

February 2, 1970

To the REB.

Dear Colleagues,

Today would be a great day if it weren't for the East coast*. The final version of Chapter I has just been completed. It may sound as if very little had, indeed, been achieved. But, there is nothing, be it in philosophy or science, in the humanities or politics, that is as difficult as a beginning. And this beginning will meet with such hostility that we better prepare ourselves now -- a year in advance -- to meet the onslaught.

It is, for example, no accident that it was the breakthrough on the Absolute Idea that led Johnson to break up the organization. This may sound as if I'm saying nothing new since we all know that back in 1955, if not 1953. But what we had been stressing heretofore is (1) his cowardice since he left us just when I was listed, (2) his departure from Marxism (which he has, now that it is safe to do so, "reclaimed"), (3) his conceit -- he was not about to swallow Grace's hyperbole that my letters on the Absolute Idea were for our age what Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks were to his. The principal point at issue is that, whereas, on M&F, he could even claim as "his" when it suited his opportunism, on Philosophy and Revolution, he will be glad to "collaborate" with anyone from Mattick to the Stalinists, from the Trotskyists to the "New Left", and from Academia to trying for someone like Judy ala Chirik. And, of course, Chirik will join the pack, too. In a word, it means so total a reorganization of one's politics rolling back to the death of Lenin that all will be happy to join the anarchists (with a small and capital A) to make themselves comfortable all over again and continue walking on their heads.

In our philosophic preparation for revolution, it is, therefore, necessary to study, study, and study some more this first Chapter. All the rest will be easy, I assure you. I would, again if it were not for the East coast*, be happy to give one copy per local. As it is, I must restrict myself to the REB and the LANES. I do not oppose, (in fact I favor) to let the rank and file study this/provided they are willing to embark on "the labor, patience, seriousness and suffering of the negative" necessary for the study, and providing that that begins with not asking for any privileges "to take it home" but are willing to come to the office and there alone to do so. (From the point of view of the publisher, this becomes an unchangeable rule since it is a final copy.) I am especially sorry for the workers since there is no way to change the language in a first breakthrough. On the other hand, they will be the ones who will understand it best and will act it out in the concrete. I will plan sometime before one must begin thinking about Convention Theses to have a long week-end discussion with the REB on this.

Yours

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