

Jan. 19, 1977

Dear Diane:

The first paragraph of your "Second Thoughts" was so original and hit Grace's contribution right on the head in a way that escaped me that made me expect less quotations from myself, etc. You surely did also grasp P&R, and it is an excellent way of projecting Marxist-Humanism among those close to us, but for the "public"--and a great many do not either accept me, or believe that anyone "truly understands" when they quote, that I felt a different style was needed, especially since I changed my mind from thinking of it only as an article for the paper. Rather now I think it should be reworked as a contribution also to the Black Thought pamphlet. In any case, one has to explain why one rereads a work, and therefore a 1st par. should say something ~~am~~ like this: On rereading Black Woman, which in many ways represented something new and different by talking of Black women and revolution, with eyes of today, I not only saw its tremendous gaps, but how far we have gone from the '60s. Take Toni Cade's contribution on pill as "genocide"!...

a critique of

By/Toni Cade's piece becoming first paragraph it will permit you at once to come to the '70 and to the class aspect for it is a fact that, whereas the nationalists and middle-class Blacks (who in any case knew not to have a dozen full) shouted against "the pill", the working class women who hardly knew how to care for themselves, much less a big family, were visiting parental control clinics. (Or whatever they are called; Ray, NY, worked in them--still does--and he could tell you a lot of stories.)

Then, by going to Grace's (do leave out James Bogg's piece, both because he is a man and one wrote in '68, the other in '72, during which there was quite a transformation in their views) you could bring in both actual revolution and philosophy, as you do, but with ~~less~~ fewer quotations from me. Instead, go to the '70s and your own views on two levels! (1) on international level bring in that magnificent Timorese revolutionary, Marie Bonaparte, to show how a "backward" country can leap ideologically far above those underdeveloped intellectuals in "advanced" country. (Ask Bess for copy of Perspectives in which I quoted substantially from Bonaparte; I believe it was a year ago, not last conv.) (2) interview Yvonne on her activities in actual struggles both on welfare, on rent, and on thought.

This will also permit you not to end with quotation of that which was already published, but what you see is either being done, should be done, is being raised, on totally new plane by Black Woman today, whose passion for philosophy and revolution recognized both the direction thought gives to action and vice versa.

When you have finished we can decide whether we wish it first published in N&L or wait for pamphlet; actually we may use it in both places since there will be many a month before pamphlet is ready, whereas N&L is in deep need of monthly contributions to acts and thought.

Yours,

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SECOND THOUGHTS

In the book, Black Woman, there is a serious separation in the unity of black revolution and the liberation of women. The essay "Black Revolution in America", by Grace Lee Boggs can begin here for two reasons: 1) not only that Grace Lee Boggs isn't a black woman who presents an "historical essay" on black revolution (and her definition of it, which is the whole point of the matter), but also, 2) there is such a distortion of history on a ground of "Or, as I prefer to phrase it." It is absurd to think one can write an essay on black revolution (in 1968, no less) and not even mention the word "woman". For the fact is, the forces of liberation show themselves to be black, women, workers and youth. And there will be no elaboration here on how this intellectual presents her "priorities" on what a revolution is and isn't, for even then, her essay would lay the ground for this critique. But it is important to see her wish "toward involving ever deeper layers of the oppressed masses", while with the stroke of the pen, she does the exact opposite.

Let us take her concept of black revolution beginning as a "reform stage". At this point, she brings in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the leader of this movement for "integration but his strategy was confrontation, and in the actual struggle the first was turned into its opposite by the second." But right here she totally misses the reason the masses wanted integration in the first place. In other words, there is the desire for new human relationships. And, yes, the strategies of revolutions change, but this does not mean one stage of revolution takes out the stage prior to it. On the contrary, there is a continuous development through revolution. Frantz Fanon in A Dying Colonialism saw this very clearly as he states, "The decision to involve women as active elements of the Algerian revolution was not reached lightly. In a sense, it was the very conception of combat that had to be modified. The violence of the occupier, his ferocity, his delirious attachment to the national territory, induced the leaders no longer to exclude certain forms of combat. Progressively, the urgency of a total was made itself felt." And getting to Boggs' attitude to black revolution in America relates to the same attitude as P&R shows in Ch. 7, "The African Revolutions and the World Economy", ". . . one socialist wrote about the African contribution as if its theory were all comprised in Tom Mboya's 'one man, one vote'. Leaving aside for the moment that 'one man, one vote' discloses nothing short of a revolution against white domination that parades as democratic civilization, these intellectuals have a long way to go before they equal the Africans' intellectual grasp of their tasks and responsibilities. . . ." In other words, merely seeing revolution as separations of race, sex, and class means the sight of a revolution is missed, for there is always a constant striving for new human relationships, in the thought and activity of the masses.

The failure to present in truth, what black revolution is, becomes more apparent in G. Boggs' essay when she "describes" the black masses and her surprise on her "question" of their consciousness, as if prior to her "discovery" there was very little black thought at all. She states, "they are consciously anti-capitalist" and "consciously anti-imperialists" as they are "now following in the footsteps of Malcolm". Her attitude to the objective world is to be stressed here, for it is the same as Jean Paul Sartre - an outsider looking in. It's the very reason her conclusions (something so contradictory to reality) as to say, Marxism "contradicts the historical and daily experience of Blacks." Chapter six of P&R shows when "Many instances are recounted against the 'dogmatists' who fail to see the particular individual, the concrete event, the singular experience, the new; in a word, human reality. Clearly, the outsider looking in, wants to be in." Importantly, the very experience of reading her essay, shows always; 1) her conclusions are first and foremost; 2) the leaders are presented and 3) the masses of people are last. The work of the people are brought in as an afterthought. "For the truth is concrete, that is, whilst it gives a bond of principle and unity, it

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also possesses an internal variety of development" (para. 14, from "The Logic of Hegel; R.D., 1961). The masses brought in as an afterthought is definitely no accident. For it becomes distinct when James Boggs in an article entitled "Beyond Rebellion" says; ". . . it is only under the revolutionary political leadership of black people that this country will be able to get out of its contradictions." He criticizes black power as black nationalism in saying it cannot be reality in that there cannot be a going back to Africa and that white people in this country cannot "vanish into thin air". But it's just as stifling to have dreams of leading the masses. He goes on to say "We have the fear which always ~~xxxx~~ haunts the revolutionary social forces, the fear of not knowing whether they can win, the lack of confidence in themselves and in their ability to create a better society." It is right here where Fanon enters with his activity in the Algerian revolution; "Today the great systems have died or are living in a state of crisis. And it is no longer the age of little vanguards. The whole of humanity has erupted violently, tumultuously onto the stage of history, taking its own destiny in its hands. Capitalism is under seige, surrounded by a global tide of revolution. And this revolution, still without a center, without a precise form, has its own laws, its own life and a depth of unity — accorded it by the same masses who create it, who live it, who inspire each other from across boundaries, give each other spirit and encouragement and learn from their collective experiences." The difference shows how James Boggs' article falls on its face.

An ineptness is revealed in seeing James Boggs' article as ground for Grace Lee Boggs' essay. To even imply that the struggle against capitalism is the "complete contradiction to the historical and daily experience of blacks", is the ultimate of contradictions. In chapter 9 of P&R, "To face reality, and to face it, not through sheer voluntarism, but with full awareness of all the forces lined up against us, is the one way to assure the coalescence with other revolutionary forces, especially labor, which is so strategically placed in production and has its own black dimension." Also, Grace Lee Boggs presents the "history" of white america as Wallace, but not the history of youth in the 60's - white as well as black. When the white students sold themselves to the anti-Vietnam War movement, it showed how racism is permeated in this society. But this does not negate ". . . without white labor the system cannot be torn up by its roots." (P&R, Ch. 9) In returning to Martin Luther King, Jr.; it was precisely when people were moving forward again that he began to realize his limitations and was killed. Killed at the point of truth — labor (leading the garbage workers strike in Memphis). His perspective was also widening with his concern of the Vietnam War. "Hell no, we won't go" was the concern of black people in this country in fighting the enemy here. This perspective was grounded in the reality of the oppression of black people in this country. So it cannot be a simple matter of stating King was an "inadequate leader" of some sort, but to see King's own transcendence as a must in order to be with the masses already transcending.

In "leaving out" Toni Cade's essays "On the Issue of Roles" and "The Pill: Genocide or Liberation?" is not to say this is of less importance. On the contrary, the importance of Cade's essays presents the whole ground for the book. For the ~~fact~~ fact is, Cade edited the book in 1970. In her eyes, there are "two kinds of revolution". One is that of burgeoning black pride and militancy. The other is the rising demand of women. Through this, it is unlikely that one can see the black woman liberationist. For it becomes a game, on the one hand there is black liberation and on the other hand there is women's liberation. But when the very words "black woman" are spoken, there is no division. Is there a certain time to fight for black and a certain time to fight for woman? I say no. There is only one time. And I feel anguish for my sisters in S. Africa when they "suffer additional disabilities both in law and in custom." ("For Their Triumphs & For Their Tears", Ch. 1). And the white woman in S. Africa can share rights with the white

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man because of the color of her skin (although she does live in a male dominated society). So it isn't a question of it being a "private" matter or that "Revolution begins with the self, in the self." (On the Issue of Roles", T. Cade, 1969). But it is a question of what freedom is to "every man, woman, and child".

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