

Aug. 1, 1970

Dear Paul:

Your letter arrived as I was locking up the door in polluted Detroit to escape to the Laurentians for where I'm dropping this note. (I'll be back in Detroit Aug. 9th.)

Yes, I'm confident that once we meet and develop our ideas as they assume a human face, we will be able to work out a form of collaboration in the editing of Philosophy and Revolution. I will bring with me the first and most difficult chapter of the whole book, Hegel's Absolute Idea As New Beginning, which analyzes the major works of Hegel "in themselves" and "for us" as today illuminates them, and they help illuminate our age of transition. Ever since the death of Stalin allowed the emergence of a new movement from practice to challenge the stillbirth of Trotskyism as any historic continuity of Marxism from the death of Lenin, I have been laboring hard at breaking down the Absolute Idea as having that duality of totality and movement from practice as well as from theory. (I wrote my first letters on the Absolute Idea in the few short weeks between the death of Stalin in March and the East German Revolt in June.) I took to Telos like a duck to water because the very announcement of its birth made me feel that that new generation of revolutionaries that did not separate dialectics from either thought or action had arrived and, of all fantastic places, in pragmatic America. In any case, once we meet and discuss (and I do agree with you that Telos will have a lot to contribute to the work), we will then be able to arrange also for a full day's conference for winter when the work will be completed but not yet published.

Now, then as to the Waterloo conference, it looks somewhat different from what you first described. Is it still to be held as the Dialectical Materialism section of the APA? Is the project of establishing a Canadian journal seen as something of the serious nature of Telos, or of the rather diffuse and constantly changing character of RA, more on the nature of Our Generation, whose conference I addressed last year and thought rather lopsided? It won't, of course, affect my appearance, but the more I know about the audience, the more concrete (in the Hegelian sense of comprehensive as well as tangible) can be my presentation of what you call Hegelian Leninism. It is not only a question of presenting the pivotal function of the dialectic in Lenin's thought. It is also crucial to have a concrete analysis flow not only from what Lenin said and did post 1914-1923, but from what is, 1970, and, again, not only as tangible, but as the new Humanism the East Europeans brought unto the historic stage in the 1950's, the Africans in the 1960's, and the French, Italians and USA since 1965. This, as I see it, is new; this is a task, not a conclusion; this has been beating at us from below for nearly two decades. It is time theoreticians tried meeting the challenge not only out of their heads but out of mass movements without, however, "giving in" to the latest "fads" (and it is time, as against Women's Liberation which I criticized when some one referred to it as "fad", I do mean it) whether they arise out to the sky from drugs or from Maoism. Nothing is more decisive than catching that link of historic continuity.

It may not be possible to present it all in an hour, but I am a disciplinarian of myself more than I ever was of others, and so if that ~~was~~ is your rule, I will limit myself accordingly. Discussion must always be at least as long a time as presentation. I'm a strict believer and practitioner of dialectics even when it is limited to its original Greek sense of dialogue; look what great tragedies arose out of those dialogues! Two has always been the most dangerous as well as the most serious number even where mass historic movements, transitions from one age to another, and epochs refusing to co-exist were concerned.

I'll leave other matters raised by you for another time, but I'm including special postscript to make sure when I speak of collaboration I mean with Telos, not with RA.

Yours

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Revised
 Carousel



Tunes

August 1, 1970

70 STATION STREET • AJAX, ONTARIO • TELEPHONE 942-5580 AREA CODE 416

Dear Paul:

I do not know whether to call this note a postscript to the letter on Philosophy and Revolution, as book, as conference, as new deepened relations with TELOS, or an "underground info", or what. But it is important that we understand each other fully on my total distrust of Paul Buhle, and, therefore, that I take for granted that when I speak of Telos collaborating on editing my book, I do not, NOT include Buhle who is not to see anything I send to you re book, etc. Here is why:

1) Although he took the initiative of contacting me, not I him, Buhle never bothered once to look at the genuine documents of J-F T (outside of the few he had when the tendency was not split), but proceeded to collaborate in helping James rewrite the history of those documents by publishing those he wished under his (Johnson, now finally willing to tell he is James after having resisted it for a decade, incl. return to England) name as if they were his alone. Since he was not part of the Tendency, and has never bothered to ask Forest, I cannot see that he could possibly "indicate some of the major battle-lines". I suspect that now that Glaberman has likewise split from James (and that it is not unconnected with Buhle's sudden "prominence" in that non-existent tendency other than "connected with the writer James"), there may be some light shed on that. But I am not the least interested in it. James has produced nothing since the split that is worth any one's serious attention unless the rewriting of history becomes "an original."

2) If any one is interested in the original document both as it was, and as the development into Marxist-Humanism from the merely economic analysis of state-capitalism, I have deposited the whole with the Labor Department of Wayne State University Library, called Marxist-Humanism: 1941-1969, and filed as Raya Dunayevskaya Collection. (I believe I sent either you or Telos a listing of those archives.) Again, this is only for archivist and movement's interest. What is urgent still however as to objective and subjective reason for distrust of James-Johnson is this:

3) In Dec. 1954 the Govt. decided to list JFT as subversive, CLRJ was a British subject, safely ensconced in GB a time when Korean War produced the McCarthy hysteria in the US. Forest (I) was here as big as life with a publication (Correspondence) in full light challenging the powers that be, and having only 10 days to answer the listing. We were disagreeing on many things, most revolving around my desire to finish M&F (then in outline form called "Marxist and State-Capitalism"), the new stage of consciousness on a world scale symbolized by the East German Revolt June 17, 1953. But I never thought that JRJ, instead of presenting a unity at least to the bourgeoisie, would choose that moment to break up the tendency. He did. Outside of informing the international groupings of that action, I have never once had a word to say publicly on that, never made any mention of CLRJ, obeyed the strictures on Johnson as the only political name. The one time I did have a footnote referring

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to that conglomeration of escapes from reality called "Facing Reality" which not only whitewashed but glorified Nkrumah. The pamphlet I sent you on Afro-Asian Revolutions, ~~was sent to you~~ but, again, I ~~sent it~~ only as footnote. ~~But, again, I~~ you may be interested in why I considered the lie Bahle propagates about James "training Africans" to go back and make revolutions, "for example Nkrumah" as of much lesser importance than the underlying philosophy which produced the lie: way back in 1947 I was very active in Harlem in a special series on the Negro; a World View that the Schomburg Collection--one of the finest in the country on Africa--was sponsoring. It is there I met African students in this country, none of whom had, of course, any "name" then. I was impressed with Nkrumah, introduced him to James as I felt color would help establish a closer relationship, and we continued to correspond until power seemed within reach. At that time there was a complete break; James then naturally also thought it was all ridiculous to combat Gandhi and Lenin, and so there was no correspondence, much less "training for leadership," until after J's broke, and CLR as editor of a nationalist publication in Trinidad was "born" at end of 1950's and J then began writing the glories of Nkrumah plus libation.)

4) It is sad indeed that when American rebel youth do begin to search for theory that their own hunger for "leadership" leads to such bizarre bypaths.

Yours,

The New Marxism

(A Tolos Philosophical Conference: Waterloo, Ontario, October 8-11)

The last few years have seen a tremendous growth in interest in Marxism which has uncovered scores of theoretical problems, Straitjacketed in fixed categories and committed to dubious political programs, the old Marxism ^{no longer} has turned out to be somewhat irrelevant and in the long run, it has functioned more as an ideology than as a truly scientific approach to social reality. To remedy this state of affairs, there has been a revival in Marxist scholarship. This trend is becoming increasingly felt in North America in academic circles which, as the official transmitters of bourgeois ideology, have become totally useless intellectually. This conference seeks to bring together precisely the new breed of young scholars engaged in the reconstruction of Marxist theory and the development of a concrete political program.

Tentative Schedule

Thursday, October 8:

- 2:00 PM - Paul Ficcione: "Phenomenological Marxism: Towards a Marxist Understanding of Marxism"
- 4:00 PM - Paul Breines: "Hegelian Marxism: Lukacs and Korsch"
- 7:00 PM - Raya Dunayevskaya: "Hegelian Leninism"
- 9:00 PM - Symposium on Class-Consciousness

Friday, October 9:

- 9:00 AM - Dick Howard: "Existential Marxism: Sartre and Merleau-Ponty"
- 11:00 AM - David Gross: "Utopian Marxism: Ernst Bloch"
- 2:00 PM - Albrecht Wellmer: "Critical Theory"
- 4:00 PM - Russell Jacoby: "Rosa Luxemburg's Marxism"
- 7:00 PM - James Hansen: "The Marxism of the Second International"
- 9:00 PM - Symposium on Labor

Saturday, October 10:

- 9:00 AM - Michael Kosok: "Science and Dialectics"
- 11:00 AM - Robin Blackburn: "Structuralist Marxism"
- 2:00 PM - Silvia Federici: "Gramsci's Marxism"
- 4:00 PM - Alexander Delfini: "Heideggerian Marxism" ✓
- 9:00 PM - Symposium on "Spontaneity and the Party"

Sunday, October 11:

- 9:00 AM - Bernard Flynn: "Recent French Marxism" *no longer*
- 11:00 AM - Howard Parsons - "The Christian-Marxist Dialogue"
- 2:00 PM - Symposium on the New Left Marxism

For further information, contact: Scott Arnold, Federation of Students
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