

10/8
October 8, 1985

Dear Kevin:

Yes, of course, you are not obliged to be in the office during the month of October when there are already so many "assignments" you have given yourself, from reviews in Sociology not to mention the papers on Africa and East Europe as well as attending the Atlanta meeting in November. I'm very much impressed with all this, and every one is of great value for projecting Marxist-Humanism for the organization.

I was most surprised, if not shocked, that you should use such phrases as your relations with Michael having "deteriorated" and with Eugene as being "practically non-existent." I am absolutely positive that you have no cause for any such feeling, that Michael has always spoken highly of how you have opened many doors in academia, as well as in general. Indeed, that's exactly the reason why the whole REB felt it imperative for you to be sent to New York to lay the ground for what is happening there right now regarding lectures for me on the new book. As for Eugene, your column with Mary in N&L has been raised to a full page, and there is hardly a topic on the international scene, especially Europe where, no matter what the topic is that someone else may write on, we always take for granted that you would be au courant and you are asked to please help in the research, and you always do.

As you know, I have not been attending the local meetings and even if I were, I would not ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ presume to comment on what Sheila or anyone else said, or didn't say, and what you felt was being said. But I do know for a fact that whoever concocted the story you said you "found out" about what Sheila and Michael were supposed to have discussed concerning your presentation on the 30 Year Retrospective was totally wrong. It is a lie to attribute that to Michael, and to bring in, of all things, "perhaps Eugene," much less to use such an expression as that your essay had "to be redone." I have always been totally opposed in relations between comrades, and especially leaders, to using any kind of "dressing down," "disciplining." Indeed, such expressions as being "stung" so deeply that it "shakes my own self-confidence in my ability to project MH to its foundation", are so opposed to me philosophically that I never, never, never practice it. So far as I am concerned, -- and I am the one who founded Marxist-Humanism -- Marxist-Humanism philosophy may not be fully prevalent before we have a new society, but it is certainly something we have as principle and strive to practice.

The times when I do not mention people by name ~~XXXXXX~~ in my critiques, is because I do not want to divert from the philosophic question at issue. At the same time, however, precisely because I'm very concrete, there is no doubt in anyone's mind, who I mean. In a word, it is not that I talk behind someone's back, or make any pretense that the one I am critiquing

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is not the person I'm critiquing, but because I want everyone, including the one I am critiquing, not to feel like having been stung, but rather to dig into the question at issue so he or she can learn from it, and not repeat the error.

Let me cite a very "personal", recent, "event" -- I'm trying to emphasize that the "personal" relates to the most recent development of Marxist-Humanism. I refer to Chapter 12 of RLWLKM where, for the first time, we make the category of "post-Marx Marxism beginning with Engels" a pejorative, where the method is so all-important that it is the very opposite of "totality", as if that was a summation of anything anybody wrote, and the anybody is Marx. At that meeting, the book was challenged in the specific chapter 12, as something ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ that need not be considered as "final." As an example of that, new contribution, what had been cited were a lot of separate, early articles of Marx, that were not mentioned in this specific chapter, though they had been referred to quite often. So determined was I not to attack the person who ventured in that direction, that I made no response that evening, and worked out philosophically, not how wrong was the person taking that road, but what the road opened in chapter 12 signifies historically, as well as the way we have to project that chapter, which, after all, challenged every Marxist with the sole exception of Marx himself.

Yes, of course, I have total confidence in your projection of Marxist-Humanism.

Yours,

P.S. I will want to see you before the Atlanta meeting. If your meeting is in November, since I will be gone from Nov. 5 to Nov. 16, I would try to see you sometime on Sunday, Nov. 3. Please call me Nov. 2 to set the time.