

Feb 23, 1971
2416 Fowling Place

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Dear Raya;

I, for one, in the SF/Berkeley local, have a certain amount of hesitancy in commenting on Part III, Chapter III, "New Passions and New Forces" although you ask for direct concrete criticism. This hesitancy stems from the fact that I am still trying to master the theoretical concepts of Marxist Humanism and I am acutely aware of the fact that if there is a guerrilla war now raging in America today it is the guerrilla warfare of IDEAS. This is not an attempt to weasel out of critical responsibility, but a need to re-absorb, to re-understand my experiences in the light of Marxist Humanism.

So, in this letter, what I want to speak about is what I understood and what I did not quite comprehend in Chapter III., this also applies to my feelings about the local's comprehension.

2 If you had time to decipher what was said on the tape, which we sent to you on Chapter III, you would note that most of the discussion, in my opinion, was confined to minor things, without getting to the theoretical heart of the chapter. Hardly anything was said about the need for the unity of theory and practice ~~or~~ of the concept of spontaneity and organization which you so concretely and graphically described in the SELF-ORGANIZATION and WORKING EXISTANCE of the Montgomery bus boycott. (This was the essence - the most important thing that happened in the civil rights movement, even when it was ~~overshadowed~~ "overshadowed" by the heroic militancy of the Black students). It is on this issue, too, that we depart in theory and practice in the most revolutionary way, from the old and the new left.

Although this chapter was read and discussed page by page over a three hour period, from page 18 to page 21 there were no comments from the local. What happened was this: there was a hell of a lot of philosophical "compression" that due to the lack of theoretical background, the local did not bring it into easy comprehension.

What bothered me the most was the feeling of the local that we should include in this chapter other passions and forces, like the Chicano movement and Women's lib. I feel that this is a peripheral way of unconsciously watering down our theory of Black as Vanguard.

Let's jump to page 6, the last paragraph. I understand your development of our position on the Black movement as Vanguard and how the direct participation of white students in that movement gave them the philosophy and the courage to oppose their own alienation at the Universities, but I don't think that the white "cop-out" was as simple as you seem to intimate. Massive white liberal intervention, with money and influence had begun to compromise the movement long before Black militants began to turn sour on the whites. As I remember, there was quite a bit of rear guard action of the part of some white militants to remain in the movement. What always bothers me is, at that time there was a prevalence of the concept that Blacks and whites should work in their separate communities. This was readily accepted by Black and white militants, ignoring the universality of the American crisis. This concept in practice is both pernicious and self-defeating. For example: at UC Berkeley, underpaid Black dormitory maids are about to go on strike for higher wages and we have the strange anomaly of Black militants telling the maids NOT to seek the support of white students, while a Vice-Chancellor told the white students that if they support the maid's strike their fees would go up by \$160. per year!

Locally, the minorities pamphlet is not going as fast as I expected, but I have confidence that we will have it ready.

Yours, Allen