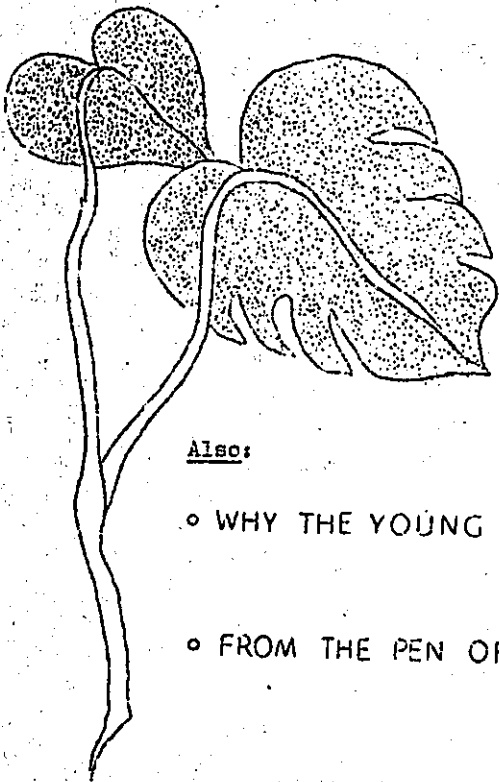


The

Young

Marxist - Humanist

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"THE HERITAGE AND THE CHALLENGE"

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TO THE YOUNG MARXIST-HUMANIST

THE HERITAGE AND THE CHALLENGE

In the name of the Resident Editorial Board of News & Letters Committees, I wish to extend our congratulations to your editors and writers. The very name you have chosen for your publication assures its identification with the Humanism which Marx defined as "the truth of idealism and materialism." No field is more in need of the daring, the imagination, the energy, the rebellious nature of the youth than the field of philosophy.

Because of the vast accumulation of intellectual sloth through the decades, you face formidable tasks. All we can do is indicate a path. It seems to us that the two main problems that confront you there are these:

(1) How to break with the mere slogenizing, as well as with the infighting among old radicals, who seem content to live in the outer regions of political gossip that passes for "theoretical discussion."

(2) In moving away from old radicals, toward the new youth struggles, especially those of the Negroes in the South, you meet up with a new challenge: how to draw a distinction between the freedom movement of the youth and the adult leadership that attaches itself to this movement. For this leadership is not digging for the native roots in the Abolitionist movement and the Humanism of Marxism, as you are doing, but prefers to run to India and Gandhi for its "philosophy".

These tasks are not insurmountable. To begin with, you have one advantage the young Marx did not have. When he first developed his new world outlook, he was compelled to leave his Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, written in 1844, to "the stinging criticism of the mice," as he put it. Where Marx could find no publisher for his views, you have a forum for yours. Time, too, is on your side. This is, to borrow a phrase from Hegel, "the birth-time of history."

It is no accident that in the past few years a veritable avalanche of books has appeared about the young Marx. With the sole exception of Marxism and Freedom, which included the first English translation of Marx's early essays because the author aimed at re-establishing the Humanism of Marxism, these books stretched Marx's Humanism to the point of non-recognition. They were written by "pros" — old radicals or professors — who stamped their imprint, ranging from totalitarian Communism to Zen Buddhism, and from psychology to technology, on Marx's early writings. This is a repetition of what took place in Western Europe at the end of World War II, when everyone, from the Catholics to the Existentialists, were busy "discovering" the young Marx, and putting their imprint on his writings. Thereby, the Humanism of Marx, that is to say, the theory of alienation which is inseparable from the quest for universality, became degraded either to a theory of alienation of "the soul", or a preoccupation with the existent.

History must not repeat itself. The young Marx must speak for himself. The alien clamor around him must be muffled so that we can hear him, see the pluri-dimensional in his outlook, grasp not merely the sense of alienation, but the act of liberation. The Young Marxist-Humanist can help make this happen, provided it is a forum not only for your views, but for those whom you challenge so that the dialogue between you becomes the foundation for a new synthesis of theory and practice.

Too long has established Marxism violated the very essence of this most profound theoretician of freedom — Karl Marx, the young and the old. "Marx," wrote Karl Kautsky when he was still the recognized head of the International, "proclaimed no philosophy, but the end of all philosophy." This misreading of Marx's statement that philosophy must be "realized" had no little to do with Fautsky's failure to publish Marx's Humanist Essays. It took a world war and the Russian Revolution, plus years of bargaining, to pry these manuscripts loose from the vaults kept by the literary heirs, to whom Friedrich Engels had entrusted them when he died in 1895.

The collapse of the established Socialist International had left Lenin without a philosophic foundation for his revolutionary thinking and compelled him to return to the origins of Marx in Hegelianism. It was only then that he first understood that it was impossible to understand the mature Marx, to comprehend, as he put it, even the first chapter of Capital unless one has studied "the whole of Hegel's Logic". (The reference is to the Science of Logic, often called the "larger Logic" to distinguish it from the "Smaller Logic" or the Logic as "summarized" by Hegel himself in the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences.)

In unmistakable terms Lenin broke with his leader, Plekhanov: "Plekhanov wrote probably nearly 1000 pages (Laitov / against Bogdanov / against Kantians / basic questions, etc., etc. on philosophy (dialectic).) There is nil in them about the Larger Logic, its thoughts (i.e., dialectic proper, as a philosophic science) nil!!" And in the conclusion of this criticism of Plekhanov, he included all 20th century Marxists, that is to say, his own generation: "At the beginning of the 20th century Marxists criticized the Kantians and Humanists more in a Feuerbachian... than in a Hegelian, manner."

Unfortunately, Lenin's break with his own philosophic past remained "a private affair" not only because he had not published his Philosophic Notebooks of 1914-15, but also because he continued to recommend his own earlier works as well as those of Plekhanov on philosophy. Nothing else was available since neither his Notebooks, nor Marx's Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts had yet been published.

Thus Lenin left a dual philosophic heritage. The duality made it easy for the Communist theoreticians of Stalin's Russia to keep writing, after Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks and Marx's Manuscripts were finally published in the late 1920's, as if the Lenin of Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, which gave the green light to vulgar materialism in 1908, and the Lenin of the Philosophic Notebooks, which helped form the underlying philosophy of the 1917 Revolution by re-establishing the unity of the ideal and the

material, were one and the same. So prevalent is this attitude among all present-day writers -- Khrushchevists, Titoists and assorted modern Kautskyans, as well as Nazis, Trotskyists and even American pragmatists -- that no modern philosopher has yet attempted seriously to grapple with this statement from Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks: "Man's cognition not only reflects the objective world, but creates it."

Marxism is a philosophy of human activity -- the labor of hand and mind. For our age of absolutes, which invests everything with its opposite, so that even counter-revolution parades about as revolution, it cannot be stressed too strongly that Marx did not oppose idealism. What the Humanism of Marx does oppose are these:

(1) the de-humanization of ideas in Hegel, who dealt with the various stages of consciousness and self-consciousness as if those existed outside of the human body;

(2) capitalism, which is a class society based on the exploitation of man by man -- of those who labor by those who control the means of production, so that all labor, even when it is freed from chattel slavery and serfdom remains "forced labor"; and

(3) "vulgar communism", which thinks all ills of capitalism are abolished the moment private property is abolished when, in truth, no new society can arise unless that which is most degrading in class societies, and is the source of all that is perverse in capitalism -- the division between mental and manual labor -- is rooted out totally.

The writings of the young Hegel, as, later, those of the young Marx, were not published until after World War I. The fact, however, that Marx was unaware of these writings did not keep him from penetrating through the de-humanization of Hegel's philosophy as Hegel had retreated to his ivory tower, and discovering the revolutionary nature of the Hegelian dialectic, and also its humanist origins. Because freedom is the point of departure, and the point of return, for both Marx and Hegel, the daring of the young Hegel, who wrote under the impact of the French Revolution of 1789, is breath-taking even today:

"Only that which is an object of freedom may be called an idea. We must, therefore, transcend the State. For every State is bound to treat free men as cogs in a machine. And this is precisely what it ought not to do: hence the State must perish."

It is this concept of freedom that enabled Marx, who developed his views on the eve of proletarian struggles of the 1840's, to concretize the abstract in Hegel, and thereby to transcend him. The 1848 revolutions that covered the whole of Europe, disclosed to Marx how "to realize philosophy", that is to say, to make freedom real. The heart, brain, and spirit of his philosophy all pointed to one truth: the driving force of "the dialectic", "the absolute negativity" of development through contradiction, was man himself, not just his thought, but the whole of man; not just alienated man "in general", but the alienated workers specifically,

at the point of production. Marx maintained that bourgeois theoreticians, because of their place in production and their compulsion outside it to defend the status quo, have a false ideology, are "prisoners of the fetishism of commodities." The worker, on the other hand, because of his place in production is the "negative principle", the force which will resolve the contradictions of capitalism.

The unity of theory and practice is, as Lukacs phrased it, "only the other face of the historical social situation which makes self-knowledge and knowledge coincide. Thus the proletariat is both the subject and object of its proper knowledge." Indeed, as Lukacs correctly puts it, Marx accused Hegel of not having truly transcended the duality of thought and being, of theory and practice, of subject and object, "that Hegel had not gone beyond Kant on this decisive point, that his dialectic was a simple appearance and not the actual, interior dialectic of the historic process" and that he, Marx, was carrying to its concrete, actual meaning the Hegelian conception of a "spirit-phenomenon."

To grasp the spirit of our age, to participate in the freedom struggle of today, to gain a new dimension in thought as well as in action, and thus to end class divisions, discrimination against minorities, the alienation of youth, it becomes imperative to recapture the inner essence of Marxist-Humanism — the individualistic element, which is its warp and woof. That individualism is not the petty-bourgeois individualism preoccupied with its own ego. Just as Hegel had conceived individuality to be "purified of all that interferes with its universalism, i.e., with freedom itself", so Marx defined freedom as "the free development of each (which) is the condition for the free development of all." "We must, above all," Marx had written, "avoid setting up 'the society' as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual is the social entity." In this way, and in this way only, can we end, once and for all, exploitation of man by man and the accompanying perversions that stem from the division between mental and manual labor.

We feel confident that The Young Marxist-Humanist, as a publication, as a group, and as individuals, will play no small role in this historic task.

RAYA DUNAYLVS KAYA, Chairman,
National Editorial Board,
News & Letters

WHY THE YOUNG MARXIST-HUMANIST

Every generation must re-evaluate theory for its time, and must not to use history, experience and thought creatively, not carelessly superimpose on today what may have been true yesterday. We owe it to ourselves not to be dissuaded by those oldsters who loiter about the meeting places of youth regaling them with stories of what the class struggle was really like, representing the '30's to be the millenium past. At this point we don't know whether to feel anger or pity for the memoirs of revolutionaries who were never revolutionary and sorrowfully complain that things aren't what they used to be, and that ideology has come to an end.

Every political publication has a reason for existence. The Young Marxist-Humanist exists to fill a void in theory in the youth arena. We hope it will enable young Marxist-Humanists across the country and over the world to know one another, exchange ideas and experience.

We call ourselves The Young Marxist-Humanist to associate ourselves with Karl Marx. Communism with a capital C has unfortunately been usurped by Russia and hence is but another name for the totalitarian state-capitalist reality in Russia, the supporters of that system and the ideology that flows from it. Humanism, on the other hand, has not only not been tainted by the Communists but they have rejected it as a product of the "immature" Marx. We are proud to associate with that youthful Marx who never changed his view of the world. He used "Humanism" in 1844 in defining his philosophy and separating himself from the vulgar communists of his day, and in his later works he never departed from this philosophy. Socialism too, has been a much abused word having different meaning to different men and has become too vague in its connotations. Marxist-Humanist is as precise a characterization of ourselves as we can find to show our link with the past and our rejection of present-day radicals who use the stature of Marx, yet pervert his ideas to serve their own ends.

In calling ourselves The Young Marxist-Humanist we grasp firmly the hand of the young Karl Marx who still in his mid-twenties broke from bourgeois society and created the now popular three early essays. This profound critique of capitalism, is all the more amazing since capitalism was then in its hey-day with a future which seemed boundless to intellectuals in Marx's time. So much so, that even capitalism's professed opponents were incapable of freeing themselves from its intellectual bondage. It is these "opponents" Marx tears to shreds in his essay on "Private Property vs. Communism" pointing out that those vulgar communists who were satisfied with the abolition of private property were not touching what was most alien to man, the cleavage between mental and manual labor. Already Marx had seen far beyond the nationalization of property. And this unfettered mind pointed out that communism, even in the best sense "is not the goal of human development, the form of human society."

In the following forty years Marx was to live he gave breadth to his early works and originated his economic theories not as a substitute for his early humanism, but as he developed gave even greater scope to the philosophic foundations that yet confront the world with a vision of what the future development of mankind might be. Marx today, far from being dated is much more readily understood. We have seen in life that the wresting of private property from its owners in and of itself has not lightened the burden of humanity, but to the contrary, in Russia and its satellites have added to it.

For the youth in the United States it was 1960 that opened up a new era. The lunch counter sit-in that four Negro high school students initiated in Greensboro, North Carolina met with immediate spontaneous sympathetic response from a significant section of this generation, North and South, black and white.

The mass activity of the Sit-ins, Freedom Rides, picketing and boycotts was a first awakening for many. Some moved on to demonstrations against the House Un-American Activities Committee or joined in on other civil rights causes, participated in peace walks and Ban the Bomb rallies.

What started in 1960 had national and international ramifications and brought forth old and new organizations to intervene in the struggle. Ideology then, cannot be long ignored. The only way this generation can keep from being used, is not to turn a deaf ear, but to come to grips with the world we live in.

In sharp opposition to all that Marx stood for the vulgar Communists of our day who met October 1961, at the 22nd Congress of the Russian Communist Party offered instead of a reunification of mental and manual labor, a firming of class barriers and to the masses a promise of free bus rides in a score of years—and even this crumb contingent upon ever greater productivity—is evidence that these minds see no further and offer less than their private capitalist counter-part.

Those who didn't recognize the fake quality of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization or didn't take seriously the crackdown on the peasantry and working class as a prelude of horrors to come should now ponder the recent liberal use of capital punishment in crimes against the state; the suppression of harmless jazz by the monolith and the censorship of the more harmless poet Evtushenko who must either recant and rewrite or sink into complete oblivion.

What seems a simple key eludes so many. How does the worker fare at the point of production? What are his hours of work? Who controls production? What difference to the man at work whether he is fulfilling Castro's Plan or Ford's Plan. If he must work the same way, he must cheat the boss the same way to save something of himself. Capitalism's conditions of work are just that, there is no amount of brainwashing that can eradicate the fact. The conditions of work are such that man cannot happily adjust to them—this is capitalism's grave-digger. This is Kennedy's problem,

Khrushchev's problem, Mao's problem and Castro's too. Where public relations can win some intellectuals, it is production relations that sway workers. It was a twenty-six year old Marx that understood this in 1844 when he wrote his essay on Alienated Labor. Yet over a century later, one Daniel Bell in his fantastic for-ies proclaimed the end of ideology in the West and wrote "...the workers, whose grievance were once the driving energy for social change, are more satisfied with the society than the intellectuals."

Unfortunately too many present-day intellectuals are in agreement. This is why so many of us were elated when we found Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxism and Freedom, Marxist-Humanism in our time. The impulse for writing the book she says in her introduction came from two sources, the East German workers, who first broke the strangle hold of Russian totalitarianism on June 17, 1953 and the American workers, in auto and coal particularly, who in coming to grips with Automation raised demands that were qualitatively different. These workers were asking then not for more money—the mere equivalent of "plenty for all"—but protested against the conditions of work, being driven to keep pace with the monster machine. In our epoch this has been what the major strikes have been about; the inhuman conditions of work, the increased alienation of man which doesn't stop short at national borders but already is a world wide phenomenon. Automation exists and seeks to reduce man on both sides of the iron curtain to a cog in the machine, an unfeeling automaton.

"What kind of work shall man perform" was the philosophic question workers have been asking, and union bureaucrats with bosses have tried to appease them with a little more money and pension plans.

Marx saw the working class as the negation of capital because he recognized that just to live, to retain their humanity they are forced to throw themselves against the system—every day, in a thousand ways. The new stage this negativity has reached the new categories developed demands a great sensitivity to working class aspirations and a mastering of the economic-philosophic foundations of Marxism to give voice to what remains implicit in the struggle, and by making the implicit, explicit a new quality is created, demonstrating the inseparability of thought and activity, the unnaturalness of the division between mental and manual labor, the shaky foundation upon which this society of alienated men rests. Dunayevskaya represents today the only political tendency which approaches Marxism with a boldness that knows Marxism isn't confined between the covers of books but is in the daily lives of the masses of people and it listens as it speaks.

It might be a source of frustration to some that so much emphasis is placed upon the working class. So many in all layers of society are ready for something "new"—particularly so the youth, impatient youth. To youth's credit, they have not yet made their peace with society—have not found the expediency of compromise.

No one can accuse the youth of the '60's of torpidity. Some of the articles herein bear witness to the fact that youth are on the move. The

Sit-ins and Freedom Rides changed the face of the nation and tore an irreparable hole in the Southern wall of segregation. Peace demonstrations and anti-HUAC demonstrations have been features of the '60's. We are here to say there is a role to play. It may be a different role than some may think.

For the youth the road hasn't been easy. The fact that almost one half the students that enter high school leave before graduating is a stunning statistic. Along with this the realization that youth make up a disproportionately large percentage of the 5½ million unemployed are matters we as youth must confront.

The swelling tide of anti-social behavior on the part of youth some call "juvenile delinquents" is composed of waves of thousands of youth who have already felt in their adolescence that they have reached dead end, remains unstemmed. The Administration seeks to recreate CCC camps to settle with them. They cannot remain strangers to us.

In the perpetual war-time emergency youth continue to be drafted and re-drafted to the armed forces. They receive none of the compensation granted their fathers and older brothers. No insurance, no mustering out pay, no educational opportunity after service--nothing awaits them but the army of the unemployed. Their voices of protest are muffled. We must be more attentive.

A Negro youth picketing a Woolworth store in the South carried a sign which said in effect, if you expect me to fight in the Army end segregation at home. And a white youth refused to picket Woolworth's in Detroit because he said it would only spread the illusion that Woolworth's was the cause of segregation and not the capitalist system.

What each sorely needed was a unifying philosophy that would embrace both thought and activity. Our Southern friend lost sight of the forest for the tree, while the reverse was true of the Northerner. There are too few times and places where youth sit down and consider the implications of their activity, and perhaps too few who recognize thought itself to be an activity.

If some of the ideas and experiences are similar to your own, if something between these covers finds a response in you, by all means make yourself a contributor. We require no credentials from the bourgeois world. Friend or bystander or even foe let us hear what you have to say.

Several years ago the Trotskyist Youth around the "Young Socialist" announced a new organization and unabashedly proclaimed that their mission would be "to lead the working class to victory." We couldn't resist showing this to some workers. They just grinned and shook their heads. A little modesty is sometimes a great virtue. Let us seek to know ourselves, our generation, the society we live in from our vantage point, align ourselves with the working class, Negro and minority struggles for complete

freedom. History will either prove our relationship to those struggles or we will suffer that type of intellectual prostitution which creates the basis for Birchism, for the challenge of Birchism is not alone from an alien class. Were it so YPSL's and Trotskyists would know how to answer it.

All other radicals are satisfied with frantic activity, Jimmy Higgins work. We feel unless thinking too is realized as an activity, we will never rejoin either the wholeness of the human being or the unity to assure the forward thrust of humanity.

— Robert Ellery

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"All My Life I Have Wanted To Be Free"

I am an average Negro girl. I want the same things most people want. All my life I have wanted to be free. I have always wanted the freedom of travelling anywhere I pleased with whomever I wanted, but this very simple right is impossible for me to have at this time. When I was in grade school I always dreamed that I was that little white Jane in my first-grade reader; that I lived in that very nice home in such a nice neighborhood 20 miles out of town. When the bell rang and class was over, my dream was over too. At a very tender age I learned to face reality, that I was a Negro; that my grandparents were slaves; that they were so stupid they didn't know what to do with their freedom when they got it. This is what 99 9/10 percent of all history books in the United States say.

I can remember so clearly the wonderful feeling I got when I finally got up enough guts to participate in the civil rights movement. Yes, I — like countless others — had read and heard about the sit-ins down South. I felt it was good that the youth right in the heart of the South were standing up and fighting for their rights. But the fighting spirit didn't hit me until later. It was a nice Saturday afternoon. I was shopping downtown, and passed Woolworth's, a ten cent store which was under a nation-wide boycott because of its segregation policies. In front of the store was a mixed group of people picketing, mostly youth, but some adults. There was a young girl at one end of the line selling pins. The pins were in black and white. They said: "Freedom Now." I went over to buy one, and to get a closer look at the signs. One said: "Don't Support Second-Class Citizenship". Another said: "We Want Our Freedom Now." At the same time the line was singing: "We Shall Not Be Moved." They had changed the words to: "Black and white together, we shall not be moved; Integrate the cop cars, we shall not be moved..." It seemed that all of this hit me at once. I could help in the fight for my dignity and self-respect, but most of all my Freedom, just by joining this picket line.

This picket line was composed of people with many different political views: Trotskyists, Communists, good old flag-waving Democrats and Republicans, and a few Marxist-Humanists. From this line there was formed a civil rights action group called the Detroit Brotherhood Youth Council (DBYC). For about two years we participated in a number of civil rights actions, with a certain amount of success. The DBYC, like countless other groups, soon wasted into loss of members, inactivity, and finally inexistence. To me the main reason was that we were incapable of fulfilling the inner needs of an organization. We were all fighting segregation, but that was not enough. You have to fight the cause of it, this type of a society. A society that is so much like an inhuman science-fiction creature that it thrives on the blood of the people for its very existence. A type of society that is based on the greatest lie in history. One that loves to hide behind two great words — Christianity and Democracy — and at the same time tries every dirty trick to keep the common people down so that a handful of rich can prosper even more from their sweat and blood.

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We had no basic philosophy because everyone had his own politics outside of the group. Through some of the kids in the DBYC, I began to go to some of the Trotskyist meetings. At one of the meetings there was a man talking about his great invention, his one-man-band. This was the topic of the whole evening. To me this seemed a little nutty for the topic of a political meeting. As far as their philosophy went, I couldn't see any great difference between Communist Russia and Capitalist America except the spelling. They both are two great parasites living off the common people. After that I only went around to be with some of the kids, but after awhile even that became an effort.

When I began coming to Marxist-Humanism, it was extremely hard for me at first to understand what was going on except that the people were very nice, and it was very clear to me that they were fighting just as hard for the rights of Negroes and workers, but unlike so many other organizations this was not for the sole purpose of getting their name in print or in order to take over and use people for their own selfish reasons. Because of their basic philosophy I saw my life, the world, and the whole Civil War through a different light. I saw why the world is in such a big mess, why the Civil War was fought, and the true reason why good old Abe declared us free. I also saw why, as long as we live in this type of a society, the common people will always have a hard way to do.

Before I came to Marxist-Humanism I knew that our educational system was shot, insofar as history goes. In high-school they talked about Karl Marx in only one of my history classes. It was all in one line: he was a Communist. There was nothing about his writings or about his philosophy. It is now very clear to me why this was so.

- Bobbie Turner



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A Philosophy That Unites Thought and Action

The youth are in the forefront of much of the political activity today — from the Freedom Rides to Peace demonstrations, from the Sit-Ins to the anti-HUAC picketing. All of these activities point to and demand a re-evaluation of today's society. Youth more than any group have something at stake. Yet, I fear that much of today's activity seems to be a negative type of activity. It is negative in the sense that one is always acting against something — against discrimination, against the H-bomb, against the HUAC. Certainly we are against these things; but what distinguishes "againers", which may include people from a wide range of the political spectra, is what these people are for. This is the important thing. It is not enough for youth to go out and join a picket line; yes this is activity, and it may be a very good activity, but it is this very activity of going out on the picket line which demands another type of activity — thought.

Thinking itself is an activity every bit as important as the immediate concrete action. The reason I believe this to be so is that a human being is a total person with a mind and body. We therefore need a total philosophy to give our action direction. James Meredith has an article in the April 9 issue of Look Magazine in which he says, "An old man, a gentleman 85 or 90 years old, told me once that anything you keep thinking about, you are bound to do something about. Humanly and physically, the individual is not able to think about this matter, to keep on thinking about it and not do anything about it." I could not agree more with this link between thought and action. This gentleman may not be acquainted with Hegelian philosophy; but he is expressing its central principle, the relationship of thought to deed. What is great about Hegelian philosophy is that it was developed under the impact of the French Revolution. Hegel, as a philosopher, was isolated from the people. But his philosophy reflected the human struggles for freedom from the Greek city states through the French Revolution. And it is this which made him discover how powerful is the idea of "full-blown liberty, there is nothing like it in its uncontrollable strength." It was Marx, however, who made the dialectical philosophy concrete. He grasped its human origin for his day. Thus was born a philosophy of full emancipation — not only for labor, but for all mankind. Marx called it "Humanism."

To me, what seems wrong with today's youth movements is that in all of these struggles the question of a truly different way of life is always left implicit instead of being brought to the forefront and discussed.

I remember recently speaking to a young man who was on a 500 mile Peace Walk from San Diego to San Francisco with about 30 other youth. In speaking of why he went on this Peace Walk he said that he was doing it because he felt that at this point no one was doing anything for peace, and that if he as an individual did something maybe others would become interested. I asked him why he thought more people, especially workers, hadn't joined in the peace movement. He felt that not many people were

sufficiently concerned with stopping the H-bomb mania. He felt little, if any, relationship to the working class of this country. He thought they were satisfied. The question of peace became so paramount in his mind that the cause for the H-bomb and the threat of nuclear annihilation -- the class division created by private and state-capitalist society -- was pushed into the background.

From this Peace Marcher's comments, it can be seen that this world we live in separates groups of people from each other, especially workers from youth. The way to break this segregation between people is a humanist philosophy. It is not an easy matter to get to know what the working class thinks and does for freedom in the working day because it is written in few places. But it is something which must be understood if we are to see the relationship of peace demonstrations to the total fight for freedom.

The young Marx, when he became an exile, searched out the few worker exiles from his country to get their thoughts and feelings about their country.

Jean Varlet, an enragé during the time of the French Revolution, looked for reason and scientific knowledge among the people. "I have learned how naively, and just by saying what they think, the poor devils of the garrets reasoned more surely, more boldly than the fine gentleman, the great talkers, the bumbling men of learning; if they wish to gain scientific knowledge, let them go and move about like me among the people."

The Peace Marcher has also got to look among the masses. His philosophy must be so concrete that the masses will either join or he will be where the masses are when they do move. The greatest opposition to war is the working class. During the second World War, American miners went on strike to fight for their rights. Minorities rioted for their freedom. War tomorrow is greater oppression against the worker in the factory today. Witness France, where De Gaulle wants his nuclear bomb and therefore moves against the miners. It is only the miners and other parts of the working class who fight back against him. This is the biggest fight against war today.

This type of philosophy involving the working class was not implied in the Peace Marcher's thought, although it might be in his action which wanted a change in the status quo. What is needed is a Marxist-Humanist philosophy which will open his eyes and ears so that he is able to know of the existence of his allies and not be sold a bill of goods that "working people don't care." The lack of a philosophy in his action prevented him from sensing his own allies. This underlying philosophy, to me, is the way that history moves forward -- when masses of people use their potential to change society, when they combine their ideas with action.

One hundred and nineteen years ago, the young Marx (26) began to analyze his own society. In his essay on Private Property and Communism, Marx deals with communism, psychology, natural sciences, relation of man to woman, man's senses, atheism in relation to socialism, private property, the crea-

ation of man, and philosophy. In the space of a dozen or so pages, Marx is able to deal with such diverse topics. The reason Marx can deal with these topics is the unifying thread which runs through all of them and through all relationships which man has, whether they are with other men or nature — the type of labor man performs.

When Marx says that man's labor determines all other relationships, he is not merely dealing in economics. What he wants to deal with is the human being. Labor is really what differentiates us from all other animals. It is through this capacity to labor that the human being develops. However, in the world in which we live, labor (physical and intellectual) is used merely as a commodity. The person who has certain capacities has his identity as an individual destroyed. His labor becomes alien to him as a human being. The drive of the society is to have as much human labor as it can command under its power. Thus the world is divided into two great powers, the U.S. and Russia, each seeking to control the labor power in the world. The individual, meanwhile, has lost control of his labor power. He, as a human being, is utilized in such a way as to resemble a machine which has a specific function and no life outside of this function, whether this function is putting a nut on a bolt, or figuring out the design of a building.

It is because of this division between thinking and doing, between mental and manual, that the human being is alienated. He isn't developing himself as a human being. Because his labor is an alien activity, one that is not his own, the products he produces are also not his own. But a society that so perverts human activity as to make it into a commodity (labor power) imbues all life with its opposite.

It is this which the Peace Marchers and others cannot see. The intellectual youth seems to think that it is only the laborer's activity that is alienated, not his own. Yet it is our age, and it is the scientists in it, who split the atom and then found that their discovery was not used for the benefit of mankind, but became the means for total annihilation. If they saw a relationship between the discovery and the use to which it was put, it seems to me that the youth could then see how alienated he too is — and begin to look for allies among workers.

The youth who seeks a change in the status quo must go on a voyage of discovery and find this relationship himself. It is when the fight of the youth and that of the workers are fused that the struggle for a new society reaches its culmination point — witness the Hungarian Revolution where workers and youth took to the streets in a challenge of Russian totalitarianism. To challenge the status quo here we need both the workers and the Marxist-Humanist philosophy.

— Eugene Walker

If You Dig Me...

What is it like to be young in the 1960's? I can't tell you because I'm not technically young anymore. (I'll admit it: I'm 32, female, married, mother of two girls, a college instructor.) But taking a larger era, post-World War II, which is really our (brave?) new world, I can speak with some feeling. It's a world of the H-bomb above all, a world where technology and efficiency are God, a world of Cold Warring, a world of alienation in work, in all human relations, a world of racism not just as a personal quirk but with the realities of Jews exterminated all over Europe, Japanese exterminated at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, South African atrocities, and the terrible, deadening knowledge of the every-day, every-hour humiliation and degradation faced by American black people.

But no young person needs to be reminded of all this; most of them have it so imbued in their souls they scarcely think of it consciously anymore. It has become like a ringing in the ears so habitual that it is not noticed. Besides, you are two people, at least: your public, social self wherein you are linked to all hates and ambitions. Mostly these are separate, we try to keep them separate to preserve a little sanity. Sometimes they come together in the exhilaration of a picket line for desegregation or peace, or in a hot political debate or article when you're using all your own special powers and engaging your whole mind and body... And who is there, young or old, who didn't feel a sudden and frightful fusion of his two selves last October when we hovered helplessly between life and immediate death? In those few days it was terror and despair (because there was nothing we could DO) that for once invested our every meal, our most trivial remarks to a friend, our glance at someone we loved, our plans not for next year but for tomorrow with an immediacy, an intensity, a feeling of oneness with all the people in the world, a sense of my-god-this-is-my-only-life-what-am-I-doing-with-it-anyway—a feeling we ought to live with every day without the terror if possible, and which ironically we departed from with enormous relief and probably a resolve among many to cultivate even more their own little gardens.

I'm inevitably reflecting my own life and feelings and thoughts, so I'll leave off pretending to speak for anyone else. If you dig me, fine. Now if it's helplessness and terror that brought us to life, why, how, can I be a Marxist-Humanist? I am thoroughly convinced that if there is any answer, this is it: a humanist revolution, world-wide. Nothing less will save us, if not from immediate holocaust, then from the death-in-life that alienation is, and is getting more so all the time. So, I'm a Marxist because Marx analyzed history to show how it had always been a movement of the oppressed against the intolerable conditions of their lives that had created new societies, new ideas, new stages of history. It's useless, then, to argue that we would be better off if the Industrial Revolution never had taken place (we'd never have that bomb, these machines)—Marx showed us WHY these developments took place, Man in history and history in man, the masses as reason, the class struggle—to me these are his great contributions. And then Marx indicated where to

look for the sources of new change--in our case, under capitalism, look to the proletariat, the most exploited class, and we add, look too to the Negro in America, and to the oppressed nationalities and peoples the world over.

We can't make this big change to a more human society where there is no more exploitation of man by man, overnight, or even over decades; it has to ripen, come to consciousness. We get impatient. We want some human-ness right now. All right, as human beings, we have an urge to know things, so at the very least being a Marxist helps you be more human in the sense that you see things more clearly, you know where to look to find the "new passions and new forces for the reconstruction of society", you understand how the hell we GOT to where we are, and you stop being bullied, scared, brain-washed, shucked, doped and injected with the false appearances in front of the hard realities of this life. Like, if I died tomorrow without seeing the revolution, I'm still glad I could see life plain-er for being a Marxist. But I haven't given up on changing the world, either.

To reason about the world is to change it, in a sense. To see it clear is to change it. To criticize things-as-they-are is the highest human function almost. For today, at least, it is a form of action. And to wait for the day of change not passively, but like a human being (talking, learning, experiencing, writing, picketing--whatever it is), and you'll be there on the correct side of the barricades.

So I am a Marxist. I'm a Marxist-Humanist instead of a Trotskyist, Communist, etc., because they aren't really, in my opinion, in total opposition to both world powers, state-capitalist Russia and mixed state-and private-capitalist United States (throw Mao's China in there somewhere, too). All other political parties and tendencies that I know of are apologists, finally, for or the other, and that is like being for death. I myself feel rather close to the anarchists temperamentally, however. I don't much like the term Bolshevik or Leninist. But in that I deviate somewhat from other Marxist-Humanists.

I like News & Letters because, at its best, it isn't old-politicky. You catch the sound of real workers voices there. I think Raya Dunayevskaya is the most important radical thinker of our time. (But sometimes the style of writing of News & Letters and of Dunayevskaya irritates me.) I think the "purity" of N & L, the fact that its hands aren't soiled by betrayals of workers, is important. I think its international connections, in Scotland, England, Japan, Africa, etc. are impressive and are with the kind of people who are going to make this world-wide revolution if anybody is. I think Marxism and Freedom is the most important basic book one can read to make sense of this insane world. I certainly don't exclude from my thinking other great non-Marxist writers, in fact I depend heavily on Freud, Reich, Paul Goodman, Herbert Marcuse, Norman O. Brown, and lots of novel-ists and poets. I don't think Marxism has the answer to every phenomenon of life: sex, for instance. I would like to see the thought of Marx and Freud linked, as some of the above are trying to do.

I think this pamphlet is a good idea and will work if people get either mad or enthusiastic about something. I think as young people, you

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can afford a more relaxed spirit, a questioning attitude, a hip style. I know I do my best thinking, such as it is, in opposition to someone (the dialectic? so I'd be glad to hear retorts or supports. Obviously I haven't proved anything I've said, but I'd be glad to explore any of the points more deeply if anyone is interested. Most of all, I'll be watching with interest, and partly with envy, what you young spirits do.

— B.G.

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SHOP EXPERIENCE



As the problem of unemployment for youth — especially youth who are high-school drop-outs — becomes more and more pronounced, I, a high-school drop-out, considered myself very lucky to find a job in one of Detroit's un-automated factories, just as Michigan's 1962 gubernatorial election campaigns were winding up.

I've heard many workers talk of their experiences in the shops, mills, and mines of America's various industries, and have read many more in News & Letters, so I had no illusions of what working in a factory is like. Still, this being my first experience in a shop, I didn't know quite what to expect.

The first thing to strike me as I stepped out of the brightly lighted office of the man who hired me, and into the plant proper, was how depressing it all looked. The place was dimly lighted and clouds of dust floated in the air. Most depressing of all were the workers themselves who all had the same apathetic looks on their faces while they automatically worked at their jobs with mechanical motions.

It is difficult (at least for those who have never worked in a factory) to imagine a man or woman as being part of a machine, but that is exactly what a factory worker is — an appendage of a machine.

I looked at these men and women and I was reminded of an army of zombies I saw in a movie once who all kept moving, each with the same robot-like movements.

I was told when I started that I'd be on probation for a thirty-day period, at the end of which, if my work was satisfactory, I'd be asked to join the union and get a raise in pay. My shift started at 7:30 A. M. and ended at 4 P.M. During the day I got two ten-minute breaks (one in the morning and one in the afternoon), and a half-hour for lunch. The lunch period was on my own time.

The change that came over every worker in the shop when lunch time and break time rolled around was quite remarkable. It was almost like Lazarus rising from the dead! The apathetic expressions were gone and everyone began talking at the same time about everything except work.

My job consisted mainly of keeping the area around the close-to-twenty machines in my department clear of scrap, and anything else the foreman could think up for me to do, including hauling a stack of this (on a hand truck) over there, unstacking it, and returning over here with a stack of something else.

Keeping the department clean was a full time operation all by itself as scraps were always falling every which way. By the time four o'clock rolled around (and it didn't roll around fast enough!) I'd feel as though I'd been shoveling snow in a blizzard all day long. Every pile of scrap I picked

up over here was the same pile of scrap I already picked up over there.

The one good thing about my job was the fact that I wasn't stuck in one place all day long. As I went from machine to machine, there were different faces, different voices, and different snatches of conversations (never about work). Unless one has worked in the same place all day long with the same monotonous motions, it is hard to realize what a difference a variety of people and conversations make.

Because of my moving around, I became messenger boy between the workers. I would also be the one to pick up cigarettes, gum, candy bars, and sometimes a sandwich for the guys in my department as I passed the food and cigarette machines at the other end of the plant when I went to dump the last batch of scrap.

The ruses and subterfuges that the workers used to enable them to sneak an extra smoke in the lavatory or to grab a bite of a sandwich or candy bar while appearing to be working, I won't describe except to say that there were many of them.

After working a week and a half I was laid off due to lack of work. When I was called back two weeks later, I was told that I had to start my thirty-day probationary period all over again. In talking to some of the other guys in my department I discovered that many of them had been treated in the same manner when they first started. One fellow told me that he had worked three weeks of his thirty days before he was laid off and then two weeks after he was called back, he was again laid off. This is one of the biggest tricks of the company to keep a worker in their clutches. Not only don't they let you work long enough to become eligible for unemployment compensation, but you don't get a chance to build up any seniority and union backing.

I worked another week and a half when I was laid off a second time, again for lack of work. This was just before Christmas. The last thing my foreman said to me before I left the plant was that I'd be called back as soon as things picked up at the start of the new year. I never heard from them again.

Just after I was laid off the first time, the company introduced (from what I heard, for the umpteenth time) an air hammer which enabled one worker to do the work of four. It is easy enough to confuse this mechanization improvement with automation for it indeed threatened the jobs of at least four workers. The mechanization improvement of the unautomated shops follow the pattern of automated shops by cutting work force by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ and at the same time, upping the work load.

Despite the fact that a twenty cent raise in pay went to the workers who used the air hammer, most of the guys tried to keep as far away from the thing as they could. After working the hammer for not more than two jobs, one old timer used his seniority to bump himself off of it. He said afterwards that powerful though he is, the vibrations of that air hammer went right through his whole body and that anyone who worked on it when he didn't

Freedom Rides and Marxist--Humanism

Freedom Rides USA cannot be separated from the actions which led to them, nor those to which they have, in turn, led. They are part and parcel of the Negro movement for civil rights and for freedom; they flow naturally from such actions as the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Sit-Ins.

The Sit-Ins began through the spontaneous activity of high school youth. They were Southern Negro students. They fought the weight of generations of segregationists by "sitting-in" at lunch counters, movies, all public places. A simple act? Not on your life! As the idea spread and more joined in the demonstrations, it became evident that "just" to sit on the stools meant to risk violence and perhaps even death, at the hands of the maddened Southern racists.

One white Southern girl who joined the Sit-Ins told me, while we were both locked up in the same cell-block as Freedom Riders, of the white mob which was so infuriated at seeing her, a white girl, with the Negroes, that they took matches and set her long hair on fire. One of the Negroes she was with threw water on it, and saved both her and her hair before she even knew what had happened. A Negro girl in the same cell-block told of taking several blows to the head without flinching although she had a steel plate in her head from a childhood injury.

There is nothing simple about the actions of these young people. The movement spread to almost the entire South and involved thousands of youth, most of whom proudly became "jailbirds." Those in the North participated as best they could by throwing up sympathy picket lines against Woolworth's, Kress Stores and others.

The Freedom Rides were a further development of the Sit-Ins and of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. When the rides began, it was again the Southern Negroes who took the lead. They were the first to go, and they were the ones who were the majority. But the nature of this movement made it possible for the first time for many Northerners, both white and Negro, to participate. For myself, I had helped man some of those Northern picket lines for a year during the Sit-Ins and had wished I could be a sit-inner. Others became Freedom Riders for other reasons, but none to whom I spoke could deny that they had been inspired by the Sit-In movement of the previous year.

However, the white radical intellectuals who did come from the North fell far short of living up in theory to the spontaneous activity of the Southern Negro who had initiated the movement. For example, during the many discussions on violence vs. non-violence as methods, the political youth from the North who had no illusions whatsoever about non-violence as the "only" method, nevertheless argued that this is the only method. They did this, of course, deliberately; that is to say, because they wanted to befriend those who were non-violent through religious or other principles. Others of these same political youth, from those who call themselves di-

have to was crazy. He said that he wouldn't use it again, not even if they gave him a twenty dollar raise instead of twenty cents.

A miner once told me that there was an old saying in the mines which was started right after the continuous miner was introduced in 1949-1950: "A worker knows the company will do anything to improve the machine, but they won't spend one red cent to help an employee if they can avoid it." Workers feel this way in all shops, whether they be automated or not. I have heard many workers say the same thing and I understood the full meaning of it when I saw many jobs ruined because the worker probably felt just as little interest for the job as the company felt for him.

As I was laid off I don't know whether or not the company finally succeeded in keeping the air hammer. I do know though, that if they have succeeded in keeping it, it will cost them a lot of money because as long as any worker's job is threatened by it, many jobs will be turned to scrap by the guy operating under that threat.

--Karl Brand

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rect actionists to some who were near-Communist, spread the illusion that segregation can be fought separately from all of capitalism by their very silence on this question! They not only did not deepen the movement by this silence — they helped to confine it.

No one, least of all I, can deny the exhilaration of getting on a train and heading South to integrate the stronghold of segregation, Jackson, Mississippi, for the first time since the days of the Reconstruction and of the Populist Movement. No one can say that it does not answer the need of youth, Negro and white, to "do something" about Freedom NOW.

The very presence of nearly 400 Riders in the city of Jackson created new categories: Negro and white acting together on Civil Rights for the first time within the deep South; Southern Negro organizations which sprang forth to clothe and feed the Freedom Riders going into the fight for Civil Rights within their own city; the automatic identity and link between Africa and the Riders, and so forth. As a result of the dedicated young people who willingly spent 40 days each in Southern jails (which are noted neither for their comfort nor for their cleanliness), it is true that in almost all of the South the terminals are now integrated by law.

What is true too is that segregation is still with us. Ask James Meredith, and the Negroes of Greenwood, Mississippi; Birmingham, Alabama, etc. if they think that the South is a civilized place.

The nightmare that faces us now is the evil of "tokenism." I'm not saying that any other activity during the Freedom Rides, or now, could possibly guarantee the end of segregation within the confines of a capitalist society. This is precisely the question which must now be answered. And it must be answered not only by activity but by an over-all philosophy which would tie together all the varied activities and propel them forward into a broader movement.

For example, take the very special role of the Negro in American life. It is not a simple "racial question" which can be overcome through "love." There must be a total change in the society which produces the disease of racism, as well as all the other diseases of capitalism.

As young Marxist-Humanists, we are fond of saying that the American workers, Negroes, youth and those intellectuals who would join with them in creating a new society are looking for total answers to total questions. What does that mean? To me it means that these forces in society, these human beings, are looking for a road out of a world they did not make and a way to change it into one which they do make. A total change from the barbarism of capitalism with its racism, unemployment, wars, and the degradation of the human spirit of which Marx wrote so voluminously.

We choose the young Marx, author of the essays Private Property and Communism, Alienated Labor, and others, as "our" man because the young Marx is the later Marx; because the idealism he expounded in these essays is the idealism of youth of any day. He was opposed to the vulgar com-

munists of his day because they reduced the struggle of man to be free to a dead and unmovable matter of who owns the property. We have seen in our time that the changing of ownership of property, as in Russia, has created not a new society, but a new force of oppression -- state-capitalism. We agree with the young Marx that the change must be a much more fundamental one; that of man to man, so that the relationship of machine to man is subordinated, allowing man himself to emerge as the mold of his own destiny.

Youth are now, and always have been, a most revolutionary force in our country and in the world. No other generation of American youth has so concentrated its activities in the fight against segregation, as well as participated in a range of activities from anti-war, to anti-EUAC, to expression of solidarity with international events and especially with the African Revolutions.

To the Freedom Riders at the rally in Jackson, Mississippi, there was no greater moment, as measured by the applause given by us, than when we learned that the Africans who had but a short time before only known two English words, "Sit-Ins", had now added two more words -- "Freedom Riders." To show how deeply we were moved and demonstrate our solidarity with the Africans, we adopted their word for Freedom at that rally and shouted, "Uhuru!"

But to shout "Freedom!", in whatever language, is not yet to attain it. As young Marxist-Humanists, we recognize that the Negroes' and the youth's struggles are the revolutionary partners of the working class struggle, and that they are the Marxism of our day. We recognize, too, that these revolutionary strata are deliberately kept apart not only by capitalism, but by the petty-bourgeoisie, to try to make sure that the unity between them does not come to its final fruition and at last create a new society.

In this moment of history, when the world faces instant destruction through nuclear madness, it is time to see what can be done about answering the need for an underlying philosophy which can unify the separate struggles for freedom. YPSLs, of course, do admit, in general, that there is a need for such an underlying philosophy. They may even feel -- and I believe that some do -- that Marxist-Humanism is that philosophy. The difficulty is in finding how to come to grips with that in such a way that it does not remain an argument confined to "politics", but a way of living which sees in the spontaneous movement, a kinship with this philosophy -- and in turn makes this philosophy so familiar to the spontaneous movement that the youth recognize it as their own thought.

In this light, may we hope that YPSLs and others, along with ourselves, get on to the building of a youth organization around a total philosophy so that we can all proudly call ourselves Young Marxist-Humanists.

—Louise Inghram

"LETTER TO A STUDENT"

Dear.....;

The following pages contain the experiences of a student—someone much like yourself—with some workers in America. They also tell of how he happened to have those experiences and the conclusions he draws from them. They are presented for what they are worth; in the hope that what is typical, and a-typical, in them may help clarify your own ideas about your role—and mine—in the world today.

I am 23 years old, the suburb-spawned son of moderately-well-to-do intelligent and liberal business people. At present I am a graduate student in a large metropolitan university; some day I will be a teacher. "Petit-bourgeois intellectual" is the social category an old-fashioned Marxist might place me in, and, taking into consideration both the scorn and the respect attached to the label I accept it—but with a hedge: I am young, I have no settled role in society, and I hope to defy definition as long as possible.

I should like to tell you about an experience: my introduction to the American worker. As I write these lines I become conscious of a certain bizarre quality. I write "the American worker" as a "National Geographic" writer might begin an article: "let me tell you about my first experience with the Zuni Indian..." Yet there is both truth and tragedy in the simile. In our society, where we are daily told that everyone is "middle class", it is nonetheless true that a student growing up in my circumstances is more likely to understand the goals, the drives, the fears, the daily thoughts of a tribesman he may have studied in Anthro #1, than those of the man who built the car he drives or packed the cigarette he smokes. There is a home truth that we often know the least about that which is most familiar. The paradox of our "classless" society is that Harlem and Hooverville are more "foreign" to most of us than Paris or Istanbul. Let us cease to be defensive and guilty about these barriers; we did not build them; let us at least have the honesty to admit they are there and perhaps the courage to try to break them down.

My "introduction" to American workers was thus not a natural conclusion of my education, but rather of my convictions. I had become a socialist in college, and, wishing to put my ideas into practice, I eventually found myself in Detroit with a bundle of literature under my arm on my way to distribute it at a factory gate. (If the reader will bear with me, I will tell him how I got there, anon.)

The Ford assembly plant at River Rouge, near Detroit, Mich., is said to be the largest factory in the world. It is not an attractive structure, being rather a sprawling complex spread out over a dirty field through which flows a slag-choked stream. From it have also flowed a high percentage of the automobiles the world has driven since it was built. Driving up to it, one has feelings of vast admiration tinged with horror...

In principle the afternoon shift is over at three o'clock, but since the company can schedule overtime arbitrarily, the worker never knows exactly when his day will end. One waits, maybe an hour, feeling a bit nervous in the parking-lot and trying to act nonchalant with one eye on the company guard who may or may not be friendly. Then the exodus begins. First a handful, then a steady stream, finally a veritable deluge of men and women pour forth from the gates. The workers come out as fast as they can move, some at a dead run. It is as if one more minute in that place would be fatal. Your papers are literally torn out of your hands as the mass divides around you like a murky stream around a twig. A few workers are hostile and refuse the paper. The majority say "Lemme have a look at that" or just "thanks"; a few are friendly, with winks and nods; occasionally someone knows your paper will comment on an article that pleased him, suggest that you write about a specific problem in the plant, etc. In a few minutes it is over, and you are again alone in the parking-lot. Your first impression is one of shock. "Are they all old men?" you ask. In fact, many are, you are told. Unemployment has cut out all but those of long seniority; many have been in the plant since before the War. But most are not as old as they look: they are just beat and tired. You notice that the workers coming in for the next shift look on the average five years younger. Another thing that shocks you is the number of crippled, bandaged, or altered limbs; the limps, the missing fingers. The company, you are told, is very generous about supplying signs and slogans on work safety, but at the same time it is impossible to keep up with the speed on the line without taking some risks, and after eight or ten hours in the shop a man's reflexes tend to slow down a bit.

It takes you a while to assimilate the impression of ashen-grey faces, of extreme fatigue, of people trying to hurry to a waiting car or bus on limbs that cry out for a hot shower and bed. These are not the same people you have met familiarly coming out of bars and movie palaces down town on Saturday nights with their Robert Hall suits and Tom McCan shoes. You suddenly realize that you had been missing the point of their whole existence, seeing only the negation, the escape of their real life. They are not the same people. Here is where their lives are defined, here is where the better part of their psychic and physical energies are expended, (or wasted), here is where the material base of their lives (and indirectly ours) is created.

"What about the Union?" you ask in a small voice. You will learn that every protest, every work-stoppage over speed-up, brutal treatment, safety hazard or unfairness is decried by the union as a "wildcat" instigated by "troublemakers" and suppressed as soon as possible. At the same time, grievances of workers against the company take at least six months through the "proper channels" and are more often than not "mislaid" in the process, while the worker in question is "talked to" or quietly eased out. You learn how the pre-contract demands of the rank-and-file for shorter hours and the recall of the unemployed, work-rules that protect against inhuman speed-up and safety hazard, a few minutes to go to the bathroom (often several city blocks across the plant from one's job) or to eat a sandwich, and for immediate on-the-floor settlement of grievances--demands that the worker be treated a little less like a cog in a machine and a little more like a man--

are all sold out to the Company at contract-time for a few cents an hour. Pennies that many workers may not even be in the shop long enough to take home. You hear about a "strike fund" of several million dollars controlled by bureaucrats that would do anything to avoid a strike and who spend their time taking jets to Europe and Africa to defend "the American way of life." You had read about "the new men of power; " now you knew what that power was based on. You pick up a Detroit paper and read a speech by some union leader complaining that the workers are "apathetic" and won't go to union meetings. Then you meet someone who has been trying to get the floor in his local since late 1957, and you understand why.

In your first contact with the workers at River Rouge, they are passive--the victims--you active, trying to understand, to help. But the sight of so many old faces makes you reflect. You do some mental arithmetic...."A man who is 48 years old today would have been 21 in 1936." You remember that you are standing on historical ground. The overpass that the workers cross to get from the factory gate to the parking-lot is a new, tube-steel affair. But it replaces one that was once famous as the scene of a full-scale battle. Ford was the last hold-out against union organization in the country, and the final and bloodiest battle of the great movement to organize the unskilled was fought right here, probably by these very men now dragging their tired bodies to the parking-lot. Then they were not passive. They stirred the world with a new word--"Sit-down"--and by taking over the factories they not only built a union but proved once and for all that the factories themselves belong to the men and women who slave there.

Nor are they passive today. Talk to them and you will find bitter men estranged from the union they built with their own blood, insecure about their jobs, searching for a way out of their problems, ready at the drop of a pin to fight if....if it can be won. Contrary to the pronouncements of the bureaucrats and smart economists who believe that the economy is a kind of pie to be divided up by them, they are not asking for more pay. They are posing much more fundamental questions, like "in what sense is my job my own?" "is this work fit for human beings?" Many of these questions are difficult for non-workers to understand. Most of our contacts with "the lower classes" are with people who have escaped or who are escaping into the middle-class world. They share the general American belief that anyone can, with luck and perseverance, "make it" and become a success.

Such was my "introduction" to the world of the American worker. The newspaper I was distributing was "News & Letters" (to my knowledge the only journal in America edited by a production worker) and the working men and women I met through that paper have helped me to understand things (however imperfectly) that even years of theoretical study on my own could not have taught me. It is evident to me that such a confrontation was not in the natural course of my social development, although it might have been had I grown up during the Depression when the classes were brought out of their self-isolation by common misery.

Talking now, however, to the college students of 1963, it is the relative rarity of this experience, banal though it be, that makes it of general

interest. It is clear to me that its full impact could only have been realized in the context of a revolutionary organization combining both workers and intellectuals. I, like many college students, had worked summers as a laborer; it is simply not the same thing as making the acquaintance of workers under conditions where it is clear that you intend to share the destiny of their class.

I have stated above that my "road" to River Rouge was not "natural" (in the sense that that of a Southern Negro coming North to work, or that of a Detroit workers son would be) but a conclusion of my ideological development. Yet this development was by no means linear; there were many detours and false starts—many other possible destinations. Here let me state, if I have not done so already, that my personal development has no particular significance other than the possibility that knowing it might be of some use to others in my generation who are seeking a new society. Let them read it, if they will, for what it is worth.

I never cease being amazed how a few years' of development in the world situation can entirely transform the subjective development of someone growing up. To the student of 1932, the final collapse of capitalism appeared imminent, and it seemed natural to turn to Marxist ideas for an answer to problems that were all too evident. At the same time, the prestige of Soviet Russia, in spite of everything, was still very high. But that is a whole generation ago. Let us look at those students who were Seniors when I was a Freshman in college (1957). Where today we have a growing student peace movement, a nation-wide civil rights movement with the prestige of the Sit-ins and Freedom Rides behind it and chapters on every campus, a struggle for civil liberties and academic freedom which was able to face up to the powerful House Un-American Activities Committee and various socialist-and socialist-leaning political groups and student publications from Berkeley to New York—where today all of this is part of student reality—the Seniors of 1957 knew only the chilling world of the Korean War, McCarthy and the campus witch-hunt, and general conformity in the personal and social sphere. The only rebellions the majority of those students were exposed to took place in the back seat of a parked car; the only prospects were early marriage and a secure job in "communications." (!) Yet that world was only five years ago and I remember it. To me the general failing of even the best and most militant of today's students is that they don't see the relevance of the working-man and his world to the struggle for peace, freedom and a better society. I think time will repair that blindness. The student of 1957 was unable to even entertain thoughts of a struggle of any kind; since then Montgomery, Alabama; Budapest; West Africa; Jackson, Mississippi and even Cuba have changed a lot of things in human consciousness. In that sense, my personal experience is not without relevance...

My first political memories were of the rosy atmosphere of the end of World War II. Hitler was dead, and the memory of Roosevelt and our fatherly ally Stalin were the two poles of greatness in my child's imagination (as nourished by the songs of Paul Robeson and books like Dave Dawson on the Russian Front and the novels of Howard Fast.) The rebuffs I received in the

schoolyard when it was learned that our family was supporting Henry Wallace in the presidential election did not phase me, since the same children expressed a hatred for my hero Roosevelt. However, by the time I got to junior high, the word "communist" had been pronounced, and I soon learned that it was best to keep one's mouth shut.

I thus arrived in college in the position of someone who had been swept off the earth in 1946 and had only just returned. My first real political activity was helping in the organization of the first Youth March on Washington, and the 32,000 Negro and white school kids that came from as far as Montgomery and Detroit gave me my first notion of the great reserve of energy and willingness to fight of the people in this country. At the same time the totality of the newspaper blackout on this event (which was the largest political demonstration in the U.S. since MacArthur turned the tanks on the Bonus Marchers) taught me a lesson about our "democratic freedoms." At the same time I shed the last of my illusions about bourgeois society, I began to realize that Russian Communism was no revolutionary alternative to it. A Socialist professor set me reading Orwell's Homage to Catalonia, and the Stalinists' betrayal of the Revolution in Spain and the Warsaw uprising in World War II were "Kronstadts" in my ideological development.

Even though I was beginning to shed my illusions, there were many things that kept me from turning to any really serious thought. The petty factionalism of the YPSL, which stifled any serious and sincere debate combined with the general tendency of radical students to separate their life as an intellectual from their life as a socialist to produce an effect of intellectual absenteeism. Then, I had no real contact with the YPSL. I received four letters in five years of being a YPSL, and my only contact with the national organization was occasional trips to New York City where I was treated coolly and almost hostilely by the rather cliquish YPSLs at the "center."

When I finally "met" the YPSL seriously as a delegate to their convention, I lost my last shred of patience with that organization. The conduct of that convention was shocking to my idea of "democratic socialism," for all serious debate was held behind locked doors in "factions" which were obviously controlled by "guests" from the adult Socialist Party. This convention was such a madhouse that often there was rarely a quorum in the hall itself because all the delegates were outside listening to "advice" from some "adult theoretician." Moreover, the actual issues in this factional dispute were petty maneuvers far removed from the realities of the American movement or from any socialist fundamentals. Thus, with the Freedom Rides and massive wildcat strikes against Automation raging outside, the major debate in that organization was whether the socialist programme should be for "reforming" the Democratic Party or splitting it to form a new party, presumably on the basis of the labor bureaucracy. The few of us "outsiders" who tried to bring up questions like the conditions and attitudes of the working class in the country or how to deepen and radicalize the civil rights struggle were treated as fools. Obviously, if you are busy splitting the Democratic Party, you are not interested in such irrelevant matters.

I did not leave that convention totally disgusted, however. On the last night of the debates, when the "factions" were grouped behind locked doors discussing last minute "strategy", a few of us "outsiders" found ourselves sitting outside under the trees. Some of these young students were totally new to socialism and didn't know quite what to think; others came from anarchistic and I.W.W. backgrounds, and they felt equally out of place. Gropingly at first, under the twinkling stars, we began an informal discussion of our own hopes and fears, of why we had become socialists and what we hoped to be able to do. One young student from Texas told of how he had been beaten up in a Houston jail and lost two teeth for having walked down the street with some Negro friends. A shy girl from Arizona, who had not had the floor once in three days, quietly told why she had come there. Questions like the relevance of Marxism and the possibility of world revolution were tentatively aired. One had an impression of free and inquiring minds searching for solutions to the world's problems.

Many of these people decided to remain in YPSL, feeling that they could continue to work in their localities without interference from the organization. I wish them well. But for me, if the best thing a socialist organization has to recommend it is being so disorganized that it doesn't know you're alive, this isn't much. I too remained in YPSL, so as not to lose contact with that idealism, but at the same time I craved something more. If, as I believed, society must be totally recreated, then it was necessary to re-think society from top to bottom; to consider the fundamental problems of human liberation; to create an organization whose thought and activity was on the level of that task.

Thinking, that was the problem. I began to reflect on my generation of student youth. We had broken the silence of McCarthyism; we had defied the powerful HUAC and the local red-baiter; we had broken the race barriers with our Sit-ins and Freedom Rides; we had raised the banner of peace and sanity on every campus in the country, and carried on marches from Boston to San Diego. But what have we produced in thought to match those sometimes heroic actions? What break had we made with the past? We did not create the world of the Cold War, but what foundations had we laid down for a new, totally different and human society? Was it just enough to have been "on the side of the angels" if and when "It" comes to have "done our part", or was more demanded of us?

In my middle-class world, a college degree seemed like a kind of "meal-ticket" or "union card" to a milk-and-honey land of sales-managerships, executive training programs and IBM or government jobs. The majority of students didn't know why they were in college, except that their parents could afford it and their neighbors expected it. The "ivory tower" began to take its place in the world around it.

Those of us who were nonetheless burning to learn found ourselves the "possessors" of a plurality of world-systems, from Platonism to existentialism or neo-Keynesianism. Each "system" seemed like an interchangeable part in a Henry Ford nightmare; each had its validity; each had been compared to the others and "understood"; none seemed to compel belief or action. Today

religions are not practiced, but "compared." Thought is alienated. I had thought that the purpose of philosophy (and humanism in general) was to understand oneself and society, perhaps eventually, to improve one or both. Instead I had developed a vocabulary of 300,000 words and the ability to juggle a variety of verbal counters like "romanticism", "idealism", "positivism" and (best of all) "mysticism."

I began to feel a kinship with the worker at his machine; he too manipulates a variety of objects, none of which really belongs to him. He too spends the better part of his creative energy in alien activity that rather than increasing, actually robs him of his humanity. There is, of course, an important difference: whereas the worker, through his labor, only succeeds in increasing the wealth that oppresses him, the intellectual, as long as he keeps his ideas in the abstract state, can become one of the powerful managers in society. Nonetheless, once either attempts to assert the human content of his activity—one in the sphere of ideas, the other in that of material production—he finds himself working at cross purposes. The fact is that mental and manual activity, by being separated in our society, are both alienated activity. In alienated society, the "right to think", like all rules has a "catch" in it: the catch is that you can't take those thoughts seriously. By "serious" I do not mean the student that does his homework every night, (or the instructor who publishes "his" article) but the idealist for whom what happens in thought must be translated into life.

It is to the latter that I now address myself.

The cleavage between thought and action, intellectual and manual labor is at the root of our self-alienation and of our separation from the other creative elements in society: the producers. But the workers have one advantage—they are not isolated.

It is not so easy for the intellectual. By the nature of his activity he is isolated from his fellows and from the rest of society in general. His is most difficult because he must proceed alone, from abstractions, to conclusions about forces in society which he is both too "well-placed" and too isolated to see. The easy solution is to slip into the forms of liberal or Stalinist non-thought that see abstract "progressive" forces coming from one place or another and avoid looking at some earthy and highly complicated realities. The alternatives of the retreat to the ivory tower and the self-negation of total "activism" (with all its heroism) are equally forms of intellectual absenteeism.

But for the student who is willing to re-think society from top to bottom, who is ready for the intellectual and personal risks of "total" philosophy (i.e. philosophy in which theory and practice are one and the same), who is capable of making the leap from the cozy defeatism of today's tired intellectual radicalism into unexplored or neglected territory—for those, there is another path. This path is not as immediately as adventurous or as dangerous as leaping onto the deck of a Polaris submarine (or even walking into a Dixie bus-station, though neither of these is excluded). But in the end it is more so, for it engages the whole human being, heart, body and mind,

and for life.

For me, this path began with the reading of the book, Marxism and Freedom, and lead, as if by necessity, to River Rouge in Detroit. Reading that book for the first time, all that I had, in my life, suspected and half-seen fell into a clear picture like pieces in a puzzle. Here, at last, was not apologetics for one or another form of "progressive" barbarism but true, unalienated thought that was based on the idea of the liberation of mankind by man himself. Moreover, in "News & Letters" I found an organization of worker and intellectuals, men and women, Negroes and whites engaged in that struggle for a new society who held out their hands to me. They invited me to collaborate with them in the elaboration of that theory and that practice of Marxist-Humanism which will put an end to the separation between thinking and doing, working and living. They told me they made no distinctions between "members" and "non-members" in that continuous dialogue with the hopes and dreams of all mankind. I now extend that hand to you.

Fraternally,

-- H. Bear

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OCTOBER 1962

" But we live, while these others die daily."

at 10 am
housewife at typewriter
I write this:

the factory workers rose at 5
and went into the dark streets
each one carried a metal box
containing food and drink
except for the young ones
without a wife to slice meat
and brew coffee

they will work for some hours
where it is very dirty very noisy
pulling machines down and up
moving hunks of steel in place
sweeping wiring things together

after a number of hours
they are allowed to go to the toilet
later to eat
the food they have brought in the metal boxes
or food they buy from a machine

when they have smoked a cigarette
they turn on the machine again
pick up the tool or
put on the heavy gloves and face shield

daily, die daily

in offices men wear white shirts
they eat in the cafeteria
drink coffee often out of paper containers
their work consists in pushing
pieces of paper around their desk
saying words to other men in white shirts
to girls at typewriters

everywhere are sheets of paper arranged
various ways

daily, die daily

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- 33 -

whatever we do we're tired of it
we know we are lied to daily
we don't like our work

our thinkers lie
to themselves, to others, daily

the thinkers do not think neither
do they act
no one acts almost
some few act and are jailed for it in Georgia

America, where is your Petofii Circle?
where can I sign up for the League of the Just?
how do I get into the First International?
would I be accepted into John Brown's group?

rebellious slaves in the labor camps of Vorkuta
citizens of Budapest
Mau Mau
anarchists of Cuba
those who are represented by James Meredith
those who sabotaged the Communes of Mao
Angolan libertarians
South African fighters
many but nameless

all of the departed are not
dead
all of the living are not
alive

those who lie to us
lie not in graves
but are dead

those who loved freedom
and died, live

we live and die, daily

—Barbara Gibson

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From The Pen Of Karl Marx

On Religion, Communism and Humanism

"A critique of religion leads to the doctrine that the highest being for man is man himself, hence to the categorical imperative to overthrow all relationships in which man is humbled, enslaved, abandoned, despised. ... Religion is the sigh of the harassed creature, the heart of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless circumstances. It is the opiate of the people Religion is only the illusory sun which moves around man as long as man does not move round himself The abolition of religion, being the illusory happiness of the people, is a demand for their real happiness. The demand that one reject illusions about one's situation is a demand that one reject a situation which has need for illusion."

from Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, 1844

* * *

"Since, however, for socialist man the whole of what is called world history is nothing but the creation of man by human labor, and the emergence of Nature for man, he therefore has the evident and irrefutable proof of his self-creation, of his own origins.... Atheism, as a denial of this unreality, is no longer meaningful, for atheism is a denial of God, and seeks to assert by this denial the existence of man. Socialism no longer requires such a roundabout method; it begins from the theoretical and practical sense perception of man and Nature as real existences. It is a positive human self-consciousness, no longer a self-consciousness attained through the negation of religion, just as the real life of man is positive and no longer attained through the negation of private property (communism). Communism is the phase of negation of negation ... but communism is not itself the aim of human development or the final form of human society."

from Private Property and Communism, 1844

* * *

"When actual corporeal Man, standing on firm and well rounded earth, inhaling and exhaling all natural forces, posits his real objective faculties ... that means that, in the act of positing, it does not depart from its 'pure activity' in order to create the object.... We see here how thorough-going Naturalism, or Humanism, distinguishes itself both from

Idealism and Materialism and is, at the same time, the truth uniting both. We see, at the same time, how only Naturalism is capable of grasping the act of world history."

from Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, 1844

* * *

On Private Property, Alienation, and the Five Senses

"Private Property has made us so stupid and one-sided that any kind of object is ours only when we have it, i.e., when it exists for us as capital, or when we possess it directly in place of all the physical and spiritual senses, there is the sense of possession, which is the simple alienation of all these senses. To such absolute poverty has human essence had to be reduced, in order to give birth to its inner wealth!"

from Private Property and Communism, 1844

* * *

"We shall begin from a contemporary economic fact. The workers becomes poorer the more wealth he produces and the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more goods he creates. The devaluation of the human world increases in direct relation with the increase in value of the world of things. Labor does not only create goods; it also produces itself and the worker as a commodity, and indeed in the same proportion as it produces goods."

from Alienated Labor, 1844

* * *

"The cultivation of the five senses is the work of the whole history of the world to date. Sensitivity, preoccupied with crude practical necessity, is only limited sensitivity.... The anxiety-ridden, needy man is incapable of appreciating the most beautiful drama. The tradesman in minerals sees only their monetary value, not the beauty and unique character of minerals...."

from Private Property and Communism, 1844

* * *

"The greatness of Hegel's Phenomenology, and of its final result -- the dialectic of negativity as moving and creating principle -- lies in this, that Hegel comprehends the self-production of man as a process ... that he, therefore, grasps the essence of labor...."

from Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, 1844

* * *

"When man speaks of private property, he believes he has only to deal with a fact outside of man. When he speaks of labor, he has to deal directly with man. This new posing of the question already includes the resolution."

from Alienated Labor, 1844

* * *

"Each of his human relations to the world -- seeing, hearing, smell, taste, feeling, thought perception, experience, wishing activity, loving -- in short, all organs of his individuality ... are in their objective relation or in their relation to the object, the appropriation of it. The appropriation of human actuality, its relation to the object, is the affirmation of human actuality. Therefore it is all-sided as are the essence of man and the forms of his activity!"

from Private Property and Communism, 1844

* * *

On the Individual, Society and Science

"We should especially avoid re-establishing society, as an abstraction, opposed to the individual. The individual is the social entity."

from Private Property and Communism, 1844

* * *

"The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that circumstances are changed

precisely by men and that the educator must himself be educated."

from Theses on Feuerbach, 1845

* * *

"Let us not fear to criticize the existing world ruthlessly. I mean ruthlessly in the sense that we must not be afraid of our own conclusions and equally unafraid of coming into conflict with the prevailing powers. ... The world has long had the dream of something and must only possess the consciousness of it in order to possess it actually."

from Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, 1843

* * *

"The vulgar communist is only the consummation of this envy and this craving to level down, establishing a certain common denominator. He has a definitely limited standard. How little this type of abolition of private property is an actual appropriation and enrichment is proved precisely by its abstract negation of the entire cultivated and civilized world: it is only a retrogression to the unnatural simplicity of a poor and needy man, who not only has not gone beyond the limits of private property, but has not even attained its level....

"We see how subjectivism and objectivism, spiritualism and materialism, activity and passivity, first lose their character of opposites and therefore their existence as such opposites only under social conditions.

"We see that the solution of theoretical oppositions can be accomplished only in a practical way, only through the practical energy of man. Their resolution is, therefore, by no means a task only for knowledge, but a task of actual life. Philosophy cannot solve them precisely because philosophy grasps them only as theoretical problems....

"Industry is the actual historical relationship of nature to man, and therefore of the natural sciences to man.... To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie."

from Private Property and Communism, 1844

* * *

On Psychology, Art, the Proletariat

"... what should we think of a science (psychology) which presumptuously abstracts from this enormous section of human labor and does not feel its own inadequacy? What should we think of a science where such an extensive realm of human activity says no more to it than what can be said in one word: 'Need', 'common need'!"

from Private Property and Communism, 1844

* * *

"... It is well known that certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material basis and the skeleton structure of its organization. Witness the example of the Greeks as compared with the modern nations..."

"All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature. What becomes of the Goddess Fame side by side with Printing House Square? ..."

"But the difficulty is not in grasping the idea that Greek art and epics are bound up with certain forms of social development. It rather lies in understanding why they still constitute with us a source of aesthetic enjoyment and in certain respects prevail as the standard and model beyond attainment."

"A man cannot become a child again unless he becomes childish. But does he not enjoy the artless way of the child and must he not strive to reproduce its truth on a higher plane? Is not the character of every epoch revived perfectly true to nature in child nature? Why should not the social childhood of mankind, where it had obtained its most beautiful development, not exert an eternal charm as an age that will never return?"

from Marx's notes for Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy, 1857

* * *

"Just as a philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat so the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy Philosophy is the head of this emancipation and the proletariat is its heart."

Philosophy can only be realized by the abolition of the proletariat, and the proletariat can only be abolished by the realization of philosophy."

from Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, 1844

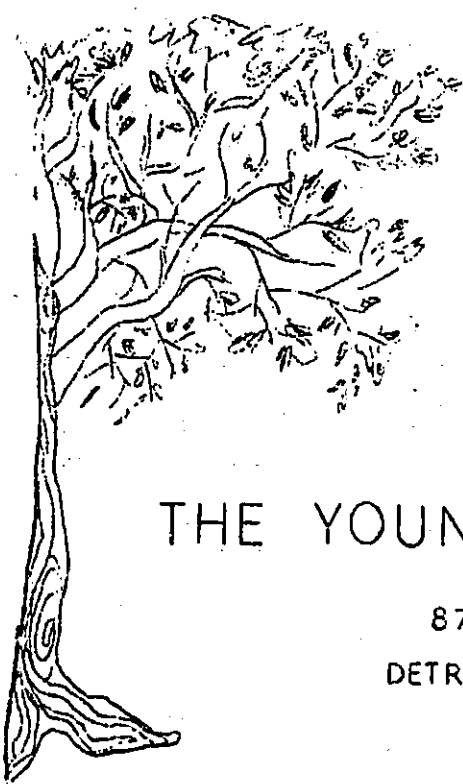
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