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Philosophy and Revolution:

The Point of Transition

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PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION: THE POINT OF TRANSITION

1968 is a period of transition, the year in which mankind throughout the world is demolishing all the economic, political and sociological myths of the world's rulers. The masses — the workers and the youth — are proving once again that the human being, and not wealth or weapons, is the determining factor of any and all developments. It is impossible any longer to deny this. It stands out as bold as life and as stark as death. Whether one starts out a review of the year with the Tet offensive of the Vietcong and its consequences in the United States where suddenly there appeared not one, but two, anti-Vietnam war presidential candidates from within the ruling class while President Johnson took himself out of the race and declared a de-escalation of the war; or one turns at once to the current situation in France and the emergence of millions of workers on general strike, it is clear that the masses have, in a very brief span of time, changed the objective world situation beyond recognition.

That the totality of the world crisis and the attempts at fundamental class resolutions of these crises are not lost upon the bourgeoisie can be seen in the sudden U.S. and Russian decision to act, or pretend to act, to stop the mad Anti-Ballistic-Missiles (ABM) race. It is to be doubted that anyone (least of all the U.S. and Russian ruling classes) has any illusions that these two super-powers, at this historic juncture, can for long practice "peaceful co-existence" since each is a contender for undivided world power. As can be seen by the crisis within each country throughout the globe, the lesser powers are equally impotent. You can very nearly take any country at random and the only thing that distinguishes one set of rulers from another is the specific form of the crisis in which each functions. The so-called Cultural Revolution in China, no less than the general strike in France; the mass demonstrations in industrialized Japan, no less than the civil war in tribalized Nigeria; economic stagnation in Great Britain no less than the "economic health" of Germany (West or East as both reach for "full automation") -- all these transition points mark the shakiness of the established world order.

The remaining six months of the year hold out promise only for further exacerbations of the assorted crises. The newly passed 10% surtax called The Revenue and Expenditures Control Act may satisfy Big Capital that was determined to curb labor and the so-called "growth binge" since labor refused to listen to the President's "guide lines" while the war hawks kept expanding both the war and its costs. But the real name for what the bankers call "much less buoyant conditions than now prevail" is recession. It is a "planned" recession and it is supposed to be "mild", but neither the "plan" nor the "mildness" can take anything from those who have nothing. Rep. Wilbur Mills may gloat at the plight of the Poor People's Campaign, but even he cannot be sure that the hungry will take the new assault lying down while the actual financial debauchery for the ABM system goes on apace. On the contrary.

The more perspicacious bourgeois ideologists who see the need to aid the poor can hear "a cry in the world ... for a new philosophy, for the priorities of life rather than death, for some unity of purpose and common control of human affairs" (James Reston, New York Times, June 30, 1968). That the ideologists, like the rulers, cannot achieve anything remotely resembling a philosophy based on human needs is seen clearest in France, where revolution and counter-revolution are locked in a death embrace. No "vote" can unlock it. The vote shows only that, once the revolutionary situation loses momentum, the counter-revolution tightens its grip. No "reform" can serve as a transition point out of the crisis, which will only deepen as it reacts to the world situation.

To grasp the direction of any movement now, we must examine not only the forces of revolution and counter-revolution, but also their philosophies and transition points to the "unknown", that is to say, to the rendezvous with destiny that cannot be known before the battle has ended. It has just begun.

I. The Objective World Situation: Revolution, Counter-Revolution, New Points of Transition

"... Not only unity of opposites but t r a n s i t i o n of every determination, quality, side, feature into its opposite."

-- Lenin, Philosophic Notebooks

The spontaneous outburst of French youth, after a decade of Gaullism, distinguished itself from youth revolts the world over by bringing the mass of proletarians to the front center of the historic stage. In turn, the 10 million workers, on general strike, brought the whole French economy to a standstill and sent fear into the hearts -- and pocketbooks which they call "souls" -- of international capitalism. Masses in action, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie in disarray, on the other hand, marked the approach of revolution. But the approach, far from leading to outright revolution, stopped stockstill at the threat of counter-revolution.

Why?

How could the new stage of world history, the highest for a technologically advanced country in the post-war period, have been arrested in its track? Surely it was not because the working class had allegedly become a mass of one-dimensional men concerned only with their stomachs. Even the ruling

bourgeoisie, and its Loyal Opposition, the French Communist Party, had been taken by surprise, both by the spontaneity of the strikes and by the workers' refusal to accept the unprecedented economic package "won" by their leaders. Because none, least of all the youth, had any illusions whatever about the "Stalinist creeps" (to use Cohn-Bendit's phrase), the questions must be directed to the independent Left, i.e. Trotskyists -- there are at least four varieties of those -- the Anarchists, and socialist independents, including the "International Situationists" (who, if you forget the philosophy part of Philosophy and Revolution, that is to say the theoretic preparation for revolution, would sound like us in their anti-elitism and call for Workers' Councils).

In weighing the answer to this life-and-death question, we must bear in mind that youth revolts are the most characteristic mark of this epoch. Although they have nowhere attained the high development they reached in France, nevertheless in some aspects the rebellions in some other countries were more advanced in respect to timing, to sense of internationalism, and even in relationship to philosophy. Thus, it was the West German youth who contacted the French, not the French them. A few days before Rudolf Dutschke was shot, his address to Czechoslovakian youth could be heard on CBC. And in Czechoslovakia where the student rebellion and workers' revolt still have, thus far, at least the grudging approval of the ruling faction of the Communist Party, a prominent part is played by philosophers.

Thus, Ivan Svitak, who has written on the Humanism of Marxism, has tried to concretize this by establishing direct relations with miners. Here is how he stated his position: "Workers and intellectuals have a common enemy -- the bureaucratic dictatorship of the apparatus ... And it is for this reason that in the interest of socialist democracy we have to strengthen the unity of those working with their hands and those working with their brains against the apparatuses of the power elite which has been, is, and remains the main obstacle in the unique experiment of our nations with socialist democracy." The new unity of worker and intellectual has just begun and could hardly at this stage be considered as the point of transition to the abolition of the division between mental and manual labor. But it is a move forward and contrasts sharply with the counter-revolution which seems to be in the saddle in Poland where the student revolt has been contained, and the unbridled attack against "Zionist" intellectuals bears the brand of a most characteristic feature of Fascism itself -- anti-Semitism!

This doesn't mean that Poland can be written off. In 1955-56 Poland was in the forefront of the East European rebellions, posed the problems in the deepest philosophical terms, and was a catalyst for the Hungarian Revolution. The very severity of the attack against philosophers now, speaks volumes about the fact that the philosophic revolution was not destroyed, but only driven underground. Every time it surfaces, the counter-revolution looks for ideological aids to its "police actions" to help obliterate the integrality of philosophy and revolution. It gets it by the most vicious and deliberate abuses of the language of Marxism.

Those who think that the East European situations have no lessons for revolutionaries in the West had better take a second look at France and consider

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also this: workers in Detroit shops held discussions about the general strike in France. One worker kept repeating, over and over again, "But how could 10 million workers on general strike be stopped? Who could stop them once they were out on the streets? De Gaulle threatened to bring in the Army, but the Army did not actually enter Paris. Who stopped them?" Another worker chimed in: "The Communists? The Trotskyists? If the Trotskyists were so militant, why didn't they expose the Communists? I don't believe the Trotskyists really opposed the Communists. They act the way our trade union leaders do. They talk against the company all the time, but when it comes to brass tacks they go with the company every time the workers wildcat. 10 million workers out on general strike is not just a wildcat, though. 10 million workers -- 10 million workers!"

To answer the questions raised we wrote:

History is about to repeat itself. Communists feel confident that there is nothing to fear from the Trotskyists. What they do stand in mortal fear of is power in the streets, spontaneous independent proletarian power which is independent of state-capitalism calling itself Communism. It is this, just this, that Communism is out to destroy. It is this, just this, that De Gaulle appreciates in Communism. For it is this, just this, which permits him his two faces: OAS and CP.

To all this Trotskyism remains deaf, dumb and blind, not because it does not know Communism's "history", but because it cannot comprehend its class nature. Because it is this which arrested the French Revolution, it is this to which we must turn.

The first Trotskyist denial that Russia had become a state-capitalist society was based on the fact that, though "Cain-Stalin betrayed the Russian Revolution", its result -- nationalized property -- remained and, therefore, the workers' state, "though degenerate" enough to be tied to a Hitler-Stalin Pact, had to be "defended."

The second denial that Communism was no more than a euphemism for state-capitalism concerned East Europe where statified property had been instituted, not via a social revolution from below, but via a bureaucratic Party from above, propped into state power with the aid of a "Red Army". Again, though "born degenerate" and even though the Hungarian Revolution opened up an entirely new page in world revolution, and, in pools of blood, proved it wanted freedom from Communism (its Party as well as its secret police), wanted freedom to establish genuine workers power through Workers' Councils, still the Trotskyists kept intoning that it was "impossible" to have a revolution unless there was a "vanguard Party to lead it."

Then the Third World was born without the aid of any of the shibboleths of Communism -- statified property, or "the Party", Red Army, or the "International". So the Trotskyists came up with still another excuse for tailending the Communists -- these countries were technologically backward and U.S. imperialism, as "enemy No.1" would only perpetuate neo-colonialism and "therefore" one must be with the "Communist camp."

Now what can possibly be the excuse for not unfolding a totally new philosophy of liberation free from all the shibboleths of what they call "betraying

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Stalinism?" France is neither isolated nor a backward country. It is far from having "workers' power" thrust upon it, pure, degenerate, or in-between; from below or above which somehow has to be defended from "imperialism No.1" as an outside force or some inner "usurpers" (unless that be precisely Gaullism which must be overthrown and which Communism, instead, is propping up).

France is a technologically advanced land which is in the very heart of Europe. It is a world power, with a force frappe to boot. And the native Communists have betrayed it not once but twice. (Three times if you count the mid 1930s not only as it appeared in Spain, but also in France.)

How many betrayals are needed to kill the self-delusion of the Trotskyists about the class nature of the present day Communism? The answer is that the number of times is numberless for the good and substantial reason that the Trotskyists themselves believe in statified property, the State Plan, the elite party which binds them to the concept of the backwardness of the proletariat that is incapable of reaching socialism without being "led by the vanguard party." It is for this reason that the struggle against Stalinism, despite all the sacrifices, has amounted to nought, that is to say, has looked like just a family quarrel precisely because that is all it is.

Or, more precisely put, Trotskyists lack the totality of the Marxian philosophy which encompasses not only a change in property forms and production relations, but the liberation of man from all the fragmentation that capitalist exploitation imposes upon him through the division of mental and manual labor. It is for this reason that shouting "betrayal", "class collaboration", "new form of reformism", means nothing since they continue to tailend the Communists on the ground that "only in action" can they win over the masses in general and the rank and file Communists in particular. The elaborate subterfuge for the Trotskyist bizarre behavior is further proof that it is impossible to separate revolution from the philosophy of revolution. No revolution can succeed unless it releases all of the energies and talents of the proletariat and that is precisely the function of Marxist philosophy.

To live for revolution is not done only "in action," nor only by "bravery". It is impossible to prove "in action" what you have proved incapable of proving in theory -- that you do indeed have a philosophy of liberation totally freed from Communist elitist concepts, and totally dependent on only one force beside a philosophy of liberation and that is the spontaneity of the masses who will themselves "to a man" reconstruct society on totally new, Humanist beginnings.

The general strike that brought the economy to a standstill, that was not isolated from the student youth who inspired it, and that nearly toppled De Gaulle, has not only not developed into a full revolution, but it is in full retreat. While the counter-revolution is mobilizing, both visibly and clandestinely, the revolutionary forces are in disarray, not because they were defeated, but because they lacked the unifying cement of a philosophy of revolution that is inseparable from a philosophy of self-liberation. This was the missing ingredient of the pre-revolutionary situation in France.

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DeGaulle, emboldened both by the class-collaborationism of the Communists, and by the ideological confusion among the revolutionary forces, went all-out both for the Army support and the wavering middle class who, only through ennui and boredom, looked sympathetically at the youth in rebellion. Once the revolution stopped its forward movement, the petty bourgeoisie enthusiastically embraced the ballot box -- that graveyard of revolution and paradise of the cowards, the back-lashers and the Fascists-who-have-not-yet-gotten-power. Intellectual and petty merchant alike, proud of their "individuality", and as multi-colored and brilliant as the rainbow, always rush to the stronger. The stronger in France was DeGaulle, backed by the Army and the OAS and Big Capital, none of whom play with power.

By no means, however, is this the end of the drama. New points of transition will and must arise as the counter-revolution begins to bear down on the masses in demands for both belt-tightening and conformity, and as its posture of glory-seeking abroad and terror against the youth at home unfolds.

There is, of course, no point in deluding ourselves that the revolution will reappear the morning after DeGaulle's electoral victory. The dialectic of such turning points reveals a single pattern -- either one wins or loses. There is no in-between for periods of revolution and counter-revolution. But his counter-revolution has proved itself only at the ballot box, not in battle. Armed with a philosophy of liberation, revolutionaries can detect new impulses, new potentialities, new forces, new points of transition. Neither Maoist-type of empty optimism bred by adventurism, nor "the tragic vision" that sees "no exit", no new "possibilities", can replace dialectics, which because it is well aware of the counter-revolution within the revolution, therefore prepares to transform reality anew by unifying the forces of revolution and the philosophy of liberation.

This is not to say that we look only at France. No country is the world. Crises abound everywhere, not the least in the citadel of world power -- the U.S. From the barbarous Vietnam War to the black urban revolts, from poverty in affluence to the "balance of payments" crisis, from the opposition to the Vietnam War by the people to the opposition even within the ruling class -- all of these crises were sufficient, in a single week, to force LBJ out of the presidential race, compel the Administration to begin de-escalating the Vietnam War, and send it looking for new avenues among the people. It almost looked as if "democracy" was being revived. It did not take long, however, for the Administration to once again bear down so heavily on dissenters that it created a climate for murder. We had, first, the assassination of Rev. King, and then of Robert Kennedy. As the surtax shows, the U.S. is preparing for further repressions against labor and the youth, especially the black youth. And the international role of the U.S. is so debilitating that even if it were able to "contain", i.e. to leave the Vietnam War stalemated, its reactionary role on a world scale would not change.

The logic of the state capitalist world, split into two poles, has taken its toll through Russia's increased role in the Middle East. This has effectively bottled up the U.S. Sixth Fleet. There will be no new Arab-Israeli War without it becoming transformed into a Russian-U.S. confrontation. On the European front the U.S. is once again in conflict with its NATO partners. It is sheer delusion for the U.S. to think that, because France is in crisis this will help re-establish relations "as of old". So long as U.S. capital continues to swallow up French capital,

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the exacerbations between the two countries will continue. At the same time, now that France has revealed that it has clay feet, West Germany, which is the real industrial giant of Western Europe, may very well strike out on an "independent" path, away from both France and the U.S. Already we witnessed that, when Berlin was recently harassed, Willy Brandt turned neither to LBJ nor to DeGaulle, but went directly to the Russian Ambassador in East Germany. We can expect more such actions, more moves away from an unholy alliance with France to an unholy alliance with Russia. In any case, the super-powers have again taken over the front center of the historic stage.

Whether or not it is the rumor that China is supposed to have developed an ICBM which is "uniting" Russia and the U.S., or whether it is the staggering sums required by development of an ABM system, the point is that the U.S. and Russia prefer for the moment a stalemate in atomic terror between themselves. The latest moves toward "containing" nuclear proliferation only emphasize the totality of the world crisis.

At home, the situation is hardly less critical. Whether Nixon or Humphrey wins the presidential sweepstake — and it is not excluded that Nixon will be the winner — the world situation presently discloses: 1) the fictitiousness that Russia, just because it is a planned and totalitarian society, can undertake endless military build-ups irrespective of the effect on the conditions of Russian labor; and 2) the fictitiousness of U.S. prosperity both as it relates to the poverty in affluence, but also in the strictly economic sense of capitalistic production, that is to say, that prosperity can allow for no less than 10% of the entire gross national product to go into militarization and still be counted as "production". Moreover, the truer sense of the government cost of militarization is seen when this is related, not to the gross national product, but to the Federal budget, of which no less than 70% goes to the military.

Such a swollen economy is neither productive nor capable of working its way out of crises, much less being the foundation for any human solution. While there is nothing new about the fact that capitalism has long since outlived its usefulness, what is new are the forms of revolt both the black masses and the youth are now working out as they try to open new avenues to a unity with labor. What is new is that Communism, both of the Russian and Chinese varieties, as well as Trotskyism, none of which have ever had a mass following among the U.S. Left, may be forced into a battle of ideas before an audience that has not been sucked into the fractional quagmire. What is new is that 1968, especially the French events, has compelled the non-ideological pragmatic Left in the U.S. to look both toward labor and toward theory. The urgency of the times sets our task in organizational as well as philosophic terms.

II. Philosophy and Organization

Once we keep in mind that at no time in history, after the death of Marx, has any Marxist organization considered dialectics as integral, much less urgent, to the Marxist organization, we need feel no self-consciousness when the analysis of the subjective forces for revolution turns to News & Letters Committees, engaged in minor activities as compared to the millions involved in the mass organizations of France. Our organization is still the only one whose attitude to the theoretic void was serious enough to begin the working out of a new relationship of theory to practice that neither shifted to the shoulders of the masses the burden of theoreticians, nor degraded the activity of the masses to the mere muscle of revolution.

The theoretic void is not an academic question. All you have to do is look at the reality and see that since Lenin's death, it is not philosophy "as such" that has suffered. Rather, its lack has transformed all crises as well as all revolutionary situations to barren land for any revolution approaching the scope of 1917. It is high time that the youth became aware, oppressively aware of the fact that neither the rise of Fascism nor the holocaust of World War II, on the one hand, nor even the forward moment of the postwar national revolutions, on the other hand, have resulted in a full social revolution that, once and for all, put an end to exploitative society and all its alienation.

It is this which does not make it "sacrilegious" to come down from the revolutionary heights of the Sorbonne activities which were a catalyst to near-revolution to the "bust" at Columbia University which aroused no mass response from the outside. Whether actions take on historic proportions, or seem restricted in space and involvement of people, the philosophically determining factor, the point of transition to a future development, still depends on the consciousness that the self-emancipation of the masses cannot be achieved when man's self-development is detached from the Marxian philosophy of freedom as if it were a cumbersome appendage in the way of the "nationalization" of property, "efficiency" in production, and "vanguardism" in the party concept.

We must never forget that, until the outbreak of the first World War which brought with it the collapse of the only existing Marxist International, the dialectic meant little to the "organization men". Although every Marxist revolutionary was shocked by the betrayal of the Second International, Lenin alone began relating it to philosophy. And even he did not relate philosophy to organization openly and directly. It was only after the first successful proletarian revolution in history still did not compel its leaders (the Bolsheviks) to understand either "the masses as Reason", or philosophy as preparation for revolution that Lenin began hammering away at his co-leaders on the question of dialectics. His Will revealed this preoccupation. Since, however, Lenin had kept his Philosophic Notebooks private, how was anybody to know what he meant by his testament that Buldharin, although he was "the chief theoretician" of the party, "did not fully understand the dialectic" ?

By the time the Philosophic Notebooks were published, the European revolution had been defeated; world capitalism, as is its wont when the proletariat lies prostrate, drew a new breath of life; and Stalin, now armed with full state power, transformed "the vanguard party" into a monolithism in accord with the State Plan. At the same time, the only opposition to Stalin -- Trotsky -- had reduced all "Lessons of October" to one of "leadership."

This leadership fetish held no tragic consequences when Lenin was alive, not because he was "The Leader", but because the leader never moved away from the concept of the proletariat "as Reason", thus uniting theory and revolution. It became tragedy when Lenin died, leaving the results of his thinking, not the philosophic process of how he arrived at these results. By the 1930s, with the Depression raging throughout the world, Trotsky not only still held on to the 1903 concept of the Vanguard Party as if Lenin had never changed his views throughout the period 1903-1923 (see Chapters XI and XII of Marxism and Freedom) but, worse still, reduced the whole crisis of mankind to "a crisis in leadership."

By substituting "crisis in the self-mobilization of the proletariat" for a "crisis in leadership", the State-Capitalist tendency hardly improved on this concept when it did shake free from Trotskyism and its elitism on "the Party question." In truth, it meant, and could only mean, shifting the responsibility of theoreticians to work out a new relationship of theory to practice onto the shoulders of the proletariat. This is the mark of the one-dimensionality of theoreticians in the age of state capitalism. In any case, without a new concept of dialectics, directly linked to a new concept of organization, it is impossible to move forward, either in philosophy or in organization. To be able to embark on this task, we had first to break from the "Johnsonites."

It makes it imperative to reverse the usual way of starting our history with all the "firsts" we have established since the elaboration of the state capitalist theory, in 1941. We will, instead, concentrate on one, and only one, feature that spells out our uniqueness. This is Marxist-Humanist philosophy. Because of the indivisibility of the self-development of the proletariat and that of the Humanism of Marxism, we did, from our birth in 1955, simultaneously start a workers' paper and assign Marxism and Freedom to be written. And yet, 13 years afterward, we have yet to concretize our passion for philosophy into organizational terms and make the twin poles of activity into that single organizational passion. It becomes necessary to look critically at our own development.

1955-1958 may be considered the necessary prologue to the first serious postwar re-statement of Marxism. Marxism and Freedom singled out the humanism of Marxism, not merely as the philosophic uniqueness of News & Letters Committees, but, above all, the specific mark of the age of revolutions -- against state capitalism calling itself Communism, against private capitalism attempting neo-colonialism in the disguise of "foreign aid"; and for the unity of mental and manual labor in man himself, the development of his multi-dimensionality as the sum and substance of a non-exploitative society. What

however, did we do in 1959 - 1963 to build the organization rooted in Marxist Humanism? Was the attempt to create a Committee for International Correspondence by those who opposed both poles of world capital -- U.S. and Russia -- sufficient once these tendencies rejected philosophy as indispensable to a regroupment of revolutionary forces?

It is true that the International Committee indirectly aided in the Italian publication of Marxism and Freedom. But since they themselves neither answered the challenge of Marxism and Freedom for a restatement of Marxism for our epoch, nor concerned themselves with a French edition, shouldn't we have made that our responsibility above all other responsibilities?

Again, fruitful as the trip to Africa and the establishment of new relations to the new "subjects of revolution" proved to be, wasn't the trip, in part, undertaken in order to "find" the new "Subject", the new forces of revolution -- as if that could dispense with "the labor, patience, seriousness and suffering of the negative" demanded by "pure" philosophy?

1963-65 did prove that so inherent was philosophy to the objective situation that we had to rush one part of the "Philosophy and Revolution" (the chapter on Mao) to print in a new edition of Marxism and Freedom, directed to the Orient. The trip to Japan, great as that was both in developing live relations with the Orient, and in bringing out a Japanese edition of Marxism and Freedom, only proved that there is no substitute for this theoretic labor, and that no one but the Marxist-Humanist tendency is working out the relationship of philosophy to revolution. As a consequence, 1966-67 was the beginning of concern with the growth of our own organization. All the more reason for us to concentrate on 1968 as the year of transition for our growth as well as for our relations with other organizations, both from the vantage point of philosophy and revolution.

It is no small task.

Practicing dialectics means engaging in the battle of ideas with other tendencies, and engaging in those battles both for philosophic purposes and for organizational growth. Above all, as the French events prove all over again, spontaneous developments can no more succeed without a philosophy and an organization based on it than a philosophy and organization can succeed without the spontaneity of the masses and the ripeness of the objective situation.

High sounding rhetoric about proving "in action" the validity of one political tendency as against another contains the danger of shifting the responsibility for the world crisis onto the shoulders of the proletariat alone as if revolutionary theoreticians, like bourgeois philosophers, can only talk after the event rather than influence events in the course of their development. Marxist Humanism is what gives action its direction.

The proof that the phrase, the crisis in the self-mobilization of the proletariat was not only a Johnsonite aberration is seen in the interview of Jean-Paul Sartre with Cohn-Bendit and their talk about opening new "possibilities" as if that sufficed. Crises have to be resolved, not just opened up.

The transition point can be either a forward movement, or the point of transformation into opposite. When Lenin said that imperialism was the "highest stage of capitalism" and the "eve of revolution", it proved to be precisely that in Russia. And precisely the opposite in Germany.

Some recognize the need of a new relationship between philosophy and revolution, or at least between theory and practice. None do anything serious about it. Whether you scale the heights of Sorbonne, or have to descend to the nonsense of a Columbia University Marcuseite who proclaims that "The key to history is the conservatism of the oppressed, the ruled ..." (The Third Stage of Imperialism, p. 10), the ideological battle cannot be relegated to the background. That such a reactionary conclusion could gain even one adherent underlines the necessity for a theoretic destruction of that pamphlet's pretentiousness, as well as for the concretization of Marxist-Humanism in organizational terms. To concretize both theoretic and organizational tasks for the year ahead, the REB wishes to spell out a few conclusions here, although the discussion on them belongs under the Organizational Report.

III. A Few Conclusions

(1) Engaging in a battle of ideas, at the present moment, in the concrete circumstances of the Columbia University revolt, means that a pamphlet on the event is needed.

The vulgar materialism of a Marcus cannot be exposed only "in action"; it must be destroyed in theory, and this must be done very concretely. For example, it is insufficient to state that a Marcus gains adherents, no matter how few, because the students themselves have precisely such an elitist concept, accompanied by the concept of the backwardness of the proletariat. Now that SDS is supposed to turn toward labor, such a concept would paralyze their whole work there. It is true that intellectuals have such concepts — it is the mark of our age that they all want "to lead" rather than to listen to the impulses from below. But we have always made exceptions for the youth precisely because they are not yet bound to bourgeois careers, are still idealistic and their ideas are in constant flux. Therefore, even when they thirst for leadership, to the extent that they consider elitism to be for "revolutionary purposes", we must catch, work on, help elicit the revolutionary element — that and nothing else, and thereby win them for Marxist-Humanism both in theory and in organization. One way toward that end is the pamphlet proposed.

This pamphlet about the revolt at Columbia is not merely to tell what happened, but to analyze from a Marxist-Humanist viewpoint, the events that even in themselves seem Marxist-Humanist. This Marxist-Humanism must not, however, remain merely implicit, but must be made explicit. It goes without saying that the main responsibility for this is that of New York. It was their activity and their thought which were part of the happening and it will continue to be the field for organizational work for Marxist-Humanism as well. At the

same time, even as a collective venture of all of the participants, it cannot be done apart from the center, but must result from joint collaboration.

(2) One way of expanding our work in the factories was begun in News & Letters by the concentration on news from specific factories which would maintain continuity in the columns. Thus far, however, we have not yet succeeded in having these workers establish factory papers like The Stinger and The Protester. One conclusion to be drawn from this is that it is impossible to achieve this only through "contacts." Charles Denbys and John Allison do not emerge overnight, but once a worker's self-development is spelled out as Marxist-Humanist membership, such growth is a reality. Therefore, the concentration of the work in the factories, from both inside and outside, must have membership as its goal. There is no other way to assure self-development of workers in this critical period when capital will press again them, and the labor bureaucrats will ask them to wait for "contract time"...2 or 3 years hence.

(3) The black revolution is sure to remain the most sustained and heated event. However, the REB does not believe that a second edition of Black Mass Revolt has the urgency now that it had at the time of Rev. King's death, not because any of the crises have been resolved, or can be, but because, until after the elections, the transition point here is most tenuous. What assures it not being smothered, either by reaction, or the divisiveness in the Movement, is the objective situation. Capitalism can do nothing fundamental on the race question because it is racist through and through. But, to the extent that both the Poor People's Campaign and black power revolt are in a period of transition, the REB considers it best to delay publication of a second edition of the pamphlet until after the election. With or without a second edition, participation in the black revolt will remain our most sustained activity.

(4) By no means subordinated to the above three perspectives is the fourth: the book itself, the draft of the book as a whole, not just chapters of it. The REB considers it quintessential that this work remain a collective effort. It is the determinant not only in carrying out the perspectives of 1968-69, but, historically, it will become the theoretic preparation for revolution. Therefore, the REB proposes that the organization undertake the responsibility of seeing that a draft is made available to each local. Toward that end, it will be necessary, in addition to the annual \$3000 drive to assure the existence of News & Letters, to raise an additional sum of \$300 for the typing of the manuscript. This, however, will not have a Dec. 31 deadline since the work will not be completed until somewhere at the end of January.

(5) Finally, and as a combination of all four points, there is the imperativeness of the growth of News & Letters Committees. Each of the points above must have membership growth as its goal. Thus, to begin with the last first, the ideas of Philosophy and Revolution cannot wait for completion in book form to be transmitted to those on the outside of the Committees. Just as the members participate in the book while it is still in the process of completion, so friends can become active participants in it, and just as the classes in philosophy proved to be stimulants to membership growth, so this second draft of the book can help us in gaining new members. Indeed, the very idea that this will happen next year

should be used as a step toward membership. The same applies to the pamphlet on the Columbia revolt, the activity in the black revolution, as well as the new quality of our work in the factories.

A new unity of theory and practice needs more than the expression "in general" of Marxist-Humanist consciousness. The need is for a specific working out for ourselves, in each new situation, of what it is that Marx meant both by the "self-organization of the proletariat", and by the fact that the Marxist organization is distinguished from the general one by bringing to the forefront the historic and international (and not only the immediate and national) interests of the proletariat. By now the historical task is as inseparable from the philosophic as the philosophic is from the revolution.

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