

Turn to Raya

February 17, 1985

Professor David Joravsky
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Dear David Joravsky,

The report about you from two young intellectual friends of mine -- Kevin Anderson and J -- excited me. I have been thinking about you ever since the publication of Soviet Marxism and Natural Science in 1961. I felt I had a fellow-traveler in that strange region that none wanted to pay attention to -- the Russian philosophical debates of the late twenties that included the remark about Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks as "fantastically suggestive of a new turn in his thought."

May I tell you why I felt so delighted with the remark, thought it hardly paralleled my view of Lenin as philosopher? My contention is that Lenin's encounter with Hegel in 1914 was the philosophic ground of the Great Divide in Marxism, as great as the actual political betrayal of the Second International. In 1956 I was working and arguing (if that is the right word for battling) with Marcuse who had volunteered to write the Preface for Marxism and Freedom. E.H. Carr, who was then at Brandeis University and had joined us at lunch, asked me for a copy of my outline of Marxism and Freedom. He followed this up with a very warm note to the effect that if it is really true that the active revolutionary Lenin, whose head was filled with nothing but revolution, had really turned to Hegelian philosophy seriously, then every Russian specialist in economics and politics would need to change his position on all he had said about Lenin. I was naturally flattered and a few months later, when I finally signed a contract for the publication of my work, asked if I could please use that letter for my publisher's publicity. To my shock, since he was English and I though not affected by McCarthyism, I got a note from him which said he didn't remember having written me what I quoted him.

This, dear Joravsky, followed very nearly a decade of having tried to give my translation of Lenin's Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic free to any publisher -- this included everyone from the Slavic Division of Columbia University to the Trotskyists -- before I simply appended it to my Marxism and Freedom.

I am looking forward to in-person fellow travelling with you.

You couldn't think, could you, that the piece that the French Trotskyists published in 1977, "Trotsky as Man and Theorician," a piece I had written in 1938, was written in 1977, some 40 years after I broke from Trotsky? It isn't that I ever hid anything. I wrote on Trotsky when I was his secretary. My permission for letting the Trotskyists publish it was two-fold: The introduction must state (1) the fact that I had broken with Trotsky; & (2) that the "Russian question" was not the only thing I disagreed with Trotsky on. History has recorded Lena Trotsky's greatness in the Russian Revolution; and I considered my own great experience with him as great. But it is the forty years since a broke with him that are well documented with my three major theoretical works, and soon to have a fourth on Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching

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for the Future. And it is naturally my Marxist-Humanism I want to project.

Are you by any chance going to be in Detroit March 21? The Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs of Wayne State University will have a month's display of selections from my Archives, which incidentally does have as one Appendix some of my correspondence with Trotsky since I felt people would be interested. I will be speaking in McGregor Hall on March 21 from 7 to 9 p.m. Afterwards there will be a reception, during which time I will present to the Archives the page proofs I'm correcting of my new work, and bring the entire collection, which had stopped with 1981, up to 1985. I am entitling these four years Dialectics of Revolution: American Roots and World Humanist Concepts.

Internationalism has naturally always been my main pre-occupation. I suspect that J had been attracted to me because I was knowledgeable about the international ramifications, especially to Persia, of the 1905 Russian Revolution. I had a piece on the 1979 revolution in Iran which analyzed its connection to their revolution in 1906-11, focusing on the fact that in 1906-11 women there had established anjuman. That was the first women's "Soviet" anywhere, Russia included, and Russia then also meant Poland with Rosa Luxemburg as its leader. (I'm sending you a copy of my work on Rosa Luxemburg; I hope you'll wish to review it.)

I will be back home in April and I hope we will finally be able to meet in person.

Yours,

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