

January 5, 1983

Dear Harry:

The Marx centenary surely makes this new year a real turning point for all of us. On the one hand, I was most glad to hear that evidently are going to speak to two meetings on this question in March. Who are the sponsors? Will it be possible for you to spend as much time on today's Marxist-Humanism as a challenge to post-Marx Marxists, as you do on Marx himself? Frankly, I was somewhat disappointed that you didn't mention that Part III of Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, which is wholly devoted to Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, both as ~~Marx~~ Marx recreated the Hegelian dialectic as the dialectic of liberation, and as the post-Marx Marxists have not measured up to that global vision of what he called a new Humanism. The final chapter of the Luxemburg book -- Chapter 12-- is crucial in its last sections (Section 3 on "The New Moments of the Revolutionary Philosophic-Historic Concepts Discovered by Marx in the Last Decade of his Life" ); and Section 4 on "A 1980s View" ) because it spells out in the Marxist-Humanist view the specifics of why we challenge post-Marx Marxism. That is to say, we are not talking of the other revolutionaries -- Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg -- as if they were not revolutionaries, or as if they in anyone "betrayed" Marx. No, the reason we challenge them is that they didn't measure up to Marx, whether it was on something ~~like~~ like the Ethnological Notebooks, though it was precisely that work which has such relevance to what we now call the Third World; or the prophetic prediction of revolution in Russia ahead of the West, though that was written in in nothing less important than the Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto. In a word, our challenge to post-Marx Marxism is to work hard at not repeating any revolutionary activities without connecting them to a philosophy of revolution.

It seems to me that that may be the reason why you feel in a "quandry between expounding Marx and my past political activities and my conversion to Marxist-Humanism." Here is what I mean: Because all your past political activities were so great as ~~Marxist~~ class struggle and, in those years, we were all sure that great activities would bring on successful revolution, little attention was paid to theory -- at least, it was certainly all left to the theoreticians. What we all got to know in the 1950s was: (1) that the movement from practice was itself a form of theory, as was clear from the East German revolt against Stalinism, along with suddenly bring onto the historic stage Marx's Humanist Essays. (2) that this movement from practice to theory did not (I emphasize did not) free the theoretician from responsibility in further developing theory to the point of philosophy -- that is to say, a new relationship of theory to practice so that the unity of philosophy and revolution can by no means stop at the class struggle but must recognize other forces of revolution as Reason, from the Youth to the peasantry, from women to national self-determination. (3) Finally, insofar as British Marxist-Humanism is concerned, there has been such a deep eclecticism that it hardly has freed itself from all bourgeois prejudice against philosophy and for "science", as if human beings and their Reason were just following some vulgar materialistic impulses.

I hope you are going to meeting with the London Marxist-Humanists very soon; it's ridiculous that there has not been closer contact. Why can't you invite them to come up with copies of the new book at the very meetings you will address? Yours,

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