

July 31, 1968

Dear Comrade Svitak:

The events in Czechoslovakia since Spring have been followed with avid interest by all independent Marxists, East and West. I have been especially excited reading your speeches not only on the question of democracy and need for multiple parties, but also on the urgency for a unity of worker and intellectual. On a very different level than the historic circumstances you find yourself in I raised this question at the outset of the second world war when I broke with Leon Trotsky whose Secretary I had been because I felt no new revolution would result from the war if Marxists wouldn't seriously face up to the new problems of the class nature of the Soviet Union and the need for a totally new world society by unfurling the new banner of the Humanism of Marxism. (I happened to have been the first in the English-speaking world to have translated the 1844 Manuscripts.)

The warm solidarity that Marxist Humanists feel for those who are carrying on the struggle in Czechoslovakia would naturally wish to express itself by making known the views of independent socialists. But I do not know how you feel about writing for such organs like the one enclosed, NEWS & LETTERS. It is a most unusual monthly (bi-monthly during the summer months) which uniquely combines worker and intellectual: the editor is a Negro production worker, Charles Denby, while I am the chairman of its editorial board. The issue now going to press will contain a special on Czechoslovakia that will quote some of your speeches. It would be a great honor to us if we could follow this up with a piece by yourself.

In any case it is most important at this moment to re-establish international relations among independent Marxists, whether that be on a public or a personal plane. As a matter of fact, in a non-organizational capacity--just as a writer--I did once before attempt to establish contact with you when I found that we were both included in a symposium on Socialist Humanism edited by Erich Fromm. I did not pursue it when I got no response from you for fear of stirring anything up that you may not wish to be involved in. Now that there is more freedom of expression I hope I will hear from you. I'm not sure that I sent you my major work, MARXISM AND FREEDOM; I shall be glad to send you a copy if you wish one. In the meantime I thought you might be interested in my views of East Europe at the time my book went to press--1957--and therefore I tore out a few pages I enclose.

Finally, I had also considered it important to establish purely philosophic relations among Marxists as there are very few indeed in the West who have any conception of the relevance of the Hegelian dialectic to the problems of today. The work I am now writing, Philosophy and Revolution, is related to this problem and, again, I would feel honored if you cared to read any of the chapters though they are still in a rough draft form and comment upon them.

Fraternally yours,

You can write to me either at the offices of NEWS & LETTERS, 415
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or at my home:

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