

*Theory and Practice
at the Turning Point*

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WELCOME TO THE NEWS & LETTERS CONVENTION, Sept. 5, 1964

Peter Mallory:

Permit me to welcome you once again to this, the fifth Convention of News & Letters. We meet at a time of crisis in the affairs of men, a time which we have characterized as a turning point in history. We will discuss, in the days ahead, what this turning point means to all of us.

We will begin primarily with the crisis in American politics, which has reached its turning point under the cross fire between the forces of the civil rights movement and the whip of the counter-revolutionary forces in capitalism. The civil rights movement itself has reached a turning point. It is no longer adequate to continue the struggle through multiple organizations which are conducting that struggle without a basic philosophy or political approach. The next year of the struggle will see these issues resolved, or the organizations losing ground.

Finally, we are at the turning point as an organization. No longer can we be satisfied with merely maintaining an organization to promote our ideas. We must turn our faces to the masses and institute a growth rate that will find this hall inadequate to hold our next convention. It is these matters that we have come here to discuss.

But before we begin our deliberations, I want to greet our guests at this gathering. We have with us today, three young visitors from Venezuela, who have traveled thousands of miles to participate in our discussions as a mark of international solidarity.

I am reminded of an event during the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. At a meeting in London of the Second International, Plekhanov, representing the Russian Social Democrats, met Sen Katayama, representing the Japanese Social Democrats on the platform. They shook hands and greeted each other warmly, to the applause of the entire world gathering. All recognized that even though their respective countries were at war, the international solidarity of the working class transcends all national boundaries. In Venezuela today the word "American" is usually followed by "imperialist". Yet these young men come here today recognizing that even in the heartland of American imperialism, there is a working class group, ourselves, with whom they can discuss their problems, knowing that we will understand and work together against the enemy that we have in common.

We regret that our friends from Japan, and in Argentina cannot also be with us today. An African student was to attend. He expressed great joy when he was invited, and made every attempt to get here, but his hosts, unfortunately, refused him permission to attend. At another convention, I am sure he will be here, even as now he transmits our ideas back to Africa.

We must also strike a tragic note insofar as we must express sorrow at the loss during the year of one of our founding members. -- Louis -- who wrote "A Doctor Speaks." His writing was part of the continuing proof

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that Marxism is a living tool, which he applied to the field of Medicine. During the next year, a book of his writings will be published which will not only honor his memory, but which will demonstrate the link which he established between medicine and Marxism. Both Marxism and medicine will be richer as the result of his efforts. In this manner he will always be with us.

During the summer we were fortunate enough to have Eugene participate as a part of Freedom Summer, working and teaching in the heart of Mississippi. I will not anticipate his remarks, but a full report of his activities and the role which our ideas and literature played in it, will be given during the convention.

In the days ahead we are faced with an election which poses Goldwater as a choice for President. While I am sure I do not have to agitate anyone here about what a disaster it would be, if, by any chance, he got elected -- the mere fact that he is running as the candidate of a major political party is threat enough to show us all the strength of the reaction in the United States. We shall work to beat back that threat.

The civil rights movement, faced as it is with the decision of where to go next, made its bid at the Democratic Party National Convention. Those who watched it on TV know that the Freedom Democratic Party took the world's attention away from capitalist politics to freedom aspirations. The world that watched Rev. King from Tougaloo, as a white Mississippian who has fully aligned himself with the freedom struggle, and the Negro Mississippians, who told of their harassment for trying to vote, knew also that "the vote" will by no means end this battle. This, precisely, was the significance of their participation in politics, the proof that demonstrations and the direct mass fighting for freedom and the anti-Goldwater struggle is not a "for Johnson" vote, but a "for freedom" action.

It is at this turning point in the civil rights struggle that the direct intervention of Marxist-Humanism is of the essence. Last year when we met in plenum we voted on a new paperback edition of Marxism and Freedom, concentrating on the new in the objective situation around "The Challenge of Mao Tse-tung." This year we not only have the paperback edition, but also a hard-cover edition. Here it is. And it is the new Introduction that defines the new relationship between the civil rights movement and Marxist-Humanism this way:

"An age in which 'a little thing' like school desegregation, can hold in tow such scientific milestones (as the Sputnik and the six-orbital entry into space) is an age in which men's consciousness is preoccupied, not with scientific conquest, but with human freedom."

It is to this task, then, this human freedom, that we turn now, as, in the name of the Resident Editorial Board, I declare this convention open.

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THEORY AND PRACTICE

AT THE TURNING POINT

by Raya Dunayevskaya

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THEORY AND PRACTICE AT THE TURNING POINT

INTRODUCTION: Dialectical Methodology, or
Relationship of Means and Ends in the Year, 1964

Daily displays of brinkmanship, as in South Viet Nam, or, more correctly, the bombing of North Viet Nam, assures a crisis-ridden world of one thing, and one thing only: that one day, the showman Commander-in-Chief will push mankind over the brink, into the abyss.

Daily practice of police brutality in the U.S. succeeds only in establishing the fact that the North, as well as the South, is, by no accident, an indivisible part of that USA whose reactionary visage the world over stands for imperialist nuclear domination.

(Who would wish to take any bets either that the New York Police Commissioner Murphy is not, in fact, Alabama's Bull Connor, or that "McNamara's War" in South Viet Nam differs from Mississippi's war against freedom here? And who would see any fundamental difference between a New York Grand Jury's exoneration of the killer-cop, Thomas Gilligan, and Mississippi's jury freeing Byron de La Beckwith?)

Daily examples of the so-called white backlash against Northern school desegregation, as led by the "Parents and Taxpayers Coordinating Council" under the benign non-parent tutelage of Rosemary Gunning, establish an all-too-obvious kinship to the benighted white Southern motherhood in Louisiana that shouted such profanities at Negro first-graders and indulged in such misconduct against the one white mother who had the courage to lead her child to an integrated school, that it became unsafe for her to continue to live in the South.

Seemingly limitless is the depth of degradation of bourgeois white America for it has now produced still another phenomenon which, by comparison, pales -- or more precisely put, unifies all other manifestation of reaction. This neo-fascistic phenomenon bears the name of Goldwater.

Goldwater's motto seems to be: Bring me all your very own prejudices and I will make room for them.

Fascist Spain, the Far Right in France, and in Italy, the neo-Nazis in Germany were jubilant when he won the Republican Party's presidential nomination. As the overwhelming majority in Europe recognized the procession of ghosts of the Hitlers, Mussolinis, as well as their own compatriots who had boasted they "could do business" with those modern barbarians readying themselves for World War II, Europe shuddered.

So did the United States.

The sad truth, however, is that, while being against Goldwater will certainly defeat him at the polls in November, this will not uproot the phenomenon of Goldwaterism, Birchism, KKKism.

Only proletarian revolution can undermine reaction.

Only Marxist-Humanist theory can destroy the Goldwater ideology. Anything short of this reduces theory to impressionism. This is one of the reasons why the crux of the Resolution, "The Turning Point", is stated quite early as: (p.4) "Never was there more need for theory, and never less comprehension of it."

Despite all the bourgeois and petty bourgeois klanders against Marxists for allegedly believing that any means are justifiable to achieve the aim of a socialist society, the "right" ends are inconceivable without the "right" means. For Marxist-Humanists, the self-activity of the masses, as "means", and human self-development, as "end", are one and the same.

The methodological basis for this view was, in abstract form, elaborated by Hegel. Marx, however, had not far to go to concretize Hegel's concept of history as "progress in the consciousness of freedom". He aimed to make freedom a reality. Man, as creativity, was the "subject" that would achieve this. The proletariat was the center of his thinking.

The revolutionary simplicity of the aim and the means spelled out the humanist society. Preparing oneself for anticipating, and participating in, the spontaneous outbursts that were daily occurring and that were sure to envelop the world entailed a dialectical analysis of existing society. Since life, practice, was the only possible proof of the validity of dialectics, it is best to turn to our own age and its latest phenomenon: Goldwaterism. Here are the main reasons why such a methodology is of the essence:

(1) Without a dialectical approach there is the danger that, no matter how active anti-Goldwaterites we are, we could be lulled to sleep either by thinking that the "no vote" against Goldwater will destroy the phenomenon of Goldwaterism, or by an "it-can't-happen-here" attitude, a feeling that those who voted for him thus far don't "really" know what Goldwater stands for; once they do, they will run to the opposite direction.

In contrast to these "attitudes to objectivity", the dialectic approach is grounded in the actual historical development -- and Goldwaterism is an historic phenomenon, a terrifying phenomenon. Historic phenomena do not arise through "error", but are born in response to objective class needs.

(2) At the same time, the dialectic also prevents us from falling into the trap either of "popular frontism", or its seemingly total opposite -- adventurism, i.e. guerrilla tactics (in life and in thought) -- since both these political tendencies, though they parade under a "class line", are shorn of the needed "means" -- mass self-activity. Dialectical development, on the other hand, either is self-development -- or it is nothing.

(3) Because "labor, patience, and suffering of the negative" is the warp and woof of dialectical methodology, it is a stranger to impatience and the politics of desperation which characterize pragmatism and the pragmatists, in and out of the freedom movement, who would, in desperation, chain the civil rights movement to the Administration.

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(4) Finally, and above all, the dialectic methodology of Marxist-Humanism by no means exhausts itself in an analysis of the Goldwater phenomenon. It is the only method of analysis of both the objective and subjective relationships in the national and international situations in the year 1964, or any other year.

Since this is the only method of analysis we ever use, it would, on the face of it, appear superfluous to go into paeans of praise of dialectics to a convention of our organization. The reason for doing it nevertheless is that we have begun to take dialectics "for granted", which is one way of not practicing it.

I would even go so far as to say that some of us experience what Hegel called "the chill of passion" one experiences when he finds that love does not solve all problems, does not satisfy the craving for the "universal" of freedom.

This makes it necessary to restate some fundamentals of Hegelian methodology, both as the relationship of method to the "Absolute" was analyzed by Hegel, and as recreated by Marx who discovered the material base of development of class societies and, hence, the inevitability of socialism. A new humanist society, then, was Marx's "Absolute" not only as "goal", as "end", but as "the future" inherent in the present. In a word, the transformation of reality, is the core of the dialectic, for Hegel and for Marx.

Hegel, in his time, would not brook professions of faith in the Absolute that could not be subjected to the dialectic method because -- and in this he was uncompromising -- "the truth is concrete", while a philosophy, shorn of history, is an abstraction that lays the ground for "reaction" in place of the forward movement in the "progress" of the consciousness of freedom."

This, precisely this, made Hegel's dialectics the indispensable, the quintessential methodological foundation of Marxism.

Hegel insisted that "nothing is either conceived or known in its truth except insofar as it is completely subject to the method..." (Science of Logic II, p. 468); he stressed that the negation of the negation "is the turning point of the movement of the Notion" (p.477); and that "At this turning point of the movement of the method, the course of cognition also turns upon itself" (p.478), that is to say, it is self-transcendent; objective conditions for freedom and self-liberation are inseparable, one from the other. They alone constitute the Absolute Idea, the unity of theory and practice. "Everything else", wrote Hegel, "is error and gloom, opinion, striving, caprice, and transitoriness" (p.466).

Everything else is.

It is necessary to clear away intellectual debris: Neither a psycho-analytic nor an abstract materialist approach can explain the deep-rooted objective bases of the neo-fascistic Goldwater phenomenon because both approaches lack what Marx called "history and its process", an Absolute for any period.

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A. "HISTORY AND ITS PROCESS"

I. Production, Profits, Poverty

Let us first look at the contradictions in the objective situation. Paul Johnson, an editor of the liberal New Statesman, calls prosperous USA "The Sick Giant" (issue of 7/17/64) and asks -- again, the words are his, not mine: "Did Marx Have A Point After All?" As against our radicals whose rootless brainstorms talk of a workless society as if that is the problem today, this British liberal marshals some facts of the day.

With industrial production 30 points above 1957-9, says Mr. Johnson; with corporate profits up between 22 to 50 per cent above 1963 (which was not exactly a depression yet, for industrial and financial tycoons) while this year the tax cut alone has poured \$1500 million into corporate profits -- in a word, with prosperity at its height -- why, asks Paul Johnson, should no less than 1/5 of the population (according to Administration figures, and 2/5 according to union figures) live below the poverty line?

It isn't limited to any single region -- no less than 38 million Americans fall into this category. Nor is it a question only of the unemployed. The latest study of United States income distribution (Rich Man, Poor Man by Dr. Herman Miller) shows that the share of income received by lower income groups has not changed in 20 years, and the gaps in incomes between whites and Negroes has actually widened since 1957!

Thus, if even we leave out the picture of the world as a whole, (which, of course, it is impossible to leave out, and which shows that the rich nations are getting richer, and the poor nations poorer, that no less than 3/4 of humanity live in poverty-stricken non-industrialized lands) -- I repeat, if even we leave out the international picture which a Marxist-Humanist cannot leave out, and concentrate only on the richest nation of the world, the U.S., we can still feel Paul Johnson's astonishment as he writes: "There is a phenomenon in America which, outside of parts of Southern Italy, is unique among advanced industrial nations; third generation unemployed."

In a word, Marx's analysis of the economic laws of capitalist development -- accumulation of capital at the one end, and accumulation of misery, at the other end, resulting in "the general absolute law" of capitalist production -- the army of unemployed -- seems truer today than when Marx wrote it 100 years ago.

Now Mr. Johnson thinks that Automation is one reason, but not the only reason. This liberal's answer is "Plan", a plan which would assure "greater growth rate" and absorb the unemployed.

We are not interested in Mr. Johnson's panacea anymore than we are interested in the new technocratic (cybernetic) panacea made by Robert Theobald in the August 1964 issue of Liberation, about "a guaranteed income" and a changed

"legal system" that would, he assures us, lay "the groundwork for the Great Society", as if that could be achieved without a social revolution!

What does interest us is what eludes them: In the case of the less serious analyst, the cybernetist libertarian, Robert Theobald, we have an escape from what is. Where, to Marxists, all history, to use the famous phrase of Benedetto Croce, is "contemporary history" (History As the Story of Liberty, p. 19) Theobald jumps over all reality. He is too busy talking from on high to hear the voices from below, whether these are toiling inside automated factories or are already in the unemployed ranks. In the case of the more serious, and just as well-intentioned analyst, Paul Johnson, his concern with the present, the present alone, fails to take into consideration the historic specifics of this "Sick Giant" -- American capitalism as it co-existed with slavery of which it bears the marks to this day.

II. A Century of Racism and Belatedness

The belatedness of the abolition of slavery in the U.S. meant that the proletarian class was already on the historic scene when the Civil War broke out. Rather than face the proletarian challenge at the end of the war, American capitalism chose to leave its own revolution unfinished, that is to say, Northern industrial capital compromised with its battle enemy, the Southern plantocracy and consequently with Southern racism.

Later, when monopoly capitalism evolved into its imperialist stage, its racism wasn't only "colonial" like Great Britain's, but was also internally ingrained and reinforced.

It is true that the richness of the country at the next stage of development, or, more precisely put, collapse, made it possible for American capitalism, wrecked by the Depression, to save itself through a Roosevelt and the New Deal, rather than destroy itself through a Hitler and an /ryan Gottedamerung.

World War II, however, had so shattered West European capital that the United States was not only robbed of the spoils of victory, its very presence in Europe was also immediately challenged, by its erstwhile Russian ally.

The frustrations of having to give rather than to receive takes its toll of the "psychology" both of Big Capital, and the middle class even in its lower rungs. The end of World War II signalled the beginning of the Cold War, the launching of Marshall Plan for Western Europe, the Truman program for Turkey and Greece, "Point 4" for the underdeveloped economies, the loss of China to the Communists, and back again to another, this time "limited" war in Korea where, moreover, the mighty, nuclearly armed U.S. was brought to a standstill. This was an altogether new type of defeat. A new word had to be coined to describe China's victory: brainwashing.

In a word, it was neither nuclear might nor nuclear stalemate that brought self-paralysis to American power. Russia did not then have the H-bomb, much less did China or North Korea. The loss was in the struggle for the minds of men!

"Anti-Communism", in and of itself, was not a banner which could mobilize the American soldier for "victory", much less act as a polarizing force for Asia, Latin America, or Africa who were soon to begin their struggles or had already begun their struggles for independence from precisely such "anti-Communist" imperialism.

McCarthyism, the alleged "magic" of General Eisenhower, the Nixon flamboyance of "20 years of Democratic treason", the slogan of "cleansing out Communism and corruption" may have won Eisenhower the Republican nomination. But what won him the presidency was "I'll go to Korea" -- i.e., the promise of peace.

Not only was the Korean War the most unpopular war ever in American history. Any war failed to arouse anything but revulsion, and not only in the U.S.

In 1955 it looked as if there might be war over the Formosa Straits but Great Britain showed it would not fight such a war.

In 1957 Great Britain tried an old-fashioned imperialist war in Suez, and Eisenhower let it be known the U.S. would not support Great Britain.

Every "small war" since only put nerves on edge that it might trigger a nuclear war; calling it "police action" or "peace force" and flying the UN flag, as in the Congo, failed to lessen the stench of imperialist ambitions.

The horrors of a possible nuclear holocaust laid the foundation of a mass movement such as Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Yet it is no accident that, as against those who, in desperation at the imperialist readiness to plunge us into war, wished all other struggle subordinated to CND (then Committee of 100), we gained adherents to the full Marxist-Humanist position against war and for a new society on the national and international front, especially in Great Britain and Japan.

On the other hand, all decadent capitalism could give birth to now was the John Birch Society!

Until Goldwater gave them respectability, in the 1960's, the Birchers were little else than a lunatic fringe, almost as much out of "the capitalist mainstream" as the KKK. Today, however, because Goldwater helped them capture the Republican Party, the Birchers gave him an organization too -- organized lunacy, it is true, but an organization of white shirted instead of white hooded creatures (although he has the support of the latter, too); an organization of grey flannel suits and super-sophisticated dresses a la Clare Booth Luce in addition to the organdy of the more obviously elderly women; and an organization and an audience so large that Goldwater had never dreamed he would command anything like it ever since the Army and the Senate finally got around to censuring his friend, the late and unlamented Senator Joseph McCarthy. This audience comprises the soft underbelly of society.

The middle class, corrupted by 20 years of post World War II 'prosperity' and 10 years of post-Korean War brainwashing, whether McCarthyite or simply 'apathetic', has produced a new progeny: the uneasy, fragmented, reck-

less, college-educated sons and daughters. Fascinated and horrified by the ability of the automated machine 'to think', these new young intellectuals want to be sure to align themselves with power -- the state as well as the machine power, the "intellectual" as well as the capital power of Automation. In a word, they want to be 'in on the kill' in the hope that they will not disappear with the disappearance of the labor force.' " (From "The Turning Point", p.3)

III. The Labor Force and Revolutionary Theory in the Nuclear Age

Let's take a second look at this labor force and, as we do so, bring back the less serious cybernetist analyst from his stratospheric conception of a 2% labor force, and have him face reality:

(1) The latest Department of Labor statistics show that the United States has a labor force of 70 million at work and some 5 million more out of work.

(2) 58 million are in industry, 4 million in agriculture, and another 8 million in services. Since the 8 million in services include maids, waitresses, grocery clerks, street sweepers, we are quite sure that, by no stretch of the imagination, can they all be classed as non-proletarians. But since 2% are the characteristic top, very top, echelons of a capitalists society and those Big-Capital decision-makers can count on another middle rung of 8% of the population, we can, for our present purposes, disregard not only the services, but also white collar supervisory personnel.

(3) The bulk and most concentrated of the proletariat are in industry -- 17 million in manufacturing, 3 million in transportation, 1 million in extractive industries. This gives us a solid 21 million workers in production, still the largest single force, powerful, cohesive, and so strategically placed in the economy that they can stop all industrial and military production.

(4) Nor can anyone who has ever seen the exploitation of the agricultural workers, or seen a factory-in-the-field, or experienced these "Grapes of Wrath", wish to discount the majority of the 4 million agricultural workers.

Now I do not mean to say that either the industrial production workers or the agricultural workers are as pure as the driven snow; nor that either the native workers or those belonging to ethnic groups have acted as one unified, revolutionary force and have never participated in the "white backlash".

What I do mean to say is that they were not the decision makers in that backward movement and that, objectively, precisely because of their place in production, and precisely because the open shop Goldwater has, of necessity, to differ from the racist Wallace in what he chooses to emphasize, the bulk of these workers are compelled to align with the Negroes if they wish to defeat Goldwater. And this is precisely what they are doing now.

A story datelined from Milwaukee, appearing in the August 12 issue of the New York Times, reports, in utter surprise, that the very same racist voices he heard among labor when Wallace ran there, are not only hotly against Goldwater

and want the Negroes with them, but they failed to understand how the reporter could have thought otherwise.

Our workers in the shops report the same phenomenon. No doubt when labor is quiescent, as it is at the moment, it is hard to remember not only all it accomplished historically, but what it did directly after the end of the Second World War to so shake up victorious American capitalism that the capitalists feared they would completely lose the battle of labor productivity.

Yet that was the class battle of the postwar years and explains the potency of American labor and the impotence of American power as well as the immobility of bourgeois intellectuals. The potency of American labor arises from what it was doing and the impotence of American power stems from its failure to achieve its goals, no matter what it did.

Thus (1) the minute World War II was over, labor threw off the shackle of the wartime no-strike pledge and burst forth in great strikes in all basic industries, especially and unexpectedly in power. It was the latter strike in Pittsburgh which so scared Congress out of its wits that it rushed, helter-skelter, to enact the Taft-Hartley Law. Since labor had no representation in Congress, the latter could imagine power was its, to use as it pleased. Production, however, being inconceivable without labor, its potency very nearly nullified the Act in actuality.

Then (2) industry got into the act and hit back with automation in the mines. This time the miners came out on general strike, not for a day, or a week, or a month, but for 9 long, bitter months during which they fought not only capital, but their own union leaders. This act of not letting others do their thinking for them led to their posing the most profound philosophic as well as the most basic economic question: what kind of labor should men do?

Where the cybernetists -- in 1951, before the birth of News & Letters we had in our own group -- wanted us to base our theory on the type of activity one would engage in in a workless society, we thought, instead, that what the miners had posed as the question for our day was the stuff of thought and theory.

Cynics may ask: "So what has happened to that genius of a miner who asked that question? I have seen no evidence of a humanist revolution."

How easy it is for cynics to either forget or wish to skip over, as something in the distant past, totally inapplicable to our day, a decade so full of philosophic leaps and historic actions as the decade marked, "The 1950's" ! This is not only the decade of Automation battles which led to our rediscovery of Marx's Humanism, but, above all, the decade in which the intellectuals were to hold their tongues for a long time while workers bled and died to put an end to the myth of totalitarian invincibility.

I am referring to the East German revolt in 1953 in which the workers, not the intellectuals, gave the lie to the theory that state-capitalism can brain-wash people, transforming them into robots not only on the production line, but also

in politics. These very workers, by battling work norms, were the real heroes of deStalinization. Three years before Khrushchev used the theme in a power play, these workers so shook up the mighty Russian empire as to cause the downfall of Beria, inspire Russian slave labor in the camps of Vorkuta to dare to revolt, and by their national and international revolt, answered in the affirmative the philosophic question that preoccupied our age of state-capitalism: Can man gain freedom from under totalitarian tyranny?

Three years were to pass between this new page of freedom in history before the intellectuals, at least the Hungarian Marxist intellectuals, did also open a new page of freedom, marked Humanist philosophy; but here, too, the revolutionary intellectuals left the field while the workers built Workers Councils, and continued the battle as well as lay the foundation of new forms of decentralized organizations that give us an outline of what the future is likely to hold.

Again, in these three years, precisely because we were, from the start in 1950 led by the impulse we got from the miners' general strike to rediscover the Humanism of Marxism,¹⁾ We raised it as the philosophy of our day before the Hungarian Revolution did so; (2) we were able both to anticipate and participate in the Negro Revolution in America; (3) we were able to show more than solidarity with the African Revolutions, that is to say, we raised the philosophical-political problems that would confront them in the nuclear age, that would try to suck them back into the vortex of the world market and the production relations of world state-capitalism.

Just as Communist fellow-travelers did not admit to the existence of forced labor in the Soviet Union until Khrushchev announced the "abolition" of those camps, so our pragmatists who saw neither the workers' revolt in Communist lands, nor the Negro Revolution here; neither the strength of the African revolutionaries who held no might but the struggle for the minds of men, nor the counter-revolution just beneath the surface; these intellectuals are all too ready to discard "abstract philosophy" for the concrete chaos of the convolutions of their own brains as they emerge from the day to day activities, unrooted in the labor process and unrelated to theory.

On the other hand, our rediscovery of the Humanism of Marxism for a very much overworked society separated us not only from the cybernetists, who were few indeed, and from the Existentialists who had a much greater following and who twisted Marx's Humanism out of joint and into their own philosophy of existence as having "neither cause, nor reason, nor necessity", but also from the anti-ideologists.

B. PHILOSOPHY AND THE NEGRO REVOLUTION; THE HUMAN ESSENCE VS. SCIENTISM

I. The Anti-Ideologists

One philosopher, coming rather late on the scene to attempt to save philosophy from the onslaughts of the anti-ideologists (see Henry David Aiken in Commentary, April, 1964), frankly states: "Let's not mince words. Out anti-ideological foxes are no more 'empirical' and no less rhetorical than their leonine opponents; they are, on broad issues, merely more indecisive and more eclectic." The "they" referred to is, mainly, Daniel Bell. I agree that Mr. Bell is certainly an eclectic. But, now that the mass movement and its freedom philosophy is seriously challenging "the white power structure", Daniel Bell, far from being indecisive, has suddenly become all decision.

In the News York Times Magazine Section of May 31, 1964, Dr. Bell asks the Negroes to choose "responsible" leaders, "skilled political brokers", who, in a "responsible way", should present "legitimate" demands "for bargaining". He claims that certain "militancy" is "self-defeating". He attacks Rev. G. M. Johnson for speaking of "the abstraction of integration", and adds: "With little heed to plan or method or recognition of the fact that the demands might simply wreck the educational system."

In setting down the conditions for bargaining Dr. Bell blasts out this warning: "Not all issues can be solved by political means." This is said after he fairly ordered the Negroes to present their political demands so that they can be bargained away -- pardon me, bargained over.

His explanation of why "not all the issues can be solved by political means" is this: "The most fundamental ones -- the structure of the Negro family and communal life cannot." Eastland maintains that very point.

Dr. Bell does not stop here, but at this point sets off a diatribe against the Negro community that must indeed make the out and out segregationist green with envy. He talks of "the high rate of illegitimacy" among Negroes, "the instability" of the home, the lack of "a regular father" so that the child's "self-image is impaired."

You must remember, though it is tempting to forget, that this is no segregationist, nor even "just" a liberal. Dr. Bell is a socialist of sorts -- right wing, it is true, but socialist nevertheless. In fact, he is the "expert" on American socialism, and, though anti-Marxist, he "specializes" in Marxism. Indeed, it is precisely because he knows that the war against Communism cannot be won without winning the struggle for the minds of men, that he more truly represents the academic community than the majority in it that concerns itself only with its own not-too-interesting, not-too-liberal, very, very careerist and jumbled personal lives.

To the latter, it simply comes naturally, to brainwash the youth because these members of the academic community are so much part of the organism of the system, that they are ignorant of any other ideas but those of "private

enterprise". But since this is done unconsciously, they do not know how to deal with the resistance of the youth who rebel against the status quo, much less inspire youth to give their lives for their country.

And because the Bells know they must at least try, and because they do try, one cannot help but gag at the putrefaction that passes for Western thought.

It is too heavy a burden for the civil rights movement to bear.

II. The Human Essence vs. Scientism

It is a fact of history, of yesterday's as of today's, that intellectuals, even when they join the proletarian movement, nevertheless bring with them, precisely because they have no solid class roots, seeds of possible counter-revolution within the revolution. There is nothing evil in this. It is an objective fact.

A Marxist intellectual knows this and therefore he works hard, without let-up, daily struggling not to forget, for a single instant, his petty-bourgeois class origin which may suddenly erupt in his thought. No question of betrayal or disloyalty is involved. What is involved is this: at every crisis, when solutions are sought, the classes react from opposite fundamental vantage points. The bourgeois theoretician faces reality without the revolutionary intervention of the masses; his answers involve "mechanical" solutions. Once the revolutionary theoretician loses sight of the revolutionary intention of the masses as the only means of resolving the crisis, his answers must approximate the bourgeois solution. Indeed, he often anticipates it precisely because he is a Marxist and does go to the root of matters. And the root of the matter in this case is that he faces the crisis in an abstract materialist manner, i.e., without the reality of class struggle.

It was so when the revolutionary martyr, Rosa Luxemburg, stepped off for a single instant from the Marxist theory of accumulation of capital -- and ended up in anticipating the next thought of capitalist "underconsumptionism": the Keynesian revolution in economic thought.

It was so when Nikolai Bukharin laid the theoretic basis for Stalinism or "socialism in one country", which turned out to be an anticipation of the next stage of world capitalist development: state capitalism. Read his Economics of the Transition Period and see the seeds of it there, and understand why Lenin concluded that, although Bukharin was the party's main theoretician, he "did not fully understand the dialectic." (Note I mention only revolutionaries, not reformists, much less liberals.)

The temptation to flee from the specific form of an antagonism to some abstract Absolute like revolution seems to be overwhelming. This is our methodological enemy now.

Because Marx never succumbed to this temptation, but extracted everything from the given stage until the existing, live contradictions forced a transi-

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tion to another stage, he could make the next cognitive leap which met the proletarian challenge, like the 8 hour day as a philosophy more concrete than the Declaration of the Rights of Man or the lower and deeper strata as the propulsion for the forward movement of humanity beyond the Paris Commune.

Lukacs was absolutely right when he viewed scientism as but one more form of reification which deprives man of his specific human essence and identifies him with things. For altogether too long have scientism and mechanism substituted for thought and human aspirations.

Consider Norbert Wiener, the scientist who first wrote of cybernetics and the "slave labor" it entails. Prof. Wiener soon changed his mind when the industrialists convinced him they knew how "to apply" the new technological, so-called "information revolution", that far from producing slave labor, would "lighten toil and transform society from one of production to one of "consumption."

Look now, how quickly Dr. William E. Pickering's mood changed from one of depression to one of elation. When, in 1959, he sent aloft the first U.S. "Explorer", he spoke with great pessimism about the nature of the scientists, saying it didn't really matter who -- Russia or the U.S. -- first pushed that nuclear button, humanity was at that point "one half hour" away from total annihilation. But by 1964, although that half-hour has lessened to a few minutes, he is all aglow about the possibility of beating the Russians to the moon.

In the first case, he begged us to appeal to "common man" for "a new unifying philosophy". In the second, both the unifying philosophy and common man have totally disappeared from Dr. Pickering's pronouncements!

We have come a long way from the starting point of the Goldwater phenomenon as analyzed by others and by us. We have reached our own philosophic positions not by a mere return to roots, as basic as that is, but as a constantly new and developing, changing approach to reality.

Anyone who thinks "isms" are for Europe or Asia or Africa, but not for the USA, better take a second look at those who tried to grab the headlines during the Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant demonstrations -- and wished they could claim also Rochester, New Jersey and wherever spontaneous outbursts may occur. There was a man named Epton in Harlem; there were leaflets on the streets -- no doubt some of them, like the one on how to make a Molotov cocktail were forgeries. These calculated forgeries, however, vied with radio blasts from Cuba and China that sounded almost like the forgeries.

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III. Marxist-Humanism vs. Maoism

Now I do not know who Epton is, but I do know that he does not have either the economic or state power Mao wields.

I do know his ideas therefore are no cover-up for any ruling class.

I think we can further assume that he lives in Harlem, knows the true relationship of forces between the demonstrators and the power structure, and that the one thing would be not to court such massacres if the masses listened to him, which they didn't; nor to march with all 20 of his followers to the police station in face of all the real demonstrators saying "No" -- again if he is at all interested in the masses controlling their own destiny.

Why then the adventurism -- and "the legal case" ?

It is, once again, our state capitalist age with its administrative mentality, the conceit of its intellectuals that all can be done from above, and masses are just things after all! In its own way, therefore, it is not only a demonstration of how not to think. It is proof of one new truth we have learned only since Maoism and his guerrilla tactics revealed a new variant of state-capitalism: the willingness to take power and class collaborations are no longer opposites.

Were we even to disregard Mao's obvious rise to power on the class-collaborationist slogan of "the bloc of four classes", and his first year in power which he himself designated as a sort of "state capitalist" "people's republic" -- and neither these facts nor his variant theory of Communist monolithism can be disregarded -- but were we even, for the moment, for our present limited purposes, to disregard the non-proletarian ways to Communist power in the pre-1950's, all we would have to do to see the truth of the statement that willingness to take power and class-collaborationism are no longer opposites is to view the Communist Parties of Indonesia and Japan.

In the first case, the head of the Communist Party, Mr. Aidit, supports Sukarno. In the second case, the Japanese Communist Party is against the Japanese rulers, and so closely follows Mao's "revolutionary" line that, in disregard of the feelings of the great masses who suffered a nuclear holocaust, it also opposes even the limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Khrushchev signed.

Yet in both cases, those who aim to come to power with possible help of nationalist rulers, and those who must make a clean "revolutionary" sweep -- openly and opportunistically state that proximity accounts for their allegedly principled stand. Were their borders nearer Russia's, as Aidit put it, their positions would differ.

In a word, all aim for power without any concern for the masses, They are bitterly opposed to the self-activity of the masses and spontaneity which would make "willingness to take power" synonymous with proletarian power and destiny in one's own hands.

What this means, in the context of the USA and the Negro Revolution, where power is still a long way off, is that everyone, from the Khrushchite Communists to Malcolm X, and from the Maoists to the Freedom Now Party is preying on the movement. All are ready for the grandstand play, the ordering from above. None is carrying on a dialogue from below.

You will later, in the Mississippi Report, hear how we are continuing what we have always done in working with the masses and in carrying on the dialogue. It is by no accident that you will hear the report from our L.A. youth. This is why our Resolution stresses the point that "the youth work is to be concentrated where it came to be on its own" both in publishing The Marxist-Humanist and in its activity in other organizations. Here I wish to limit myself to the relationship of philosophy to the civil rights movement at this critical turning point.

It is certainly not a question of getting black and white unity for the election -- both the labor bureaucracy and the civil rights leadership will do that; the worry is that they will thereby chain the Negro Revolution to the Democratic Party.

For example, even those who did not agree to call off civil rights demonstrations for this period -- CORE did not, and all certainly have put on a magnificent demonstration at the Democratic Convention -- have no comprehensive philosophic revolutionary banner to unfold and no established leaders believe one. Thereby precisely they are creating a void -- as was seen clearly enough during the demonstrations when the masses everywhere showed they do not wish the civil rights movement confined -- they are creating a void, I repeat, that the Communists of one sort or variety, or the Nationalists of one sort or variety, will attempt to fill -- and might succeed unless Marxist-Humanism makes its appearance in life as well as in theory.

Hence, of the essence is how to concretize, always to concretize further, this philosophy of freedom.

Heretofore we expounded Marxist-Humanism, in its American roots, mainly as a direct line from Marx's aid to the Abolitionist and the cause of the North in the Civil War through the manner in which he expounded this principle in Capital: "Labor in the white skin cannot be free so long as labor in the black skin is branded." This remains of the essence.

Now, however, we wish to bring in a new element from the young Marx, not the 1844 Manuscripts which have been published in English finally, but the essay on the Jewish Question which preceded these 1844 Essays.

It goes without saying that we continue to expound, as we always have done, that Marx's Humanism opposed not only capitalism, or oppression of man by man, but vulgar communism which thought all ills would be eliminated once private property was abolished. Marx, on the contrary, as we all know very well, held that until that which was most degrading -- the division between mental and manual labor -- was abolished, there would be no new society. Communism was not the form of a humanist society.

It is as an integral part of the development of his conception of a humanist society that he first wrote the essay on the Jewish Question. Because that stressed the difference between political emancipation and human emancipation, this 1843 Essay has special relevance for the underlying philosophy governing our activity in the civil rights movement. I therefore wish to quote some lengthy excerpts, beginning with his criticism of the left Hegelian, Bauer:

"Bauer's mistake lies in subjecting only the 'Christian state', not the state as such, to criticism. He does not investigate the relation of political emancipation to human emancipation."

"The splintering of men into Jews and citizens, into Protestants and citizens, this splintering is no lie against the bourgeois state, it is no reversal of political emancipation, it is political emancipation..."

"Political emancipation is to be sure a great progress, but, of course, it is not the last form of human emancipation..."

"Political emancipation is the reduction of man...to a member of bourgeois societyThe vote is the last political form of recognizing private property."

But what is necessary, continued Marx, is not mere emancipation from feudal society, but from all class society: "...the so-called Rights of man, as distinct from the rights of the citizen, are nothing but the rights of members of bourgeois society, e.g. of egoistical man, of man separated from man and from community ... Man was therefore not freed from religion, he received religious freedom. He was not freed from property, he received freedom of property. He was not freed from the egoism of trade, he received free trade."

Then Marx drives his conclusion home: "Only when the actual individual man takes back into himself the abstract citizen and has become, as individual man in his empirical life, in his individual labor, in his individual relations a species essence; ... only when man has recognized and organized his own forces as social powers and therefore no longer separates from himself social power in the form of political power -- only then will human emancipation be completed."

This distinction between political and human emancipation has achieved more, not less relevance, since it was written. It is so not only in relationship to the Negro Revolution; it is so because political emancipation, even when proletarian revolution makes it a historic new, can, and as the Russian Revolution showed, does get transformed into its opposite, unless it brings with it a new human dimension and therefore a new society whose only motive force is the self-development of man.

No one here needs to be told that the vote, if even the Negro ever fully achieves it in the South, will solve nothing. It is either a marker on the way, or it is a dead-end.

To make sure it becomes nothing of the sort, it is necessary not only to develop the struggle and see its momentum expand; it is necessary to achieve unity with the philosophy of freedom called Marxist-Humanism, which, in turn, must

be enriched and concretized.

Therefore, to be noted, is how, in the case of Marx, the general principles of human emancipation established in the 1843 Essay on the Jewish Question became enriched the following year in the Humanist Essays, but became concretized in the Negro Question and the Civil War in the United States; how it then developed from the general theoretical principles in Capital, both on the philosophy of the 8 hour day and the relationship of white and black labor, to the particulars of such minorities as Jews in East London, Irishmen, newly arrived peasants from the country to the big city who were outside of the British trade union fold, but to whom the First International could appeal directly. The very self-liberation born out of the Paris Commune led to the new universal "lower and deeper" into the population in general and the proletariat in particular.

Ever wondrous is the way of the dialectic when you realize that it was not the politics nor the organization built on Marxism that led to the "discovery" of this new universal. It was Lenin's rereading of Hegel on "absolute negativity", "self development", "self-transcendence". The key to this is, of course, once again, what Marx called "History and its Process"; negatively as the downfall of the Second International, positively as the Irish Revolution and proletarian revolts yet to be.

Moreover, this "lower and deeper", was not only the pathway to the Russian Revolution; it was the road the day after when Lenin's further concretization of it as the population "to a man" guided him in fighting not only the incipient bureaucracy, but his Bolshevik colleague's failure "fully to understand that dialectic" and thus endanger the development of the Revolution within Russia and beyond its boundaries.

And finally, it led to a new departure in theory on the Colonial Question. It is not that Marx did not declaim against the colonialism of his day. On the contrary, he went so far as to write this startling today-ish thought of the relationship of the Chinese peasant revolt to the European proletarian revolution:

"It may seem a very strange, and a very paradoxical assertion that the next uprising of the people of Europe, and their next movement for republican freedom and economy of government, may depend more probably on what is now passing in the Celestial Empire, -- the very opposite of Europe, -- than on any other political cause that now exists, -- more even than on the menaces of Russia and the consequent likelihood of a general European War." (On Colonialism, p. 15)

It is a fact, however, that, in Marx's day, the proletarian revolutions covered Europe, and, therefore, concretely the colonial revolution was not developed into a theory of national and colonial revolutions. On the other hand, the defeat of the German Revolution of 1919 while uprisings in the East did give a global view of revolution did prompt Lenin to a new theory, a new philosophic category. And this was our departure.

It was no accident that we alone were in the 1943 Demonstrations in Harlem with a philosophy; that we alone recognized, in the Montgomery Bus Boycott

the beginnings of the Negro Revolution which we placed alongside of the Hungarian Revolution; and that we alone are ready to move from our productions like Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves and American Civilization on Trial to establishing a sub-center in New York.

If that had not flowed from our Resolution on the Turning Point, we would now have to empirically make such a motion. It is good, therefore, that theory and practice are not far apart where one feels the pull of the future.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEORETIC POSITIONS:
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANIZATION

When we speak of the Turning Point we mean not only the objective situation, nor only that subjective awareness was caused by the whip of the counter-revolution. A Turning Point has been reached not only because the labor bureaucracy is using labor's anti-Goldwater feelings to chain labor to the Democratic Party, nor, even, only because the Negro Revolution has come to the cross-roads.

All these are of the essence, but, for us, the turning point also signifies a turning point in the development of our organization.

The 1950's form the Great Divide -- I should not need to add that Great Divides do not occur either in nature or in man's history every day of the year -- the Great Divide in thought as in production; in the liberation of the colonial world and in the creation of a nuclear stalemate; in the anti-war struggles in general and in particular against any flirtation with nuclear war.

Japan, which alone experienced atomic destruction, and the popular frontism against it which led nowhere, has shown especially significant searches for a total philosophy. Being an Asian land, the adherents of Marxist-Humanism there know full well the need for a fully comprehended Marxist-Humanist stand on war -- indeed part of our Resolution on War and Peace is reproduced in the new chapter on Mao that they have published in their edition of Marxism and Freedom.

In a word, it is important to know the truth of the international and national relations resulting not only from the discovery of nuclear power, but of humanity's powerful thrust for freedom.

Thus (1) the nuclear stalemate resulted not only because of the "near equality" of the nuclear powers: Russia and the U.S., but

(2) the standstill was forced upon both nuclear powers by the developing Afro-Asian-Latin American Revolutions. The phenomenal result, therefore, is that

(3) at home -- whether that home be Russia or the U.S. -- the nuclear

power is impotent for there is no way to drop the bomb "only" on workers, or "only" on Negroes, "only" on the youth. Therefore the home capitalists cannot, in fighting against the total reorganization of society where all the movements are toward human freedom, use nuclear weapons here.

It is here, therefore, where the total reorganization can begin.

This does not, however, mean either playing down the revolutionary role of workers in a non-nuclear land, or excluding other revolutionary sections of the population -- whether these be majorities in colonial countries, minorities in advanced countries, or youth in all lands.

No one can know in advance where or when a revolution begins. Marx thought it would begin in Great Britain, where it came first in Russia. Lenin hoped it would come next in Germany, and then realized that the only way to overthrow the whole of capitalist imperialism may be from the East, rather than the West.

No one knows. No one can know.

What we do know, what we must act upon, is that our activity, our unfoldment of a banner, a philosophy, an organization remains our responsibility. In a word, the masses will do what they will do. The only way we can assure that there finally be a fusion of philosophy and revolution is through our participation and therefore quintessential is our daily activity as an organized body of thought and action.

A while back I stated that the Humanism of Marx's Essay on the Jewish Question has shed a new light on the difference between political and human emancipation in the Negro's goals. It was clear, I hope, that it would do so if we make it our business to bring that new quality into our functioning in the civil rights movement as well as in trade union organizations, not to mention our own organization and its publications.

That is why the axis of our thesis as well as its point of proof is organizational responsibility for theoretic positions, which we have always prided ourselves upon since we first organized. And the individual responsibility for the organization now becomes the very reason for being an organized political-philosophic tendency.

The fact that we are not a party nor lay claim to being one cannot by any stretch of imagination absolve us of responsibility for a body of thought, or, perhaps I should have said a philosophy -- a Marxist-Humanist philosophy -- that has a body, a form of being as well as a form of expression.

The crux of the dialectic is the dialectical relationship of subject to object in the process of history. History is of today's making by live men in their relationships with other men, through struggles, class struggles, freedom struggles, struggle of the future inherent in the present to come to the surface, to become the actual.

We become molders of history when both our mass activity and theoretic activity get spelled out as individual responsibility in a way which erases distinction between subjective and objective, between mass and organization, between ranks

and leaders, between philosophy and revolution.

Everyone of us laughs at the disintegration of Trotskyism which has ended in Trotskyist tailending everyone from Mao to Malcolm X.

But does any one think we are immune from degeneration merely because our theory is superior? That it certainly is, and this certainly goes a long way toward maintaining our historic right to be the link of continuity with the Humanism of Marxism.

Unless, however, that theory has people who practice it daily; unless both what Hegel, in philosophic terms stated as the organization of mind's realm, and what Marx, in his own life, represented when he called himself and Engels "The Party"; unless individually we grasp the new dimensions in history along with the theoretic positions established since we developed the theory of state-capitalism in 1941, and a decade later brought it to fruition in the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism; unless, in a word, we as individuals practice Marxist-Humanism, not even the greatest activity, in Harlem, or in Mississippi; in L.A. or in Milwaukee; in Detroit, or in Glasgow; in Philadelphia, or Tokyo, will do more than result in tailending rather than in organization building.

It is not the shouting from rooftops that is required. It is the patient building of a Marxist-Humanist organization that is needed. I do not doubt that at this turning point of the organization, every one will rise to new heights.

The act of bringing Marxist-Humanist truth into being will, of necessity, mean the growth of the organization to the point where it coalesces with the mass movement in the construction of a new world of freedom. But no one can make a blue print as Dick is finding out daily, as Johnny and Inez will find out when they leave the center and are on their own in N.Y.; as Saul and myself are sure to find out as we work out the relations of local and sub-center to center and other organizations; to individuals, in and out of the civil rights movement, in and out of the academic world, or in the political one. The New York local and sub-center will be what we all make of it. The proof of the correctness of "the line" will be the organization's growth; the proof of incorrectness its failure. Olga will deal with this in the Organization Report, and Saul in his report on the Marxism and Freedom paperback. Let me just say here that the compulsion "to do right" comes not from organizational dictates, but from the objective situation. The Resolution on the Turning Point phrases it as follows:

"Nearly 20 years after the end of World War II -- a full generation has grown up! -- and yet look at our "new" nonfascist world: 20 years after the British Empire began its dissolution with India winning its independence; 15 years after Tito broke from Stalin, and Mao won power in China; a decade since the end of the Korean War and true deStalinization was begun by the East German workers, who first put an end to the myth of invincibility of Russian totalitarianism -- a new stage of freedom which was climaxed in that orbit by the 1956 Hungarian Revolution; some 7 years since a whole new world was opened by the African Revolutions that so enveloped whole continents that even in the mightiest imperialist empire -- the United States -- Cuba tore away free, not to mention the Negro Revolutions right

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within this country; all these world-shaking events, and yet, and yet, capitalism is still so firmly in the saddle that it can exude a new form of reaction.

"In Europe there is DeGaulism; in the United States Goldwaterism; the Sino-Soviet conflict signifies, not a break from state-capitalism, but within it, for the domination over the new third world of newly independent countries aspiring to establish themselves on new foundations. During the same period, the Cuban Revolution was so diverted from its humanist channels that Cuba is now hardly more than a satellite of Russia.

"Far from acting as a beacon for the whole of Latin-America, as it did in the first year of revolution, it now, as in Venezuela, offers so shabby an alternative to Betancourt "democracy" and undiminished American imperialist domination, that the Venezuelans rejected Fidelismo. Must we then in the United States nevertheless fall victim to the gravitational pull of pseudo-revolutionism -- Maoism, Trotskyism, Fidelismo, "pure" CPism? This, indeed, is the only alternative when one looks for escape, instead of true liberation, which can only be achieved where there is a unity of the movement of liberation and the philosophy of liberation." (The Turning Point, p.8)

Philosophy is of the essence not in any abstract way but because of objective compulsions. New dimensions of history were created by mass explosions that shook up the world and showed that human aspirations, freedom's call can bring to a standstill the two mighty nuclear titans -- Russia and the United States -- each fighting for world domination. But absence of nuclear might also worked to make Mao's usurpation of Marxism sound like revolutionary thunder from the East. Only through the dialectical method can this sophist's pretensions to Marxist philosophy be destroyed, even as it was only through Hegel's dialectic method that Hegel's reactionary statist views were destroyed by Marx.

Every one of us must internalize the dialectical method to the point where it becomes one's own.

Only in this way can we carry on all organization work as well as publishing of News & Letters; all international correspondence as well as writing pamphlets; theoretical as well as organizational self-development -- and all this without the National Chairman who should, once and for all, get the time to settle down to work on the new book and any trips, possibly one to Japan, that this would entail.

Only in this way can we concretize organizational responsibility for theoretic positions as individual responsibility for organization.

Only in this way can we impart a new quality to our functioning in other organizations.

Only in this way can we aid in the regroupment of Marxist forces on the international scene and thereby also destroy the Trotskyist pretensions to historic continuity.

Only in this way can we establish a sub center in New York that will take its rightful place both in local activity and as national, and even world, market place of ideas.

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Merleau-Fonty's profound definition of philosophy holds here:

"Philosophy is not the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, like art, the act of bringing the truth into being."

Now, it is true that this act can neither arise out of thin air, or through the belabored convolutions of a scientist's mind, much less be superimposed from above by an intellectual bureaucrat.

It is true that the unity of the objective and the subjective can historically take place only when it enters the consciousness of millions, for the masses alone can transform reality.

It is no less true, however -- and history shows this, too, to be a fact -- that a theoretic grouping, such as ours, steeped in history, and revolutionary theory and practice, can become a propellant. For that humanist goal, the act of bringing truth into being must be the act of each and every one of us here, and must begin now.

Sept. 5, 1964

-- Raya Dunayevskaya

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EXCERPTS FROM CONVENTION DISCUSSION ON PERSPECTIVES REPORT

Olga: It really shakes you to suddenly realize that "a superior theory is no guarantee". At our last Plenum, I remember that what impressed me most, and what I took my ten minutes to speak on, was the fact that it is the organization that makes each of us, individually, the inheritors of the whole past and development of the organization. So that, while we might only have joined yesterday, everything from the history that Raya represents to the experiences that Eugene has just gone through, becomes our history, and our experience, collectively.

That is still true, but it is only part of the truth, and since the truth is the whole what is even more important this year is what the thesis put this way: "the generation that has not participated in the elaboration of theory, but satisfied itself with beginning and ending with the results previously achieved, only succeeds in turning past achievements into nothing more than 'a pillow for intellectual sloth'."

One of the easiest ways to see how wrong you can go by taking the "results" and not bothering to try to understand the "process" by which these analyses were arrived at, is to look at all the groups and individuals who accept state-capitalism as the economic era we are living through -- and yet the differences in their conclusions and their activities. And it is not a matter of grafting a theory of "humanism" onto state-capitalism either. That is not what distinguishes us. What distinguishes us is seeing the inseparability of Marx's philosophy from his economics.

Even more frightening are the wild theories that are possible when one loses the class line, and becomes so overwhelmed by the power of state-capitalism and so angry that the workers have not yet made the revolution, that he may even wind up inventing out of his head an entirely new class to "make the revolution."

Never was it so clear that "never was there more need for theory and never less comprehension of it."

I believe that workers have a lot more respect for, and therefore understanding of "theory" than intellectuals do. Because understanding begins with respect and wanting to understand. Part of the reason intellectuals have less respect for (and understanding of) theory than workers is what we have often pointed out -- that they think they understand the big words, and satisfy themselves that they understand the concept when all they really understand are the definitions of words, and not the meaning of ideas. And part of it is that workers don't have to struggle to keep on the class-line, as middle-class intellectuals do -- it just comes instinctively to them. There isn't a worker in the world who is going to be convinced that the workers are enjoying a life of abundance, or that unemployed workers cease to exist as humanbeings and should not be counted as part of the proletariat, or the statistics about "2%" or any of the rest of that line.

But even though workers are blessed with a sort of built-in safeguard about not going off the deep end as easily as intellectuals seem able to do, that does not mean that they do not need theory as much as the intellectuals do.

It is very sad to see that several of our worker-members were not here to listen to the Perspectives Report this morning -- for whatever "good reasons" they might have. Eugene's report on Mississippi this afternoon will be an exciting, and important, report -- but it was placed after the Perspectives Report for very good reasons -- and in an important sense, it will be incomplete without being heard in the context of Raya's presentation. This is one of the most urgent problems the Detroit local will have to discuss, so far as I am concerned.

The Thesis took up all that happened in the 20 years since World War II. We here in this room have lived through these things in our own brief life-times, most of us. And there isn't one, not even the youngest in the room, who has not lived through those things that have happened just since the writing of Marxism and Freedom -- not even ten years: the Hungarian Revolution, the African Revolutions, the Cuban Revolution, the Negro Revolution. There has certainly not been any let up in revolutionary situations, but not one has been a successful revolution in the sense of establishing a truly new society. They have certainly proved in life what Marxism and Freedom proved in theory, and that is why the new Introduction to M&F could sum up all the events since the book was first written in five short pages. What is more important, however, is that the new Introduction also relates all this which has happened to the question of the future as well. That is what makes the new Introduction so imperative for the Freedom Movement today, especially the Freedom Movement here in the United States. To me, it also proves the urgency for the NEXT book, now.

The new book will revolve about what Raya says is "the second negativity". To me that means that the thing that must be broken down now is not just the overthrow of the old, but the creation -- and continuity -- of the new. The smashing of the old is the easiest part of the job. That was one of the main points in the Afro-Asian pamphlet. It says almost precisely that on p.8, of you want to look it up. In fact, that is what makes the pamphlet so pertinent to today, even though it was written in 1959. It is because first of all it is a pamphlet on the ideologies involved in the Revolutions, not a description of the revolutions themselves -- and that, I finally discovered, is the reason the pamphlet had to have that "interminably long" title. What makes the pamphlet so much more important today than when it was first written is that those revolutions remain in so unfinished a state that the theoretical warning in the pamphlet are truer now than when the revolutions were so new and glowing and so unworried about where they were going to go next.

The need for theory is even more gripping to us, who live in the United States at a time when the Civil Rights movement must start really worrying about where it wants to go next. Because the Far Right certainly has no doubts about where IT wants to go. Nobody has to tell the Negroes that Goldwater is the

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enemy. But Goldwater is a lot more than simply an enemy of civil rights, and overcoming the enemy is a lot more difficult than just defeating him at the polls on November 3. It is also a lot more difficult than simply uniting white labor with the Negro freedom fighters. It is a matter of uniting white labor and the Negro masses with the need for a new kind of society altogether. That is why it is so important to see that the real enemy is the methodological one.

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Eugene: I want to discuss "Organizational Responsibility for Theoretical Positions". I don't know whether Raya has ever given a speech on it, but she has talked several times in Los Angeles, in informal discussions, about some of the mistakes that Trotsky made. And one of them -- besides supporting Russia -- was that he seemed to spend all his time in personality fights, with Cannon, or somebody else. In other words, his main interest seemed to be in the personalities in his own party, or parties related to his, and not in adding to the theoretical heritage that Marx and Lenin had left. As a result he lost a lot of the continuity that he had with Lenin because he wasn't willing to take on the serious job of producing a theory as Lenin had done, but spent his time in factional disputes instead.

We come now to our age. Our National Chairman has said -- more strongly to the REB than to the organization as a whole -- that she is going to take the time to write her new book, come hell or high water. The whole preponderance since News & Letters was founded was this whole idea of building a theory, because if we couldn't make it, maybe the next generation would. The point was to build on Marx and Lenin's heritage, and maybe the next generation could build on what we had laid down here.

I'm afraid I'm always the pessimist, and I don't think there's going to be too many more generations going the way that we are going. Also, I'm not willing to give up a new society to the next generation. I want to take it for our generation.

This is our role as an organization, so far as I am concerned, and I don't think we are putting forth the effort we should toward building a type of cadre around the National Chairman, who is the theoretician of our group, and I believe the theoretician for our age. But we can't go on postponing things -- saying we are going to build a theory and maybe the next generation can use it. I know she doesn't want to postpone it certainly. Today there just can't be the separation between building the theory and building the organization. She as a theoretician can't go as far as she should, if we as members of the "cadre" or members of her organization don't ourselves go far enough. This is our real problem.

I know that when I was in Mississippi, you either thought as a Civil Rights worker 24 hours a day, or you got your head beat in. Sometimes you got your head beat in anyway. Why can't we be Marxist-Humanists 24 hours a day?

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Certainly the objective situation is serious enough -- especially with Goldwater -- to make us 24-hour a day Marxist-Humanists. It is much more difficult than being a 24-hour a day Civil Rights worker in the South, but I think the objective situation for us as a whole is just as real as for the Civil Rights worker in the South who may be shot or beaten.

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John: Up until six months ago, except for a few individuals in the Marxist-Humanist group, nobody in America was seriously interested in the direction in which reaction in the U.S. was moving. Goldwater's candidacy, when it began, was considered a joke. Later, as he began to gain convention delegates, it was still considered impossible for him to succeed in America. No one except Rockefeller considered seriously running against him until a few weeks before the convention, and the titular leader, Eisenhower, appeared only as a \$50,000 a week commentator at the Republican Convention.

The John Birch society that, a few weeks before, was considered crackpot, a few weeks later dominated the Republican convention. The Birchers succeeded in nominating their candidate as the Republican presidential candidate on the first ballot.

Students from the North, who had planned to bring some democracy down South by helping the majority people in that region -- the Negro people -- to register and vote, have been murdered. In the course of the search for them, bodies that were not even considered missing have been turned up dismembered -- not just murdered, but dismembered, in the Mississippi River.

Europeans, who were supposed to have political knowledge of the American scene, never considered the candidacy of Goldwater and the situation existing in Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, etc., as anything that would affect them directly. Today they see the events unfolding in the U.S., the richest country on the face of the globe, one that dominates them, and they are becoming increasingly alarmed over the state of reaction in the U.S. They see the man being nominated for President saying that if he had been a general in the German Army it would have won both world wars for Germany. They see a man who wants to use the atom bombs to defoliate the trees of Vietnam so he can see the Communists better, and one who wants to wipe out 25 years of social gains for the working class, in order to provide more profit for American capitalism.

For the first time, these Europeans are beginning to see the growing dangers of fascism becoming a reality in the U.S. today, and the horrors of Nazi Germany with its racist, anti-labor, pro-capitalism, totalitarian, pro-war regime finding its counterpart in an American candidate for President, who is popular among American middle class students, Big Business, anti-Semites, anti-Negro whites, and they remember how Hitler rose to power.

Recently, in a book called Mississippi: The Closed Society, by Prof. James Silver, they read, many for the first time, how the South, for nearly 100 years, right after defeat of Reconstruction, has maintained white supremacy by force and violence; how the laws of the Federal Government are disregarded so that the Federal Government's law does not hold sway in each of its 52 states; that the white minority in Mississippi, Alabama, and generally in the South, has disregarded constitutional guarantees for the Negro's civil and even human rights, job opportunities, etc. Moreover, no Federal Government since 1877 has done anything to restore law to the South which is ruled today, as 100 years ago, by the KKK and now the White Citizens Councils, not by the President of the U.S.

Perhaps even more shocking to them, as they read this documented study of the closed fascist society of Mississippi, is that the liberal, brave professor, who has stood up to those forces at least on the question of school desegregation and in exposing the lawless attacks on the Federal Marshals by Mississippi racists who are fully and completely protected by the state government, is yet so timid as to "understand" his wife's attitude when she refused to invite James Meredith to dinner in their home!

Now all of this -- most of it so familiar to us -- is restated here for two reasons: (1) the Political Letter, which Raya wrote on Goldwater's primary victory in California, and which tried to rouse the organization to the dangers of fascism in the U.S., and (2) the American intellectual who seems always to run towards the superficial phenomena in any situation, rather than the class analysis, and the Marxist-Humanist attitude.

The American intellectual has been educated by the professors of the pragmatic school, taught to sneer at Marxism as "outmoded". In ignoring the history of the thought of Marxism, he is therefore ignorant of what theory is and ignorant also of the relationship of theory to history. Wandering, as they do, like window shoppers in a store of ideas, they sample Zen Buddhism, Existentialism, Goldwaterism. Some do go to the Negro Freedom Movement. But in all cases, they seek that which is "popular" at the moment, and ignore the study of the unpopular, which they make themselves believe are really "old" ideas of Marxist-Humanism. Without any solid theoretical base in history, politics and philosophy, they wander aimlessly from one cause to another, developing no serious theory of their own, essentially supporting the status quo of society today, building nothing with which to challenge the capitalist society, certainly nothing that would bring lasting change. By this I mean the following:

Whether you insist only on concrete issues, be that the picket lines in the 1930's or the 1960's -- and we've been on both -- or only on the theory of the lesser evil, you have, in each case, chosen to disregard theory in a way that the problems that faced us in the 1930's still face us in the 1960's. They never will be solved with such an attitude. History shows that the immediate concrete issues come and go, but the necessity for theory remains, which means the underlying ills of civilization remain. In America this has always been the Negro Question. Only Marxist-Humanism has had not merely a consistent line, but a profound analysis that should finally enable us to unite theory and practice.

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It is in this context that I raised again the Political Letter on Goldwater which appears even more relevant now than when it was raised either there or in the main thesis, "The Turning Point". If we had read either one seriously, that is to say, made it our individual business to put each into effect, then we would not have considered "brainwashing in advertising" or "fear of Communism etc.", which really work on people and cause the sickness which results in Goldwater" as primary over the fundamental analysis of a new, a qualitative stage in the development of capitalism which produces fascism.

Nor could we have possibly fallen for the line that there has been "a shift from scarcity to plenty", much less the flights of fancy about only 2% of workers as all that are needed. Instead, we would have seen both the concrete working people who are still the majority of the people, and the concrete Negro people, who are still 90% proletarian, and therefore worked out ourselves how to project Marxist-Humanism.

It would certainly, for example, have been appropriate to bring to the attention of the CORE convention this phenomenon of Goldwater, which was to be treated not only as an anti-civil rights candidacy, but also as the open shop, reactionary candidate of what the Negro leaders call "the power structure". Whether you use class structure, or "power structure", you can thereby concretize Marxist-Humanism in a manner that both presents an action -- such as mass picketing of the Goldwater convention -- and a theory, the transition point from immediate, concrete ideas to political, philosophic ones.

This is what I consider the main problem of our convention.

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