

AN UNSOLVED THEORETICAL PROBLEM

It is appropriate that this section conclude with two theoretical articles, each offering a contrary explanation of the role of the middle strata in the May Events. This phenomenon is both very new and very difficult to interpret. The pessimistic analyses of "white collar" labor of C. Wright Mills and William Whyte seemed adequate and convincing until May '68. But the Events shattered the image they presented of a politically passive and socially conformist "middle class".

The new potentialities revealed by the May Events require a new theory of the middle strata, because we now know they are capable of more than anyone previously had imagined, even, no doubt, in countries like the United States, where they still remain largely passive and conformist to this day.

The May Events produced a flowering of theories, from new working class interpretations* to a vigorous reassertion of the rightness of the traditional Marxist assimilation of the middle strata and the petty bourgeoisie. This latter position, which was that of the French Communist Party throughout most of its history, lies at the basis of the article by Claude Prevost translated above. Curiously enough, this was also the position of French Maoism during the May Events.

In a pamphlet written in response to A. Glucksmann's new working class argument, a Maoist group proposed that scientists, executives, and engineers all sell services individually to corporations which pay them out of revenue. **Hence the individual cadre is never a producer of surplus value, never a proletarian, but always a recipient of profit. His petty bourgeois class being is merely veiled by the fact that he receives a salary instead of owning an enterprise.

On the other side, Roger Garaudy, in an article which appears below, attacks the traditional view in La Democratie Nouvelle, a theoretical journal of the Communist Party.*** Science, he argues, has become a direct productive force today. Hence the bearers of science are members of the "collective worker" of advanced capitalist society. The working class, thus extended, embraces a large part of the middle strata, from students to researchers, engineers and technicians, from office employees to executives "because the mechanization of administrative tasks and managerial functions increasingly effaces the frontier between the employee as a manipulator of computers, for example, and the laborer working under conditions of automation".

Within the leadership of the Communist Party, Garaudy was one of the most sympathetic spectators of the May movement. He belonged to the minority in the Political Bureau (the highest policy-making body of the Party) which supported an opening toward the students, if not an adoption of their revolutionary strategy. Garaudy's article must thus be understood in part as an attack on the majority, particularly on Georges Marchais, soon to be the new Secretary General, which believed the student movement was a "typical petty bourgeois leftist adventure".

* See, for example, A. Glucksmann, Strategie et Revolution en France 1968 (Paris: Christian Bourgeois, 1968).

** Les etudiants, les cadres et la revolution, published by the Center Universitaire d'Etude et de Formation Marxiste-Leniniste.

***April-May 1968. (This journal no longer exists.)

Marchais and his allies won, and Garaudy was later expelled from the Party for his criticism of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and its aftermath. But French communism was not, after all, unaffected by the events which had influenced Garaudy to place the middle strata alongside the proletariat in the "collective worker". Already on May 26, the Party published a leaflet designed to win the middle strata away from their Leftist leaders. It states:

The ENGINEERS, CADRES AND TECHNICIANS, threatened by de-qualification and unemployment and suffering from the ambiguity of their relations with management and the government, and the SCIENTISTS, who play such an important role today for the future of France, are tied to the most modern productive forces. They are thus in solidarity with the working class in its demand for an economy the rationality of which will no longer be subordinated to the profit of a few, but to the needs of all. *

Later, in a major theoretical work published in 1971, the Communist Party revised its analysis of the middle strata, arguing that even if all of them are not productive, they are not petty bourgeoisie and have much stronger reasons than the latter to ally themselves with the working class.

Only a part of them can be placed in the working class; in their totality, they cannot be purely and simply assimilated to the unsalaried middle strata. It is certainly a matter of a diversified social strata, but the workers who make them up are united by a common trait of decisive importance. Even if their activity is not directly productive, these are all salaried workers, exploited individually and collectively . . .

Before these transformations emerged, the support for working class struggles by the middle strata and especially by intellectuals appeared as a rallying to the proletarian cause. Today there is no more question of rallying individually to the cause, but of an entente to be established between social strata having common interests and which can build a democratic future together.
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Garaudy's theoretical victory, if not complete, was substantial at the very time when he was being expelled from the Party. And while the intellectual Garaudy was being ousted, the Party embarked on the most aggressive (and highly successful) campaign of recruitment and unionization among intellectuals, executives and others in its history.

While the long overdue re-orientation of the Communist Party on these matters responded to certain realities, it contained another

* Le parti communiste francais s'adresse aux intellectuels, aux etudiants. ** Le capitalisme monopoliste d'etat (Paris: Editions Sociales), pp. 239-240.

danger already noted in 1968 by the authors of the second article translated below.* They point out that the policy of alliance with the middle strata, whether they are regarded as petty bourgeois, as a new working class, or as something between the two³ tends to "legitimize and stand behind the whole present social structure, except for the capitalists' title to their factories". Indeed, the condition for alliance would seem to be a willingness to uphold and defend the privileges of the middle strata, just as working class parties have often promised to protect small property to win the support of its owners away from large property.

But tactical support for the petty bourgeoisie, before and after the revolution, has at worst bad effects on the morale of the proletariat. The petty bourgeoisie wields no great power under socialism and is doomed to extinction in any case. The middle strata, on the other hand, are an extremely powerful and expanding group. When the working class defends their privileges and status within capitalism, it is preparing a post-revolutionary maneuver which would lead to the continued subordination of labor to a technocratic bureaucracy. Thus the new working class analysis risks passing over into a justification, no longer merely tactical as with the petty bourgeoisie, of functional class divisions of decisive importance in the development of socialist society.

* The authors belonged to the Comite Revolutionaire d'Initiative et de Reflexion, a group, Vidal-Naquet tells us, which contained former partisans of the "Italian" theses in the French communist youth organization, but evidently, no longer associated with the Communist Party in May 1968. (of. Journal de la commune etudiante, p. 639).

DOCUMENT

THE REVOLT AND THE REVOLUTION

Roger Garaudy, Professor of the Faculty of Letters at Poitiers and member of the Political Directorate of the French Communist Party.

To understand the meaning of the events of these last three weeks involving the students, it is necessary to get rid of all that is simply anecdotal.

Anecdotes about the movement and the often anarchic carryings-on which have accompanied it have mainly obscured and even distorted its real meaning.

One should, it seems to me, ask the following questions:

1st: What are the real objectives of the student movement?

2nd: What are the causes of these mass struggles?

3rd: What is their significance in terms of a class analysis, and what is their relationship to working class struggles?

4th: What is the present revolutionary role of the working class?

I The Objectives of the Student Movement

An outstanding feature of the student movement has been the very rapid growth and development of student demands and the increase in scope during a period of less than three weeks of the objectives of their struggle, made apparent by the serious work of the student committees in the various faculties. Let us sketch in brief the direction of the movement.

A. In the beginning, their revolt was directed only against relatively superficial aspects of their situation which hardly touched upon the roots and principles of the system. Two of the issues at the beginning were:

- (a) relations between professors and students
- (b) the structure and management of the universities

- (a) Relations between professors and students were, at first, identified with the relationship between classes: the professors were the oppressors and the students, the oppressed. The professor was, for the student, the image or the symbol of their dependence.

In less than fifteen days, the situation evolved very rapidly: the solidarity of a large fraction of professors with the student demands and, at the same time, the repression by the government, created a radically new atmosphere. New ties were born.

The common struggle brought under question the present regime

and its basic principles: the political regime of the Gaullists, and the socio-economic system of the society, which is no more than a monopolistic state capitalism.

- (b) With respect to the problem of the structure and the management of the universities the development of ideas took likewise a positive direction.

The meetings in Caen and in Amiens had posed a false problem: that of choosing between an ancient, decadent university, in which there was a contradiction between the educational system and the requirements engendered by the development of productive forces in the society. . . and a technocratic university, better adapted to the demands of the monopolistic state capitalism. This false alternative was quickly swept aside. A more profound contradiction was brought to light: no longer was it a matter of making the educational system better respond to the needs of a monopolistic state capitalism, but rather to challenge the very rationale for seeking such an adaptation.

In facing these two problems, the students began to understand, some more than others, that the relations of teachers and students in the modern universities, simply are a reflection of the relations of social dependence and of alienation typical of a capitalist society.

They began to be aware that the contradiction of which they were the victims, was only a particular case in a system of dependence and alienation, of which the exploitation of the working class represented the most striking and advanced expression. And from this were born some very fundamental demands:

First of all the demand for autonomy of the universities which, contrary to what M. Pompidou has said in the Assembly, has been recommended and outlined in the Project for democratic educational reform by our Party (p. 139). This demand, made also in the resolution by the Deans condemning the absurd centralisation of the system, implies two distinct ideas:

1. That the elected organs at all levels: institutes, faculties, universities and national councils, have not only a consulting role but also decision making power. This demand is precisely along the lines of the policy as stated by our party, proposing to substitute everywhere the agents designated by the central power with elected representatives. Just as we have proposed that the powers of the prefect be transferred to the president of the general counsel, so professors and students have demanded to replace the rector - who is presently a sort of prefect - with a president elected by the university.

2. A second implication of the idea of autonomy, which the students have stressed, is the proposal of co-management, the participation of the students in the management of the universities. Here again is what the Project as outlined by our Party has proposed (p. 139), suggesting a democratic counsel of the University, on a paritary basis.

As to the extent of the powers of these directing organs, what has been proposed coincides almost exactly with our project:

- determining the needs of the universities with respect to personnel, facilities and materials
- discussion of the programs and methods of teaching, and of the testing of students

Furthermore, the main idea from which the others are derived, that is, the participation of the students had already been clearly formulated in 1963, at the Congress of UNEF in Dijon by the 'Corpo des Lettres de Paris'. With respect to these two objectives, there is nothing which does not conform to the basic sense of our policy.

B. As the movement reached greater and greater masses of students and particularly following the qualitative change that took place following the brutal police repression, the objectives of the movement broadened; as they increased in breadth, so they came to correspond with the working class perspective as defined by the program of the French Communist Party.

It is remarkable, furthermore, that the radicalisation of means preceded the radicalisation of ends.

The very violent police reaction facilitated a clearer understanding of the nature of the Gaullist government. And this was the second important characteristic of the course taken by the movement: beginning with a partial struggle that concerned itself with objectives within the universities, there emerged a broad political challenge of the Gaullist regime.

It became apparent that one could not strike out against the structures of the university without, at the same time, coming up against the state apparatus, and without challenging the entire system.

C. The strike occurring on the 13th of May involving massive participation of the working class constituted an important moment in the movement. The announcement of this strike alone brought the government to a first retreat and to concessions; it made it possible to arrive at a third step in the increasing awareness of a large number of students: after the struggle within the university, and the political struggle, a problem of class was posed.

This is certainly not very clear to all the students (it is furthermore not clear to the majority of workers either, for if it were, they would all be militant revolutionaries).

But the problem has presented itself, for the first time very forcefully, to the great masses of students, and that is an eminently positive fact.

Admittedly it has presented itself only in terms of particular issues relevant to the students who, at first, opposed those aspects of the regime which have to do specifically with their own work, especially the industrialization of the University and the commercialization of the culture.

The students now, in mass, refuse henceforth an education which has as its essential function to prepare them for an integration into a society in which the law is profit and in which "the imminent and coercitive law" as Marx has said, is production for the sake of production, and a university destined, in essence, to furnish managers for private enterprises.

They refuse to become wheels in this system, and they seek a culture which integrates technical needs into the system, rather than one which is subordinate to these technical needs.

No one challenges the need or the worthwhile nature of a liaison between science, research and production, but it is remarkable that the business monopolies do not even think of this liaison in the same manner as we do*

Let us say, in order to simplify, that regarding specifically the teaching of the human sciences in the faculty of letters (notably psychology and sociology), and in the faculty of law the teaching of political economy isolated from the human sciences and reduced to a question of management, the education aims less at ameliorating the forces of production, than at preserving the relations of production.

It is remarkable, furthermore, that the student demand for participation finds expression in the language and the concepts of Marxism, even if their use is often confused and dubious, and that the most frequent theme of this expression is that of alienation: the common denominator of the demands of the students is participation in historical initiative against the alienating weight of structures.

II The Causes of a Mass Struggle

One can state them in a couple of words: the Fouchet Reform and the immediate worsening of all the contradictions in the university system brought on by its application.

The most deeply felt consequences have been not only to maintain and accentuate the class discrimination and the anti-democratic nature of the university, but also to commit an injustice against even those who had already the privilege to be at the university:

First of all because by introducing into higher education the short "Licence", the reform produced the same cleavage as exists in the secondary school system between the long and short cycles. In addition, because at all levels in all the disciplines, the reform has separated more than ever before one's technical training from reflection upon the ends and upon the sense of work and society.

From a practical point of view, the Fouchet Reform has worsened the employment crisis after the university, not only in one or another branch (as in psychology and sociology) but also in a more general sense: the prohibition against repeating a year, that is, eliminating a student after a failure at the first level, makes for additional obstacles especially for the students who work in addition to pursuing their studies, while already before the reform, 72% of the students never obtained their "Licence". Even for those who have succeeded in getting beyond these obstacles, designed to selectively eliminate, there is not often a guarantee of getting a job.

The immediacy of these problems accounts for why the movement became so quickly a mass movement and one involving considerable combativeness. In such a movement, the gaining of awareness proceeds very quickly. The strike of May 13th signified a step in this direction. It made possible situating the action of the students within the perspective of working class struggles. Three major ideas have, since then, become clear:

1. A consciousness of the intimate and profound relationship between this movement and the movement of the workers;
2. The idea that a true revolution, in our time, can not take place without the working class;
3. The idea that one can not have a socialist university in a capitalist world and that the solution of the university problem presupposes the solution of a much larger problem.

It is not therefore a matter of transforming the university first and then the society, but of making of the university, not an instrument of conserving this society, but a locus of change.

Having stated these indispensable clarifications, which were in fact made in the action itself, one can pose the problem of the significance of the student struggle within the perspective of a class struggle.

III Significance of the Student Struggles and Their Relationship With the Struggles of the Working Class

This is a fundamental theoretical problem which determines the way in which the student struggles and those of the working class are related.

Given the fundamental idea that the principal revolutionary force is the working class, two methods of approach are possible in attempting to give a class -analysis of the student movement to define the significance of the working class for the student struggle. This must take account of the situation unique to the students, a situation which by definition, is transitory and preparatory: one can attempt to determine their status as a class either by their past (their social origin) or by their future (their future function).

One can first of all make a study of the social origins of the students and underline especially that they are, in the large majority, of middle class or lower middle class origins with only 10% the sons of workers; these figures give the inverse of national population. If one should argue, on this basis, for the democratization of access to the University, it would be perfectly legitimate.

It would be false, however, to base on this alone, our judgment about the meaning of the student movement from a class-perspective. If for example we should say that because of their social origins, the students do not constitute a homogeneous social group and that the fact that a considerable number of them comes from the lower middle class confers necessarily upon them the political characteristics of the petty-bourgeoisie man with its hesitations, its oscillations, etc. . . we content ourselves with a mechanistic sociology which has nothing to do with marxist analysis, and the practical consequences of this theoretical error are disastrous. Without any doubt the social origins of the students have an effect upon their political behavior and weigh heavily upon them. But it is necessary to recall very clearly that this theoretical point of view was not Marx's at all, but it was rather Hippolyte Taine -who suggested this sort of predestination and this mechanistic relation to the milieu of origin.

Class membership, according to Marx, has nothing to do with the milieu of origin, but rather with the place one occupies in the production process. None of the three criteria which he gives for defining a worker refers to the milieu of origin.

Starting with these criteria, one can approach the question of the students, obviously in a very special way, by defining them in terms of their future functions. From this point of view, a large number of students, especially those who are preparing for occupations related to the production process, who will become engineers, who will enter, as managers and executives, into the economic life and its management, those even who are oriented toward scientific research, will have, in our time, a particular place in the production process: we have said and repeated, with reason, that in our age, science has become a direct productive force.

It follows that those who are engaged in science constitute a social class, though such a class must necessarily have novel features:

1. Not only do they not own the means of production, unlike previous concepts of class and unlike the working class, as in the past – and like the workers – they do not possess the instruments of production.
2. But like the worker they too are producers, of surplus value; they are an integral part of the 'collective worker'¹ about which Marx has spoken in Le Capital (1, 2, pp. 30 to 52).
3. And a third criterion, the subjective one of class consciousness. For many years now, following the development of the productive forces, and particularly following the application of cybernetics to production, organization and management, these strata of intellectuals find themselves in conditions favorable to attaining an increasing awareness of the fundamental contradictions as well as of the more recent contradictions of capitalism.

Clearly it is not only in anticipation of their future that the students experience these contradictions, that is in reflecting on the contradictory role that will be assigned them by the system when they will leave the university to become the managers of this system, the ends and meaning of which there is no question of discussing.

If it is true that the theme of alienation is so widespread, then this is because, in a more or less confused way – rather more than less – many students feel the increasingly relevant analogy between their particular situation and that of the worker in industry, even if, in the beginning, as we have noted, this analogy is conceived falsely. . . for example, in identifying the professor with the boss or with the state boss (just as in the first stages of the working class movement, as Engels recalls, the class struggle that was still instinctive and primitive vented its anger against machines or the foremen, and not against the capitalist system, itself).

This is why the working class and its Party can and must pave the way toward a true revolutionary consciousness among the students in trying vigorously to clarify the intimate and profound link between the aspirations of the students (even if these aspirations still have Utopian and anarchic forms which can easily lead to diversion and provocation) and the objectives of the working class.

One must not lose sight of the new fact that, at the present level of the development of productive forces, there exists an objective class basis' for the student struggles, and that this struggle has objectively revolutionary

implications.

This objective basis explains that if, in the time of Marx and Engels (the one a son from the lower middle class and the other of the upper middle class) taking up the cause of the working class for intellectuals was a purely individual phenomenon - since it had only a subjective basis: "an understanding of the course of history" as Marx wrote the Manifesto - taking up this cause today becomes a mass phenomenon since it rests on the objective basis of class relations linking the 'collective worker'¹ (of which an increasing number of intellectuals are now an integral part) with the capitalist system.

Admittedly in the case of the students, because of their unique situation as future producers, the tendency will be to emphasize, in a unilateral fashion, the future, the perspectives and the ideological or even moral aspects of the problem, with all the risks of utopianism and anarchism implied thereby, and with the possibilities of demagogic and even police exploitation.

But none of this should obscure for us the essential issue, nor prevent us from seeing clearly the proper link between the class struggle of the workers and the student movement.

To rely upon the mechanistic analysis of vulgar sociology with accounts for class membership in terms of social origins alone, would lead us toward a sort of paternalism considering the student movement, and all its aspects as forever subordinate, a necessarily unpredictable ally as are typically, the petty-bourgeois strata from which students generally come.

If however, we approach the problem in a more open fashion, in situating the role of the intellectual as an integral part of the 'collective worker' at a time when science has become a "direct productive force", and in seeing the situation of the student with respect to this future function, we will be able to correctly evaluate the link between the working class struggle and the struggle of the students.

The working class of France has defined its objectives as follows: demands for increased salaries, a decrease in working hours, active participation in the management of the Social Security, increased powers for the workers' committees, democratic decision making in the enterprises. The common denominator of all these demands, aiming at a democracy which will open the way to socialism, is the fundamental demand that each worker, instead of being a passive instrument in the hands of capital, become an active and creative participant, in directing the economy against the rule of the business monopolies, and in creating a political program which will substitute everywhere agents designated by the central power with elected representatives. Finally the working class demands, as the French Communist Party underlines, equal possibilities for all to have access to culture, a culture which is no longer in the service of monopolies, but a creation -which is conscious of the future.

That the student movement is perturbed by uncontrolled and adventurous ambitions, by provocations which divide it, weaken it and which make repression of the movement even easier, all this should make us even more aware of the need for vigilance, but it should not in any way obscure the intimate and profound link of this movement with the movement of the workers. The students are well situated to directly experience the malign influence of the business monopolies; they are, by their very work, necessarily more sensitive to all the obstacles involved in actively participating in a search for the meanings and aims of society. Their struggle emphasizes this central aspect of

the revolution and contributes toward making the revolution even more richly human.

To associate this movement with that of the workers, to be aware of the unity of their interests and to reinforce this unity, this is the sign of a common victory.

Why are these problems so acutely felt by this generation of students?

Because a considerable increase in the pace of human development has brought them to maturity at a moment of great historical upheaval.

More scientific and technical changes have occurred in the last twenty years than have occurred in the past two thousand years. A report from UNESCO has noted that there are more working scholars presently living in the world today than have existed since the origins of mankind.

Young people now twenty years old are of the same age as nuclear fission and cybernetics.

From a social perspective, their fathers were contemporaries of the October Revolution, and they reach the age of consciousness on the morrow of the 20th Congress with all the new problems that this era posed. The young people are also of the same age as the great movements of national liberation and socialist revolution in Asia and Latin America. Up to that point Europe and North America appeared to be the only centers of historical initiative and creators of value. The renaissance of non-western ancient civilizations, whose values have been quite different from the overriding concern for technical advancement and production for production's sake characteristic of Western capitalism, has posed problems and raised a number of questions for the young of today. The effect has been even greater since they are of the same age as radio and television. The whole world appears before them everyday as has never been possible for any previous generation.

Thus are born, in spurts, moments of great questioning, large revolts, a challenging of basic principles and of the meaning of life.

We should say, without reserve, that this rapid change is a positive sign.

We, -who are proud to belong to a revolutionary party, far from becoming mourners of history, welcome with joy this marvelous uplifting of the human condition.

It is, we believe, an important moment in the fight against the false capitalist order, for the construction of a new society and for the creation of new relationships between society, science, culture and art.

The first great challenge raised against capitalism in its very principles, has been that of Karl Marx and marxist parties.

The first revolution which defeated capitalism in a major country, and which, by its example, has threatened capitalism throughout the world, is the Socialist Revolution of October, 1917.

Why then, one might say, does a student problem also arise in Warsaw or in Prague? Is it a general crisis characteristic of all "industrial societies" no matter their form of government? Is it a question perhaps of conflicting generations, the young rejecting the "consuming society" erected by their elders?

The question, in effect is posed in terms that are fundamentally different in capitalist society from those in socialist societies.

In a capitalist country "production for the sake of production" (and "consumption for the sake of consumption" - which is the corollary) is a consequence of the basic economic principles themselves, of which the

exclusive motivating force is the law of profit.

It is not the same for socialist countries. What has made this difference difficult to see is that socialism has been introduced into countries which are technically and economically backward; they have had to accomplish two tasks at the same time: institute socialism and overcome underdevelopment. The interaction between these two fundamental tasks has required, necessarily, giving priority for long stretches of time to the expansion of production, making it possible to overcome their lack of economic development. Accomplishing this in socialist countries has been a matter of life or death; and it is true that what has really been a means of staying alive might have given the impression of being an end in itself.

It is important to add as well that certain subjective errors have resulted in continuing, beyond the necessary time, the extreme concentration and extreme centralization of resources and powers, with all the bureaucratic and authoritarian distortions that this entailed.

The first country where such errors have become clearly apparent is precisely the only one of the socialist states which had begun the construction of socialism in an already highly industrialized country: Czechoslovakia. Correcting these errors has been truly difficult, under the fire of implacable enemies who seek to exploit the situation, not in order to improve socialism, but in order to destroy it; but these corrections are underway and the success of this will provide a great example for the possibilities of socialism in a highly developed country.

In short, in the socialist societies, the tendency to emphasize matters concerning production and solving problems relevant to production, while neglecting all else, was only a temporary situation.

In capitalist countries there is no question of a temporary phenomenon, or of subjective errors and distortion, and there are no possibilities of reform. It is rather a permanent and necessary characteristic resulting from the objective conditions of the capitalist mode of production: a revolution is necessary in order to do away with the very laws of the regime.

Contrary to the thesis of Professor Marcuse, the soul of such a revolution is the working class the importance of which is continually increasing in numbers as well as in terms of its historical significance.

When, in France, more than 10 million workers go on strike, occupy the factories and hold the street, it is ironic to read in the book by Herbert Marcuse that "the workers are more and more ineffectual and resigned" (*L'Homme Unidimensionnel*, traduction française, Editions de Minuit, p. 55).

The thesis of Marcuse rests on three postulates: a restricted definition of the concept of revolution, an even more narrow definition of the working class, and an outmoded definition of the internal contradictions of the capitalist system.

The definition of revolution begins with the analysis done by Marx in the middle of the 19th century based on the study of the contradictions of the most developed of capitalist societies at that time: that of England. Marx never intended to give, with this example, a concept of revolution that would be valid for all countries and for all times. The generalization of Marcuse constitutes then an interpretation and a dogmatic distortion of Marx's thought.

Marx's aim was above all practical: he was concerned with changing the world. His theory is not fully understandable except in terms of this practice. The object of Marxism is to give man full responsibility for his own history. It is a conception of the world which is the basis of a methodology of historical 'initiative'. Marx teaches us how to determine rigorously, at each period of

history and in the conditions unique to each country, what is possible given the existing contradictions.

A Marxist is therefore not an academic commenting on the texts of Marx, but rather a militant who has sufficiently understood the theses of Marx in order to be able to determine the specific contradictions unique to his people and to his moment of history.

The definition of revolution given by Marcuse is therefore restricted and empirical. This is likewise the case with his definition of the working class.

Marx has never defined a social class by its standard of living: it is not the possession of a car or a television or of a refrigerator which causes a worker to no longer be a worker.

In fact in this age - where because of the development of techniques science has become a direct productive force - not only is it not true that the working class is losing his importance either from a numerical point of view or from a historical point of view, but on the contrary, its importance is increasing in both numbers and influence.

First of all because an increasing quantity of technicians, engineers and research personnel become an integral part of the "collective worker".

Also because the mechanization of administrative work and of the functions of management blurs more and more the boundaries between an employee who has become a manipulator of calculating machines for example, and the worker, working under conditions of automation.

Finally because the extension of the use of machines in agriculture changes a large number of workers in the countryside (drivers of tractors, for example) into workers very similar to workers in the factory.

Professor Marcuse poses a third problem: this working class can no longer exercise, in industrialized societies "a negating function", a revolutionary role in the society.

This thesis rests on a postulate: that this working class, in the broad sense that it has today, can no longer attain an awareness of the contradictions which place it in opposition to the capitalist system because these contradictions are in the process of disappearing.

In the present stage of the development of productive forces, not only have the contradictions discovered by Marx, between the forces of production and the relations of production not been surmounted by capitalism, but new contradictions which did not exist in Marx's lifetime have appeared which confirm and aggravate those preceding them.

They contribute toward making more and more obvious and intolerable the irrationality of a system which requires of the worker the maximum initiative in his technical tasks and an unconditional obedience to private or collective ownership of the means of production.

This demand to participate actively in the determination of the aims and the meaning of production is therefore the common denominator of the aspirations of the students and the conscious objectives of the working class.

The problem of the relations between them can not therefore be posed in terms of rivalry or of subordination (still less of antagonism). The worker movement and the student movement are both aspects of a same totality.

Marxism remains the most effective theoretical instrument for the revolutionary transformation of the world. First of all because it constitutes a scientific method making possible the theoretical determination of new contradictions of the system. Further because it provides a scientific method making it possible to define the forces capable of overcoming them and the forms of their organization, in showing why the working class, in new conditions and new forms, remains the principal revolutionary force.