

May 1, 1983, 8:45 p.m.

Dear Raymond and Frank: (Copy to Andy)

It is about 2½ hours since we finished the sum-up meeting in which you created a new category for "remembrance of things past" as the future in the present, that is to say, the trail back to 1949-50 as the actual trail to 1983 where the origins of Marxist-Humanism in its embryo stage actually reflects our true roots. An historic labor struggle, one of the most critical in labor history--1949-50 Miners General Strike--is the one that become our roots, and thus the predecessor of my 1953 break-through on Absolute Idea.

However, it becomes imperative that we do not forget in that reconstruction of the past that it is not only historic narrative but historic reason. And this means that there is no separation between theory and practice but, just as movement from practice is itself a form of theory, BECOMES SIMULTANEOUSLY THEORY REACHING TO PHILOSOPHY.

This means that it must not only be narrative of what was happening among miners, but the self-determination of our thought as we responded. That cannot be as just a 1:1 relationship either, but the factional fights, open or hidden that goes on between tendencies. In a word, you, Frank, who at the split with Johnson, remained with him, means you have documents that were ~~actually~~ reflective of what J. was really after and the implicit as well as explicit criticism of me. For example, what you said about some accusation of "small party-ism" when nothing short of a 100,000 General Strike is equated by that ego to distribution of a million leaflet is distributed to non-participants, be it a la Labor Action, on the one hand, and the reformism involved in SWP Militant choosing to write of "how great" John L. Lewis, asking the workers not to disobey the Lewis telegram to return to work.

I don't know Andy at that specific moment but I am convinced he was at that miners' strike where, clearly, the overwhelming majority of the rank and file voted, precisely, to disregard that telegram, saying "The union is in us, or it isn't. What did we ever get from the union?" Naturally Andy will write his actions and coordinate your remembrances as well as his. But, first, is to did deep into your own action, INCLUDING THOSE EVENTS THAT MAY NOT THEN HAVE SEEMED IMPORTANT, BUT ACTUALLY PROVE CRUCIAL IN THE BIRTH OF MARXIST-HUMANISM.

For example, though I was that active then whereas J. was in NY afraid SWP criticism of what we were doing "purely on our own" instead of following the "line" from the center since we were not orthodox Trotskyists but the JFT the JFT was placating them, but I certainly wasn't. Even more true is that "checkup on us" by having us come to Ohio and the tri-state meeting of macho steelworkers okaying our activities after all, after which the caravan that still one more JFT member, Zupan, arranging a meeting of rank & file members with UAW Local 600 succeeded in creating.

Now, whether or not we get Mike--and I feel we can get a lot of help from him--to co-author the pamphlet. The point is: 1) we do have three sitll with us; (2) we do have my new tape at Taiment of historic narrative as reason so that we can see how all this, just this, was the movement from practice AND from theory that began that whole new world stage of historic development which, though we have always mentioned as "just as in 1949-50... the fact is that since the breakthrough on Absolute Idea occurred in 1953 and East Europe was more world-shaking, the focus was on that rather than on US.

Raymond, you had some magnificent things to say on both the role of VP & SWP (and I believe also the non-activity of CLRJ) that must be expanded. And I was also excited about the fact that in August you could go down to W.Va. BUT DEADLINE FOR 1ST DRAFT OF REMEMBRANCE REMAINS JUNE. O.k.?

Yours,

Raya

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May 10, 1983

Dear Mike:

As you can see from the stamp I am in Canada where I escaped to rest a week after a most exhaustive and also most exciting 3-mo. lecture tour on the new book and the Marx centenary. And I am ~~not~~ that far behind in acknowledging how glad I was to have seen you on the W.Va. University campus and renewed acquaintance. Two of the events of the tour that I felt would interest you are the following:

1) The Tamiment Library in NY which has a microfilm of the Archives I deposited with the Wayne State University Labor Archives asked me to please also consent to an interview (for their Oral History of the Left). When I resisted, saying they already have 7,000 pages, 1941-81, plus the books and pamphlets, they insisted. But you never speak of you and not just ideas, and it is you in labor events as well as philosophy. The labor historian who did the interviewing became so excited about the 1949-50 miners' strike both as unrecorded history and as so integral to my category of our age as a movement from practice to theory as a form of theory itself that he couldn't understand how so important an event wouldn't rate a pamphlet all to itself. I agreed with him.

2) By the time I reached the West Coast

and talked with both Raymond and Frank, and found that they also agreed and began telling their reminiscences. I was convinced that, with Andy, and telling you of it, we could indeed have a most exciting and historic work. What do you think?

I did pass through NY before coming out here (I'll be back in Detroit next week (5.15) and Andy said he had not heard from you, so we do not know your attitude. By what I wrote in your book you can see that I do consider your work there as a shaper of history. The paragraph of the strike in Marxism and Freedom (I assume you have that work and what was the final chapter in the 1st ed.--Ch. XVI, "Automation and the New Humanism"-- will refresh your memory as to my attitude) is not the same as participants speaking for themselves. How about reliving that time?

Do let me know, and give my warmest regards to your daughter and ask her to drop me a note of her attitude to the new book on Rosa Luxemburg.

Yours,

O. yes, Raymond said that he intended, during his vacation period in August, to come down to Morgantown.

*O, the reason ^{shaken} the shape. } The note on
which I wrote to T . Show it
to Andy + Reed copy if we should
want to xerox it to send
to Roy Frank - I put the
return address but included
my label.*