

5/5/57

THE NEW STAGE

Today is May 5th, the day of birth, 139 years ago, of KM, the founder of the new world outlook in which the working class was shown to be the prime mover of history.

The news that a contract has finally been signed for the pub. of MARXISM & FREEDOM is 9 days old and may be no news to most of you. But the "accident" that the official announcement is made on such a day as today makes up ~~for~~ for its non-newsworthiness and bears testimony to the view of the ~~great philosopher~~ great philosopher, George Hegel, that there are no accidents in history; that the sum total of all accidents rather reveal the true course.

If you are smiling at the moment because you consider this a planned accident, then at least temper your smile by the realization that it has taken 16 years of hard labor, patience, and suffering to have arrived where we are now. It is 16 years since the theory of state capitalism was first elaborated. From the start 2 features distinguished our view of state capitalism from others who also saw that Russia, far from being a workers state, was a totalitarian state capitalist society: (1)

One was that we maintained that it was not a Russian Question, but a question of the world dev. of cap. in which labor as a cog in the machine was no different from what it was under private property capitalism. (2) And

Two, that the way, the only way ever to reorganize society on totally new beginnings was to change the role of labor at the point of prod. to make the people TO A MAN,

that is to say, EVERY man, woman, youth of all races, manage production and the political state. In a word, that people run their own lives as HUMAN BEINGS, not as appendages to machines. *Thus the true history of humanity will first begin then.*

Because that was our theory, our practice led us to the working class itself, to learn from it how it wishes to overcome its enemies, including the labor bureaucracy that was bearing down upon it, and not allowing it to stand upright as men. Because the working class was on its own moving in the same direction as we, it was inevitable that we meet. ~~But it was no easy matter~~ ~~to break from all other radical groups and meet the workers~~ on their own ground, ~~but~~ with our knowledge and experience.

*and all races are very specific in each country. In America the key has always been the Negro*

*the youth at its own... the Negro in the plane and*

That we finally accomplished exactly that with NEWS & LETTERS HAS BEEN BORNE OUT very sharply ever since the rank & file revolt against Reuther. I heard eloquent testimony of that fact the other day from a rank and file worker who said,

"So long as N & L writes the truth about what we are doing--and they do just that--I'll buy it, read it, write for it, spread it so others can see the truth."

TO MAKE MARXISM AND FREEDOM AS REAL TO THE WORKERS AS IS NEWS & LETTERS SO THAT WE CAN EXPAND THE PAPER AND MAKE IT SELF-SUFFICIENT WHICH IT ISN'T NOW--indeed we are 3 issues behind in paying the printer's bill--WE MUST MAKE MARXISM & FREEDOM REAL, THAT IS TO SAY, CONCRETE FOR OURSELVES.

Since we have all been writing it, working out its ideas, it may sound ~~abstract~~ <sup>concrete</sup> first now make it concrete for ourselves.

so let me hurry to elaborate what the NEW STAGE is:

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Take these seemingly unconnected events of the past week:

(1)  
There is presently a development in the class struggle brought about by the seemingly incidental question of moving some dies from Detroit plants of Chrysler to a new plant in Ohio that has all the workers in this key industrial city in a turmoil. It comes at a time when their ~~new caucus~~ <sup>new caucus</sup> has shown even less audacity, ~~than the Reutherites~~ <sup>than the Reutherites</sup> because it has not faced problems created by automation. And the workers who thought it was sufficient just to be against Reuther now see that they must be for something, something concrete and yet universal.

(2)  
Throughout the period when N & L COMMITTEES worked on the book, the theme was that each of us must be the author of the book. The understanding of that was twofold: (1) it was a collective work, and (2) we lived in an age of absolutes where the very survival of civilization depends on the merging of the movement from practice to theory with the movement from theory to practice.

All this is certainly true. Every conceivable power on both sides of the Iron Curtain from the capitalists and their ~~paid~~ <sup>paid</sup> press to the labor bureaucracy and its propagandists, and not excluding the ~~State~~ <sup>State</sup> bureaucracy and their cultured Voices of America, Russia, Arab world, etc. etc. ~~are~~ <sup>are leaders</sup> bent upon seeing that workers remain workers while they do all the thinking. Because that is so, the two outward enemies, US & Russia do everything in their power to force an identity between the 2 opposites--Marxism which is a theory of liberation--with Communism which is a theory and practice of enslavement. We certainly found that out when we struggled to find a publisher for MARXISM & FREEDOM and are finding it out daily in the factories when the labor bur. tries to smear NEWS & LETTERS.

What is new is the urgency to concretize all this. For ex., it would be narrowing the true base of the book if we were to consider that only our committees and the general objective situation made it possible. The truth is that it is the whole wkg class and the intellectuals who recognized the wkg. class as the fundamental force for the reconstruction of society who are responsible for it. It is insufficient merely to say so; we must do something about it to make it accessible to the working class so that they see their struggles and aspirations mirrored in it.

and youth

TO GIVE THE WORKERS THE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR OWN POWER IT IS NECESSARY TO SEE THAT THE AMERICAN ROOTS OF MARXISM IS NOT A MATTER JUST OF HISTORIC PAST BUT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE FOR WITHOUT IT NO TRULY NEW SOCIETY CAN BE ESTABLISHED

This is borne out even such minor matters as seeing the R & F Caucus disintegrating before our very eyes. In the face of the actual situation in the factories and moving the shops they are as helpless as the Reutherites. WHY? No explanation would be necessary

they are beginning to come to us

THE NEW STAGE IN OUR OWN DEVELOPMENT DEMANDS AN OUTWARD MOVEMENT WHICH WOULD PROVE US AS GOOD IN TRANSMITTING OUR THEORY TO THE WORKERS AS WE HAVE PROVED GOOD IN ELICITING FROM WORKERS THEIR EXPERIENCES. TO MAKE THEM FEEL IN THE ORG. AS FREE AS THEY DO IN THE PAPER WE must stop living divided lives between paper and book, between organization and union, between home life or life with neighbors, shops, friends as separate from the IDEAS that motivate our lives.

"How do you do that" is not only something the youth or new members ask--The leadership faced the same question. It faced in a few weeks ago both before the new stage in the class struggle, although we can now see that it was in anticipation of it, it appeared to come merely out of our own development and the need for the leadership itself TO GROW UP.

Every organization has its own dialectic of decisions we take over. I'm glad to say I now speak in the name of the whole nat. leadership

I'm glad to say the 9:10 conference gave me the youth person of the honor

For the first time since the convention the REB considered the topic of such importance--and it considered it importance because it signaled a new stage of our development--that it held the equivalent of a plenum, that is to say, 1) it had a preliminary presentation and discussion, 2) sent this forward to the LA & W Vs NEB and had them list to it, and record their own discussions 3) only after all these tapes were in and listened, did the REB hold another discussion, and so modified, expanded, and internalized the views of the whole NEB that it is now prepared to present this unified view to the membership as a whole, and have them record their discussions and decisions, so that the organization as a whole may open so many new doors that the new stage will not be a passing phase but a new life.

Now then the RFBs deal dev 4

started with what we have called "the rude awakener"

Every organization has its own...  
from publisher.

Robert  
February 4 1950

We had one type of GROWING UP WITH THE CREATION OF THE COMM. OF CD & Inez. Now we needed a growing up where TIMING WAS OF THE ESSENCE.

ANTICIPATION AND TIMING INDEED SUMMARIZES THE WHOLE SIGNIFICANCE OF MARXIST THEORY AND WORKINGCLASS ACTION AS A UNIFIED PROCESS.

As if to prove how deep are our roots in American history, I found on the new publisher's desk a biography of Wendell Phillips

That too is no accident/He had written it back in 1940 but it is 1st now getting published, and then with reservations.

The growing up now will be proven that the way we must...  
Now we have accomplished our obligations...

1) Am. has. instead of coming in here by back door establishes us as principled people who belong

2) \$2500 will be published, 500 for which we are responsible \$1500 has to be paid June 15th, and a \$1000 September.

3) Though the house is small, the interest is such that promotional will be good AND WE WILL BE IN IT FROM THE START AND IN EVERY PHASE. For example, jacket design we will write ourselves. Even before it is given for printing, we will mimeo it so that EACH has it before him at ALL times as he goes to see anyone. We ourselves will cover-- we will get paid too--and then we send it to every name that was ever on anyone's list--alt

We have always said you learn by doing. You grow up the same way. Not only that it requires not merely your passive but your ACTIVE, YOUR CREATIVE PARTICIPATION. Thus just as MARXISM TO US TODAY IS NOT MARXISM IN GENERAL BUT MARXISM & FREEDOM, that same sense of concreteness and individuality is given as we approach everyone in our own way. I cannot tell the youth what to say or the workers or the Negroes--to each it will mean something special and individual and each must will bring their individuality to it and thus deepen and enrich and expand the process.

3) that is little, so little that RFB had decided to leave nothing to

say on paper until June when we see what has come in and how we can combine the paper and book.

It was a joke of course to have asked only \$25 and excluded so many from it--NOT THAT IF YOU HAVE NOTHING or have 25¢ you are not just as welcome--BUT BECAUSE WE WHO ARE OLDER KNOW THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANYTHING FROM JESUS CHRIST & HIS 12 disciples through Marx and the 1st Int., to an actual rev., as the Russian which did not have Gideon's army to ANTICIPATE ~~THE~~ FIRST AND WHEN THE TIME CAME TO MERGE WITH THE GREATER MASS MOVEMENT SO THAT THE MOVEMENT DOES NOT CHALK UP ONE MORE EXPERIENCE OF A SPONTANEOUS MOVEMENT THAT NEVERTHELESS DID NOT CRYSTALLIZE INTO WORKERS POWER OR DEGENERATE FROM IT-- but actually to reconstruct society on new beginnings.

In a very funny way that is even true of those in power. Take Democrats at last election in Michigan

To return to ourselves the \$25 on the face of it was false, as could be seen from fact that O & A gave \$175. Now we have already promises for a good deal--some of it, as Manon's offer of \$100, straight cash--Then there is John's \$200 loan on his own--and Bessie will work till she earns \$500. Whether it is 25¢ or \$2500, everyone should say precisely what he can and will do, what in cash, when in pledges, how much will come in by June 15th & how much Sept. On the basis of your immediate responses, cash & pledges, the REB will reconsider what to propose re paper. Not that you are not getting a full report next week of the actual financial situation on the paper--but we are not coming up with decisions and suggestions until we see these responses.

*Handwritten notes:* It is not for the summer that was in... 4 the program that... 1/14... 1/15... 1/15... 2/5... 2/20

For. rights are reserved and already some are working on English rights, French, Italian, German--we will know at end of summer where we stand on these, and on Asian publication we will know in fall for it is easier to work with the book actually published. But already we can see the interest: For exm.

*Handwritten:* Royal... (circled)

*Handwritten:* Conclusions

- ① The point of growing up is to be in on every single phase of the development of this our ~~organization~~ PIONEERING COMPRIED & so in each locality there will be one place where copies of letters will be kept and everyone can read, but must come there to read for we do owe publisher privacy.
- ② The manner + speed with which we respond to the financial needs will decide how good of control we have.
- ③ *Handwritten:* In 2 1/2 hrs... will get... finished... sheet
- ④ *Handwritten:* All... (circled)
- ⑤ Every stage, especially what involves it. Therefore, I must conclude return to

the author of the book. It is so and it must be so. It is so because I couldn't have written without all of you. It must be so because you can either sell it or bring members into the org. on this foundation unless you internalize it and relive it within the context of your own experience. Let's break the "I" and the "you" down to where we are one because only under those circumstances will we be one also with him whose birthday we celebrate today. I dare to think that he would welcome such a celebration from his rightful inheritors.