, and 1807 when the Phenomenology of Hegel was published. Now you have Hegel for the early 19th. century; and you have Marx for the mid-19th. century and into the 20th. -- because even though it was Lenin and not Marx that made the Russian Revolution, 1917 was that recreation of what was established with Marx's new continent of thought. So it isn't that it's easy, it's very rare that it happens, a whole philosophy of revolution; and even the spin-off that is the theory for this particular period, isn't very easy. So you have to see one other thing that is necessary, and that is that in addition to practice, in addition to theory, you must realize your break with all other theoreticians and all other movements, to start something

new. And yet that break which is so decisive that it is a break, has to be in a continuum with the historic stage; that is you cannot start just by saying, "Well, all the others were wrong and therefore we don't need them" -- 'cause they may very well not have been wrong, and especially not for their age. In other words, it's every bit as wrong not to recognize practice, not to recognize theory, or to think with this Paris '68 youth we're so proud of -- but they didn't make it -- that you can catch theory en route; you can't. Theory is every bit as hard labor as any other kind.

Now when you see all of these factors involved in this journey of discovering a new stage of cognition -- that nevertheless must be within the continuum of these 200 years since the industrial and political and social revolutions -- you would have to see it always from the point of view of today, so we also have to add todayness to all the other problems. Now I believe that what we're trying to do in posing the question of a single dialectic process in thought and in action -- and the stress is on the word posing, because if you really had recognition that there's a single dialectical process of development through contradiction, in theory and in action, then you would have the revolution, you wouldn't be talking about it -- so that the posing of the question is in order to see what has been achieved thus far, and I will try and divide my presentation in four parts: I The first is "The Science of the Experiences of Consciousness" -- that's what Hegel called his philosophy -- "The Science of the Experiences of Consciousness" -- that's the Phenomenology as Hegel developed it in 1807, as Marx saw it when he broke, but continued in the tradition of the dialectic, and as it appears to us today -- even though we will be little on today, and will stop with Gramsci in Italy in 1931, and just the beginning in 1953. (By today I always mean 1953-56, 1973-76; in other words the two decades since you have the beginnings of the East European revolts, the beginning of the African revolutions, and all the new stages that we have had in these two decades when we tried to uproot society, and it's still with us.)

II The second part will be "The Science of Logic" -- (Incidentally, in case anyone thinks "science" means "scientific", or the way science is understood in a general sense, it isn't in philosophy; in philosophy it means a complete, total view. For example, "The Science of the Experiences of Consciousness" is a comprehensive view of 2500 years that Hegel had summed up in his dialectical philosophy.) Now we always connect it with something on the current scene, so the second part is "The Science of Logic, with Lenin's break with his own philosophic past, 1914-17, the return to Hegel in that period." And that will carry us through as to what is the position for us in the period of these two decades.

III The third part will be "Absolute Idea", but I'm dividing "Absolute Idea as new beginning", which is our contribution to our age, into two, and instead of considering the Self-Thinking Idea, which is what Absolute Idea is, together with Absolute Idea, I'm dividing it. So the third part will be "Self-Thinking Idea vs. All Retrogression, Deviation, and Intellectualism" -- during the same period. "All" meaning those who made any sort of claim towards Marxism -- whether it was Mao, or Trotsky, or Sartre as an outsider looking in, or Adorno, and so forth -- all that has appeared that's new in our age, and they thought they were independent, and they didn't make it.

IV The fourth part, therefore, the final part, I'm calling "Praxis". This is going to be the activity that Marx was talking about, human activity that's both mental and manual, so I say, "Praxis: Hegel's Absolute Idea as new beginning, Marx's new continent of thought, historical materialism, and Our Two Decades" -- this time not just by referring to today, but actually taking up what has happened, and what is our task.

I Science of the Experiences of Consciousness: the Phenomenology as Hegel articulated it, as Marx and Gramsci in 1931 saw it.

Now when we come to the very first part of the "Science of the Experiences of Consciousness", we have to realize that what Hegel was doing was breaking with the various philosophies that had appeared up to that time. The new in Hegel was the fact that

he was very dissatisfied: Here was the great French Revolution that had occurred, that had overthrown the monarchy of France and was also trying to create the revolution for the rest of Europe to get rid of feudalism -- and the philosophers were doing exactly nothing! they weren't creating any sort of new categories. So it's the break from that. Now Hegel begins with three stages of consciousness: Consciousness -- just the idea that you're a human, the world is something opposite, and you're not very happy 'cause there's this opposition. Then Self-Consciousness -- now Self-Consciousness does not mean what it means in ordinary language, that you're embarrassed -- Self-Consciousness means social consciousness. You suddenly realize that, yes, you're unhappy with the world -- but there are an awful lot of other people unhappy with the world. In other words, it's the recognition of social consciousness. The height of it is the fight between lordship and bondage, and the sudden discovery, that not only is the lord a horror, and you just have to do whatever he tells you to do, you're the serf -- but by golly you've got a mind of your own and you don't like any of his ideas at all! So it's the gaining of a mind of your own -- whether it leads you at that particular moment to being against the lord and master, or whether it makes you unhappy with what you just got through discovering, or whether it's a recreating, but it's not what you really wanted, it's the Unhappy Consciousness. So you have the Stoicism, which people think is so great -- you take everything that's given to you -- but so far as Hegel is concerned Stoicism means that you're a slave! It has appeared in the stage when Rome conquered Greece, and the Greek philosophers instead of trying to overthrow the Romans were saying, "Well, really, it's all great anyway", in other words, trying to take it, "I'm a free man even though I'm a slave." Well Hegel doesn't have very much to do with that.

Now you come to the third stage which is Reason. You have now not only gained a mind of your own, as a serf, and fought against the lord, but you have created something new, in other words we are in a new stage of production, a new stage of social relations -- capitalism instead of feudalism. You would think therefore that now in Reason you're all happy ever afterwards; that however is really only first the beginning and retelling in Hegel's mind of the development of thought from the beginning of philosophy, 500 B.C. in Greece, to the French Revolution. Now instead of being happy in Reason -- (and this is the most difficult part of all, and I don't think I've seen a really good critique of this whole part) -- we have the Spirit, Alienated Spirit. In other words, you not only have an Alienated Soul, the serf who didn't want to be a serf, you have alienation with this high stage of Spirit, in other words freedom. Why is it that what you have just created in this new state isn't really it? The Enlightenment for example that has done away with superstition and so forth, and yet suddenly finds that -- well, it isn't all that good, because now you have new troubles. Hegel said, You have brought all you household goods into the house of Faith, and so now not only superstition is no good, but belief is likewise questioned. You have everything even to the Absolute Freedom with the French Revolution, which ends somehow in Absolute Terror -- and Hegel's saying that not only as a reactionary or bourgeois against the guillotine, that was my first impression, "Oh well now Hegel really shows himself as the bourgeois that he is" -- No. It was the idea that instead of what we call, since Lenin's day, the population to a man, woman, and child running production and the state, that just a tiny little faction, one tiny little group, was in charge; in other words, we see that actually in recreation and the new. So you see this movement, where you are suddenly an Alienated Spirit with the Enlightenment, with the French Revolution, with all the great things you have achieved -- and that makes Hegel dispatch all of the stages and go to Absolute Knowledge. Now that's where Marx broke, but we will be critical both of Marx and of Hegel.

So let's take up first of all, what is it, and why is it so relevant to our age, and why was it so relevant to the age of, say, the Great Depression in the '30s, when the French first began studying and being excited by the Phenomenology of Mind -- and in fact in the period when they were fighting the Occupation they were maybe even more excited by it, and that was the beginnings, the whole birth of Existentialism

in the post-war world. Now, even earlier, look how seriously real revolutionaries took the dialectic. I'm now talking about Gramsci, who in 1931 was considering such a "simple" thing like the fact that Bukharin happened to be in London addressing the International Congress of the History of Science and Technology -- (and they use "science" not in the sense of totality, but as, science and technology will do it all, not the masses will do it, but science and technology.) So Bukharin's going to explain materialism as against this petty-bourgeois idealism and science, and he gives this talk in London. (Stalin had let him out at that particular moment.) Now, here is Gramsci, in prison, in Italy, (the fascists had put him in prison) -- and they're both supposed to be Communists, right, Gramsci and Bukharin? You would think that he's very happy that here is Bukharin telling the bourgeoisie off, at least ideologically. But in fact -- well, first of all consider all the trouble Gramsci had to go through to get a copy of the talk. In that prison -- Mussolini was very famous for his castor oil treatments, and Gramsci was very sick in addition to everything else, you couldn't mention all the sicknesses he had. Nevertheless he demands that his wife who's on the outside, or his daughter, or somebody get hold of that talk in London and send it to him. And they send it to him, and I will tell you what he writes in his Prison Notebooks. (And I want to call you attention to the fact that even though he wrote this in 1931, I felt it was so appropriate to what we are now considering that's new in the Communist parties, the Euro-Communism -- in other words, they are very flirtatious with capitalism -- that I felt it was worth mentioning in the Political-Philosophic Letter #3-4 on the European Communist Parties.) The part that I'm interested in here is Gramsci's "Critical Notes on an Attempt at a Popular Presentation of Marxism by Bukharin" -- and this is both about the London talk and about Bukharin's book, Historical Materialism. The "Critical Notes ..." focuses on the fact that in Bukharin's work "there is no treatment whatever of the dialectic ... which is degraded from being a doctrine of consciousness and the inner substance of history and the science of politics, into being a sub-species of formal logic and elementary scholasticism" -- (as if it's a thing of you saying, you think so-and-so, and I think so-and-so, the other one thinks so-and-so -- instead of seeing the movement of history.) "He in fact capitulates before common sense and vulgar thought Marxism is precisely the concrete historicisation of philosophy and its identification with history." Then he tells you that the section in Bukharin should be read in full -- and believe me, you better read that critique of Gramsci's at the same time.

Now you take a man like Lukacs, who is both a revolutionary, a Marxist -- in fact he capitulated to Stalinism most of his life -- and a great philosopher. Now, every Marxist has been very quick to recognize -- since Marx has said it -- that all of the greatness of Hegel's philosophy and revolutionary dialectics of liberation begins in, develops at its fullest -- that is, in thought, not in the actual revolution -- in Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind. If you have ever worked with the Phenomenology -- look, there's eight pages, just the table of contents. Okay. Marx made out of it, and I'm sure that Hegel did, four sections, four chief parts: Consciousness; Self-Consciousness; Reason; Spirit, which includes Art and Religion, as sub-sections; and Absolute Knowledge. Now comes Lukacs; and you know these erudite people, eruditionists really want to go off the deep end -- and they always cover their flanks besides! So Lukacs, when he mentions something, says, "Well, for our purposes." So you can't really argue with him; supposedly he saw everything else but he is only concerned with such and such development. But in fact "for our purposes" hides the fact that he is doing what? Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason, everybody recognizes. But in Spirit, Alienated Spirit he recognizes 'cause he's trying to develop it, but then he takes up and hides Absolute Knowledge, as part of Spirit, so you have not Absolute Knowledge as a separate category but Absolute Knowledge along with Religion -- and it just doesn't happen to be true.

Now, whether you're considering the first stage, as Hegel developed it in the French Revolution, the point of the matter was, that the form of revolt, wasn't only the French Revolution, right? You didn't pay any attention, because it was supposed

to be for freedom -- and they certainly got rid of feudalism and what not. But did anybody think about the slaves in Haiti? No sir, they didn't! Okay. There was Toussaint L'Ouverture, and he said, "It belongs to me: if you're out for freedom -- wait a minute, I'm around here, and I'm not going to let you or believe in you to bring my freedom, I will do it myself." So there is the very great first colonial revolution, and moreover it's a successful one, not just one that gets beaten down by the counter-revolution. So at each stage you have the incompletion that you can see by the fact of what the masses are saying -- and that's why the masses are so great, because they're the ones that will tell you, if you're talking about freedom, it's just an abstraction -- if I'm not free you haven't really done it. Now at that time, insofar as Marx was concerned, he wasn't yet conscious of the fact of the Black Revolution, as he became conscious of it and made it very pivotal to himself as he fought in the Civil War in the United States. But what he was conscious of, and knew very well, was that this freedom wasn't total, it only brought a different stage, from serfdom to wage slavery -- maybe that was better -- but it did not free awful great parts of the world, particularly the Third World.

Now when Marx gets mad at Hegel, and the Absolute Knowledge, he gets mad because he says: You have only considered development of thought -- "the self-determination in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak" -- and yes, you've been very great, 2500 years is a very great extent -- but nowhere was a human being around. So therefore when you go into Absolute Knowledge, it is your escape from reality, its your way of really going back to religion, without calling it religion. (because now the Enlightenment has come, and that will be the end of superstition, it has shown you something else.) Now it isn't quite true, what Marx says of Hegel, but this is the necessity for that break in order for Marx to discover what is the real, material foundation for the next stage of development. And it is very peculiar always at which point you stop and you say, "I'm through with you, you haven't really done it, you've illuminated certain aspects but not the whole." Now we have seen for example Gramsci, who is in prison, and he is trying to show you that a vulgar materialism isn't the answer, that there is something very important in the dialectics of thought that Hegel has brought out, because it actually illuminates great parts of the critique like Marx has shown -- but at that time no one did know the early essays of Marx, where he said that Unhappy Consciousness, and Social Consciousness, and all the other alienated forms of Consciousness, are that many forms of critique of actual stages, in other words of law, of religion, of actual movement; what you see in the movement of these developments of thought, is the actual movement of history, but it's in a very alienated form. In other words, Marx is opposed to the dehumanization of the Idea -- the Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason -- as if the ideas could really travel over there, and you don't have to have people who think ideas, you only have to have ideas. (And if you're a philosopher, you've got lots of them, and so forth, so you won't get there.) But, as against Gramsci, when it comes to the French in the same period of the '30s, they are very much in love with the Phenomenology, and especially the Unhappy Consciousness -- there are probably thousands of books written on the Unhappy Consciousness, including Marcuse who has now conquered the Unhappy Consciousness, or at least he's talking about "The Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness" by the people who are the leadership, you know, the imperialists and so forth. Why were the French so attracted to the Phenomenology? It was exactly because of historical materialism; in other words, isn't life horrible? This is the Depression. Now it's true that they thought fascism wasn't going to come to France -- but you were pretty damn unhappy during the period. So when they get to learn about the various stages of consciousness, particularly the Unhappy Consciousness, everybody -- Sartre, and Hypollite -- they think it's as if they can go directly from that to some sort of a new philosophy that supposedly would answer the question, without going through what Marx had developed.

Now actually what Hegel is doing in the Absolute Knowledge is this: "Well, we have gone through all these forms of consciousness. I didn't, so to speak, reveal it

15042

to you before, but we have gone through this by the dialectic method which is second negativity; that is, in first negativity you destroy what is, but now it isn't enough to destroy what is, you have to create something new. So the dual rhythm of revolution, the destruction of something old, the creation of something new, that dual rhythm as I showed it to you in thought" -- (it was actually in life) -- "is what will create a new basis, the second negativity will create a new basis, a new form for the new stage." Now Hegel is so thrilled with this new form, even though he has just declared it to be Absolute Terror, and so forth, that he says, "Time" -- you know, it's supposed to be "eternal time" -- "is history". Now it's true that he calls history contingency: he isn't going to stop at just history, he's going to go further. But the point is that it immediately does something. So you see that there has been a development of actual humanity and not just of thought in this history. And when he comes to Spirit, you're supposed to be at the height, yes? Absolute Spirit, you're reaching it now: for heavens sake, it meets its Golgotha! In other words, it's crucified. So he finishes up with the Absolute Spirit by the crucifixion. Now he speaks about it in such an absolute optimistic tone, and thinks forward to infinity, but the truth of the matter is, where he thinks forth, to infinity over there -- that's his infinity, as man, as philosopher -- and it's already a new state, and don't think that the religious people didn't immediately recognize that and call him an atheist. But when Marx criticizes Hegel and says, "When human beings will answer this, what will come out of their struggles? and what they will think will be very different, and we won't have to go in this alienated way to see something" -- he creates what? A very new continent of thought.

Now you know, we as Marxist-Humanists have always been very proud of the fact that Marx, in place of either idealism or materialism -- vulgar materialism, vulgar communism, that did destroy private property, but thought that all ills were now ended, with the destruction of property -- Marx said, "No, neither materialism nor idealism but the unity of the two, the new Humanism, Communism is only a stage to this new Humanism, and it's not the final form." He says that in "Private Property and Communism". What I want to show you today is that his greatest and more total form, which directly relates back again to the Hegelian dialectic, is the way he expresses this same thought, on a higher level, in the "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic." In the process, you see, of denying Hegel's Absolute, saying you have forgotten the humanity that is enslaved -- you have also dehumanized not only humanity but the ideas! And when does Marx begin saying, this new man, this new woman, this new idea? Right when he talks about this little tiny word, second negativity. "Communism, as transcendence of private property, is the vindication of actual human living as its own property, which is the becoming of practical Humanism and communism is humanism mediated by the transcendence of private property." -- Okay, we got rid of private property. Now, says Marx -- "Only by a transcendence of this mediation, which is nevertheless a necessary presupposition, does there arise positive Humanism, beginning from itself." In other words, whereas before he merely denied that Communism was the new stage, the new form of totally new human relations, now he is saying that that's only the first stage, the positive Humanism beginning from itself. And when he gets to be the mature Marx, he says the same thing, in a way that we would recognize better -- "Human power is its own end". That's not a means to something else; when you have the human power, that's when you'll have a new society and never before, and the new revolutions aren't going to help you. So he arrives at this new continent of thought precisely when he identifies with two things in Hegel: the dialectic as the actual development of history, even though it's expressed only in thought; and transcendence which is not a religious term, it doesn't get you up there, transcendence is an objective movement, which when there is a real revolution will get you to transcend, as an objective movement -- the actual overthrow and the creation of the new -- and that new would only be truly new if it's beginning from itself.

..II Science of Logic and Lenin's Philosophic break, both as attitudes to Objectivity

Now, we have seen that in the '30s, the French felt so much in the Phenomenology. (Actually, the new translation wasn't published till '47, but they all began it in the '30s.) Now what does Hegel do? (I'm not going to go into the development of Marx's whole new continent of thought until the very end; I just want to develop what Hegel does.) So let's now take up the Science of Logic. Now Hegel himself was overwhelmed by what he had done in the Phenomenology. In fact, he didn't know he was going to do it, it was only supposed to be an introduction to what was going to be the new philosophy, the new logic, and so forth. This "introduction" became over 800 pages, and was a whole philosophy of history! He actually had the outline for only what I call the first part, Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason, but then he went on, and on, and on, and on -- and some stupid people say, "He really didn't know what he was doing, it was a real Bacchanalian revelry of thought" -- he caught the whole historic movement from 500 B.C. through the French Revolution! Yes, he didn't see Toussaint L'Ouverture, but he saw plenty up to that point. Okay. Now he himself is catching himself, he's saying, "Well, now I'd better get down and catch my breath, and have real philosophic categories that I recognize, never mind all this Consciousness and various things." So he comes down to the Science of Logic. Now this is very peculiar. He begins again where everybody else begins: Being -- whether you consider it as the Absolute Being, or just the human being, or just Being as a thing. Nothing. Becoming. Now all of his history could be just in this little word, Becoming, it's always an ever-new process of becoming. But he spends three little paragraphs on that, and you know what he goes into for the next 125 pages? After three paragraphs? A polemical movement. He's going to get it against all other philosophers. One hundred twenty-five pages after three little paragraphs? In other words, the polemical movement, the break, with philosophy is every bit as important as what the content is. In fact, insofar as the first Doctrine of Being is, I would say it's more important.

The Science of Logic has three books: Doctrine of Being, Doctrine of Essence, and Doctrine of the Notion. In the Doctrine of Being, the first three most important categories are Quality, Quantity, Measure. In other words, the three first things: that something is, it has a quality; and then, there is a difference when there is many -- you may think it's the same, but when you have 10,000 people instead of one person, it's a very different situation; so from the Quantity, the quantification of the Quality, that leads you to Measure, in other words, the measure of all things. Whatever you finally consider the Measure, you're ready to go into, This is not really the appearance of things, this is the Essence. And in the Essence, you get the Identity, which is really equivalent to just bourgeois thought (maybe he just considered it early bourgeois thought or something, because he himself was bourgeois); the Difference, you begin arguing with other people and other aspirations; and the Contradiction -- everything is a contradiction, everything is a duality, everything has the opposite within itself. But it is not in the Essence to just counterpose, This is only phenomena, this is only Being; this is the real thing, the Essence. These two have to be jammed up against each other, and you will have something entirely different when you have a new unity of Appearance and Essence, of Being, and so forth, and that new unity is the Doctrine of the Notion, which we would consider as the subjective and objective ways to get to actual freedom.

Now, what happens the minute you reach a new situation? I have spoken to philosophers a lot -- that is, not a lot, only when they want, "Let's see what a crazy Marxist has to say" -- and I will read you something I have said to them. The question always was that I forced, supposedly, the following: For example, I happen to have brought a relationship, which I said was not accidental, between Hegel and Nat Turner's revolt. Even though it was accidental that Hegel died in 1831, by the plague, and Nat Turner had his revolt in 1831, I said, Well, you may think it's forced, because it's a cinch they didn't know about each other, it's a cinch Nat Turner didn't know about

any white man, much less somebody living in Germany and a philosopher. And Hegel certainly wouldn't be interested in Nat Turner's revolt, even if he had remained to live and record it. BUT -- the Essence and the Notion is, that they did know each other, there was this intercommunication between the ages, because what stimulates and makes relevant Hegel for our day, and for Marx's day, and why Marx couldn't do without Hegel -- was FREEDOM. Marx said, It's true he limited it to thought, but Hegel said, "Nothing is worth being called an Idea that isn't Freedom." -- Forget it; if it's not about Freedom, it's not an Idea. Right? And when Nat Turner was brought up, just before he was hung, they were accusing him not only of having led his revolt, but some other revolts that were also occurring. And he said, No, he didn't lead those, he doesn't know about them. And of course the white man looks and says, "This slave is a liar." And Nat Turner says, "I see you look at me as if you don't believe me. BUT: don't you think that freedom is so strong a force, that if I was willing to die for it, that lots of other slaves are willing also? You think that when you hang me, that's going to be the end of it? No." So you see, it is the idea of freedom, of wanting to give up your life to have this freedom, and the fact that the greatest philosopher of the bourgeoisie recognized that, even if it was only in the French Revolution, or only in his own thought -- that shows that there is this connection, and that's exactly what concretely makes Hegel come alive, with the dialectic methodology, with the development through contradiction, in every stage of crisis.

Now, when you go from the fact of the essences, and you see the contradictions, and you say, No, it's not just behind, but we have this new, the Doctrine of the Notion, the concept: What are we finally going to do with uniting, or how are we going to unite theory and practice, where are these various elements? and you are back again to the fact of Universal, Particular, Individual -- the three major categories of the Doctrine of the Notion. Whether Universal is to you socialism, or freedom in general, or Black -- it doesn't make any difference. You set your goal: that's your Universal. The Particular is the form the Universal takes at that specific historic stage; and the Individual is when it really becomes concrete and you see that freedom really does mean you. There is no freedom if you, the individual, are not free. Now, this movement, on the Doctrine of the Notion -- there is something very very fantastic, because here, (just like he takes 125 pages after the first three paragraphs of the Doctrine of Being), just before Hegel leaves Essence, and goes into Notion, he shows you that Kant stopped dead. And he doesn't know how such a great man, a philosopher, can stop dead at that particular point. Okay. I will take up that in a minute; I'll read you what Hegel said. But I want to go off to Lenin before, because when I will read you what Hegel says against Kant, I will add, "and so did Trotsky and Luxemburg stop dead" -- though they were great revolutionaries, and for very opposite reasons. What is it at that point where you do recognize that there is a Universal, and there is a Particular, and you want to make it concrete, and yet you don't jam them up, and you don't have a new self-developing Subject, you haven't named who are your forces of revolution and the Reason that will create this new state, and this new world.

Okay. The reason I want to go off to Lenin is to show you that heretofore -- heretofore, I'm talking about 1914 -- all good Marxists knew that Marx came from Hegel, but they didn't bother to read Hegel; after all, didn't Marx break from him, so what's the point of that? And they knew the class struggle, and they weren't talking about such nonsense as Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, Reason, they were talking about labor, and capital, and wars and revolutions and class struggles and strikes. So why pay attention to Hegel? He was already, so to speak, translated into human form. So what happens in 1914? All your comrades, your dearest comrades, who were always talking about wars and revolutions and -- "Let the bourgeoisie dare to declare war -- " -- they all capitulate. The whole Second International collapses, along with the outbreak of the imperialist war, the First World War. Now here is Lenin, and he's saying, "This is fantastic! My god, that's the day we were waiting for to make our revolutions! And

Here is my comrade and leader and theoretician Karl Kautsky, the head of the whole Second International -- and he has capitulated. He certainly was my leader, I believed in him, I was always quoting him. All I wanted was that we in Russia, the backward Russians, should have such a great beautiful mass party as the German Social Democracy, wouldn't it be wonderful! Now look at it. WHAT HAS HAPPENED?!! And I am Lenin, I cannot say I'm a dumb guy, and I didn't know, and they betrayed me. For heavens sakes, I was in all the shennanigans and conferences and meetings. SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH MY VERY METHOD OF THINKING. Something is wrong with everything. And it isn't only politics, that I'm not afraid of. I know I'm not going to capitulate. And I know that the masses will be with me some day. But WHY did this happen, and why did I -- not -- SEE IT?!"

So now think of how crazy everybody thinks Lenin is. Everybody's running around like chickens with their heads cut off. What does Lenin do? He is in the library in Switzerland, and he makes sure, says Krupskaya, that he's always there a few minutes ahead of time because he doesn't want to miss a single second, and he stays there all night long, until closing, for several months. And what does he read? Hegel's Science of Logic. You can imagine, everybody thought this man was really going crazy! AND WHAT DOES HE SAY? As soon as he reads it -- "For heavens sakes, who would have thought that bourgeois reactionary Prussian would say this, that the dialectic moves -- self-movement, self-development, self-activity, self-transcendence -- what the heck is this 'self'? How did it happen that I didn't see this before? And that every single thing has its opposite within itself. Look at this goddamn Second International. Look at the proletariat, that has a section within it, the aristocracy of labor -- my heavens this means that we Marxists didn't know a damn thing. We didn't even understand the first chapter in Marx's Capital, never mind all the rest. Because you can't understand it until you have read the whole of the Science of Logic. And this Absolute -- "Well actually he says, We'll have to throw that out. But on the way before he reaches that, look at all the contradictions he has seen: "Therefore, what we have to recognize is that cognition is not only the reflection of the objective situation, that's a lot of nonsense, that's just the first stage, cognition is the actual creation of the new."

Now don't think he has left us and has gone over into that kind of idealism; but he has now recognized that theory is something very different than just saying the opposite of what the capitalists say. What has happened in this transformation into opposite, that has opened all sorts of fields for him? If not only capitalism became imperialism, but the proletariat produced aristocracy of labor; if not only the bourgeoisie is no good, and its ideology is false, but the Second International is kowtowing, and going with them, and telling workers to shoot each other across national boundaries, if all this has happened, what should we do, where's our second negativity? That's a very good word. HOW ARE WE GOING TO TRANSFORM INTO OPPOSITE THIS IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A CIVIL WAR??? And I have the answer now that I've returned to Hegel. It's all in the dialectic of history; we have to see what is happening in reality. Okay. WHAT IS HAPPENING IN REALITY? Here the whole Second International has capitulated, the German Social Democracy, that's gone to hell and all that. And these people who are real revolutionaries, who are with us, they don't recognize the totality of this collapse. Yes. Yes they want to be with revolutionaries. But you have to recognize the totality, and completely uproot it, otherwise there's no point to it. And who is the new force? Well by golly look at the Irish Revolution. There's an imperialist war going on, and the Irish say, "To hell with them, what do I care about their England? It's always oppressed me!" The dialectic of history shows that small nations can become the turning point if the masses go up and do it; in other words, if they recognize who their real enemy is. So the national question, instead of just being a principle, (it was always a principle, with the Bolsheviks, with the Socialists supposedly too) -- now it's not just a principle. IT'S THE BACILLI FOR THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION!

In fact, they've come ahead of them! There is no proletarian revolution, this is 1916. And Lenin's still so afraid that nothing is going to come in Russia that he's saying, "Well, if not this generation, the next generation will make it." But the national question, the turning of the imperialist war into a civil war, the recognition of what is happening in forms of organization -- yes, he's going to come back to the vanguard party some day, but right now, who and what is appearing?

Well right now, in February 1917, the spontaneous revolution overthrows Czarism. This is just a couple of months after Lenin told the Swiss, If not this generation the next, he's too old, it won't come -- THEY HAD CREATED WHAT? Soviets. A new form of organization. "And when they had created Soviets the first time, in 1905, we stupid Bolsheviks and Mensheviks and anarchists -- all the big shots -- we were all sitting debating whether this was going to be in competition with us, the vanguard party to lead. Well you better stop and it better be, All power to the Soviets, or you're not going to have any revolution!" So it's the entire transformation, every single thing, whether it was the national question with its new urgency, whether it was the force of both the Irish and the peasants, and the Soviet form of organization, or anything that was happening, including the next stage. In other words, he writes State and Revolution -- a non-state form; he suddenly sees that the Paris Commune that Marx had hailed is the thing that would become a really new form. "It can't just be the end of poverty or the end of Czarism; we have seen all that the Social Democracy has done." So you see, this is when he is suddenly seeing that Hegel's philosophy is great in methodology; and whether or not you accept the Absolute Idea or Absolute Knowledge or Absolute Mind, the point is that at a certain stage where you're trying to unite the movement from theory to practice, and the movement from practice to theory, you have to come to the recognition of how are you going to meet the movement. The masses will make it, you have nothing to do with it in a certain sense -- they'll make it, or it ain't going to be made! So now when the masses are there -- where are you going to be? Are you going to be able to rush and be there? Not to lead, but to be part of it and to see that this movement from theory has caught up with this new tremendous movement from practice and together you have developed something entirely new.

Now Lenin did not know Marx's Humanist essays. He made up a very good Humanist slogan when he said, "the population to a man, woman, and child" -- they're going to run it or we ain't going to have a new society. But he didn't know about the early essays, and he didn't know therefore also that when Marx first broke with Absolute Idea, Absolute Knowledge, he had identified the fact that, here was Hegel, after the Logic -- the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences has three books, Logic, Nature, Mind -- Hegel went to Nature. Marx said, "Oh this is insane. Any human being would tell you first you have to have something on a material foundation and in nature and people, and then the thought develops. But Hegel twisted everything upside down." Now Lenin sees the same thing, in 1914, and he doesn't say, "That was because Hegel was standing on his head", he said, "Isn't this magnificent! The elements of materialism are right in Hegel. Just like the Hegelian dialectic is the source of all dialectics -- he is stretching a hand to materialism by stretching it to Nature." Now what made him interpret Nature as materialism? as stretching a hand to it? The age in which you read something, that tells you both what are the developments, but more importantly, it tells you where you are. And Lenin saw that he learned more from the movement of cognition and the dialectical development of ideas in Hegel than he learned from Karl Kautsky. Because it wasn't just a question of betrayal; it was a question of the foundations -- Kautsky couldn't have done, so to speak, anything else by such a vulgar interpretation of Marx's new continent of thought. So by now, therefore, Lenin is seeing that the ideas are so great, that there is such a relationship between the movement from practice, the actual historic movement which is in the back of Hegel's head, and the ideas that come out from his head, that he says, "When he greets Nature, that's stretching a hand to materialism." Now unfortunately those wonderful Philosophic Notebooks were Lenin's private domain. He was preparing himself for the revolution, and then when he went and made it, he put them down. (It's like

..he said in the P.S. to Stata and Revolution, "Pardon me, I was going to take up 1905, not stop at 1871, I mean after all that's the 19th. century, but it's so much pleasanter to make a revolution than to talk about it, I'll have to come back to this some other day.") However, every time there was a debate in Russia, whether it was against Trotsky, or against Bukharin, or against them both -- a little tiny section of it would suddenly be published, very much out of context, very much related to what they wanted.

And you know it's fantastic. The French are supposed to be so intellectually -- above -- ! And there's a guy by the name of Lefebvre, one of the great philosophers, who was a Communist, and he translated the Philosophic Notebooks -- I think it was in 1935 as a matter of fact (but I didn't know about that in '35, I was busy going for the C.I.O. and the Spanish Revolution) -- in any case, it didn't mean anything then, because the objective situation was such that they were facing fascism and so forth. So the real time when it was reproduced was '47. Now in '47 they brought me a copy of the French translation -- and I was so disgusted! His introduction was terrible, his idea is, Hegel would be gibberish if it weren't for Marx and especially Lenin. So I said, "Then why are you translating, I mean after all, if it's just gibberish, what's the point?" Now this is the year, 1947, when I translated the Philosophic Notebooks into English for the first time. (He may not have read it until I had it as an Appendix to Marxism and Freedom, but that is only because no one recognized me, everyone said, That's only gibberish, or only footnotes, or something, they didn't want it.) But what was the greatness of recognizing '47 where you did see a new stage? It's what you see appearing in the post-war world. And we will go into that in (III), but just before we do, I want to say this:

In '47 I happened to have been in France. These people are so conceited -- they think everyone is backward, especially Americans, they're even more backward than the African Revolutions -- and, you know, that's just, one man one vote, they had that in 1789. But what was happening was that people were expecting a new revolution -- for heavens sakes, what are we now going through with another World War, and we still haven't made it? Right? And who is the new ones that are appearing? You see, French imperialism was coming back to Africa; as soon as they defeated Japan and Nazi Germany, they were coming back. And there was this tremendous Black man from the Cameroons, trying to address the Socialist Party and the Trotskyists and so forth in France. He said that they were so happy with the end of WWII and the Occupation -- and now they were afraid, and they were saying, "Why in hell should we let France back here? So let's call a little meeting, you know, and try and find out what we should do." So a few people met and said, "Let's discuss what to do, how to see that the French don't reestablish themselves in the Cameroons." Now, one great thing about Africa, it's so hot, and they have no halls -- they don't care, you know? It's much more beautiful to meet outside. So they called a meeting and the point is, that instead of just a few people coming -- the whole damn population comes out! -- He says, "Gee whiz, we didn't even have membership cards, we didn't know what to do" -- Everybody decided it was their affair, there was no difference. And what do you suppose the great French intellectuals and what-not told him? "Well, it's like this: you first have to teach them what is a trade union, and then, when they know what's a trade union, what is a party, and then, when they've learned what is a party, you'll get to the more advanced." And I was saying, "Oh my God, here is the greatest revolution that just happened, they're going to kill the African Revolutions before they develop." (If you're dumb enough to go to France, or to Britain, or to America, or to any of the imperialists, that's the answer you'll get.) So that when we were translating that same year, it wasn't that this was gibberish -- No! We had gotten up to the stage where Lenin had seen what is, in the Science of Logic -- the dialectic of development, the dual rhythm of revolution, the importance of feeling the cognition not only reflecting the objective situation, but creating it -- and therefore, what should be our stage now, what exactly are we going to say is in '47?

III Self-Thinking Idea vs. Retrogression, Deviation and Intellectualism -- including
Mao

and

IV Praxis: Absolute Idea as New Beginning and Marx's "New Continent of Thought"

In each stage of historic development, when you look at something that really grabs you, that's because it answers what you're really concerned with. So what neither Marx nor Lenin had taken up -- when they said, The Absolute is good for nothing, though we've learned a lot until we got to the Absolute -- that's what we have to consider now. For example, even Hegel -- now he mentioned Absolute all the time. Every one of his works ends in some Absolute, Absolute Knowledge for Phenomenology of Mind, Absolute Idea for Science of Logic, Absolute Mind for Philosophy of Mind -- but the point is, the only true Absolute is Absolute Negativity!!! In other words, no matter what arises, it's this second negativity that you have to go through in order to get to entirely new total human relationships.

Let's see, therefore, what Hegel had tried to do in the last three syllogisms of the Philosophy of Mind. First, there's what just appears to be a listing of the books in the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences -- (There are three books, three sciences, three philosophies: Logic, Nature, Mind.) So he puts down, Logic, Nature, Mind, and it appears that he's just listing the three books he wrote. But in fact, if you know the dialectic, you know that the mediation, that which is in the middle, that which can turn both forward and backward, is the center; it is the one out of which the whole will develop, because you're going to constantly have the opposites, the beginning and the end, broken up, so the fact that Nature is the mediation is going to show a new movement from practice. Now, when he states the second syllogism, sure enough you now have not Logic, Nature, Mind, but Nature, Mind, Logic. Now Mind is the mediation. It's not the party-to-lead, it's not something else, but Mind is the mediation. That is, you will now have philosophy turn to both the movement from practice, and the movement from logic, and try, What new will it create out of that? Well, Hegel calls it the Self-Thinking Idea. He throws out Logic altogether! If it's the Self-Thinking Idea, you don't want to go back just to categories. And it would be the Self-Bringing Forth of Liberty -- except in the very last sentence, he doesn't know where to get it, if it's the Self-Bringing Forth of Liberty, you'd really have to turn to the masses finally, you can't go on with the thought forever, without the people who are thinking it.

I was speaking to the philosophers a couple of years ago, the Hegel Society of America, and they started laughing about the fact that I had said, I'm sure you don't find anything in common between yourself, the great elite, and the Soledad brother -- but what do you suppose started Hegel? After all, it was the breakdown of the Bastille. That was a real revolution and that was a real breakdown of a prison, and people coming out. And you also don't think that there is anything in the fact that I related 1831, and Hegel died -- and he considered the idea of Freedom -- and so did Nat Turner? And what about our age? Your great ideas that could only be in thought and God forbid that somebody should listen to Hegelians! So I said, "In his reexamination of Hegel, Professor Findlay was right when he stated Hegel's exegeses 'can seem arid and false to those who see nothing mysterious and godlike in the facts of human thought.' But isn't it equally true that philosophers who stand only in terror before revolution not only do not 'comprehend' it, they cannot fully comprehend the revolution in thought. And Hegel did revolutionize philosophy. Absolute Idea as new beginning can become a new 'subjectivity' for realizing Hegel's principle that the 'transcendence of the opposition between Notion and Reality, and the unity which is truth, rests upon this subjectivity alone.' This is not exactly a summons to the barricades, but Hegel is asking us to have our ears as well as our categories so attuned to the 'Spirit's urgency' that we rise to the challenge of working out, through 'patience, seriousness, suffering, and labor of the negative' a totally new relationship of philosophy to the actuality and action as befits what Hegel called a 'birthtime of history'. This is what makes Hegel a contemporary." Now I don't know whether they

15049

accepted me. But the point is that 1970 happened to have been the 100th. anniversary of Lenin's birth, and the 200th. of Hegel's, and so sometimes these conferences kept criss-crossing, and that's the first time the Hegel Society of America had invited a Marxist. And the Communists are mad as hell for them considering me, instead of, you know, the established line-- they've got the copyright to it, state power is a good copyright (it's at least powerful, an army is very powerful too.) And the Communists say, to prove that we really have to separate the materialism of Lenin from the idealism of Hegel, and the materialism of Marx from the idealism of Hegel, they say that those two sentences that I quoted, about cognition not only reflecting the world but creating it, they say Lenin was only repeating what Hegel had said. What they don't add is that right after Lenin quotes the sentence that Hegel had said, he puts down, "That is to say, men don't like what they see, and they are going to overthrow." That's a beautiful translation, I like that translation. But you have to understand, it's not what you, the leader, are going to tell me to do; it's what this new working out of philosophy and revolution as the unity will tell me.

It's for this reason I wanted to leave Marx's new continent of thought for now, that is, for the considering of Hegel's Absolute Idea as new beginning. What is Marx's new continent of thought? If you think it's only the fact that he found that material foundations are the real basis of everything, and production is labor and capital -- you're wrong. He found a new continent of thought, and it didn't stop with materialism. (1) For example, in those same essays where he breaks with Hegel, and when he tries to show you, what is the new world, what is this new philosophy he's calling a new Humanism, the unity of the ideal and the material, he says, Take the most important of all human relationships: man and woman. Supposing I let you forget the class struggle, and say that labor and capital are okay, supposing I let you forget a lot of the things I say against capitalism, and private property -- Just look at man, and woman -- and not a stranger or an enemy, the one you love! Just look at the way you treat her, is she really the one you love? She's subordinate, she's second-rate, she's nothing -- now what kind of crazy, alienating, racist, sexist society are we living in? So he brings in the relationship of man and woman -- for heavens sakes, we don't get to that till our age, and Women's Liberation is an Idea whose time has come. When did Marx say that? In 1844. (2) What else is in his discovery? He's against the dehumanization of the Idea -- why? Because he's trying to tell you that the proletariat is the center of everything, and he produces all the values and surplus values of the world. And he's made into just an appendage to a machine -- BUT he isn't just an appendage to a machine, she isn't just an appendage to a machine. The very fact that you try to make him into an appendage to a machine, brings about in him, in her, such a QUEST FOR UNIVERSALITY that nothing is going to stop it! The proletariat is going to be Reason! Marx has a beautiful expression about these poor German weavers and so forth, that they were much superior even to the French Revolution, because even though they went and broke up the machines and that was supposed to be very backward, they also went and burned up all your deeds to the machine. (3) So what else does he bring out that's new and that isn't just material? You know, we think we know science, right? Compared to what it was in Marx's day -- did he have such a beautiful thing as an A-bomb? But what did Marx say in discovering his new continent of thought? "If you have one method, one foundation for life, and another one for science, it is a priori a lie!!!" You'll just end up with this crazy machine, that's going to dominate all of the living workers, and with this crazy science -- he calls it an abstract empiricism. It's like a contradiction in terms, an abstract empiricism -- but he's right. In other words, you can relate about every single technological revolution, but Marx says, Do you want to see how you really should relate it? Just see how many strikes you had. how many forms of the hands did they want to take off when the machine was created? And you'll find yourself a beautiful history of technology. So you see, he had Man/Woman, he had Science, he had class relations, and he had the ideal and the material.

Now, once the 1848 revolutions were defeated -- 'cause after all, that's what we are for, we are preparing ourselves and trying to be on the right side of the barricades when the revolution comes -- Marx is off in the British museum. And it's the quiet '50s. (You think only our 1950s was the best generation? You should have seen Marx's 1850s!) He goes into the library, thinking, I really should know more specifically about all these economic laws, and discover them really precisely. He discovers, so to speak, everything: labor is the source not only of value, but of surplus value; he discovers the concentration and centralization of capital -- even if it reaches the ultimate in the formation of one single capitalist, nothing will change in your actual relationship between man, woman, between labor and capital; he discovers other things -- the Orient. Now isn't it fantastic. In 1848, here he had given this magnificent Manifesto -- "A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism", you better watch out -- (even though there were all of twelve people in the Communist League of Germany, but anyway he's threatening) -- and sure enough a revolution happens! Before the Manifesto was off the press there already was a revolution. BUT so much was Marx the Western man (you can't ever escape fully the damned situation in which you live), that he also used an expression, "the Orient, vegetating in the teeth of barbarism." Yes, that's in the Communist Manifesto. And what happens in the '50s? Well, everybody is just finished, the revolution is defeated, and there is no good, and there is going to be more crises -- who arises? The Taiping Rebellion for heavens sakes! That magnificent revolution in China, and he says, "Look at them, they're making a revolution while we're doing nothing -- they're trying to encourage us." So now, in the '50s as against the '40s, when he's supposed to be completely economist, he's suddenly up with all this about how great the revolution in China is and how backward we Europeans are -- they are really upsetting! Because if you're going to upset Britain, the greatest imperialist power -- it's going to be better, so to speak, than our revolution, it's going to really upset! So he brings in, in his most economic period, all this new idea of the Orient.

Okay. Meanwhile there is a crisis, a world economic crisis, 1857. And he had his economic notes, so he thinks he ought to rush ahead, and he publishes the Critique of Political Economy. (Now we can have the Grundrisse complete.) But he ain't happy! Why isn't he happy? He had all the economic laws. He has discovered a new continent of thought. He isn't happy because the Subject, the self-developing Subject, the proletariat -- what came out of them that was new? What came out and was new of the women? What came out and was new of the Blacks? And then there happens John Brown. "Isn't that magnificent!" Marx says. "A NEW WORLD STAGE HAS STARTED!" He is so happy with John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry that you think he's finally going to have the revolution in Germany! And he says, With that new stage, look what we are getting to see -- America, the backwoods -- there sure is going to be a revolution, this can't go on, the slavery. And what is going to occur in that? Well, he really defines the abolitionists -- white and Black, and women, and so forth. And he says, This is fantastic! He goes and becomes the spokesman, (you know, he writes for both the German press and the English press -- and incidentally also for the New York Tribune), and he begins by saying that a speech of the abolitionists, especially Wendell Phillips, is more important than all the stupid bulletins from the Civil War and by that pettifogging lawyer Abraham Lincoln. "One Negro regiment would do marvels for the nerves of the South." You know, it would just completely rattle them. This idea of trying to have a Civil War with bourgeois methods, "The union come hell or high water", and not freeing the slaves, that's just fantastic. Now, great things are occurring in these '60s, they're magnificent, just like our '60s -- and what else is occurring? The First International. Marx has just established it, to make sure that the goddamn bourgeoisie in England doesn't intervene on the side of the South. The bourgeoisie in England is flirting with the idea that they can get their proletariat to be with them -- because the proletariat is starving, the cotton is blockaded. Whereupon the First International is established, with Marx as the head. And the British workers say, We would rather starve on this side of the ocean than see the perpetuation of slavery on the other.

Now, there is also another question. Women. There isn't a single Women's Movement that Marx is not in. And he's very proud of the First International he's establishing, because not only is he for women's freedom, as in women's equality and all that, but the women have to be the leadership as well; in other words, they're the only ones in the 19th. century who had a woman, Mme. Law, as part of the Main Committee. But more important even than that is the fact that there's a certain woman, Russian born, who is escaping from Czarism -- (we're always escaping from something, if it isn't Czarism, it's Stalinism) -- and wanting, looking for a new way to revolution. She's a young woman, Elizabeth Dmitrieff. And she goes to Switzerland, because everybody is going to Switzerland, all the Russian revolutionaries are there, the Polish revolutionaries, everybody is going to the free country. Yet where is there a real revolution occurring? So the revolutionaries say to her, There is a man in England, go over and speak to him, he seems to be an internationalist. So she comes and Marx says, "Well, we don't have a section in France. Now you know something is going to be happening with this Franco-Prussian War, why don't you go and establish a section of the First International in France?" And she barely gets there, and there is the greatest revolution, the first workers' state, the Paris Commune. And what those women did! You should all read The Women Incendiaries by Edith Thomas, who is a woman of this generation, in other words, of the Resistance, and the Resistance women were now finally discovering the women incendiaries. So we have not just Man/Woman as a principle as in 1844, but by 1871, the actual builders and creators of the revolution, and the Reason.

Okay. Now he's ready to rewrite Critique of Political Economy. And it's not just economics, (even though it's the most beautifully developed, to this day we don't have anything compared with it.) But, this thing that the American slaves did, in other words, the Civil War and the ending of slavery -- this has produced the first national labor union. We never had a national union before. And the fight for the shortening of the working day: eighty full pages in Capital goes into the shortening of the working day. Marx says, "Labor in the white skin cannot be free as long as labor in the Black skin is branded." -- Now people think that's rhetoric, but that's ridiculous! It was the most precise expression of exactly what was happening not only in the creation of the first national labor union, following the war, and the struggle for the 8-hour day -- but the fact that he, as head of the International, was trying to say something that would be new in this struggle, right? Whereupon the Baltimore workers in 1866 are saying, "We will fight for the 8-hour day till capitalism is completely destroyed." Isn't that fantastic?! And Marx when he writes that down, he says, "Well, they did it so great, there's no point in my mentioning that, all I can tell you is that such concreteness in the struggle for freedom, such concreteness when they ask even the question, 'When does my day start and when does it end?' is greater than all the damn manifestos of the American Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the French Revolution. "

Now what else does he do in Capital that he didn't do in Critique of Political Economy, and that comes with this new Subject, this new self-developing Subject? This new stage of cognition that isn't only going to be a revolt, but Reason? Well, all the time he kept asking the question, Why in heck are we so enamoured with and capitulating to this question of commodities? What has made it a fetish? Here I've just explained to you all the laws, that the appearance of equality in the market is a lot of nonsense, at the point of production you're exploited, you do exactly what the boss tells you, and you get exactly the pay, and no nonsense: so it isn't equality of the market, it is exploitation at the point of production. It's ridiculous to say a commodity has use value and exchange value, as if that was the commodity's natural characteristic. Its "natural" characteristics are due to the fact of the duality of labor. -- You're concrete labor, and you produce something useful, right? But you're an abstraction, though there is no such animal as an abstraction. So how did you become abstract? Why are so many hours of labor so much value and surplus value? The damn factory clock has pounded you in! you have to produce this socially necessary labor time. But why do we who have discovered all this, and told you about your exploitation,

and you believe it, why do we still go on and accept commodities? Why don't we say, Well, wait a minute, my labor power, this ability to labor -- you can't take my hand away -- or you can take it away, but it ain't going to produce anything for you -- so you can't separate the labor power from the labor as activity. What is this? And the Paris Communards say, Well, like this: Let's meet every day, let's decide what I will pay, what I will do, why I will do it, when I will do it -- So Marx ends up with the fact, writing about the Paris Commune, "The greatest achievement of the Paris Commune was" -- four little words -- "its own working existence." Now its own working existence was by freely -- freely -- associated labor. So now Marx comes back to Capital, he had just published it, now he's ready for a second edition -- AND HE SAYS: The form: the fetishism is all from the very form, the very idea that a person can appear as a thing. Okay. The Paris Commune has shown him that.

Now why is it that when we come to our age -- whether it's the '30s, the '40s, or the two decades that we're interested in -- the three things that always come back to haunt us, to be for it, or to be against it (and the minute you're a deviationist you're against it): (1) negation of the negation, everybody's ready to say that's a lot of nonsense; (2) fetishism of commodities; and (3) freely associated labor. Okay. Let's go through and see.

In 1955, they suddenly in Russia built up a terrific struggle against the Humanist essays. "Marx wasn't really yet a Marxist, and he was still a Hegelian" and a lot of nonsense -- "You have to separate the materialism from the idealism", and so forth. So these things are attacked. And everybody laughs, right? That is, the bourgeois intellectuals are laughing, saying, They're splitting hairs, like how many angels can dance on the point of a needle or some nonsense like that, that's the way Communists or Marxists always are. And I say, No! Russia, one-fifth of the world, isn't going to argue about such a thing, it must mean something -- negation of the negation means revolution! You may think it's a lot of nonsense, but every revolutionary knows that capitalism destroyed feudalism and socialism destroys capitalism -- the negation of the negation is revolution. So if they suddenly decide to argue against the 1844 essays, it means that some revolution is somewhere -- we don't know where -- but it's going to break out. It means that the East German revolution in '53, the first revolution from under Russian totalitarianism, that one was destroyed by the mightier power of Russia, BUT now something will appear. And the next year we have the Hungarian Revolution. And sure enough, those Hungarians, their new stage of cognition is: "What are we keeping those 1844 essays in the archives for? That's exactly what we should have, right here. Didn't we all become Communists because we thought it was going to be a new human society? Look at this damn society!" So the question becomes very real and concrete.

Now, on this question of commodities. Let's take all the so-called new philosophies or intellectuals in that same period, and see what happened there. There is Sartre. They were all interested in the Phenomenology, the Unhappy Consciousness -- Sartre's going to make it more than unhappy -- "Being and Nothingness". And he says that what is wrong with Marxism is that it's forgotten all about the human individual personal freedom. He's going to bring in the human personal freedom -- He practically repeats what the Stoics said! You know, "I'm a philosopher even under fascism" -- but the personal freedom could mean what under the Occupation? whether you were a Jew or otherwise. So that the expression of the Existentialism was in order to reestablish some previous category of freedom -- the individual freedom -- disregarding the social. And Sartre wanted to be a revolutionary -- he wasn't but he wanted to be, he certainly was in the Resistance and so forth -- and he was very interested in Black, right? At least he helped the Black writers -- (but I'll read you what Fanon says.) And yet Sartre says that that was an a-historical stage. Now what kind of nonsense is that? You mean when you don't have an encyclopedia written by you, the people have not had their roots, or their own history, in the development? How can you say that? Well, if

you're an abstract philosopher you can say that. Now you know Fanon was an Existentialist of sorts -- he certainly thought a great deal about Sartre, and some of the others. But then he gets very shocked at the ideas in Black Orpheus when he reads what Sartre says both on the a-history and on the question that Black is just a passing moment. (How you can say Black is a passing moment, how you can escape the skin, I don't know, but in his abstract sense it is that.) Here's Frantz Fanon: "Sartre was reminding me that my Blackness was only a minor term. In all truth, in all truth I tell you, my shoulders slipped out of the framework of the world, my feet could no longer feel the touch of the ground." And then he turns and says, It's not only the imperialists that we have to tell to go to hell, but something is wrong with the white man. So it's a certain recognition of the Particular -- even though its the middle term, and if it becomes a fetish, a fixed particular like nationalized property or any other fixed particular, it's wrong -- but the Particular that is your human development, or your racial development, or your class development, that is the very road to total freedom. "And if we're going to do away with this European mimicry, they always speak about the freedom of man, but always kill him (especially if he's the wrong color), that's suddenly the opposite of manhood and womanhood and what not" -- Fanon has brought in a very different understanding of the word Particular, not only as mediation and the in-between form, but as the way to freedom.

Now. You take a man like Lukacs. He was not an outsider looking in like Sartre, he was a Marxist -- and he suddenly thinks that this fetishism of commodities should really be applied to "fetishism of thought". Marx had always said that, so far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, they're such slaves of the period in which they live (though they may think they're masters, they have all the power), that even when they discover something as new as, labor is the source of all value, they're still bound to the fetishism of commodities, they can't get rid of their historic framework. But he, Lukacs, wants to develop fetishism into thought. And then Adorno, Negative Dialectics, that was the height of the height of the height of something, the main philosophic legacy of the whole Frankfurt School (in other words, philosophers in Germany who were both Marxists and not going with Russia, were trying to be independent). And in fact, it turned out that they broke from Marx and from Hegel because instead of having it the dialectic of negativity, in other words, this development through contradiction and double negation -- they have negative dialectics. And he says that he wants to free the dialectic of its positivistic nature (because, you know, two negatives make a positive). So that's exactly it. In other words, we're not going to have human power as its own end, we're going to have some damn new thought. In each case, they wrote on some devious path, as intellectuals who were not related to an actual mass movement.

Okay. You would think therefore that Mao would be completely different. He was a revolutionary, he was the Orient, and he did make the greatest revolution arising out of WWII. (Naturally, it wasn't as great as the Russian Revolution of 1917, but it certainly was the greatest arising out of WWII.) What happened that he likewise gets so transformed into this fixed particular, now China's the great thing and Russia's the no good thing, and suddenly you are going to have Russia as Enemy No.1, U.S. imperialism may be a great awful power and we have to destroy it, but of all the two superpowers, Russia is the worse. How do you come to that position? In ideology, in cognition, and in form of revolt. Okay. Look at Mao as he develops as a revolutionary and at which points he makes a deviation from Marx. In 1937 he made his first and supposedly his greatest contribution to philosophy, "On Contradiction", but instead of developing it either as logic as in Hegel, or as the class struggle as in Marx, he makes the question of superstructure so enter the situation, that even though in the final analysis you would have the class struggle decide, in between the primary can become secondary, the secondary can become primary, anything so long as Mao's Thought will control the direction. But let's forget '37 for the time being, because that's before he got power, and technically, historically, we know that the reason he did that was that he wanted to reunite with Chiang Kai-shek during the Japanese

invasion, so that when he sent Chou En-lai to save Chiang Kai-shek from his own troops who had arrested him, it was for that purpose, "Let's be together for the fight against the Japanese invasion and then we'll see." But now, he has made the revolution, in '49, he has created an entirely new society. Everybody is thrilled with the idea that after all this horrible imperialism and comprador bourgeoisie, we got rid of it, we have a new society. So -- what happens, when you finally have your freedom, have your power -- you have to develop somewhere, right? Now are you going to have the masses as the ones that would really be the Subject and tell you, or are you going to have once again some vanguard party?

Okay. Let us see what is different in Mao from other Marxists. For example, the greatest thing that got him a name was the peasantry; in other words, he definitely believes in the revolutionary nature of the peasantry. He's going to say the proletariat is the most revolutionary, 'cause that's what you're supposed to say, but he's going to work with the peasantry; there's a very small proletariat in China, in addition to which the original Communist Party was destroyed by Chiang Kai-shek, and in any case, he's moving in with this great peasant army. So now, you have a poet who hates the administrative mentality, and is a lover of the peasantry -- and who is going to create some new form of relations, and not only the throwing out of Chiang Kai-shek. However, in addition to being a poet who hates the administrative mentality, the second thing is that Mao is at the same time a soldier, and he so propagates, "Power comes out of the barrel of a gun", that nobody pays attention to the second part of the sentence, even himself -- "and politics controls the gun." And, third, in addition to being a poet, and a soldier, he's a Confucian, a product of Chinese mentality and philosophy, who had considered that dialectics -- the unity of opposites, the struggle of opposites, the contradiction of opposites, the destruction of opposites -- was, like, they used to say, Yin and yang, in other words, opposites complement each other, man and wife and so forth. However, even though Mao was raised with this, he accepts Marxian dialectics, so that means he's definitely going to be for the class struggle -- right? But, there's a division, as to when you'll be for the class struggle, and when you will give a greater role for the superstructure, the ideology.

Now, in addition to that fact, you now come to the fourth characteristic, that is, that even though he's an admirer of the peasantry, he suddenly is so overwhelmed with the backwardness of China, he has to catch up, he's into the Great Leap Forward, and he disregards all that Russia tells him about. You can't skip so many stages, and stuff like that. The big transition point comes in ('57) at the World Congress of the Communist Parties in Russia. Now, what happened objectively, in the world, to make Mao forget, so to speak, all that he has learned and all that he has achieved, and regress? Two things. First there is the Sputnik. Now it's always written up that Mao, being the greater revolutionary, told Krushchev that now he can challenge American imperialism right off the bat, but Krushchev told him, "You've got another few things coming, we're not ready for that yet." But the point is that there's a recognition that technology is not just being an industrialized country, but something has happened with the Sputnik, the technology -- signs of going backward. And Mao is ready to go to the end: what if the worst thing of all happened? Nuclear war. "Well, for heavens sake, we Chinese are so backward, it's going to help us, with all our masses, if you destroy half of humanity we will be the half that still lives." He presents that to poor Nehru, and Nehru's hair just about stands on end, how can you talk about something, even if there would be nuclear war, somebody would still live to tell the tale.

The second thing that happens at that World Congress, in relation to the Sputnik, is that the Hungarian Revolution has been put down by Krushchev and Mao -- Mao had told him to go in, and urged him on ahead. Why? Well, this is the first revolution from the Left -- these people don't want to go back to capitalism, or feudalism or anything, they're bringing out the Humanism of Marx on to the historic stage. "Now how in the hell can somebody from the Left arise that's left of me, Mao Tse-tung? Well, I think the Russians have made a lot of mistakes, and I haven't so I'll create 'Let a hundred

flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend" -- but he found, that when he raises that slogan, there is so much contention, there is so much people saying, "We're very happy we're free, we're very happy with you, we're very happy with the revolution, but for heavens sakes, how can six people -- you and Chou En-lai and Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou-Teng and Teng--tell 600 million people what to do? GET OFF OUR BACKS!" Now when that happens, this contradiction that he has now brought in, "How to Handle Contradictions Among the People", becomes something very different. Because having found 1000 poisonous weeds, instead of 100 flowers, they've got to be removed. So the pull of the world market, of the new stage of state-capitalism, the imperialist development -- his being for the Third World and wanting to be that representative -- is, so to speak, going to be nothing if they have the Sputnik and we have nothing; there has to be competition. So that is the stage when he actually accepts state-capitalism as the next stage of human development -- then we'll live to see that we still go on to Communism, or whatever Mao Tse-tung Thought is.

Now it is fantastic that the greatest of all the revolutions -- it's supposed to be the greatest, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution -- was actually subordinate to this new stage he had reached, in '57, with the acceptance of state-capitalism. So that when finally we have the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and he is not the besieged fortress like he always claimed he was, because LBJ decided to rain the bombs on Vietnam, not on China -- maybe it's a way to China, but the point is they're raining on Vietnam -- and everybody's saying, "For heavens sakes, let's be with the Vietnamese, this horrible imperialism is raining the bombs on Vietnam" -- and Mao says nothing is going to disturb his Cultural Revolution. He has to get rid of those in the leadership and supposedly the bureaucracy, and so forth, that we'll first know that Enemy No. 1 is Russia. So now Mao -- and the Wan Sui, "Long live Mao Tse-tung, Long live Mao Thought", from the Cultural Revolution -- revealed that whereas as late as '59 he was saying, "The greatest thing is the dialectics of liberation, and the negation of the negation, it proves that we will have to have continuous revolutions, and we will have to have this until we have the new man" and so forth, he now says, (now being 1967) that there is no negation of the negation. And he says that Stalin was absolutely right on one thing, there is no fetishism of commodities when it comes to so-called socialist societies; they're not commodities, their labor and so forth is no longer private property, so supposedly they're all together. In other words, you always return to such basics, in philosophy, in the very stage of cognition, that somehow or another, no matter where you are, in which part of the world, and when it is, it turns out to be that the negation of the negation, the fetishism of commodities, freely associated labor -- they are the ones that are constantly being chipped away at, and deviated from, so long as you don't want to have the whole.

Now, I quoted Frantz Fanon in relation both to Sartre and the Existentialists, and what he was presenting: My Blackness is my revolutionary thing, but we will create a new Humanism for everyone. Now I want to read you one quotation from the same type of rejection of Sartre and his lowering of freedom to individual freedom, from an East European -- 'cause it's just fantastic, all through my period in Africa, I was finding that there were so many parallels to what was happening in East Europe -- believe me, I felt very much at home. (They also felt very much at home with me, after all, I was only ten miles away from Juffure, and we all recognized the same roots.) This man is Milan Prucha, and he is trying to say why they were so anxious for freedom, and yet didn't go in for Existentialism, or think that was the new freedom: "The extreme sharpening between being and consciousness in Sartre's philosophy results in the disappearance of contradictions between man and the world, because their mutual alienation becomes so absolute that subjective choices are detached from the material conditions within which they are possible. Existential philosophy, which meant to express the tragedy of man's situation, becomes a superficial optimism

through its idealism." In other words, we have to have the kind of idealism which is real, in the sense that it's the complete identification with the aspirations of the masses and the material foundations for uprooting (and not just finding your "Roots") the whole society.

In this material foundation, that's where you discover the global aspects -- (and I cannot after all go into the global crisis, because we would be here till tomorrow!) -- and what you have to present, as the new for the specific stage, is that if we're going to begin with the Absolute Idea as a new beginning, you have to begin always on the totality of what faces you, so that the question of uprooting means that you will open a new banner not only for the destruction and not only for the day after the revolution, but the day of the revolution. You have every right to ask the questions the day before the revolution, and say that we have seen not only aborted revolutions, near-revolutions, unsuccessful revolutions -- but also the transformation into opposite, whether it's Russia as the workers' state into a state-capitalist society, or the new global reach for power on the part of even narrow nationalism. And this question of the new continent of thought, of the new beginnings now, means that whether it's Women's Liberation, or the Black question, or the youth, or labor -- that which is ready to uproot the capitalists, and the bureaucracy--those new four forces of revolution that we have singled out for this beginning must have all of their questions not only answered, but the point is that they can answer them. That is the whole question. You bring in something new to your age when you specify, and see, what has come from the movement from practice. In a certain sense, you could say that the division between 1953-56, in other words, the beginning of our two decades, for our today, and the end, 1973-76, could be summed up in the division between my discovery in the same period, '53, of a movement from practice -- that is, the Absolute Idea is not something in heaven, but it is actually a unity of theory to this movement from practice that's itself a form of theory, the breakdown of the Absolute into a new unification -- and '73-'76, when it's not just the movement from practice, but the unity of the movement of practice and theory to an entirely new form of relationship.

So I want to end with what I think is our task, and if you will permit me I will quote from Philosophy and Revolution: "Humanity has evidently reached the end of something when the richest and most powerful military might on earth shouts to the heavens, not about the wonders of its production, affluence, or nuclear gigantism, but about the 'strange spirit of malaise throughout the land.' This is not all due to 'spirit'. It has very deep economic roots: whether one looks at the unemployment, or any of the other problems." -- And what we have to do is to free ourselves from what William Blake, in the first revolution, as a poet, has said, 'The mind forged manacles', those fetishism of commodities we ourselves put on top. -- "And the new that characterizes our era, the 'energizing principle' that has determined the direction of the two decades of the movement from practice, simultaneously rejects false consciousness and aborted revolutions. Ours is the age that can meet the challenge of the times when we work out so new a relationship of theory to practice that the proof of the unity is in the Subject's own self-development. Philosophy and revolution will first then liberate the innate talents of men and women who will become whole. Whether or not we recognize that this is the task history has 'assigned' to our epoch, it is a task that remains to be done."

And I hope we begin doing it right here and now.

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15057

Excerpts from the Discussion:

On the question of Kant, in relationship to Trotsky and Luxemburg. Now, Hegel shows that Kant understood ideas, and understood experience, and was against the British empiricists and wanted to reestablish that even though you need science, still ideas are a force in themselves. But instead of jamming them up together, ideas and experience, instead of uniting them, Kant left them separate. So Hegel says, I don't understand how you can say, this is important, and this is important, and not jam them up together.

Now, how does it happen, that here are great revolutionaries like Trotsky and Luxemburg, and they, so to speak, stop dead at the relationship of the Universal to the Particular, and theory to practice -- and from very opposite points of view. For example, Trotsky understood that you need a world revolution, you couldn't have socialism in one country -- now that sounds like he would be opposed to Stalin, and he certainly fought him, yet he refused to acknowledge that there was a transformation into opposite, from the workers' state, and therefore fought it only as a bureaucracy, if you didn't have such an awful person like Stalin it would be better. But Trotsky never raised the banner of uprooting the society, to really have a new revolution. Now, Luxemburg, on the other hand, was great on the question of recognizing the greatness of spontaneity. Let me read something to you, relating to the 1919 revolution RL is leading in Germany; she is arguing against the German Social Democracy -- not only those that betrayed, but also those that say that Russia is backward, and therefore you can't do it there, you have to follow the great technologically advanced countries. She says: "The element of spontaneity plays such a prominent role in mass strikes in Russia, not because the Russian proletariat is 'unschooled', but because revolutions allow no one to play the schoolmaster." Now that is very very beautiful! and you would think that therefore she would make it -- and I'm not now talking about the fact that maybe she would have, because the counter-revolution had bashed her head in and threw her body into the Landwehr Canal -- what I'm talking about is what flows from the thought, which concerns, what should she do. She's absolutely right! It's not the backwardness, but the advanced stage of the proletariat, to do it, and they're not going to let you be schoolmaster -- but what is your contribution as a theoretician? Here RL was so much in advance of the times, in advance of the others; including Lenin, on the question of the German Social Democracy -- she broke with Karl Kautsky four years before Lenin broke -- in 1910, not 1914; she broke with the whole concept of imperialism -- that is, the idea they were following, you know, you just say it's bad, but -- this was when Germany first started on the imperial question -- Rosa Luxemburg was just magnificent on the Moroccan crisis! And yet when it came to a full and total theory, she was so concerned with fighting Marx on the accumulation of capital, saying that he didn't foresee this stage, that it ended up by her denying what she called the rococco style of the nature of the dialectic in the fetishism of commodities.

So what I'm trying to do now is not really answer this question, but to pose the question, because it's the first time that I myself have related so many different opposite ways that nevertheless can be explained in the manner of the division and separation between Hegel and Kant -- I really want this developed.

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News & Letters was established precisely because we not only want to talk so that everyone can understand, but also because we want to record what you say, that is, what every worker says, in a strike, in his or her thought, in any way -- exactly as that person says it, we don't edit anything -- and we're going to ask you a lot of questions you didn't even ask yourself! And yet at the same time we want to say what we want to say. N&L was established as the voice of the workers, and to be at the same time the unity of worker and intellectual. Our editor is a Black production worker; I'm the chairperson of the Editorial Board, yet I only have one column. What we are

trying to work out is difficult, that is, theoretic preparation for revolution, and being a philosophic action group. The point is to see that the break is also the continuity of history, you can't stop it.

But now looking at the actual movement from practice -- actual class struggle activities, actual Women's Liberation, or Black, or youth, activities -- that in itself is a form of theory. So what comes out of that? When you say, "To hell with you!", meaning your boss, you are actually not only saying, To hell with this job, and going out on strike, you are questioning the system. So for this reason we refuse to have a separate theoretical paper, just for the intellectuals -- that way they'll learn nothing from the proletariat -- but we always have the unity of both. And right now we're involved in writing a pamphlet on the relationship of Frantz Fanon to American Black thought. We didn't make it in the '60s, and the point is to realize that activity has to be united with theory, because activity without theory is just as one-sided as the other way around. And yes, I do think all these wildcats have been magnificent, I do believe that they are a way to revolution, all I want is that what they do and what we do should be united.

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Now: do I believe in organization? Of course! But, I'm opposed to the vanguard party to lead, I'm opposed to anybody saying, You've got to do what I tell you to do. But I'm for the organization that comes naturally. The reason that we call ourselves News & Letters Committees is that we want a committee form of functioning. What is the committee form? Well, first, during the period the American colonies were fighting for freedom, a few people were writing to a few other people, saying, "Gee, I don't like George III, and what are you doing ... ?" In other words, they organized Committees of Correspondance, and these Committees of Correspondance, that everybody thought weren't anything, just a nuisance -- they turned out to be the engines of revolution. How did that come about? First, just by letting your ideas develop; from those ideas of what should we do, there was growing all sorts of other ideas ... the whole question of what was the relationship between an idea and the deed, and what was the relationship between that particular deed you had decided on, in relationship to what was happening anywhere else in the world So you see, every deed has a consequence -- whether the consequence develops into an outright revolution, or only develops in clarifying your mind, you see the dialectic of development by opposing that which is Now, the Abolitionist Movement. In deciding to fight against that which is, the slavery, they established an entirely new way of human relations. This is in a slave society, in a society where women have no vote and are thought even less than slaves -- women and men meet, Blacks and whites meet, there's the decision that they will do it outside the confines either of the Constitution, or of any other established form So we have in the Abolitionist Movement: a new concept of organization, the committee form; also a new concept of intellectual, that which develops himself most when he or she is the expression of the social forces of history; and new human relationships

Now jump over to Russia, the five days in February 1917. The women are celebrating International Women's Day, and they say, Why in the heck are we staying in the hall, instead of creating something? Why should we go back to that horrible factory, we should stay out. And the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks, the anarchists, say, You women are dumb! The might of the Czar -- you'll be mowed down! But the women go to the factory, but they don't go in. There are 20,000. And they address a letter to the men, the metal workers' union, saying, On the third day we are going to march on the Palace. We hope you will join us And they are walking, and they are now 50,000. And as they are walking, everybody from the prostitutes to the housewives say, Don't we suffer from the war? Don't we have anything to say about it? Now that gets to be 90,000. And by the fourth day there are 200,000. You see how each action has brought on something else. And by the fifth day, you don't have a Czar. Please tell me, Who was the vanguard?

The Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and the anarchists and all the big intellectuals who said, You'll be mowed down? Or those who said, We can't stand it any longer, this war has to end! What I mean by the movement from practice that is itself a form of theory is that you meanwhile invented all sorts of new ways -- women's organizations, Soviets -- Soviets of soldiers, Soviets of workers, Soviets of peasants -- and everybody has something to say. The dialectic that comes out of those activities would lead to the second stage where you say, Well now what is the relationship of what we're doing here, in Russia, to the world as a whole -- or here in Russia not just to the fact that we overthrew Czarism, but now what are we going to accept? Just a parliamentary government? and so forth.

So that what we always have to see is that when something has happened, what have been the results of it and what part did it play that you did have a reorganization of philosophy of revolution and a new relationship of theory to practice, as well as spontaneity to organization -- as well as different kinds of organization.... You can't have a few people deciding for everybody! Even if they were all geniuses and the greatest revolutionaries on earth! You've got to have all these new forms of organization -- you can't be scared! Now Marx for example -- he had no theory of the party, but he certainly was for organization! At first he had the Communist League; then he changed it to the Workingman's Association; then he changed it to the International -- whatever was in that period. The most important thing in the 1860s wasn't the Communist League. What was important was the idea that there was the Civil War in the U.S., and in Poland there were struggles against Russian Czarism, and so you had to have an international form, where one proletariat wouldn't be in the way of the other proletariat, and would show its solidarity. So the form of organization is a relationship between the spontaneity, and that which continues throughout the years -- and like Marx and Engels said, We don't care if there's only two of us, we're going to keep this up, because this is the right form. And it has to be a form which is constantly open; one of the greatest things about the Paris Commune was that you could recall whenever you elected, within 30 days !

And the question of the committee form of functioning, the decentralized form, was the form that turned out for our age. What was the very first thing the Hungarian Revolution did after they broke down the statue of Stalin? They said, I'm so sick and tired of the centralized party-to-lead and the trade union-to-lead -- decentralization was their biggest request. So the committee form as against the centralized trade union, the vanguardist party, was the way that was re-established in the Hungarian Revolution. And here, when the Blacks first started the Black Revolution in our period, the same thing happened in the Montgomery Bus Boycott

And I'm a big believer in multiple organizations. You have to be at the point of production, you have to be in the interracial struggles, you have to be in the Women's Liberation -- everywhere that a movement arises that is really going to shake up this damn system, you have to be in it, and active in it. And at the same time, you have to be theoretically developing, to see what comes from within that movement....

The activity of ideas is in what you think of Freedom, what you do for Freedom, and what develops out of that thing that you started, that simple little thing -- I don't like what is, we'll have to change what is -- and that development is the dialectic

The pages of N&L are open to everybody. The meetings of N&L are open to everybody. And at this particular moment we're involved in writing a pamphlet on Frantz Fanon and American Black Thought. Come and join with us -- by "join" I don't mean joining for membership, though I won't refuse you -- I mean join in the actual creation of a new stage of cognition.

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