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March 20, 1967

Dear Friends:

Very good news comes from New York, Richard having succeeded in getting me two paid lectures -- one for a graduate student group at Columbia on the "Method of Marx 100 years After" and the other a super-exclusive professional group on China at Yale, on the "Challenge of Mao Tse-tung."

Detroit has held the first theoretical conference this Sunday. There were only four outsiders, and yet the most pertinent question was from one of these, a young Negro worker who asked in which way "negation of the negation" was related not only to a total revolution in this country, but internationally. In the second part of the conference that dealt more strictly with Hegel, his question on "Subjectivity" concentrated on the relationship between a political grouping and the broad masses. He felt that those who see a close connection between philosophy and revolution, that is to say, between the thought of men and the actual deeds to transform reality, would ~~mean~~, of necessity, involve but a small portion of the proletariat; would that mean that until the population "to a man" understood this close connection we couldn't have a revolution?

Both for the purposes of wanting fresh reactions in each locality, and because I in no way wish to influence those reactions, I will not report on the conference. However, one aspect as to the outline of the book as a whole did help orient the conference insofar as context of Part II was concerned, and therefore I will give you the outline, as I conceive it at this moment:

Part I would deal with the objective world situation. This would take in the stage of the economy, the degree of stratification and the relationship between the under-developed and the developed countries. It would not be limited, however, only to the economics, since we would have to bring in the question of the African Revolutions that came from the under-developed countries, that challenged the poorer East and West, that transformed reality, and yet stopped midway. The question is: why? Is it only political? Is it economic? Or can philosophy help explain it?

Part II on "Why Hegel, Why Now?" -- the three chapters of which you already have, will bring us up to the death of Lenin, and the theoretical void that resulted in the Marxist movement and is yet to be filled.

Part III will concern itself with the post-war world and the new ideologies, such as Existentialism, which first challenged and now claims to want to merge with Marxism, and the impotence of Trotskyism to meet the challenge either from the objective world, or from ideological currents. I will not be concerned with Trotskyism, but only with Leon Trotsky, himself, as theoretician.

Part IV will begin with an expansion of the pamphlet "State-Capitalism and Marx's Humanism", and will return to the problems raised in Part I, this time, however, in the philosophic context; the attempt, therefore, would be to round out Philosophy and Revolution in respect to our own world, with an indication of future developments, not as prophecy, but as challenge and task.

Do not forget that we are now preparing for the April issue. The deadline is next Thursday, March 30. This Thursday there will be a joint-REB-Detroit meeting at which Charles Denby will make a report of his trip to the South, which may very well become the lead for the issue. He was called there for personal reasons, but naturally, took full advantage of being there, both in order to meet with and talk to civil rights groups. We will send you a preliminary report next week. N.B. NEW YORK! We will hold open space for a report from Harlem by New York local in relationship to the mood in Harlem on the Powell events and election for as late as April 4-5, if it is special-delivery.