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THE MISSING LINK

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Raya Dunayevskaya
August 31, 1968
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THE MISSING LINK

THREE DECADES OF INTELLECTUAL SLOTH: MASSES AS CREATIVITY vs. COUNTER-REVOLUTION

I- Czechoslovakia

Two actions -- one of counter-revolution and one of masses as creativity -- stand facing us today. These two absolute opposites demand answers that are both very concrete and yet disclose a perspective that is long-term, for the final struggle is yet to come.

The first -- the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia -- has stripped away the last shred of illusion that deStalinization has changed the nature of state-capitalism calling itself Communism, with its forced labor camps and totalitarian politics. That may -- or may not -- cure also the blindness of the New Left that seems to think that dehumanization accompanies only the imperialism of private capitalism. Judging by the fact that Castro rushed to embrace the counter-revolution while Mao, with his built-in anti-Russianism, opportunistically opposed it, without, however, embracing the opponents of "Revisionism" -- we must not wait breathlessly for the New Left's awakening.

One of the focal points of the Draft Thesis was the question: Who Arrested the French Revolution? We then pointed out that the Communist betrayal remains without theoretical effect and contains so many practical dangers for the future because of Trotskyism's failure to grapple with the class nature of present-day Communism. Since many of the revolutionaries, however, were not Trotskyists (not always for the best reasons) it was ever so easy to evade the crucial question -- the self-paralysis of the New Left caused by the failure to work out a totally new philosophy of liberation that yet had deep historic roots. We expect that New Left will repeat its evasions when it comes to revolution in East Europe.

We, on the other hand, must make our constant point of departure and point of return the human creativity manifest both East and West, especially, at this moment, East Europe, which though subjected to the tanks, troops, airplanes, is resisting without ever forgetting that the struggle for liberation is not separate and apart from a philosophy of liberation.

Deprived of their mass media, the Czechoslovak people nevertheless mass communicate, whether that be a general strike, individual acts of sabotage and confusion of the enemy, or collective acts of daring and imagination, having already defined their passionate adherence to freedom and to Marxism, in the phrase of Ivan Svitak, who concluded that "if it isn't freedom, it isn't Marxism."

Thus, the creativity as ACT and creativity as PHILOSOPHY become one. As against this unity of thought and actions, though it is as yet only in its infancy, stands the quality that has rent the Left asunder for the past 30 years as decrepit capitalism has become ever more unacceptable to the masses:

(1) 30 years ago, state-capitalism calling itself Communism showed its class nature by decapitating what was left of the General Staff of the Russian Revolution in the infamous Moscow Trials, as the new ruling class consolidated

its power.

In the same period, however, fascism rose in Spain and as the Spanish Revolution was defending itself from this counter-revolution, the mainstream of the Left refused to concern itself with "factional" disputes among those who "still lived in 1917." The inescapable result of this self-paralysis was that Stalinism triumphed in Russia, fascism in Spain and Nazism invaded Czechoslovakia.

(2) 20 years ago came the Russian turn to carry off a coup in Czechoslovakia. But, again, there was not only a duality in the Left, but an absolute refusal to face reality comprehensively. There was a new enemy that took all their active time -- the Marshall Plan for Western Europe. The Czechoslovak coup was dismissed, as Eugene McCarthy this year tried to dismiss it because it interfered with his intrapolitical fight, as "not being a world-shaking event."

Again, mankind ended up with both the victory of American imperialism in Western Europe and the victory of Stalinism in Eastern Europe.

(3) 10 years ago, the world faced a simultaneity of invasions -- the complexities of the world refusing to get cut up into neatly labelled packages marked "good guys" and "bad guys" to make it easy for the Left "to choose sides". This time, while Russia invaded Hungary, Britain, France and Israel invaded Suez.

Although it was impossible in 1956 merely to disregard the Hungarian Freedom Fighters, as the 1948 Czech coup was disregarded, since a people took to open revolution against Communism, the imperialist invasion of Suez gave the "broad" Left just the proper excuse not to face the reality that disclosed that the "West" and "East" constituted, not two different class "camps", but one capitalistic world rent in twain only because each of the poles of world capital wanted to be the sole master of the whole world.

The true class opponents were within each country, and these were engaged in a life and death battle. But it was insufficient to move Left ideologists who were too preoccupied with "activity" to do anything about "theory."

(4) Today, the world again becomes witness to an invasion, a Communist invasion of Czechoslovakia, even while American imperialism is still ravaging Vietnam. Are we once again doomed to repeat the long list of tragedies, of doomed revolutions and victorious counter-revolutions by allowing the theoretic void to pass itself off as the imperativeness of siding with "lesser evil"?

One look at the smallness of the demonstrations protesting the invasion of Czechoslovakia as against the massive gatherings in the anti-Vietnam protests would seem to answer the question in the affirmative. Worse than the smallness of numbers protesting is the underlying ideology. As one student protester admitted, he came to the demonstration despite a full night's pressure by his friends trying to dissuade him from doing so on the ground that "it would hurt the Left."

There is only one way to reverse the tragic trend, and that is through a breakthrough in the field of ideas against the accumulated intellectual sloth. This is a necessary precondition to liberation itself.

II The French Revolt and Its Analysts

Volumes could be written about the stubborn resistance to working out a new relationship of theory to practice in the "West" where there is, at least formally, freedom of thought, as against the hunger for just such theoretical preparation in a country like Czechoslovakia that is at this very moment under occupation. For the moment, we will limit ourselves to three representative intellectual trends in the analysis of the French Revolution. Eugene will deal with the events themselves in his report.

Although the spontaneous French student revolt inspired the proletariat, not the peasantry; centered in the city, not the countryside; used historic open barricades, not hidden mountain retreats; was spontaneous, not planned from above; displayed a veritable hatred for elitism instead of any wish to substitute an elitist guerrilla force for an elitist party; and, far from making a fetish of secretive guerrilla foci, preferred open revolutionary propaganda -- in spite of all these oppositions, Jean-Paul Sartre still managed to see in this near-revolution in France a "similarity" to the Castro-type guerrilla war. Which doesn't keep Sartre, after all his shouting about the betrayal of the French Communist Party, from demanding a common front with the betrayers!

Thus, Herbert Marcuse, although the proletariat that he had long discounted had become the force that transformed a student revolt into a proletarian revolution, nevertheless likens this spontaneous near-revolution to Mao's so-called Cultural Revolution. He, himself, however, feels compelled to add some disqualifiers, like "in the sense that" it was not an economic revolt; or "in the sense that", it was political; and, again, "in the sense that" it was philosophic; or "in the sense that" it was total in its rejection of the status quo.

But if it was political, philosophic, total, then why not use these precise words instead of superimposing upon events descriptions in inexact, limping, and, indeed, non-existing "cultural" manifestations. If there was anything that not only the proletariat, but the students themselves, cared little about, it was the "cultural" aspects of their own revolt. What they did want is a social revolution.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who, in counter-distinction to Jean-Paul Sartre's fellow-travelling experiences, hates Communists (and not only totalitarian Communists of today, but also of Lenin's day) and, in contradistinction to Herbert Marcuse's ivory tower is an authentic young revolutionary anarchist student leader, nevertheless thinks theoreticians are "laughable" and credits all changes to "the act." But what distinguished it from all other tendencies in the revolutionary movement was not "the act", but his anti-elitist concept and Marxist-libertarian vision in the act.

Why then should he show such disdain for Mind? Mind, Spirit, both as history and as perspective, is not mere culture nor mere practice, but the unity of thought and actions in philosophy as a self-development and universal liberation. The very same type of disdain, I might add, is inherent in bourgeois practice ever since the French Revolution destroyed feudalism and assured the rule of the bourgeoisie who then had no further use for Reason whose further implications show it to be the movement to freedom.

By making Reason and Revolution synonymous, Marx rightly said that the

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proletariat was the heir to the dialectical philosophy, and alone could "realize" it, that is, make freedom be. Far from turning his back on philosophy, he showed that the proletariat as the subject who would bring about a new society was inseparable from the movement that would unite philosophy and reality, break down the division between mental and manual labor in the person. The road to the new society is paved not only by the self-organization of the workers but also the historic organization of the theoreticians and workers.

This philosophy has ever since Marx's death become the missing link in the revolutionary movement.

Why, for that matter, does a Sartre, who has no love for the Trotskyists, give a Trotskyist prescription, though not by name, for the next step in French development? Why does a Hegelian-Marxian philosopher like Herbert Marcuse, who surely knows the difference between superficial culture and philosophy as negation of the cultural "affirmations", that is to say, the apology for the status quo, -- why should he suddenly be so enamoured of Mao's "cultural revolution" that he even drags it onto the French scene? Why is he so insistent that the missing link of philosophy never be found? Where some left theoreticians are ready to conclude that automated capitalism makes man one-dimensional, it is, on the contrary, theoretical thought that has become one-dimensional.

Why should an activist, a young revolutionary, fall prey to the lures of the escapist's design for living by denying theory?

Some illumination of the intellectuals' self-paralysis is cast, not so much by European or Asian events, but by the American scene -- with its brutal imperialism, racist politics, degeneracy -- as if decrepit capitalism "here" can make state-capitalism "there" smell as fresh as a new society! It is true, of course, that when it comes to the latest capitalist exhibitions -- the Republican and Democratic Party circuses -- even one-dimension is an exaggeration; it is sheer non-existence.

Therein lies one element, but only one element, which drives intellectuals to tailending the Communists or to some other form of adventurism or opportunism. Let us examine the spectacle, not as an excuse for intellectual despair but to see what, in truth, it reflects.

III The Republican and Democratic Party Circuses vs. the Actual Brutality and the Actual Crises

The farcical carnivals called conventions of the main capitalist parties as they take place in halls, on the one hand, and the deadly police brutality against the black community in Miami and the anti-Vietnam war fighters in Chicago, on the other hand, may tell the New Left it has a right to see only the rapaciousness of American capitalism -- and forget about Communist state-capitalism. These circuses, however, are also intended to make the people forget what a truly exciting year this has been nationally and internationally, with great rebellions against the status quo in both the capitalist and Communist worlds.

For the first time in the post World War II world, there was a near-revolution in an industrially developed country of Western Europe -- and the last word has by no means been written in France. For the first time since the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia 20 years back, at which time all feared the victory

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of totalitarianism was complete, there has been a change of such vast proportions that there is a breath of fresh air of hope of an altogether different type of society than either private or state capitalism. That Russian Communism and its hard-line client states felt threatened enough to invade the country and try to crush the revolt cannot take away the page of freedom the Czechoslovak people have already written into the history books.

Like the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the revolt in Czechoslovakia this year not only brought Marxist-Humanism out of the books and onto the historic stage; it also began an altogether new approach to the relationship of theory and practice to revolution. Thus, it is not only a question of a tiny group like ours talking of the need to work out a new relationship of theory to practice as preparation for revolution. It is a people doing it, or attempting it. And where a revolt, as in Poland, was squashed in a fantastic anti-Semitic campaign, it had already become so deeply ingrained, that both East European and West European revolutionary developments can be summed up by the Polish revolutionary philosopher, Leszek Kolakowski in a work entitled Toward a Marxist Humanism.

And before these European developments, there was the Tet offensive of the Viet Cong which changed the picture so completely of South Vietnam that it undermined the American Goliath also at home base, forcing LBJ to withdraw from the presidential race, and splitting the ruling class so that not one, but two, anti-Vietnam war candidates arose from within the ruling party.

Even the tragedies, especially that of the assassination of Dr. King, spoke not only of death, but also of the never-ending struggle for freedom of the black people. And, for a brief moment, reunited civil rights workers white and black, the anti-Vietnam war movement, and reaffirmed the determination to go through with the planned Poor People's March. While the Kennedy assassination was not the result of a conspiracy by a section of the racist ruling class as was that of Dr. King, it, too, showed, if even only negatively, that the urban masses were determined to change the face of the United States.

The Presidential Commission had to speak the truth of these dis-United States of America: that it is not one, but "two nations, one white and one black, separate and unequal." And while the dominant parties are the worst of the racists, some rebels look in near despair at the growth of Wallace as if that was all that happened this year, as if we are faced only with defeats and carnivals. It is true that anyone watching the conventions of the Republican and Democratic Parties (and the worst is yet to come when the Wallace Party holds its convention) can only conclude that: 1) although we had seemed to be moving forward with the split in the ruling class revealed in the Kennedy-McCarthy bids for president, now "all is lost"; and 2) circuses aren't very funny, especially not when they are surrounded by barbed wire, police, army, helicopters circling overhead, the hardware of an occupied city, and the police brutality of a Gestapo -- Daley-style.

But then the model of political circuses -- the Roman circuses -- never were funny for the revolutionaries of those days who were thrown to the lions. Today is no improvement: anti-Vietnam war fighters are thrown to jail; police practice their sadistic brutality on black revolutionaries to the point of murder, not only South but North, as is shown by the Black Panther trial in San Francisco and the actual shoot-downs in Los Angeles, while that barbarian, Mayor Daley, airs his view that Negroes should be sent to Alaska to have "their own state."

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That a mountebank like Wallace could convince the respectable capitalist party bearers to run on his platform speaks volumes, not only of the all-too-obvious hollowness of American democracy, but also of the not-so-obvious and a great deal more actual death agony. One who is sure of long life doesn't transform his joyous celebration of power and longevity into an armed camp of sadistic brutality. One who feels righteous and safe in his affluence doesn't go around building walls to shut out the black ghettos. (And without the humor of Quebec's signs "Visitez les slums!") One who is sure of his ideological ground doesn't go about stealing the thunder of a mountebank.

These are but the small signs of capitalism's death throes as it faces recession for next year, permanent unemployment and poverty even at the height of its "prosperity", defeats in its attempts at neo-colonialism, and so absolutely goes to pieces even in its cloistered conventions that they wound up a great deal more chaotic than the actions of those they call "anarchists and beatniks" -- to which that Gestapo Chief of Police of Chicago had the gall to add "animals". The beasts are those in power.

Just as the smallest, technologically backward country can keep the mightiest military power pinned down for four years in the jungles of Vietnam, so the black unarmed masses and the anti-Vietnam war marchers can scare the powers-that-be in the cities so witless that they ideologically ape that sawdust little Caesar, Wallace. At the same time, the very fact that Wallace needs to appeal to parts of the working class (and not altogether unsuccessfully at that) is itself an admission of the failure of the volatile mixture of mace, police bestiality, and machine-gun power to stop the ever-deepening black revolt and anti-war movement.

Though the racist hue and cry about "law and order" borders on genocide, they are all totally impotent to embark on any such barbarous course. At the same time, the white working class is sure to be brought to its class sense. Divide and rule has always been the foundation for class exploitation. Consider the insensitivity of the most liberal and most anti-war representative within the capitalist class -- Eugene McCarthy -- who yet defended his choice of Fulbright as Secretary of State on the ground that this Southern segregationist's stand at home "would not affect foreign policy." On what planet is our liberal post-politician living?

We are at a point of transition when the old world is crumbling to pieces but none of the present so-called challengers know whether this is a transition to a movement forward or to a movement backward, for the new world is not yet visible.

Nor are they aware that it doesn't matter who wins the elections. Whoever the victorious vulgarian be who wins the presidency, he will find what the cultured DeGaulle had found -- that, while he was out charming other countries as an aspirant for world power, a few thousand of "his own" students inspired ten million French workers on general strike, and the "charismatic" leader turned out to have an OAS face, plagued, moreover, by an economic crisis along with the political one, and both rooted deep in production about which he can do nothing.

Like the disintegration of state-capitalist Communism, the decrepit old world capitalism is peeling off one layer after the other of its power until

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there is nothing left but the military, nuclearly armed, scared to death since that can hardly be used against its own masses without also sending the ruling classes to kingdom come.

No wonder the frivolity and boredom, as well as the brutality and chaos; the fear and sabre-rattling as well as the foreboding of something unknown coming which makes them behave as a truly backward "subject" before witch doctors of old who, we are told, could make a perfectly healthy person die just by scaring him to death with such foreboding.

This is, indeed, a sick society, rotted to the core.

The tragedy, however, lies not in its disintegration -- it has long since outlived its usefulness. The tragedy lies in the missing link in the movement and consequently the disarray in the ranks of the movement that is to be its gravedigger, or, more precisely put, in those who would be leaders of the grave-diggers.

Before, I pointed to the philosopher Herbert Marcuse and his predilection for the so-called cultural revolution. It is time to ask: what is a cultural revolution? What are its historic-philosophic roots? Is it relevant today?

FROM CULTURE TO PHILOSOPHY TO REVOLUTION, or
HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGY AND MAO'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In a muted form, Czechoslovakia has been showing all over again what the supreme elemental outburst of proletarian revolution in Hungary had revealed in 1956, that the struggle for freedom involves, among other things, a breakthrough in the field of ideas against the entrenched ideology -- what Marx called the Fetishism of Commodities, or private property and "equality of exchange and Bentham." These fetishes of capitalistic culture, in its private form, had been replaced in state-capitalistic Communism by State Property and the Vanguard Party. It is these the Hungarian Revolution demolished and Czechoslovakia is again challenging. In their place the Hungarian Freedom Fighters had established Workers Councils, many parties and such a free flow of ideas that the Humanism of Marx saw its first direct historic re-establishment. It is this which has never stopped haunting Mao to this day.

Despite the opportunism and pure anti-Russian chauvinism which has led Mao presently to oppose the Russian invasion, Mao has not changed one iota from 1956 when he urged Khrushchev -- not that Khrushchev needed much urging -- to lead a counter-revolution against the Hungarian Freedom Fighters.

It is true that in China itself, for a brief few weeks, Mao had opened a new road called "Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom, Let One Hundred Schools of Thought Contend". But the hypocrisy was clear from the start, in the insistence that, under all circumstances, one and only one Party remains the "leader". In any case, as we all know, the moment the voices of revolt began contending vigorously against Mao, stating that what they had in China was not genuine Marxism, freedom, that

freedom to speak out was ended, and, instead, China embarked on the so-called Great Leap Forward.

Now the shock for needing to end all freedom of speech in China, too, sent that Alienated Soul or Unhappy Consciousness -- Mao, after all, had once been a revolutionary -- to retrace the stages of alienation described in the Phenomenology as if he were being stage-directed by Hegel from his grave.

Marx, you will remember from the chapter "Why Hegel? Why Now?"*, considered Hegel's Phenomenology "the birthplace of the Hegelian dialectic", which contained "all the elements of criticism" -- and here we must remember the meaning of criticism as negation of what is, so I repeat "criticism frequently worked out in a manner far beyond the Hegelian standpoint", that is to say, very nearly Marxist. The alienation of Reason as well as of Labor, of Spirit (which includes Culture) as well as of Religion -- the whole dialectic of theory and practice moving toward a unity in the Absolute Idea, revealed its objectivity in such great depths that Marx made it foundation of historical materialism.

Marx insisted that Hegel's abstractions were, in fact, criticisms of "whole spheres like religion, the state, bourgeois life, etc." Marx singled out special sections in order to stress that the distinctions that Hegel drew did, indeed, "reach the nub of the matter". The part that directly concerns us here was the one Hegel entitled "Spirit in Self- Estrangement, the discipline of culture".

Note, please, that self-estrangement, alienation, has not been overcome though we have now reached the part on Spirit which is the cornerstone of the Hegelian "system". Remember also that Hegel was himself a bourgeois, and wasn't out to destroy bourgeois society. Nevertheless, so devastating was his criticism of its beginnings in the Enlightenment that very nearly nothing has to be added by Marxists provided, of course, they understand that in Hegel, the critique is "standing on its head", that is to say, is dealt with only in its thought forms. What saved Hegel was his profound, comprehensive, objective historic sense. Thus he praises the Enlightenment's struggle against superstition. "The Enlightenment", he wrote, "upsets the household arrangements which spirit carries out in the house of faith by bringing in the goods and furnishings belonging to the world of the Here and Now..." (p.512)

In our day, the positive feature of a new culture "upsetting the household arrangements" -- in our case by the dominant prejudices which constitute white culture's "faith" -- "by bringing in the goods and furnishings belonging to the world of the Here and Now", is seen in such slogans as "Black Is Beautiful". First, because it is true, and secondly because such separation from the dominant superstition is a step toward a new revolution, even as the Enlightenment was a step toward the French Revolution, and the Chinese did away with the comprador bestiality of Chiang Kai-Shek.

What happens the day after the positive features, which are but beginnings, is what Hegel was tracing and criticizing. First, what Hegel called the spiritual life of "pure culture", which is always just on the surface, "is the absolute and universal inversion of reality and thought, their entire estrangement the one from the other... each is the opposite of itself." (p.541) This is so because, to begin with, the here and the now was a "self-estranged reality". It must therefore be negated again, but the limitations of culture

* A draft chapter for the new book, Philosophy and Revolution by Raya Dunayevskaya

make this impossible for by now "the noble type of consciousness" finds itself "related to state power." (p. 526) The inexorable next stage is that "in place of revolt appears arrogance." (p.527)

"Culture takes up nothing but the self and everything as the self, i.e. it comprehends everything, extinguishes all objectiveness." (p.512) Spirit, says Hegel, thereupon "constructs not merely one world, but a two-fold world, divided and self-opposed." There is no escaping the development that "in place of revolt appears arrogance" (p.539) -- unless one sees it as but a "shrivelled skin" and is ready to slough it off. But that can hardly be done while you're still in the culture skin, while your "self-diremption" cannot move you from individual ego to universal mind so that you get to true individuality or, as Hegel called it in Philosophy of Mind, "individuality freed of all that interferes with its universality, that is freedom." Once freedom is the goal, then nothing, culture included, will be allowed to stand in its way. Only then, to repeat the expression Hegel borrowed from Diderot, "will, one fine morning, it (spirit) give its comrade a shove in the elbow, when, bash! crash! -- and the idol is lying on the floor." (p.565)

But this "bash! crash!" can't just be destruction -- which is what attracts all -- it can come only when a new road to freedom is open before you. It got open in the Phenomenology because it was Mind, Spirit, the Dialectic of Theory and Practice which did the shoving, made Reason see that Culture was but "shrivelled skin" that must be sloughed off if the road to revolution (the French Revolution in Hegel's case) was to be open. And the French Revolution was, to Hegel, the supreme outburst of spiritual emancipation.

If religion is the opiate of the people, culture is the "rum and coca-cola" come on. In the case of Mao, once the alienation from the masses possessed him, he engaged in such a "giddy whirl of self-perpetuating disorder" called "Great Leap Forward" that it brought the country to near-famine. The labor regimentation which Mao dared call "Communes" had long ago been much more precisely characterized by Hegel as "Self-Contained Individuals Associated as a Community of Animals and the Deception Thence Arising." (Ask me some day how Marx uses this section in the "Grundrisse".)

Having failed to create a revolution in production relations, Mao had no choice but to go in for the epiphenomenal.

At first he had tried to escape the relegation to the cultural sphere. It is to be doubted that Mao understood or had ever read Hegel's analysis of culture as "self-diremption," but every one in the movement did know at least the vulgarized Marxian version that culture was mere superstructure as against the basic structure of capitalism, i.e., its mode of production. What gave Mao a second chance to escape the epiphenomenal was the rise of the Third World in the early 1960's. He then attempted to mask his opposition to proletarian revolution by declaring the new, third world of underdeveloped countries to be the "true storm centers of world revolution."

Thereby he hoped to win this new world and challenge Russia's leadership of the Communist world. It almost worked! U.S. imperialism's attack on South Vietnam in February 1965, however, made clear the need for united actions -- and when Mao refused such a united front with Russia to aid Vietnam, it brought

about new opposition both within his own Central Committee and on the part of other Communist Parties who previously had taken the Chinese side in the Sino-Soviet conflict.

It was then, and only then, that Mao dropped the other shoe -- revealing the true retrogressionist character of his thought. You could say that, though Mao didn't recognize philosophy, philosophy recognized him so long ago it predicted his coming. The fetishistic character of the so-called cultural revolution struck out, not against exploitative production, but the bland "four olds" (old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits). All sound and fury and no class content. Only he who has no future is so scared of the past! By any other name, including that of Red Guards, the elitist character of Party, Army, Red Guards and what now merged into the one and only "helmsman at the ship of state" is as unmistakable as was Louis XVI's "L'etat c'est moi."

A single look at the deification of Mao that has taken place since the cultural revolution and one must conclude that Hegel did, after all, underestimate the arrogance of the illegitimate offspring that was to crop up 160 years after the publication of The Phenomenology of Mind.

It is not Mao that concerns us. The only reason we spent so much time on him is because in this year of transition, when genuine freedom movements are arising very nearly daily, we have to answer: what can possibly be the pull of Mao -- or, for that matter, Castro -- upon today's young revolutionaries, black and white, who are neither tied to state power, or elite party and/or guerrilla band, much less hunger for single world mastery?

The genius of Hegel, his relevance for today, is that he summed up what he called "the experiences of consciousness" in so comprehensive, so profound a manner over so long a stretch of man's development -- from 500 B.C. and the Greek city-states to 1800 A.D. and the French Revolution -- that the tendencies in the summation of the past give us a glimpse of the future, especially when materialistically understood in a Marxist-Humanist, not vulgar economist, manner.

Briefly, it is this. There is a dialectic of thought from consciousness through culture to philosophy.

There is a dialectic of history from slavery through serfdom to free wage labor.

There is a dialectic of the class struggle in general, and under capitalism in particular-- and as it develops through certain specific stages from competition through monopoly to state, it in each case calls forth new forms of revolt and new aspects of the philosophy of revolution. Only a Marx could work out the latter. What Hegel had shown were the dangers inherent in the French Revolution which did not end in the millenium but in Napoleon. In a word, the dialectic disclosed that the counter-revolution is within the revolution.

It is the greatest challenge man ever had to face.

In our age of state-capitalism, totalitarianism, and transformation into opposite of the proletarian revolutionary party to the Single State Party,

philosophy is not only the abandoned orphan for whom no one cares, much less cares to develop and labor at and with. It is the missing link everyone -- everyone except us -- is determined will never be found. Time is so short, yes. But without such "labor, patience, seriousness and suffering of the negative" the danger is that you fall backward, just when you are on the threshold of high new adventure, into one of the existing world societies, rather than move forward to a new society.

So it is neither Napoleon nor Mao; neither the White Terror that followed the defeat of the Paris Commune nor Stalin-Khrushchev-Brezhnev-Kosygin type of counter-revolution; neither Guevara's tragic death nor Castro's approval of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, though all of these have lessons for us. Rather it is we, right here and now, as we try to prepare for a future that does not repeat the past.

OUR TASKS: BLACK MASS REVOLT AND LABOR vs. RACISM
STUDENT REBELLIONS vs. "CULTURE"
PHILOSOPHY vs. PARTY

The objective situation, on the one hand, and the philosophic ramifications of the freedom struggles, on the other hand, govern all developments -- the black mass revolt as well as the student rebellions, rank and file white labor as well as international revolutions -- and counter-revolutions. Marxist-Humanists naturally view all new developments from these two vantage points. What is new this year is that we are ever so conscious of philosophy in its organizational form. This is true even of our work in other organizations, for, just as you cannot have ideas without human beings who have these ideas, so these beings do not float about in mid-air, but have an earthly base -- in this case, an organization where both their self-development and that of all whom we attract, makes possible the attempts to realize these Marxist-Humanist principles, that is, to make freedom be.

(Parenthetically I should warn you that some questions that would ordinarily be taken up only at the Organizational Session, will be injected here. The discussion on these will, however, still be left for tomorrow, though the philosophic implications of these organizational questions have to be touched here.)

Thus, let us compare SNCC in 1966, when we last met in convention, and the California Black Panthers, in 1968. The development is most significant because here we get a black organization that is more tied in with the community than SNCC ever was, since SNCC was never a member organization, and its staff worked in as elitist a fashion as any "vanguard party" of Communism, including its secrecy not of matters that truly need to be secret in a white society, but of theoretical and international views which cannot possibly develop seriously in secret.

In 1967, for example, SNCC suddenly issued a statement that had a strong dose of anti-Semitism in it. Taking its departure from the Arab-Israeli war, it brought this anti-Semitism down to the small grocery store in Harlem and other black communities. Not only did this run counter to the essential movement of

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blacks in this country, but it was brought in from above on the basis of trips from Cuba to Algeria, again without report to any membership or the community, for that matter. In any case, as black power got to mean purely "against whitey", without either class or other qualifications, it was impossible for us and all others in the civil rights movement to open up any direct means of communications. Since it is impossible to think of the American Revolution without a unity of black and white, this bore the earmarks of tragedy.

In 1968, the California Black Panthers show a different direction. They remain black without disdaining collaboration with white labor and radical organizations. If they remain part of Peace and Freedom Party, and if that, in turn, doesn't either disintegrate after the elections or get taken over in factional fights between old radicals, this is altogether a new development which we should seriously look into as an organization we could participate in.

The new in this development, furthermore, is the Black Panthers' interest in socialism, in theory. That surely would be a new high stage, far higher than what has been true of white labor at its highest stages of development. Even when a million voted for Eugene Victor Debs and his anti-war stand in World War I, the hero proved attractive through his courage and class struggle stand, not through any theoretical insights. In fact he prided himself on not being a theoretician. Thus, the new Black Panther development would prove most challenging to us, a challenge that would test us.

History may help some -- there are no less than thirty years and more of both activity and theory on this one question which we have always considered crucial to the American Revolution, and internationally. I don't mean only Africa and the West Indies; I mean as a National Question wherever it arises, from Ireland to Korea, as well as where it is not a nation but a national minority, whether that be the Jew in Poland, the Slovaks in Czechoslovakia, or the language battles in India. The world over the color question will be decisive both because of its color, and its universality as a National Question.

Both in actuality and philosophically, this is of the essence for the world revolution. I spoke previously about "Black Is Beautiful" as true, but not a serious force for revolution if it remained related to the so-called culture sphere only; I said it would have to be developed as one factor among others, become "Mind" as Hegel would say, and not just culture. What I didn't say was that it is not only a cultural or philosophic question. It has a long history, much longer than those who shout it loudest know. For example, as Negritude, an important movement of blacks in France, it developed back in the 1930s and 1940s. It developed not only great poets like Leopold Sedar Senghor and Aime Cesaire, but actual revolts which helped bring about independence, and not only in what was French Africa, but as "Africanization" also in British Africa, and again now in Portuguese, Spanish, and so on. But it has nowhere led to social revolution, a deepening of the revolutions and their relations to European, Asian, Latin American Revolutions-to-be.

It becomes, then, one more question that hungers for completion in a more total view, not for any academic reason, but because it cannot otherwise realize freedom.

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For just a moment, then, let us look at the question of black revolt where it is needed most, but sees itself as a world apart -- white labor. Marxist-Humanism could play the crucial transition point here. Begin with a concrete phenomenon, a counter-revolutionary one that is, indeed, pressing hard on white labor.

Neither Wallace nor Wallace-ism, for example, will disappear after the November elections. The danger is much greater than that which Goldwater represented. He just faded back into the Republican Party. Wallace has his own party. It is more dangerous than McCarthyism which worked on lies, hate and fear, but, not having created an organizational base to carry on without him, it simply reappeared in other forms such as Birch-ism.

Wallaceism is a greater danger than that organization because Birchism has its organizational base in the middle class; Wallace, on the other hand, is actually reaching out for workers, "the little man", a la Hitler. The labor bureaucracy cannot possibly fight this divisive force within its own ranks, both because it is tied to the regular capitalist organizations and is the direct bureaucratic force over rank and file labor, not to mention that it totally lacks any philosophy. We are confident that the proletariat as a whole will yet regain its good class sense. But, as the News & Letters lead article by Mike in the August-September issue showed, we are not leaving it at that. We are patiently and comprehensively explaining to white labor all the ramifications of racism and the divide-and-rule tactics of that demagogue Wallace.

It is not, however, just a task for white radicals. I believe the greatest force in this job -- and it will again be proof of the genuine vanguard nature of Negroes in American society -- are the black workers. It is here where Marxist-Humanism can help the black worker speak to the white worker, not only with his revolutionary aspirations and where his class interests lie, but also in drawing a sharp cleavage between white labor and its bureaucracy, by opening up altogether new visions of a different world.

In a word, the combination of activity, of unity of white and black, and unity of theory and practice, come into play in this immediately pressing problem of white labor, to whom we must say, in no uncertain terms, that otherwise it would stand in danger of being de-classed, as has happened to white labor in South Africa, and it then becomes, as Marx warned, "Nothing." The sales of Black Mass Revolt before factory gates, and a new series of leaflets that we have begun inserting in News & Letters on problems in the factory, must now concern themselves also with the danger of Wallace-ism. You will be discussing this further at the Organizational Session. Here, even when I deal with organizational questions and pose concrete tasks, it is always strictly from the point of view of how to concretize Marxist-Humanist philosophy.

For example, you will be discussing the Columbia University pamphlet at great length later. But let us here compare how both the objective situation and philosophy affect comparable events differently, depending on the time in which they take place.

Take the Free Speech Movement of 1964 and the Columbia University rebellion of 1968. Were we to take the objective situation and the philosophic ramifications of FSM, there would be no doubt that it was the greater event -- not

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only because it was a first, but because of its scope, length, broadness of involvement of both the student body and the faculty. It was, moreover, involved in both civil rights and labor struggles, and made another first by raising a philosophic question, specifically the question of Alienation. (My speech on that theory is but a single aspect, as our pamphlet on the FSM shows). By this depth of development, it has entered history and will remain as a crucial turning point in youth development in this country.

Yet Columbia University has the greater significance, not because we were in it, though that is no small part of it, nor because SDS led it as against the spontaneous rise of a single leader in the FSM: Mario Savio. Rather, it is because 1968 is so different from 1964 when the civil rights struggle was still in the South, and Berkeley, rather than Oakland, was the Northern headquarters, so to speak. It is true that all were related to SNCC, CORE, etc. -- which activity, indeed, was the spark that ignited the fires of revolt. 1968, on the other hand, not only has seen the black revolution move North in general, but, very specifically, there were black students on the campus which at once made Harlem become conscious of it, and it of Harlem. The University's proximity to Harlem and the neighborhood around itself involved SDS in tenant organizations, and the labor situation, too, was not "outside" (as was the case when FSM students picketed places in San Francisco) but concerned "its own" cafeteria workers, etc.

In a word, the historic period, the proximity to the "inner city" as against the ivory tower, and the international situation -- the French near-revolution -- at once transformed the Columbia University struggle into something more significant than the FSM in the developments leading to an American Revolution.

Finally, consider the philosophic implications and ramifications. In FSM, though Alienation was on everyone's lips, it had meant, to those to whom it acted as impulse to involvement -- and it was this that transformed a small radical grouping into a mass movement -- a struggle against the impersonalism, the IBM-card nature of the multiversity.

By 1968, such attitudes concerned, not the revolutionary but the moderate wing, and could be lowered to the status of "Restructuring the University". On the other hand, the French near-revolution transformed the question of student revolt into something unique. At the same time, philosophically it was not only the involvement of one small segment in the classes in Hegel that we held; it was not only the direction we as individual Marxist-Humanists helped give to SDS in labor and international relations -- none of which is to be discounted. It was that all these coalescing, raised the question of philosophy, not as centering around alienation, but as one about philosophy of revolution.

Because this is so, it demands that even the selling of literature at the International Assembly of Revolutionary Students, be done so creatively as itself to be a philosophic act. For example, we could bundle together special items at special prices, which would express our philosophy "all at once" so to speak. Thus: (1) Take the News & Letters of July on France and the one of August on Czechoslovakia, to which you add the pamphlet, State-Capitalism and Marx's Humanism, and give it a title such as "Today and Yesterday: Theory and Reality" and sell it very reasonably.

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(2) Copy out on a separate mimeographed sheet, the two paragraphs from the 1963 Introduction to Marxism and Freedom which said I had been criticized for having placed Negro bus boycott and Hungarian Revolution on the same plane, and I had also been criticized for not having taken deStalinization into consideration in my critique of Russia. Then ask a question: "Would anyone repeat this today? Yet Marxism and Freedom took in no less than 200 years of history," ending with: "Read this work, the first to establish the American roots of Marxism, the first to re-establish the Humanism of Marxism for our era, the first to let workers speak for themselves on Automation."

(3) Whether or not the New Politics issue with Dick's article on Herbert Marcuse is out by then, copies of the article must be available on the table. Marcuse is a big name in Europe. It must be criticized that seriously and from the Left and by a "backward American."

Oh, yes, and Socialist Humanism should have a note before it, calling attention to those who are now in jail and otherwise in danger, to show that this is not an academic question.

And, finally, it goes without saying that if we are participating in the conference either as speakers from the platform, or from the floor, we must not only speak, as we are sure to do, as Marxist-Humanists "in theory" only, but as organization -- by calling attention to the literature table, stressing that the report we have printed directly from Prague is where Marxist-Humanism is far from being "academia".

All these transition points to make, as Ray F. said in his contribution to the discussion, people "know that we're an organization with a paper, not a paper with an organization", lead me, however, to return to the question of philosophy, this time on the question we have never fully broken through: Why philosophy? Or rather, why have we never been able to make philosophy as concrete as the adherents of the elite party that we have rejected, have made their arrogant vanguardism?

Let's, then, get down to our final point -- Philosophy vs. the Party -- and try again, beginning with the latest developments in Czechoslovakia.

It is no accident that the Czechoslovak friends grasped Marxist-Humanism both in theory and as organization in a more concrete manner than we have here. It was no accident first because the enemy they had to contend with was greater -- totalitarian communism. Secondly, because they were thus engaged in a spontaneous movement on their own, in the direction of Marxist-Humanism; so that when they discovered Marxism and Freedom in 1965 -- one via an article on Africa, and the other via the analysis of Russian Communism -- it was as if they heard themselves speak, only clearer, more comprehensively, and at the same time on the questions that concerned them, since, as you know, Marxism and Freedom was being completed just as the Hungarian Revolution erupted and that, likewise, went directly into Marxism and Freedom.

Most of all, however, I think it is because their enemy, direct, implacable, both in life and in theory was "THE PARTY". Instead of merely rejecting it, they knew they had to answer its claims and not only expose its treacheries. Philosophy seemed to be the only answer, and then, so to speak, I came along, from the other end of the world, as "pure theory" with the same answer.

The fact that the counter-revolution has no doubt driven underground or killed outright this emergent Marxist Humanism neither disproves the facts, nor can it kill the idea. It will come alive again, somehow, somewhere, and we have no small task in making it not just a national, but a world, problem.

Now let's go to the beginnings in Marx and see what illumination we can get for our problem today.

It is, of course, no accident that Marx, to begin with, used the terminology "realizing philosophy" to express making freedom a reality. The tragedy lies in the fact that, since Marx's death, this is not what guided the building of a Marxist organization -- anywhere, at any time. It took nothing short of a world war and collapse of the Second International before even Lenin recognized that philosophy was the determining factor in revolution. Until 1914, he not only accepted Plekhanov's vulgarizations of philosophy as the alpha and omega of Marxian philosophy. He himself rose to fury and wrote just as vulgar a book on the question, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, only because the small group of Bolsheviks were beginning to deviate on the political front. In a word, only after 1914, did he recognize the determining factor of philosophy in revolution. His own concrete universal -- "to a man" -- was Humanism brought up to the eve of the Russian Revolution (though he still did not know the specific Humanist essays of 1844). He did not live long enough to reorganize his party on that philosophic principle. This task revolves on us, and it is no small task.

There is not only opposition to us, but a great deal of fakery going on in the radical movement on the whole question. And I don't mean only the Trotskyists. Take the Internationale Situationniste. We deliberately left out that group when we analyzed the analysts of the French situation. Deliberately, because they deserve a special niche, not because of their correctness or honesty, but to show how much "like" someone else one may sound. Here is a group that on the question of anti-elitism, spontaneity, old radical groups, sound so much like us that only if you were suspicious could you possibly think that not only is not "philosophy" ever mentioned, but history itself is distorted -- and both deliberately and shamefacedly at once.

A more careful look at their leaflet, however, would reveal that nothing was accidental in what they omitted. Thus, there is a great big half-century gap between the first example of workers' councils (why not soviets, which was their true name in 1905? Or, if they mean factory committees and not soviets, why not state that by name, and no one would know what they meant?) and the 1956 example of Workers Councils in Hungary. A little reflection will show that 1917 (no little revolution) is not even cited as what one should follow in the French events. 1937 is likewise slighted, though there were factory committees galore, and directly at the bench -- but then there were also anarchists in leadership.

I cite this not only to show that one cannot judge by generalities, but also how truly alone one is in trying to build an organization on Marxist-Humanism. Marx was alone and none after him grasped how totally inseparable are philosophy and organization. This was no simple question, nor was it due only to the fact that Marx's Humanist Essays of 1844 were not discovered until the 1920's, at the very end, just as fascism was beginning to come to the surface with the world depres-

sion. There were objective roots in this forgetfulness. The self-organization of the proletariat was first correctly expanded, just as Marx had done, this time into the Second International. The new stage of capitalism was creating a basis for a division in the working class, through its expansion into imperialism and the aristocracy of labor. When World War I finally revealed that awful truth of counter-revolution within revolution, the coalescence of life and philosophy did result in Lenin's great new universal and the greatest proletarian revolution in history became a fact.

But, fortunately or unfortunately, we cannot repeat either 1844-1848 or 1914-1917; we have to build on the basis of 1968! And now that we have found the missing link, the old radicals are trying to rebury it once again. They are going to do everything in their power to confuse the new youth who think -- not having had historical experience -- that each idea is just someone's opinion, and each has a right to be judged on the merits of what he presents at a single moment, in a single event, especially if he is active, active, active.

But to Marx, thought, too, was an activity -- the precise one the capitalists hope you never engage in (they surely exhaust you enough in their exploitation that you'd rather "relax"), but the one that is nevertheless the indispensable prerequisite in preparing for revolution. No matter how spontaneously they arise, they will never succeed and develop until we get that division between mental and manual labor broken down, and the unity of theory and practice a fact.

First, Philosophy is not an academic word. It is philosophy of revolution. That, indeed, is what the dialectic is all about. But where, to Hegel, it was an algebra of revolution, an abstraction -- to Marx it was most concrete and spelled out as Subject, as force of revolution, masses, the proletariat and the nationally oppressed as Reason.

Secondly, philosophy is needed the day before, the day of, and the day after the revolution. Otherwise, the great climax of revolution can still become a transition to a backward movement for all the rest of the capitalist world will not only press down upon the new revolution with counter-revolutionary armies, and economic might, but also with old ideology.

Thirdly, just as, to Marx, his dictum "Labor in the white skin cannot be free, so long as labor in the black skin is branded" was not a mere rhetoric phrase, but a philosophy of liberation, so we have had the extreme historic "luck" to spell it out most concretely specifically on the crucial subject of the Negro, adding to it one other new force -- youth -- and adding it at the time when all others were talking of the beat generation. (Reread our Constitution, written in 1958.)

Now it is true that it is easier to make people join when you promise them they will be "the vanguard" the minute they join the Party. It surely leaves no doubt what your main preoccupation as member is -- the main activity is to make others join the elite. And it says that unless you join "the Party" you will not be among "the chosen".

To say, on the other hand, that what distinguishes your organization from all others is philosophy, and that, moreover, though we have done a great deal of work, it is by no means finished, does not win members so easily. We

have no program, no blueprint for success. It is something that you yourself must help develop. Inviting someone to labor, to work out the future, does not have the same appeal that an invitation to adventures of power has -- and via shortcuts to it, at that.

Nor is it as appealing, as easy, as transmitting "cultural revolution" -- which tells you that if only you get rid of the "four olds" and destroy old culture, preferably with an axe, change your habits, and so forth, all will be right.

Castro is tops in glamour these days because of the martyrdom of Che, on the one hand, and the disdain for theory, on the other hand, while glorifying the barrel of the gun.

Those who are aspiring revolutionaries but do not know history do not know that the disdain for theory is not new, not revolutionary, not activism (Heidegger, too, yelled "Man is not a thinking being, but an acting one"). No, the disdain for theory is inherent in bourgeois practice.

Because, however, they are young, are not representative of any state power, but are truly idealistic and revolutionary, we do have a different attitude go them. We stress, to them, that in the battle of ideas you must be constantly engaged in every activity, and that while philosophy may appear as academic, it is not -- it is a philosophy of revolution.

Philosophy may appear as if organization building is not indispensable, but in truth, outside of organization there is neither self-development nor collective development. Nor is it possible to prepare the road to revolution "outside". There is no philosophy, no ideas, without people who have these ideas, who live by them, and if necessary die by them. But we do not make a fetish of martyrdom, either, and send you out to die or have you volunteer for it -- as did Che. It is better to live for these ideas which will create freedom for all.

No, it is not a finished formula. It is a task you yourself must participate in. Join with us in this great historic task, and the future is assured, not as formula, but as something to work out. Now that we have both the missing link and the forces of revolution in the concrete -- the proletariat, black and white; and the youth, too, as both a national and international force -- the task will be done.

Detroit, Mich.
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