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RESOLUTION ON "WORKERS BATTLE AUTOMATION"

I. SIGNIFICANCE OF PALPHELT.

Next to the threat of nuclear war, the most terrible threat to the lives of the American worker is Automation. It has already devastated the most highly industrialized sections of the country leaving, as permanently depressed areas, such populous working class centers as Detroit, Pittsburgh, Birmingham, West Virginia.

It seeks to destroy the workers' organizations in the shop, and has all but destroyed workers' protection on the job whether that pertains to seniority, safety, overwork, or upgrading. Above all, Automation has created a permanent army of unemployed which fluctuates upward from a shocking minimum of five million jobless workers.

Because it has fully exposed the bankruptcy of the union bureaucracy, Automation is forcing the production workers to seek a new form of organization whereby to overcome the permanent crisis of capitalism which always vents itself at the expense of the workers. This poses a compelling challenge to the Marxist Humanist organization for membership growth in the next period because the workers' struggles demand it. You cannot have an organization that answers the needs of the workers unless you have a theory that answers their questions and illuminated the road to the new society.

By now, and particularly in this election year, everyone is talking about Automation as a No. 1 national problem. The politicians, eager for votes, pretend to show their concern by talking about the long-range progress of capitalism, and in the meantime they offer "temporary programs" of limited aid to the depressed areas hardest hit by Automation.

The labor bureaucracy have no answer to satisfy the workers' demands for a total solution. On the contrary, they have turned against the workers by (1) abandoning the unemployed and the production worker to the ravages of Automation; (2) talking hollowly about re-training workers to be ready for the "job possibilities of the new technology"; and (3) desperately seeking to preserve their dues paying base by attempts to organize white collar workers and technicians.

Because the Marxist-Humanist organization develops its theory and organizational practice on the fundamental ground of workers experiences and needs to create a new basis for life and labor whereby humanity may emancipate itself, we alone were with the workers in facing the challenge of Automation from its very inception ten years ago, first with the miners in 1949-50, then with auto workers in 1955-57.

We strengthened the workers' struggles to break the stranglehold of the bureaucracy in 1957 when, as in the case of Chrysler Local 212, the rank and file revolted against the Reuther machine and handed it its first major set-back.

Although the bureaucracy spares neither effort nor money in order to subvert the workers' attempts to build new organizations of their own, as happened with the short-lived unemployed councils in 1958, we are with them in their incessant attempts at re-organization which are intensifying today as industry is intensifying its drive to Automation to beat the expected 1961 slump.

Our pamphlet, "Workers Battle Automation", has a double significance for us in this period: (1) it poses the workers' struggles for a new world as a comprehensive challenge that crosses industrial and union lines; and (2) it provides us with a powerful agent for recruiting workers to our organization.

The basic analysis of Automation was put forth for the first time with the publication of MARXISM AND FREEDOM in 1958. The pamphlet concretizes the analysis in terms of the actual experiences of the workers, as they live through them.

Since the fundamental analysis was made on the basis of the miners' experiences with the continuous miner, automation has made massive inroads into all major industries. In addition to the miners, the pamphlet reflects the experiences among auto workers, steel workers, rubber workers, packing house workers, electrical and white collar workers. It does so in their words. This expression of life and thought appears at the same time as Automation has been raised as a prime political question of American life.

II. CAN WE SELL FIVE THOUSAND COPIES?

The question of selling the pamphlet is a task of the highest political importance. It is the bridge to recruiting. We know from our experience with the Afro-Asian pamphlet that a Marxist-Humanist pamphlet can both make money and act as a recruiter. The Automation pamphlet will prove this ten-fold over because it is written by workers of their own lives and aspirations and demands concrete answers to urgent problems of the day.

Every serious attempt to reorganize life takes an organizational form, or it isn't serious. This is true not only of mass organizations. Where small grouping has its ear to the ground, or, more precisely the shop floor, it will reflect itself there as well. What the Afro-Asian pamphlet and News and Letters did in the Negro struggle, the "Workers Battle Automation" will do far more effectively in the factory.

The R.E.B. has felt, however, that the exact run of the pamphlet will depend on what (1) will be achieved with the special issue of NEWS & LETTERS which will first publish this work to workers to attend the convention session which will discuss how best to circulate this pamphlet, (2) what our friends and sympathizers will obligate themselves financially to publish it in pamphlet form, and (3) the spirit at the convention which will vote for either 2,000 or 5,000 to be published. The 5,000 would be a new figure for us, and needless

to say, it would be not only a quantitative, but a qualitative achievement. It is a minimum. That is to say, if we are serious about the pamphlet becoming an actual weapon in the class struggle and thus in membership growth, five thousand should be the number we make ourselves responsible for. The decision is up to the convention.

Obviously, an intensive drive to sell must begin at the factory gates where we are already known for our regular distributions of News and Letters which (1) has dealt with Automation in every issue since we first appeared on June 17, 1955; and (2) has consistently raised in theory the question that the workers are raising in life: What next? Above all, therefore, it must be inside the factory where the pamphlet acts as the spur to discussions that our members initiate and that the workers then take up to help them in their actions by bringing to fore a new quality in their thoughts.

III. WORKERS TRYING TO GET TOGETHER.

Workers in all shops and at all times, in the shop and out, are trying to get together among themselves in their battle against Automation. Informal get-togethers take place daily at the line and at lunch breaks. Other informal get-togethers take place between plants. In the breakup of plants that Automation has caused it has not been unusual for workers from one plant to visit workers in the plant they had formerly worked to report on what is happening and what they are doing about it. These lead to others - although they are often also opposed to cause - to more formal get-togethers.

Thus, the steel workers are repeatedly wildcatting against the threat to life and safety posed by Automation, and are once again seeking to form an opposition to the McDonald machine's surrender to the production demands of the companies.

Thus, the Negro workers' determination to end job discrimination forced the formation of the new Negro American Labor Council.

In all cases, formal and informal, and even at the official UAW conventions, through all the bureaucratic crust there break through the actual demands of the workers, ranging from so-called local grievances that are in fact national struggles against speed-up and lay-offs, to call for a shorter work day with the same pay both to help the workers on the automated lines and to put the unemployed back to work. As against the bureaucrats hair-brained schemes for "profit sharing", the workers want control of the conditions of labor and of production itself.

We alone are with the workers in their struggle for a total solution on their own terms. It is here therefore, whether the get-togethers are informal or formal that the pamphlet can be the bridge to our organization.

IV. THE WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND OURS AS ONE.

It is our responsibility as Marxist-Humanists, to bring our Automation pamphlet, and thereby the ideas of our organization, into all of their discussions and meetings, whether formal or informal.

It is obvious that not a single issue, nor a single tactic, nor a single organization form of struggle dominates the workers' actions and thought today, but an elemental drive to find the total solutions.

Wherever white production workers are forced by the reality of their lives under Automation to discuss race relations with Negro workers, we must be there with our pamphlet.

Wherever workers discuss the threat to life and limb of Automation, and seek to overcome it, we must be there with our pamphlet.

Wherever workers seek to overcome the stranglehold of the bureaucracy, we must be there with our pamphlet.

Most important, it is our responsibility, as Marxist Humanists, to show the workers that their current efforts to build their organizations, and our determination to build our own, are integral to the necessity of the working class to shoulder its historic task.

Our pamphlet is the key, in this period, to showing the production workers, white or Negro, that by joining our organization he strengthens his own because theory and practice are a two-way road that come together in Marxist-Humanism as the banner of the struggle for a totally new way of life.

V. CONCLUSIONS.

The R.E.B. proposes: (1) that we use the Special August-September issue of News and Letters to test our ability to sell as Marxist-Humanists. We must recognize that just as the white and Negro production workers will not rest until they find an organizational form that meets their needs, we must be alert to join with them and have them join us in making the experiences of our age as members of an organization with a total philosophy; (2) that in the fall we print a first edition of five thousand copies of "Workers Battle Automation," provided that every member of the organization, whether working in a factory or not, makes a determined and consistent effort, week after week, to sell the pamphlet (a) at as many factory gates as possible, (b) inside the shop wherever we can, and (c) at all meetings we can reach, whether informal or public; (3) that the pamphlet become the test of our recruiting ability both among workers and intellectuals since all are affected by Automation and are seeking a way out of capitalist crises and wars.

Although we have succeeded notably in demonstrating to the workers our solidarity with them, and they have used News and Letters as their paper, we have not yet transmitted that, as an organization, we are more than just friends and supporters. It is our organizational duty to the class struggle to convince the workers that our existence and growth is an organic necessity inseparable from the world-wide efforts of the working class to clarify its own politics. That is to say, to find the road through theory to practice whereby each and all of the oppressed overwhelming majority of the world control their own lives and shape their own destinies.

We will know the tree by its fruit. In this period, we will prove ourselves worthy of Marxist-Humanism by gaining new members from all strata.

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JANE [initials]