

January 30, 1985

Dear Friends:

A wealth of new-old material, which Peter has dug up in Bess's voluminous RD Archives, really belong in the WSU Archives. They range from 25 legal-size pages on "Marxism and the Negro Question" that argue about the Negro Question as a National Question, trying to prove it all the way from the plantation slavery days to "today" (the 1940s); the 1959 Milan Report, which must have been what I was preparing for that Conference there, that is full of a defense of Marxist-Humanism; to a translation of Rodolfo Mondolfo's Prologue to "Marx and Marxism", where he cites me. Peter assures me that this is very little of what he found. There are so many missing pages of the history (both of my state-capitalist theory and Marxist-Humanism before it was called that) I would like to be able to present on March 21 to WSU Archives -- that I don't know what to do because we have nobody free to work on it full-time. One thing I might single out is the collection of letters to Marcuse that Peter found, which record the fact that I did all the sociological work that came off the press in the 1950s and that Marcuse so misused in One-Dimensional Man.

This week is so full of good news, though some of it, especially about the new book going to press, is very contradictory, that it is hard to know what to focus on. The contradictory part deals with the impossibility of knowing the possible ramifications of Simon Silverman's death insofar as the timing of the new book is concerned. All I can repeat is that nobody but ourselves sets the philosophic ground for how we proceed. It makes all the more urgent that we continue with the emphasis on the Introduction/Overview that we all do have, so that the work is alive and kicking for both our presentation on March 21 and all our organizational work. You will get a whiff of that in what we discussed at yesterday's REB -- Terry's assignment to write an article on that for the March N&L.

The point is that ever since our Convention, where the final section of the Perspectives was entitled "Not by Practice Alone", through the Expanded REB of Dec. 30, 1984 and the Jan. 27 first public meeting for Raya here, the red thread running through all was Practicing Philosophy. Please read the REB minutes carefully and work out ways to practice it. It is clear from some of the discussion, for example, that our actual activities show great interest from new sources, as widely apart as David Joravsky on Science and Philosophy and Dennis Brutus, the great South African poet who is here and whose quotation we used in the Frantz Fanon pamphlet. In that same category, there now is a possibility that an interview with me by Neda will appear in the March issue of the Chicago Literary Review.

You will see from the two new assignments we have given Peter -- one for the immediate lead on the Middle East for next issue, and one for a Lead-Article on India for two months from now -- how we are trying to develop NEB members not at the Center into greater and greater responsibility.

THE DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH ISSUE IS FEBRUARY 14.

Yours, Raya

Oh yes, the videotape of the Jan. 27 meeting will be sent out within a week.

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Jan. 16, 1984

Dear Mike and Olga,

One of the most important "local perspectives" facing us after the Dec. 30 REB was the question of going through and arranging Bess' archives, and now that that has been done I want to give you a full report on what is and what is not there:

Though there is a mass of material, mainly copies of letters by RD, there is very little from the 1940's and nothing from prior to then. One area where we of course focused particular attention on was anything Raya had on the Black dimension from 1940's: we found nothing on that which is not already in the archives, except for an early draft of Part I of Marxism and the Negro Problem (June 1944) which I have enclosed. It is longer than the version in the archives, and has a number of formulations, especially in its second half, that are different from the one in the Archives. The only other writing we found from this period that is not in the Archives is the "Inevitability of Socialism and the Laws of Motion of Capitalist Society: A Reply to Gates", which I have not enclosed, as I understand you have that at hand.

Between the period of 1949/50 and the early 1960's, however, there are a number of documents not presently in the archives. They are:

- 1) Three Letters of RD to Grace and CLR just prior to what is included in the 1949/50 Correspondence. Letter of 1/27/49, RD to J, is on Lenin's Notebooks on Hegel's History of Philosophy "Letter of 2/1/49, RD to Grace, is on Hegel's analysis of the infinite in the finite and its relation to Capital, Volume III; Letter of 2/10/49, RD to Grace, is on Determinant Being section from Science of Logic on "Barrier and Ought".
- 2) Letter of RD, "Hello", 8/30/52 on Deutscher and Bukharin who "placed opposites alongside each other, but do not jam them up..."
- 3) Letter of RD, "Hello", 9/20/56, on completion of M&F.
- 4) Series of Notes entitled "Milan 1959" on need for new theoretical point of departure for international state-capitalist groupings.
- 5) "World Crisis and the Theoretical Void", typescript, 2/2/60.
- 6) "State Capitalism and the Intellectual and Labor Bureaucrats", typescript of essay printed in Socialist Leader, 1960, English version of what appeared in French in Arguments (Archives, pp. 2746-49)
- 7) Translation of Prologue to "Marx and Marxism" by Rodolfo Mondolfo, no date.

I have enclosed all of the above for you, though I am sure much of it you already know of, in case there is anything you might not have.

The bulk of the material at Bess' consist of copies of RD's Letters, from 1958 to the 1970's; there are over 1200 of them in all. They cover, as you can imagine, an enormous array of topics, both organizational and philosophic/political. The Letters have all been arranged in chronological order, and contain a wealth of correspondence on questions such as publication of M&F, European trip pf 1959,

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relations with international state-capitalist groupings, Africa trip, communications with Munis, Chaliou, as well as Fromm, Marcuse, et al, through to letters on draft chapters of P&R, the East European revolts, battles of ideas with new left, etc., etc. Close to 500 letters cover the period of 1958 to 1962 alone, and from this period I have singled out two to send you, one, a letter from Aora on the "non-meeting" with Nkrumah and three letters to Marcuse that were not deposited in the archives.

There is surely a goldmine in these letters, and the proof of how they are not "old" appears from how the new in Marxist-Humanism that has just been singled out "appears" in each one, if only in embryo or in full that was not caught at the time. Thus, of the letters enclosed to MARCUSE, you will find interesting not only the first one (which deals with critique of bourgeois sociology, taking up all those Marcuse was supposed to "know" as that was his field, and yet RD is the one giving the real ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ "facts") but also the second, which takes up ~~the~~ both the absolute idea "in general" and as RD developed her statement that "all Marxists, not excluding Marx, do like to stress method rather than absolute idea", a statement driven home most comprehensively in a different context at the 12/30 REB. Then there is the third letter, which takes up a lengthy critique of Bukharin, whom we are returning to confront this year, as well as a presentation on the type of ~~x~~ "subjectivity as objectivity absorbed" that likewise has a most "1985" ring. My point is that, whether we take one letter, or all of them, we can discern an anticipation of where Marxist-Humanism is now. And there are tons more letters than these to Marcuse that I could "list"--but, that is not needed, one, because many of these letters you already have, and two, because that is not the point. Rather, the key is how we approach "archives" in the fullest sense, how we are able to single out what has been raised about Marxist-Humanism now that is new, that we can see developed, as it were, from the very beginning, compelling a further development in the future.

As I go through the rest of these letters, I will complete what I have begun for the period 1958-62--i.e., a listing of those dealing with the philosophical, political, world issues we may want to know of, but I wanted you to be able to get a sense of what is in Bess' archives even before that is done, both because of the question of the March 21 talk, and because of the need to concretize what has come out of the 12/30 meeting. If, in the meantime, there is any grouping, period or category of letters that the Center would want, please let me know so they can be gotten to you.

I wish we could have made the kind of "find" you did with the Chicago Defender picture, etc., but for better or worse, what I listed above is the fullness of what Bess has. Meanwhile, what faces us on all questions is how can each comrade develop what 1985 demands from Marxist-Humanists on the basis of ~~xxx~~ knowing the full sweep of all that has come before, whether that be WL or ~~XX~~ Black, intervention in the ~~xxxxx~~ battle of ideas or any other "activity". Those questions there is also much to say about since we returned to LA, but cannot be contained to this letter concerning what was found at Bess', and will be told in another letter, soon to come...

Yours,

*Peter*

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## In Memoriam

by Raya Dunayevskaya

### Simon Silverman

We mourn the death of Simon Silverman. His title — Director of Humanities Press — doesn't really convey his multidimensional nature, which is better expressed by the concept of founder. His concern was not only with scholarly works but with those of a New Left nature, which is what makes so many young scholars beholden unto him. We, who knew the Depression and Fascism's horrors, know that people die, but History and Ideas live forever. That was the ground for the founding of Humanities Press; that is what he transmitted to the Youth: that is his legacy to us.

Nearly half a century intervened between my first meeting him and the day of his death. I met him when he was the unusual bookseller of second-hand scholarly works that were very difficult to find, and we constantly "fought" over them, because he wasn't sure he really wanted to sell them, and I was poor as a church mouse and couldn't afford them at any price. When next our paths crossed, I was the author of *Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution*, looking for a publisher for a new work, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Because it was the eve of the Marx centenary year, he undertook not only to publish that work but to republish my two earlier works, so that I could celebrate that anniversary with what I called a "trilogy of revolution."

Simon Silverman made available to a world of readers not only American scholars but international authors, ranging from Lawrence Krader's transcription of the heretofore unavailable Karl Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* to *We Are Bosses Ourselves: The Status and Role of Aboriginal Women Today*. The scholarly-artistic mind of this unique publisher made him a true World Person. His memory will be cherished by a legion of readers as well as writers.

### Alexander Erlich

The news of the death of Alexander Erlich brings memories of the very difficult and, at the same time, the active and scholarly life that he led. The way the bourgeois press wrote his obituary, as if he pursued only scholarly studies befitting his status as a "professor emeritus of economics at Columbia University," belies his life's goal of a classless society. In the 40 years I knew him I do not remember a single May 1 socialist/labor demonstration that he did not participate in, as the socialist Humanist he was.

His father was the very famous Henryk Erlich, a leader of the socialist movement in Poland, who, at the same time he was fighting Nazism, was critical of Stalinism. The shock that reverberated throughout the Movement, when we heard through the great revolutionary Polish underground that the Stalinists had murdered him as he was escaping from the Nazis, has never left me. Loyalty to his father's ideals characterized Alexander's life. To write as if Sasha (the name by which his Russian friends knew him) had simply "emigrated" to the U.S. is to erase from history his very profound Humanism.

Of course, his objective work, *The Soviet Industrialization Debate: 1924-1928*, is widely and correctly held by all scholars as a definitive work; but that was the nature of his objectivity. He was a scholar who would dig into all facts without any a priori concept. For that matter, he checked carefully all my statistics in *Marxism and Freedom* and chaired one of my meetings at Columbia University after I broke with Trotsky for calling for the defense of Russia as a "workers' state though degenerate." It is significant to me that his colleagues and friends entitled the collection of essays they brought out in his honor in 1983, *Marxism, Central Planning and the Soviet Economy*.

Sasha Erlich enters history because he devoted his whole life to his Promethean vision of a totally new, truly human society.