

SOCIALIST REGISTER 1970, Merlin Press, London
Conversation bet. Il Manifesto & JPS IN ROME, 8/27/69

MASS, SPONTANEITY, PARTY

Il Manifesto raises critique of spontaneity--lesson of '68--"If it is realized that the submaturity of the wkg. class requires today a new form of org. adapted to conditions of struggle in the societies of advanced cap. THE BASIS OF PROBLEM ever since '52 a classic discussion...the polemic which followed with Lafort & M-P, by way of The Ghost of Stalin of 1956 to the Cr. 1960. The q is: must image of party be changed because situation has changed or because early formulations "were vitiated by th. inadequacies which have since then been more clearly revealed."

2nd vol.

JPS: (p.254 us where he says/CR. "WILL PROBABLY NEVER APPEAR."

LORDY: "I tried to show that the party, in rel. to the mass, is a necessary reality because the mass, by itself, does not possess spontaneity. By itself, the mass remains serialized." "MASS DOES NOT REP. SPONTANEITY"!!!

p.255 "FRATERNITY TERROR"

To S's insistence that (p.239) as for bringing about a rev. olan, this requires a long & patient labor in the construction of consciousness", Manifesto insists: "Eveb so, this unification appeared immediate & obvious in May '68." Sartre Absolutely obvious. It is one of the rare instances...it was an idea which came to us from Vietnam & which the students expressed in the formula: "L'Imagination au pouvoir."

Handwritten notes:
D.M. Jones on 15/12/69
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NLR #58, 11-12/69 - ITINERARY OF A THOUGHT - interview with JPS

Q: How do you envisage the rel. bet. your early phil. writings, above all B/N & your present th. wrk. from CR onwards?

p/44

JPS: The basic ques. here, of course, is my rel. to Marx. In a way, B/N itself should have been the beginning of a discovery of this power of circumstances... I started to learn what I've called human reality among things: Being-in-the-world. The other dat I reread... (re prefatory note to Les Mouches & Huis Clos which he had called "theatre of freedom" but nevertheless) was truly scandalized. I had written: whatever the circumstances, & wherever the site, a man is always free to choose to be traitor or not..."

Resistance--ultimate only a ques. of courage... The problem then was solely that of physical endurance--it was not the ruses of his., or the paths of alienation... AFTER THE WAR CAME THE TRUE EXPERIENCE, THAT OF SOCIETY. But I think it was necessary for me to pass via the myth of heroism 1st.... Stendhal's egotistic al individualist...

p.45 "But for the idea which I have never ceased to dev. is that in the end one is always responsible for what is made of one."
"B/N RACED AN INTERIOR EXPERIENCE WITHOUT ANY COORDINATION WITH THE EXTERIOR EXPERIENCE of a p.b. intellectual which had become historically catastrophic at a certain moment.". But catastrophes have no less UNLESS they are the culmination of a prxis. Then one can say, my action has failed. But the disaster which overwhelmed the country taught us nothing....

& still re it & neurosis & unconscious/ & then off for 3 pp. on (off on Freud for 2 pp.) p.50: My conception of 'lived experiences, marks my change since B/N. My early work was a rationalist phil. of consciousness...

& even then only to go off re language on totalization & deforestation. & tohn back again is brought back by questioner" "by the time at end of the Cr. the reader has been taken through all the different ewweasible ewKATIONSHIP OF INDIV., GROUPS, SERIES & the practico-inert which constitute for you "the formal elements of any history". & only at end of p.58 JPS speaks of "history property" "our history" p.59 "Thus all the notions which will emerge from the 2nd vol. will be rigorously applied to our own his., my aim will be to prove that there is a dialectical intelligibility of the singular... What I

will seek to show is the dial. intelligibility of that which is NOT UNIVERSALISABLE...
(finally comes practice-inert--again brought on by...
insistence of questioner...
p.60: "In the last part of the XR, entitled Towards History...
turn off to protracted struggle Vietnam '68 etc. then on rev. party taking...
An centralization & coercion of state it is overthrown--if it gets stuck there
p.64 "only a cultural rev. against the new order can prevent a degradation of it."

Handwritten notes:
p. 60
p. 64

Concl. what I will write some day is a political testament.

Handwritten signature:
G. W. L. ...
Raufer ...

Handwritten signature:
Raufer

JPS in Socialist Register, 1970 (actually conversation bet. Italian Left & JPC was held 8/27/69)

Manifesto: they also criticized the very notion of the party as the pol., structured org. of the class... It seems to us that one can only properly criticize spontaneity--that was the case of 1968--IF IT IS REALIZED THAT

p.234: THE SUBJ. MATURITY OF THE WORKING CLASS REQUIRES TODAY A NEW FORM OF ORG., ADAPTED TO THE CONDITIONS OF STRUGGLE IN THE SOCIETIES OF ADVANCED CAPITALISM.

JPS: "reified contiguity" The prol. does not possess a culture which is autonomous, it either uses elements of bourgeois culture, or it expresses a total refusal of any culture, which is a way of affirming the lack of existence of its own culture...

THE REVOLT OF THE STUDENTS WAS A TYPICAL EXPRESSION OF THE PROBLEM OF A COUNTER-CULTURE: it was a refusal which, because it lacked its own elaboration,

ended up by borrowing, even though it gave them a contrary meaning, a series of ideological trappings from their opponents (CONCEPTUAL SIMPLIFICATION, SCHEMATISM, VIOLENCE, ETC.)

Manifesto: "The anti-cap. rev., is, therefore, both ripe & not ripe. Class antagonisms produces the contrad., but is not, by itself, capable of producing the alternative. Yet, if one is not to REDUCE THE REV. TO A PURE VOLUNTARISM & A PURE SUBJECTIVITY, or conversely, if one is not to fall back into evolutionism, on what precise bases can one prepare a REV. ALTERNATIVE?"

JPS: "I report, more on the basis of 'alienation' than on 'needs'. In short, on the reconstruction of the indiv. & of freedom..."

Manifesto: This is true, BUT HOW IS ONE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THIS NEED IS PRODUCED BY ADVANCED CAP. & THAT IT IS NOT simply the residue of a 'humanism' which antedates cap?....

Manifesto: The rev. pol. org. of the class therefore requires the elaboration of an alternative. It seems to us that this problem was under-estimated during May. Those who took up positions of Marcusian inspiration (or of spontaneist kind in the fashion of Cohn-Bendit) relied exclusively on negation.... the working class is bound to ask WHAT WILL REPLACE WHAT IS TO BE DESTROYED?.....

JPS: It is undoubtedly true that a theory of the passage to socialism is necessary. Suppose that the situation quickens in Fr. or in Italy & leads to the achievement of power. What IDEAS DO WE HAVE AS TO HOW a highly industrialized country can reconstruct itself on a socialist basis.... We were saying just now that, without a moment of unification of the struggle, WITHOUT A CULTURAL MEDIATION & a positive response, it is impossible to go beyond revolt; and revolt is always defeated politically.... an institutionalized party is not capable of acting as mediator bet. culture & struggles: the reason being that what is still confused

ANON SYSTEMATIZED THOUGHT IN THE MASSES (though true as a reflection of experience), as completely deformed once it has been translated by the ideological mechanisms of the party presents a totally different relation to what we call culture.... If the cultural apparatus of the CPs is, in fact, null, the reason is NOT THAT THEY LACK GOOD INTELLECTUALS, BUT THAT THE MODUS EXISTENTIE OF THE PARTIES

PARALYZES THEIR COLLECTIVE EFFORT OF THOUGHT. Action & thought are not separable from the org. One thinks as one is structured. One acts as one is org'd/ That is why the thought of the CPs has come to be progressively ossified....."

Manifesto: "This implies the TRANSCENDANCE of the L-ist or Bo.model of the party --from its origins to the Popular Fronts.....the theory of

rev has until now been a 'theory of the seizure of power' much more than a 'theory of society.' The result has been an inability of CPs to analyze advanced capitalist society....."

Re Althusser, see p.247, esp. on "autonomous theoretical knowledge"

JPS: "a real discussion always demands an effort & LEADS TO NEW THEORETICAL RESULTS"

the movement appears today richer & more complex than its pol. expression"

Movement richer than its pol. expression

One acts as one is org'd.

