

April 10, 1986

To the REB-NEB, and REL-NEB only:

Dear Colleagues:

I would like to discuss with you, long before the Convention, what has been disturbing me ever since it appeared to me that the uniqueness of the Marxist-Humanist analysis in my "Special, Special, Special" seemed to have escaped some of us.

Though the bottomless state of degenerate Reagan retrogression with the U.S. imperial attacks on Libya was recognized by all of us, I do not feel that all recognized how distinct was our "Special" from all others who consider themselves Marxists.

First, the dialectical analysis was not exhausted with our attacks on Reagan's extensions of his imperialist tentacles over Libya, or even when we called it a preparation for an outright invasion of Nicaragua.

Second, it pointed out that it may have been an exercise toward the final holocaust confrontation on the part of either nuclear giant.

Third, the "Special" related the 1986 U.S. assault in the Gulf of Sidra to the historic roots of global counter-revolution as they were seen in what had happened in 1936-37 during the Spanish Civil War when the so-called Workers' state, Russia -- which was supposed to be for the Spanish Revolution -- was testing its weapons just as was Nazi Germany. It led to Franco's counter-revolution crushing the Spanish Revolution.

It was then that tensions began to appear in the Trotskyist movement. It is true that the beginning of the end of Trotskyism did not burst forth openly until the Hitler-Stalin Pact failed to deter Trotsky from continuing to consider Russia "a workers' state though degenerate" and to call for its defense. Nevertheless, the tensions began in the mid-1930s before the actual split in 1940. Some of us dissented when we saw the Spanish Revolution crushed and asked, "My heavens, if Stalin's murder of Trotskyists is not merely 'factional', doesn't it mean that Stalin is actually preparing to participate in a full imperialist war in a global context?" That was really the beginning of the end of Trotskyism.

It led me to pose the alien, class nature of the Russian economy when, even at the first Founding Conference of the Fourth International, and even though his fundamental study of Russia was titled "The Revolution Betrayed," Trotsky still would not give up the defense of Russia. It was the beginning of my returning to Marx's Marxism, though I did not then use that term. What I did do in my finished study of Russia, in the section that was refused -- "Labor and Society" -- was to center it on an article I found in the Russian Archives of Marx. (It was not until much later that it became clear that this was part of what we came to call Marx's Humanist Essays.)

To grasp all those points imbedded in the "Special" written from a hospital bed -- a letter that, in responding to a concrete new situation, was not (was not) just an analysis of the new facts, but demanded that the tasks for Marxist-Humanists be spelled out

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as deeds to be done in relationship to the concrete perspective of the bi-weekly -- to grasp all this, one couldn't possibly just read it "on the fly." In a word, what has been disturbing me is that, though I did not separate that sudden objective new event from Marxist-Humanism's tasks as revolutionary socialists on the road to this bi-weekly -- and although this inseparability was being practiced within two hours in the changes made in the previously-assigned Lead and Editorial, which was already pasted-up -- it became separated in the discussion.

Let me put it another way. Philosophically, Hegel's three attitudes to objectivity, even if that appears as a diversion from what I am striving for here as conclusion -- that is, organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism -- are of the essence to bring in now. Here is what I mean: After Hegel had already completed his two major philosophic works -- Phenomenology and Science of Logic, which traced the history and dialectic of 2,500 years of thought -- he introduced something entirely new to what was supposed to be just a shortened version of the Logic (i.e., the "Smaller Logic"), which summarized those 2,500 years of thought in just three attitudes to objectivity. He wasn't shortchanging those 2,500 years. On the contrary, he was concluding that, irrespective of the range of years, irrespective of the greatness of thought in each historic epoch, the absolute truth was that it was all a variation of just those three attitudes.

The attitudes involved in discussions on the "Special," by not making inseparable the events and our concrete tasks -- from distributions of the April N&L, through finances for the bi-weekly, to practicing organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism, for N&L, as if it were part of one's daily life -- simply don't measure up to the uniqueness of Marxist-Humanism, which considers the Universal and concrete as one.

Frankly, I felt that if that had been my attitude when "out of the blue" I had heard on the car radio of the Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, I would have proceeded to wherever I was going, (since it was also a political task) instead of turning right around and creating a "Weekly Political Letter," which continued for years and eventually became the "Political-Philosophic Letters." That type of attitude to different objective events at a very different historic period today makes it organizationally imperative to develop journalistic "expression" as if N&L were a daily. This is exactly what I had in mind as I listened to Weinberger on TV explaining why the Reagan Administration was finally telling the public what had happened hours before in the Gulf of Sidra. In my mind, this signalled an organizational task for us -- the beginning of preparation, journalistically as well as philosophically, now for our Convention -- the central point of which will revolve about the bi-weekly.

The "Absolute," the dialectic principle that became the ground for the analysis of a sudden, new, objective event that no one could have known would happen in April, 1986, surfaced as easily as it did because that dialectic principle has been preoccupying me ever since March 21, 1985. What I thought was a "nuisance" -- Dr. Mason's insistence that I say something personal instead of "just"

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the self-determination of the Idea -- is what led me, in fact, to see how much of philosophy was already present in the years prior to 1941, and in 1941 itself, where "personal," historic and dialectic were all already there in my questions, in my writings. I was not fully conscious then of dialectic as philosophy; all good politicians were using the word, dialectic, as mere synonym for dynamic.

Archivist

When the Marxist-Humanist, Mike, actually discovered proof of that "personal" in the concrete objective situations in the various periods, I began disliking the fact that my archives singled out the year 1941. It is true that 1941 was the year when I worked out the theory of state-capitalism, and that that was a dialectical, historic happening. Indeed, had I fully known dialectics before I was conscious of that word in a philosophic way, I would have seen that my 1941 analyses showed that I was already reaching for precisely that in the economic studies. So, whether the question is 1953 when I broke through on the Absolute, or 1941 when I was only reaching for it, the truth is that the Absolute determines all perspectives.

All this boils down to organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism. You can see from the cover for the new Guide to the expanded Raya Dunayevskaya Collection that the very title has now been changed to read: "Marxist-Humanism: A half-century of its world development." This shows how the perspective determined the retrospective, both in its comprehensiveness and in its today-ness. Marxist-Humanism cannot become a cliché. What is demanded is that each and every one of us, especially the leadership, practice and project Marxist-Humanism which is inseparable from self-discipline.

Yours,

Raya

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