June 21, 1979

p.1

Dear Raya,

The letter dating was my error. I wrote you the same day News & Letters arrived and I had the urge to straighten out the authorship of the first sentence in the 18th Brumaire. For reasons you will not (or can not) understand, I avoid strictly to let myself into theoretical discussions (not to speak of practical-political things which I ignore completely). On the other side I am always willing or tempted to correct or add to very specific statements when I feel like -- in the last 25 years I have done it many times, especially with dissertations I got from students all over the world. Since I do not have the great knowledge, the immense power of clarity and the ability to really piercing critique (at the root!) as Marx I can not do more than to follow his quote from the great Florentine at the end of the critique of the "Gotha Programme."

Yes, I read your constrasting Marx and Engels on the "Woman Question", but I am afraid that I am similarly not agreeing with you as it happened before with the question on "Why Hegel Now?" I have to speak out, but I can not find the right words, and will leave it politely with only the following: You overdo it, and this has the danger of confusion! Lenin (and there has been nobody who understood Marx better, since in the practice one has to prove the truth of one's thinking!) made out of Marx's Introduction to the Russian edition of the 1st volume the categoric axiom that one can not understand Capital without studying Hegel. I also believedthis till I found in Moscow the then just published "Grundrisse" which old Engels disregarded or more likely didn't know about at all. And speaking of Lassalle, I am convinced (there is plenty of evidence for it) that nobody, yes, nobodyincluding Marx, had studied as much Hegel as Lassalle -- and good old Marx must have laughed reading a letter from L. to him where he tries to explain (to Marx!) by refsrring to Hegel that the means have strictly to imply the goal and not, in no case, that the aim rectifies the means!

p.2

To tell you the truth, when I saw parts of your manuscript on "Why Hegel Now" my first reaction was to say only with Shakespeare in Hamlet: "What is to me Hecuba!", but instead I wrote the long letter with the aim of acquainting you with the real source of Humanism which led over Lessing and Herder, Goethe and finally Hegel, Heine and Marx, back to Spinoza --

p.3

You said you took my advice? I am not the type of a teacher, not an "enlightener", but you did not grasp my hint to go back to Spinoza and his German discoverers though you read Hegel who clearly said that philosophy (=Humanism) starts with Spinoza! In Marx's earliest work, the doctor dissertation, there is not Hegel but (without quoting directly Hegel) Hegel's word about the way Moses Mendelsohn treated Spinoza -- as a "dead dog!" Too bad Marx did not know the later discovered Notes by Spinoza on Cartesian Philosophy, where Spinoza extended the axiom: I think therefore I am, to: I think, I doubt, therefore I am. Doubt! This is the same word Marxuses in the "confessions" his daughters asked for in the last question: "Favorite motto" answering: De omnibus dubitandum. (You must have doubts about everything.) This was the answer to Voltaire and Kant who believed in "reason" but not that full Humanistic society can be achieved. "Je me pas Marxiste" -- Marx really and truly believed in it -- how could he as the Marxist ? when his motto was: to doubt everything? It took Lenin a long time, maybe because as you said, only after he studied Hegel. And when was this? After he gave up on the "materialist" Plekhanov, for practical-political reasons! Though there was already a long time before published Marx's letter to Sorge where little respect was expressed for Plekhanov and Axelrod: "In order to make propoganda in Russia -- they go away to Geneva! What a quid pro quo!"

p.4

15180

Yes, Hegel was for Marx as for Heine with the end of the line of the Humanists (based on Spinoza), the up to him most perfected one -- and therefore he did not have to go back to Spinoza and his followers, while in the Economic theories, the real practice of capitalism, he had to study everybody to develop the struggle of the proletariat. He really discovered Quesnay ~~whom~~ he regarded higher even than Adam Smith though Quesnay was a Voltairian (Jefferson was Quesnay and Voltaire) while Franklin was the real Humanist, Herder already called B.
p.5 Franklin "my idol!") And Marx believed that he "only" discovered the dictatorship of the proletariat" not knowing that Marat already did it (also the revolution in permanence!) not the same as the "discovery" by Parvus-Helphant whom Engels preferred to Jogiches). Engles later rightfully said that they both did not know Marat) who in fact was the first proletarian revolutionary, if not the first known one -- later Boboeff up to Blanqui -- the heart and head of the French proletariat" (Marx) -- in fact there were others before Marat whom Marx did not know, only that he came to the discovery of the Dictatorship of the P. intuitively influenced by the French. There is one Marx and Engels in the Heilige Familia from whom Marx finds the "proletarian I see of the new stage of the world" -- Jacques Roux (who I am proud to have "discovered" said the best word that all our good revolutionaries, especially Trotski should have taken to heart: "We adore the freedom -- but we do not want to starve of hunger!"

p.6 I recognize Hegel but to say that humanistic philosophy began (your word) with him is just not true. It is false. Speaking of "woman question" where is your Hegel? But look to the French, especially Charles Fourier and before him, Lessig and Herder have much much more to say about the woman question than Hegel (also Goethe!)

Now, one should not make the same mistake and go too far in the critique of Engels as one goes too far in the apologetc of Hegel! It is confusing and reminds on the methods of Trotski (and even better of Zinoviev!) I am not against radical critique! But if Engels was good enough for Marx he is good enough for me. And the "origin" of the first sentences of the 18th Brumaire is not unimportant as you believe. (No, I don't know the exact source of Hegel, the Russians are most of the time very good in sources quoted, but do not say where Hegel says this, but Hegel often speaks of the repetitions in World History -- should not be hard to find) Engels wrote the whole idea of tragedy first, and
p.7 farce next time to Marx in the letter and also all the personalities, but not only this -- he brought the idea of the 18th Brumaire and prophesized that Louis Bonaparte will put the emperor's coat on himself. Marx later in a (new) edition of the 18th Brumaire proudly emphasized how superior just this was in comparison to the analysis given by Proudhoun and Victor Hugo. And more than that, from Engels' letter I understand why Marx avoided to talk about the French proletariat at this time (so unusual for them). True, Engels would never have been able to write the treandous paragraph in the 18th Brumaire about the great fundamental difference between bourgeois and proletarian revolution -- what a conception, what a language! ending with "Hic Rhodus, hic salta!"

I am very much for it if somebody agrees with me. I want to be sure that such happy agreement is based on real understanding. What I say against Engels or better where Engels differs from Marx might not be the same as what you say.

Be careful! True, Engels was not a likeable person, he mistrusted everybody,
p.8 very intolerant. It was not only (it was, but not only) jealousy that Engels always had stong misgivings when Marx again and again went here and there into

attempts of collaborations with all kinds of Socialists and Liberalists, especially with Lassalle and Bakunin (Engels was scared to death when Marx visited Lassalle in Berlin and the plan of a daily, financed by the [illegible] came up and about Bakunin: "Don't trust his Russian oath!") Marx recognizing the geniality of Lassalle and the fact that he really created the German political Labor party though he knew better than Engels how dangerous Lassalle would have become if he would not have been killed in the duel shortly after he attempted to collaborate with Bismarck. Marx's suspicion was proved only about 60 years later when an old desk in the Prussian Ministry was moved and memos about association between Lassalle and Bismarck were found; too bad it did not happen during the lifetime of Mehring. While both know that one can not make model revolutionary movements according to a plan, Marx recognized every potential group and person as long as there is brain and pep (?) behind while the "General" Engels wanted only Lieutenants p.9 and sergeants who do what they are told -- and if it would have gone by Engels, the International would have never been created, and probably the Paris Commune not actively supported. Though Engels had already moved to London and met him about daily, it seems to me that he had no part in the writing of the "Civil War in France" though he was the English language expert and Marx had to torment himself with about 8 drafts (in English to write was for Marx very difficult) without any participation by Engels. Interesting is also that during the whole long period of writings of "Kapital" he very very seldom mentions the contents, in the best case asks E. about details of commerce and only once when he writes him very excited about the Tableaux Econom. by Quesnay and expects reactions of Engels, we find no response. In contrast to before, from the time they arrive in England, no publication by both together is done (except the one part in Anti-Duhring and when they sit together with the French leaders to fix as good as they felt like to revise the programme of the French Party!) What happened? Marx was sick and overworked and could have needed badly besides for the bread -- articles for the N.Y. p.10 Tribune help in the writing or at least criticizing of "Capital" which finalizing over of only the first volume was on his neck! Marx ever listened to suggestions by a man like Kugelmann, but there comes nothing from Engels who only pushes him to finish, nothing else.

To think that Marx kept this so rare to find friendship even in part because of his dependence of material support would be absolutely wrong. Fact is that from the very beginning he considered Engels as the best of all the fellows available with whom the great task of clarity, which his purpose was in starting the Deutsche [illegible] could be undertaken. He tried Ruge, he even pursued unsuccessfully Feuerbach, Hesses contributions he could not use (though he took the ideas question from him), he spent just for [illegible] with sick Heinrich Heine long long hours, there was just nobody else. There were better friends around towards whom Marx and his wife (very important at that time for young Marx!) had real empathy. The few letters we have by Jenny to Engels (usually p.11 very feeling-ful to others) are somehow pretty cool! (I just do not believe that Mehring would have destroyed Marx letters to his daughters even when critical about Engels. He "selected", that is true, that means he did not publish what he did not like, but destroy? Besides: Mehring was not so hot on Engels, because of the preferences he gave to Kautsky and Bernstein. Engels made pretty nasty remarks against Rosa and Leo Jogiches, and if it means something I am sure Edward Fuchs, who wanted me to work on the Mehring papers which were all in his possession, and told me so much about his visits at Engels in London in the 90's would have mentioned something about such correspondence. True, there have been discussions if some personal letters which the daughters had should be published -- so f. e. (?) the famous letter of the father of Marx who Tussy finally against the opinions of others decided to publish.)

15182

Going back to the financial dependency of Marx as a basis for the friendship with Engels. Fact is that Marx had only the plan of very close collaboration when he seduced Engels to follow him to England, and just the reverse of financial help. Engels had great aversions to go back to England, the women and the wine (all those p.12 cheaper and better than in England) but Marx in his naivty pressed him: Course, we will both publish and we will together make a lot of money -- he even offered him to live in his house and he -- Marx -- would pay for everything! I believe that Marx would, as always, been generous and not as stingy as Engels. I once tried to put together -- since it is mostly in the letters -- what Engels till up to the time when he sold his share in the famly's business and became stinky rich, gave Marx -- it was not so much as people think. Even when Marx threatened to leave London, and go to Geneva "where everything is cheaper" he reacted only with the usual 1, 2 £ and never more than 5 pounds.// He could have done better when Marx was real desperate, sick and poor, thrown out by the landlord, furniture and clothing at the pawn shop -- Lassalle's help, even though mostly in the form of loans, was more generous towards Marx. p.13 Poor Jenny could not have liked the so charitable Engels! She had close male friends, but not a Engels among them.

Still, Engels was an EAGLE (the word Lenin used for Rosa!) or as Engels himself said: "We were only talents while Marx has been the genius!" Lukacs' (?) method of finding un-Marxism with everybody except Marx and Lenin is academic paranoia.

This brings me after so much scribbling to your bother about my letter to Hanna Arendt. I can not bring myself to go to the cellar and dig in my papers which I usually leave to the nagging critique of the mice. I once made copies for Rosie Frolich and Kostia Zetkin. But I can tell you the main points.

(1) Arendt wrote a long review in the NYRB saying that Rosa was not a Marxist. Besides that such competent people as Mehring and Lukacs(?)(?) rightly or wrongly said that she was the most continuer of Marx theory, I raised the question what is a Marxist? Since Marx said that his only original contribution to communist theory has been the dictatorship of the proletariat -- R.L. p.14 has unequivocally aimed for the forcefully achievement of the theory and praxis of Marx. [By the way, my dear Ray, though I have always been -- since childhood -- in opposition to Trotskiism*, I consider him also a Marxist, also of course Bukharin in spite of Lenin's correct criticism -- otherwise I would end up like the Napoleon personifier in the mad-house and claim to be the only true Marxist!]

* I agree with Lenin on Trotski: A Windbag!

The most important thing about Rosa as a person: Arendt (based on Nettl) said that she did not have a sexual relationship with young Hans Diefenbach because in their correspondence they used the German pronoun "SIE" (like the ~~archaic~~ "thou" in English). My answer was: It is not unusual in Russian and Polish high circles (also in French) even among married couples, even among revolutionaries. I referred to K Zetkin, the school mate of Diefenbach who was very very close with Rosa (he accompanied her on vacation trips) who had no p.15 doubt about Rosa's relationship to H.D. When Rosa fell in love with H.D. she was a woman of 40 and he at least 10 or even 15 years younger -- it was after the miserable break with the miserable Leo Jogiches with whom she was in a form of a very submissive relationship for about 20 years. [The Polish Government published her letters to Jogiches -- but only 2 of L.J. to R.L. 3 years ago -- I was tempted to publish an English translation, but no chance for a market.]

15183

If I would only have the mood after so much scribbling I would write you more what I think of R.L. and of the biographies which were written of her. She has been the ~~ex~~ idol of my youth -- but my friend Gurland made me pain by bringing up the impression that she never had a real relationship to the workers, and I must believe he was right. I know she made a great impression on the young proletarian intelligence, but not on the real workers; to the real party activist, she was Frau Doktor -- Enough! All the best, P.

P.S. I will not even re-read what I wrote -- sorry!

p.16 P.S.S. When speaking about Marx v. Engels, bear in mind that Marx never, never used such hefty tirades against Blanquism and Proudhonism as Engels did! On the contrary -- he always accepted the practical co-operation with both in the hope that when -- as in the Paris Commune -- the time comes, the Proudhonist will become Blanquist and the Blanquist ~~w~~ Proudhonist -- while Engels only vexed against them and creates that even Lenin and Rosa L. used "Blanquism" and "Proudhonism" as swear-words. The only one who did not follow was Mehring who by the way was (though a Lassallean to a certain degree) during the 1914-18 was further on the side of Lenin than Spartakus, also in the National Question (especially Poland where he formulated the demand giving to the Poles the historical Oder- as is today). Wendell Phillips was for me the true American Marxist because without any "ifs" and "buts" he accepted the Paris Commune under the leadership of Blanquists and Bakunists and was not afraid to proclaim "Nihilism" as the only justified weapon for Humanism available! This is my main argument against Engels!