

Feb. 26, 1985

Dear Jim:

Congratulations! I just read your "A Revokutionaries Critical Look Over the Historic Barrier and consider it a v~~xy~~ serious contribution not alone to the working out of our tasks and taking responsibility for them, & not only with a firm grasp of what is of the essence since REB Expanded Mtg., 12/30/84 and what flowed from it was further concretised in 1/27/-2/3/85, but making some original contributions.

Let me list them, or rather some of them. On p. 6, beginning with the sentence "The I dea is Marxist-Humanism." and, continuing for the rest on the paragraph on histori barrier, p. 7; the recognition of the 2nd Int.'s economism as category that had imbedded in it the 1914 betrayal. Do you think so-called non-~~xxx~~ philosophers among so-called Marxists will ~~ever~~ understand that by leaving out philosophy and follow instead "economic concrete" Facts they are actually creating revisionism and thus it isn't the "orthodox" (Karl Kautsky) who won, but Bernstein. And on p. 11 there is a real original formulatiohat should become more concrete still, or so I think & therefore suggest modifying it as follows: (Underline the word~~x~~ or phrase I suggest adding:

"Raya began the critical return to the Phil of Mind.. Can there be single movement uniting critique both new movement from practice and the Self-Thinking Idea in a new age? Our organization could be the order of the day if we make it our historic responsibility." What I consider the nub there, Jim, is that imbedded/it that paragraph is a way of endowing ~~the~~ in your recognition is what is meant by critical return to Hggel: it is not rejection of A.I., but only rejecting its monopolising of focal point, of the new passions--REALITY OF MASSES IN MOTION-- as if dev. of A/I. was only in thought

This is a good point to the critical look at your magnificent talk as a whole on 2/22/85 to Detroit local. On p. 2, where you use expression "becoming a local" as if that is the experience and thought needed by REB. It is not Center that needed wxperience of "becoming a local". Rather it is both the greater possibility of grow along with Chicago local, knowing why Center's move to Chicago its being there is knowing how the process of development of M-H so well as itself becoming a sub-center and its responsibility.

May I suggest the subhead for the final par, on p. 6, not the way "return" but 1-WAY STOP on the Hegelian-Marxian by post-Marx Marxism I am thinking of Hegel critique of Kant & that sentence that I have love that it is there, at the beginning of the modern dialectic, STOPPED DEAD. Also I prefer the category of "post-Marx Marxism" to merely "after Marx" which obscures the fact that it all began with Marx's 2nd-in command--ENGLES; he must be included in that category not only in being "after Marx" but claiming it as "Marx's bequest:!

898A say  
And, please be most cautious when you/"even Marx"; don't ~~xxxxxxx~~ ever forget he founded & left the humus for all future generations until capitally is totally uprooted.

I have been so impressed with your talk--Does Detroit local appreciate, that Jim is the 1st, once Center wasn't around, who grew, developed alone?--that I am thinking of proposing a Bulletin for April that would hve our report of 3/21 and your piece, to be called "Preparing for and Being

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at Archives-lecture. What do you think? See you there happily Your Raya

Preparation for 13/21/84 (1/21/84) - 6. 10. 1985  
Raya's 12/30/84 on 1/21/85 - 1/21/85  
"A revolutionary Critical Look Over The Historic Barrier"

Presentation by Jim (Detroit) on "Responsibility  
for Marxist-Humanism in the Historic Mirror: A  
Revolutionary Critical Look," Feb. 10, 1985

#### INTRODUCTION

December 30, seems like it was months ago. However so new was the presentation that Raya gave on that day that it will determine all our future work. On December 30 the Resident Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees plus a few others from other parts of the country -- like Andy and me from Detroit -- heard Raya give this presentation. It was titled: "Responsibility for Marxist-Humanism in the Historic Mirror: A Revolutionary Critical Look."

When you look at this bulletin, or when you look at the excerpts from it in this issue of the paper -- title "Unchaining the Revolutionary Dialectic" (Part I) -- you'll see that near the beginning, it says: "The dialectics of revolution is our subject." You might say that the dialectics of revolution is always our subject, even when we discuss Women's Liberation or contract concessions or Marcus Garvey. But Raya also says that it is the dialectics of revolution that is the reason for reversing the title of the new book for the final class, making it "The Dialectics of Revolution and Women's Liberation," and that the dialectics of revolution will remain the measure of all we do from now on. In fact, this look at the whole, the method of revolution, is not only what characterized this talk on Dec. 10, but also the talk many of us heard in Chicago on Jan. 27, the final class where Raya indeed made the dialectics of revolution the subject of her talk with all four books of Marxist-Humanism included in the outline. Not only then, but for our actual "Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1984-85," revolutionary method was the subject more than any analysis of the world situation at this moment. So look at the last three times Raya has given a major presentation. Each one has taken up the sweep of history from Marx, through Lenin and Luxemburg, through to our own age and the birth and development of Marxist-Humanism. Thus, when it says the dialectics of revolution will remain the measure of all we will do, it comes as a major statement of our intentions as an organization.

Turning to this bulletin, there are three parts in it. Briefly, the first part, "Unchaining the Revolutionary Dialectic," tries to grapple with the task that we set out in our classes -- "to become practitioners of the dialectical methodology" -- and presents the way that task was perceived and practiced by Marx, and then by

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"Promethian vision," (Marx's genius) is needed (perhaps it is a dialectical element) for the new of the epoch. And it continues: "that is not because Promethian vision and reaching for the future doesn't help the next generation see its task. Quite the contrary. That is when discontinuity is not a revision of, but a continuation with the original New moment when there were all sorts of new voices and listening to them was quintessential."

So with that Introduction, I want us to turn to Marx's "original New moment." Then we will try to see what was it that stopped, was discontinuous, and what reached forward into the generation of Post-Marx Marxists and into our epoch that helped us see our task. Since "unchaining the dialectic" is the task of each revolutionary generation, it is the title of Part I of this talk. The first subsection is titled "Marx Pinpointing in His Age."

#### UNCHAINING THE DIALECTIC

##### MARX PINPOINTING IN HIS AGE

If you haven't noticed, what prevades all of Raya's discussions about Marx is his lifelong return to Hegel, the German Idealist philosopher whose philosophy, we learned in Marxism and Freedom, was the first to unite history and human consciousness. Hegel's recognition that human thought advanced through an ongoing battle of ideas was baptized in the French Revolution itself, 1789. Yet how could a philosophy such as Hegel's, dialectics, be taken over by the Prussian state towards the end of Hegel's life in 1831? This is the scene which Marx enters, and it is Marx who saw the historic barrier in Hegel's philosophy.

The historic barrier between Hegel's age and Marx's, the overcoming or transcendence of which that allowed Marx to achieve a new continent of thought when Hegel could not, rested upon the concept of alienation. "Marx holds that Hegel reduces transcendence to accommodation with the irrational world" is how Raya puts it in Philosophy and Revolution. (p. 59). "In the end, perhaps, Hegel's 'Absolute,' far from achieving a unity of thought and reality, only led Hegel to accommodation to reality. And the Other of that world of Beautiful Reason, abstract rationalism, is total irrationality of the true existing world." <sup>(P&R p. 58)</sup> In other words, the struggles of successive stages of human consciousness one over the other ended in a resolution at the Absolute Idea. Marx saw that by showing consciousness as representing the history of class struggles, you could show that the enemy against human development was not one

idea's fight against another, but was the kind of thinking that places the human outside of consciousness.

You can read in Marxism and Freedom also that the historic barrier that Classical Political Economy ran into was not so different than Hegel's -- it discovered that the wealth of a society comes from labor, but it was Marx who discovered the laborers whose consciousness would create a new society by burying capitalism. The advantage Marx had was by seeing the birthtime of revolutions flower and the true actors in history take the stage.

What's very new in "Responsibility for Marxist-Humanism in the Historic Mirror" is Marx's discontinuity from our age -- at the moment of his break with Hegel and Classical Political Economy. Did it stop anyone else when they read this in it:

"..where Marx broke off in his first open critique of the Hegelian dialectic, at paragraph 384 of Hegel's Philosophy of Mind, you can understand why Marx was compelled to break off -- because, first and foremost, he had discovered that new continent of thought inseparable from revolution. The revolutionary critique is the beginning of the Marxian dialectic." (Responsibility, p. 2)

How could Marx make an incomplete summation of a philosophy he was transcending, and still discover a new continent of thought inseparable from revolution? Is there something in this of the historic barrier of Marx's own age?

Raya begins at the beginning and says, "So far as I am concerned, the new moments in Marx..begin with the very first moment in Marx, the moment of his break with capitalism." (Responsibility, p.2) At the beginning, I think there are three achievements in Marx's new beginning that laid the foundation for all future development. ~~But~~ <sup>(it must be said that)</sup> first, although Marx in 1841, when he wrote his doctoral dissertation, had not discovered a "new element," a Subject, that is what he was searching for. Thus, Marx's aim in writing about an obscure part of Hegel's philosophy was to show that it was insufficient simply to show how the master, Hegel, accomodated himself to reality:

"One must analyze the accomodation not merely to expose it, but in order thereby to discover the inadequacy of the principle which compelled that accomodation. Only in that way could the critique produce an advance in knowledge which would create the possibility of a new beginning." (RLWIKM, p. 122)

So, the point is he was looking in 1841.

Even before he broke from bourgeois society, Marx brought conflict into the real world by concretising negation of the negation as critique. (Negation of the negation is the moving principle in

Hegel.) As a newspaper editor of the Rheinische Zeitung, Marx wrote to a colleague, Arnold Ruge, in 1842:

"We must not be afraid to criticize the world ruthlessly. I mean ruthlessly in the sense that we must not be afraid of our own conclusions and equally unafraid of coming into conflict with the prevailing powers.. The world has long had the dream of something and must only possess the consciousness of it in order to possess it actually." (M&F, p. 53)

Again, revolutionary critique is the beginning of the Marxist dialectic. That was Marx's first achievement.

Then after Marx's battles against press censorship, in defense of the correspondent from the Moselle region, <sup>against the numerous</sup> laws against wood theft, he broke from bourgeois society, he committed himself to its overthrow, and he began by going to the workers in Paris and became "practical in the Marxist sense of 'practical-critical-revolutionary.'" (RIWIKM, p.125) It reflected Marx's discovery of the worker as that "energizing principle" he was looking for. And in fact, the draft of Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law was the first open declaration of the proletariat:

"As philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapons in philosophy; and once the lightning of thought has struck deeply into this naive soil of the people, the emancipation of the Germans into men will be accomplished." (RIWIKM, p. 124-5)

The Introduction was published in early 1844 and reflected Marx's second achievement -- discovering the proletariat as a revolutionary Subject.

The third accomplishment happened at the same time with the publication of "On The Jewish Question." In it Marx held that civil emancipation or equality for Jews would only be the first step at real emancipation which Christian society needed desperately, too. Nothing short of a "revolution in permanence" would do.

In late 1844, Marx wrote what we call the Humanist Essays. Engels credits Marx with having laid out the foundation for Historical Materialism in them. So by the time Marx comes to Hegel's Philosophy of Mind in The Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, he has made a foundation in 1) critique, 2) the discovery of the revolutionary Subject, the worker, and 3) the concept of revolution-in-permanence.

If these were the foundation for Marx's new continent of thought and revolution which he spent the rest of his lifetime developing, how would completing a critique of Hegel's philosophic system in Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic serve Marx further? Not that I presume that Raya would answer that, but she did recognize that

Marx's <sup>in breaking off</sup> ~~goal~~ was a conscious one:

"The real question is this: Is it possible for another age to make a new beginning upon Hegel's Absolutes, especially absolute negativity, without breaking totally with Hegel? Marx did not think so." (P&R, p. 45)

In other words, one must work out the tasks of one's own age. We missed that in Philosophy and Revolution so we may have missed Raya's return to the matter of discontinuity again where it comes up again in the Perspectives. The title of one of the sections in it should have been a strong hint: "The Absolute Method -- The Unchained Dialectic." This is what it said:

"That movement from theory becomes the uniqueness of Marxist-Humanist philosophy and our original contribution to Marx's Marxism. That happens to be exactly where Marx left off in his critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Mind, once he discovered his new continent of thought and of revolution." (Perspectives, p. 23)

I think this is why Raya stresses so heavily that Absolute Method is not Absolute Idea; it is the road to the Absolute Idea. The Idea is Marxist-Humanism. The reason is because, she asserts, "You cannot step over historic barriers even with a Promethian vision." (p.10) It would take the birth of new passions and new forces to do that, an idea Marx recognized, but has only come to be with, for example, the youth as revolutionaries. (What's new here, too, is the way Raya shows that the youth personify a revolutionary Subject taking the historic stage, who represent Marx's bequest to us, a reaching for the future.)

The lapses of time between the periods when revolutionaries made returns to Hegel are noted in this essay. Thirty-one years from Marx's death in 1883 to Lenin's search for a revolutionary way out of the morass of World War One, and 30 years from Lenin's death in 1923 to the breakthrough on the Absolute Idea by Raya in 1953.

Those gaps also represent historic barriers. The first return to Hegel by a Post-Marx Marxist in the first generation of them was Lenin. So it is to him and Rosa Luxemburg that I'll turn in the second subsection, "The half-way return to Hegel after Marx."

THE HALF-WAY RETURN TO HEGEL AFTER MARX

For that first generation of Marxists after Marx, it wasn't enough to have an energizing principle. They "listened to the revolutionary unorganized workers" (p. 2-3) -- yet "held onto the political revolutionary aspect without any concern for philosophy." For Luxemburg, her profound sensing of opportunism in and break from Kautsky was not extended to an understanding of "how total was the

lack of comprehension of Marx's philosophy of revolution that would extend beyond any single question" -- like nationalism or the Morocco incident. Her stubbornness on the national question -- holding there is no revolutionary struggle besides the proletariat's -- is obviously not Marx's. But what it paralleled was an attitude to the dialectic not fundamentally different from Lenin's when it came to a universal -- organization. Lenin's return to Hegel to discover the revolutionary method in Marx (Lenin turned to criticizing all Marxists for not understanding Hegel's Science of Logic and therefore Marx's Capital) led to the creation of a concrete universal for his age in 1917 -- the revolutionary government would have to be ruled to a man, woman and child. Yet so indelible was the stamp of the Second, Marxist International's economism that Lenin did not make a category, a concept of his return to Hegel by publishing his Philosophic Notebooks. (Please see item #29 of the Archives exhibit, the first page of Raya's translation of Lenin's Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic.) An encounter with organization would have followed.

For Luxemburg, though she could come so close to reestablishing the Marxian revolutionary dialectic as to analyze the 1905 Russian Revolution in her own age as a new kind of revolution that Marx foresaw after the defeat of the 1848 Revolutions of his own age, and though she could raise the question of spontaneity of the masses as a necessary ingredient for revolutionary organization, she did not make her own break with Kautsky "into the kind of universal that others could recognize and accept." (RWIKM, p. 119) Her universal remained as it was in her summation of the 1905 Russian Revolution -- stepping into the period of open revolutionary struggle depended upon one important condition: unity of the Party. (This is from her address to the RSDLP in 1907.)

That left the 30-year gap in the development of the revolutionary dialectic from Lenin to our own age -- another historic barrier. What Lenin could not see was Stalinism as a new state-capitalist age. His Philosophic Notebooks could even be used by Stalin against Bukarin in factional debates instead of as historic mirror to be held against what he had warned -- a return to capitalism. (See item #23 of the Archives exhibit, the original published analysis of "Russian as State-Capitalist Society" by Freddie Forest.)

It was on the question of national liberation that Lenin created another concrete universal flowing from his encounter with

Hegel -- that national liberation could be the "bascillus" for revolution by the industrial worker. But if Lenin did not leave the philosophic humus for his political breakthroughs, a new movement from practice to theory, the Third World revolutions today, helped close the 30-year gap. Yet it only brought us to the threshold of the Idea. The third subsection is therefore called "Creating the Idea -- Marxist-Humanism." Please go back to the Perspectives where the opposition to transcending a historic barrier is posed at the time of the Bolivian Revolution in 1952:

CREATING THE  
IDEA --  
MARXIST-  
HUMANISM

"A new sense of objectivity cried out to be released, but none were there to embrace it as two kinds of subjectivity engaged in internal tensions, inevitable but nevertheless diversionary from the objectively developing new situation. We were nearing the eve of 1953, that is to say, the philosophic breakthrough in the Absolute Idea, which saw in it not only a movement from theory but from practice which led to recapturing the philosophy of Marx's Humanism and the departure of those who refused to go beyond the theory of state-capitalism." (Perspectives, p. 15)

Yet just because Raya did go on to complete Hegel's system -- into the Philosophy of Mind ~~where~~ <sup>where</sup> Marx ~~had not gone~~ <sup>had not gone</sup> -- it didn't end the matter of meeting historic barriers. <sup>When revolution aborted itself</sup> in the 1960s -- at its highest point in France, 1968 -- there were those who did not agree on what our unique task is. To those, Raya wrote The Newness of Our Philosophic-Historic Contribution and stated that theoretic preparation is "on the one hand, the strictly philosophic problems in a comprehensiveness never attempted before, and, on the other hand, Economic Reality and the Dialectics of Revolution' appearing in so varied, contradictory forms as to fail to measure up to the challenge of our era." What jumped off the page when I read it this time was this:

"...Lenin didn't follow Hegel into the Philosophy of Mind, Marx, who did, left the analysis unfinished as he pursued his thoroughly original discovery of Historical Materialism. It did, of course, reappear as he split the Absolute into two in Capital. But where it concerned 'direct' contact with Hegel as the latter was tracing a process, a philosophic process, Marx happened to have broken off after he reached paragraph 384, though I didn't know this in the exhilaration over Stalin's death, when I chose to begin my analysis of the Philosophy of Mind with paragraph 385. (p. 8)

It is ironic that "Richard" to whom this was addressed was making an equation between Marcuse's and our philosophy, It was against Mao's state-capitalist politics that Raya used "Two Kinds of Subjectivity." (Please see item #96 in the Archives exhibit, the dissident Chinese translation of "The Challenge of Mao Tse-tung.")

But she began by working it out in relation to Marcuse who missed the Marxist-Humanist method behind the recognition of state-capitalism *now did he accept the 5-c-*

Although the Frankfurt School, of which Marcuse was one, began as a "critical school," "critical" became an avoidance of Marx's critical revolutionary-practical activity. On the other hand, 1960 was the beginning of the recognition "that theory and philosophy are not the same." (See item #84 from the Archives exhibit, a letter from Marcuse to Raya and Raya's answer in 1960 during a period of ongoing correspondence between them.) Back then, first with that correspondence with Marcuse and then in the addition of <sup>in Place of a Conclusion</sup> "Two Kinds of Subjectivity" in Marxism & Freedom in 1964, the ground was set for the "plunge into paths untrodden even by Marx and Lenin." Practically that revolutionary critique of Mao, of Marcuse and of Richard meant that no longer would we countenance state-capitalist theory without Marxist-Humanist philosophy. *even in the case of Lenin*

a barrier we are only now coming to terms with conceptually. I say that because 1969 when The Newness of Our Philosophic-Historic Contribution was written was also when the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection was assembled and presented for all to participate in -- the Archives. And only now are we having an encounter with Archives in a way that in the most Marxian-practical way sets off our contribution from all others, *even post-Marxist* ~~Marx~~ included. However our theoretical grasp of the epoch we live in and the new forces as Reason can only represent an unchained dialectic when it is summarized as concrete and universal. For us now, our concrete universal is March 21 and it is to that we must turn. Thus, the second part of this talk is called "The Big Lecture."

THE BIG LECTURE

It shouldn't be any surprise now that the next public presentation by Raya will again discuss the whole. Our flyer will say: Raya Dunayevskaya, founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. speaks on "Dialectics of Revolution: American Roots and World Humanist Concepts." With this lecture, we are coming into a realization of what Detroit as Subcenter means, as it was posed as part of "The Big Move." First, let's be careful to note that Raya observes "high tech has now shifted the center (of News & Letters) away from what was the CIO and the UAW: Detroit." Yet what that acknowledges is that a legacy of Black, women youth and labor struggles runs through Detroit. Our foundation in four forces of revolution as reason (a concrete universal) reappears today as youth opposition to a police state in the schools, and, tomorrow as Black women challenging the male chauvenism of Civil Rights leaders as a Martin Luther King commen

leaders at a Martin Luther King commemoration, and the next day as immigrant, white and Black women challenging sweatshop conditions at US Auto Radiator, and the next day after that as the unemployed challenging the state bureaucracy. All these come through the paper and local activity.

But not only is that Detroit "culture." "How fares the concrete universal philosophically?" is a question we must work out again and again. Put another way, "Dialectics of Revolution: American Roots and World Humanist Concepts" is the concrete universal we must grasp over 35 years since it was posed as our goals in Marxism and Freedom, and how have they been enriched? The six dialectical moments posed in "responsibility for Marxist-Humanism in the Historic Mirror" each were there at the beginning, and each have self-developed to the point where, unlike the Trilogy of Revolution, a fourth book, Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future presents them as a new beginning, a book about Marxist-Humanism's method.

It should be added here that there is a summation in the minutes by Raya where she reiterates, or rather subordinates the idea of Historical Mirror for "personal responsibility." Although the Big Move and this part of the meeting on Dec. 30 on personal responsibility took up Chicago tasks, the non-geographical nature of "where" as a philosophic designation of the epoch means we can include ourselves -- as members, as a Detroit local, as members-to-be. I mean whether "personal responsibility" or "historic mirror" is the idea in front of us, unchaining the dialectic is our goal. And laying the ground most importantly and executing technical arrangements for March 21 is our practice of that.

As an example of the ground we want to establish, I want to take the final dialectic, the need for total uprooting which Raya says we meet in the Introduction/Overview where it takes up the fourth part of the Book, "The Trail to the 1980s." If Marx didn't leave us a path through Hegel's Philosophy of Mind, he did leave us Mind as Action. At the moment he created Historical Materialism, the man/woman relationship was posed as the measure of a truly positive, humanist society, beyond vulgar communism. Marx's activity as a mind in action extended all the way to his last decade where the man/woman relation again was the yardstick for freedom in primitive and modern society. This practice of critique which knows no enclave, no separation between Life and science, today is expressed as a whole Women's Liberation movement that began its discussion of the dialectic with criticism of the Left -- the male chauversit Left. Marx's last decade likewise culminated a life of development as Philosopher of Permanent Revolution

Creating Ground for Organization to the point where he criticized the Marxists of his day in the Critique of the Gotha Program for posing a program that compromised on its vision of a new society. That legacy meets a Women's Liberation movement that has seriously posed the question: Can organization be the pathway to liberation?

However, it is only Marxist-Humanism which has met Marx's practice of philosophy of revolution. Raya completed the return to the Philosophy of Mind. Can there be a single movement uniting critique as a movement from practice, organization as the order of the day, and the dialectics of revolution? It hasn't happened yet, but that is the goal which we want to accomplish on March 21 and in all its ramifications.

that's our task

The exhibit for the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection and the March 21 lecture, or our view of it, likewise can be the "place" where this goal can be begun anew, that is, to bring the age to an understanding of itself. Already, I have tried to illustrate this talk from examples from the exhibit. Of course, it is not merely something that will be in the gallery of Reuther Library and then disappear. It has not come into being merely by appearing, and it will remain Subject or Method for our unique historical organizing before,

Women's  
Liberation  
movement  
is not  
merely  
a  
subject  
to be  
developed  
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it

during and after the lecture. There is not a topic and no revolutionary pathway -- or concrete universal -- that doesn't go through the exhibit. Who will we bring to Reuther Library so that they can merge their own experiences and Subjectivity with Marxist-Humanism's? And how can we reach out to people to make that mergence on March 21 in a way that establishes ground for membership in the organization of the Absolute Idea -- Marxist-Humanism? We have gotten a great assist from Raya in this discussion towards those ends.

is not seen