

STEWARDSHIP OF LEADERSHIP

1966

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Fear from failure of existing
leadership - the latent "contribution";
on the one hand, the silence of D & J, on the
other hand, ^{continue} show that more are only if we
they continue to "love" us even after they have
followed by wayside

We have no choice but to
move with material at hand - and we have
known how to get the most out of that -

Introduction: Ourselves and History

The discussion the past two days has been carried with an awareness of being founders of Marxist-Humanism, though this is our 10th anniversary.

Actually we are 12 years old since ^{N&L and N&L Committees} we were born in 1955, but, because we were forced into the split of what had been a united state-capitalist tendency before we had rounded both our political and philosophic views with the completion of the writing of M&H in 1957, the singling out of Marxist-Humanism as the special contribution of Marxists and uniquely ours alone, that is belonging to our age, it is correct to speak of our 10th anniversary. This is especially true as concerns the stewardship of leadership.

In many respects, of course, we are a great deal older because, as a tendency we were born in 1941 with the elaboration of the state-capitalist theory, thus completing the theoretical break with both Communism and Trotskyism. Less well known, although more crucial historically, is the year 1953 and my letters on "Absolute Idea", but this will not be fully clear, even to myself, till the book, PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION is completed.

It is this, precisely this, which brings us right back to what I started with--the awareness of being founders today because we will be working this out as an organization, and not just individually.

not only
Nevertheless, we have to give an accounting of ourselves both for the last year and the 10 years before then, but also must place the whole question of leadership in a historic framework; it is not an easy question to answer.

Thus, at the very start of Marxism with Karl Marx, the founder, with no mass following at the moment, and Ja Salle, a follower of sorts and heading the first mass organization in Germany, the question arose--and I am not referring only to the merger of the Lassalleans and Eisenbachists which Marx criticized so fundamentally in The Critique of the Gotha Program, but not publicly and not in order to stop the merger.

I am referring to what adherents thought of leadership, always leaning toward the man who could prove "success" in organization so that those great unequals --Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle were given equal "status" in the German Social Democracy, and this became a contributing factor to its collapse, and, before then, half unconsciously, the reason for the independent rise, in 1903, of Bolshevism or what is known as Lenin's theory of the party.

Thus, at the birth of the Russian Revolution, when theory and practice combined in one man, Lenin, and was further complicated with the acquisition of actual state power, Lenin, too, in the early years, felt overwhelmed by an OVERPOWERING CONTRADICTION:

On the one hand, he felt that not only were the ranks more revolutionary than the leadership, but the non-party masses more revolutionary than the party --and all this demanded that he operate on the principle that "the non-party masses" the work of the Party must be checked by

OK at 11/10/66

KP

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On the other hand, that, but for the very thin layer of "Old Bolsheviks", the whole revolution may collapse. (Sel. Wks. Vol IX, p.)

Now, luckily or unluckily, since we face neither the historic contradiction nor the historic opportunity.

But placing the problem of leadership historically was not diversionary; it was to give us an appreciation of the historic problem of leadership of a historic tendency, and at the same time to have a frame of reference for the specific discussion of the stewardship of leadership in N&L Committees, 1955-1966.

N&L Committees, 1955-57

Now then when we first met in 1955, we deliberately avoided having anything to do with elections. To assure the continuance of a workers' paper we even paid for the last (#7, 1955) issue of Correspondence when the alleged "owner" took advantage of the legality not only to walk off with the name of the paper but also to refuse to pay the bill since the worker-editor was not "his" tendency. About the only change we made in 1955 was to vote for two worker-editors since it is all too well-established that for many a person, workers included, a split is an excuse to get out of the movement altogether. (And it is indeed good that we did so for the white worker did soon leave us.)

The next problem was to strengthen the centre -- and Saul, Johnny and Inez were asked to leave NY and come to Detroit. If you will look at your Constitution, you will see that it is dated 1956, and it is then we first elected our leadership, and it was actually not before 1957 when M&F too was completed that we first knew who were our founders since in '56 we merely assigned that work, and it is only '58 that the Constitution was finalised.

The principles established were simple: ① Those who were founders of M-H and operated on the principles and proved themselves in what we still refer to as "full-time workers for M-H."

② We must never take our eyes away from the proletarian stampin leadership as well as in organization, therefore there must be a certain relationship of worker to intellectual in the leading committee.

③ Although we had no youth group, we considered it so fundamental that we voted always to have at least one youthfully devoted to that work.