

P E R S O N A L

February 25, 1983

Dear Peter:

First of all, I want to tell you that there has never been at any time in our whole existence -- and that dates back to the JFT period as well, or for that matter, to the total reorganization needed by VIL in April 1917 -- a completion of a new book (be it M&F, P&R, or RLWLM, or for that matter the 1953 Letters on the Absolute Idea) which has not produced, on the one hand a great step forward, and on the other the absolute opposite of falling off of members. To put it simply but dialectically, precisely because a new moment has been discovered objectively and presented subjectively, the ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ articulation of that new moment has made so sharp a division between what was and what is that the shock to those who are not for it, is such that they in turn reveal their deviation. In the strictly Marxist-Humanist period, the most serious date was 1969, when, on the one hand, we had all the great 60s activists insisting that the 68 was still alive and with this supposed leftism, they then proceeded to try to sabotage the preparation for real theoretical development -- P&R, and counterposed to it how much more important it was to participate in a Mahwah picket line in New Jersey, than to come to listen to me on a first draft of P&R. Dick G. did indeed consider that, as an intellectual who on his own came to M&F and now was part of the great 68 revolt at Columbia, ~~XXX~~ could lecture on the AI as Herbert Marcuse developed it in the great new introduction to his Reason and Revolution, which had totally perverted the dialectic as well as the intent of R&R 1949, not 1960!

Insofar as RLWLM is concerned, it was, pardon me for using that phrase, "the woman question." So happy were the women that finally their day had come ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ as a movement, that they couldn't possibly any longer be asked to "bow" before a philosophy, if that philosophy was "male-dominated." Of course, no M-Hist admits that. Nevertheless, while the M-Hist is, indeed, bowed to, in the way a good Catholic crosses himself when crossing before a church, that is exactly what remains abstract, while what is concrete, what they passionately believe in, what they have both dreams and nightmares about, and what "therefore" requires TIME for activity, is "the woman question." The very same thing is true with any national question. In fact, because a great revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg, saw that and that

16836

alone in both the "national question" and the "WQ" (and, incidentally, did you know that the only time she was for "the national question" was when she declared she was for divorce?). I'm sure I don't have to go into how wrong she was, but the reason I'm citing RL here is that our people, at first didn't like RL at all, and then went to the opposite extreme (that is, after the Jogibhes/RL break-up, which they wrongly interpret). I then "had trouble" with getting philosophy recognized, without which dialectic not only would the three parts of the book not be seen as one unit, but no individual part would be seen as more than a half-way dialectic. No one, on the other hand, has pleased me more, in her grasp of it, than Neda, both because she related WQ and NQ, and organization.

Unfortunately, I do not have 100 percent belief in her as an exception, and the reason, of all things, is that the other person whom I thought even more important because she was young, Sheila, suddenly considered the column as "foreign". You may not have seen why -- or rather, all the whys -- I invited you to be present in the 1:1 meeting I had with her, but that far back, I had got a whiff of Tudeh-ism coming all the way from good old popular frontism.

Asadkar is the one person I do think ~~NEKKHIEK~~ is a full Marxist-Humanist and you may not know how that, in small ways, both helped me make the decision and suddenly entertain doubts about the others. You know how very impressed I was with his piece on Sultan Zadeh, which I thought, at the moment, I didn't know anything about, and was wondering why Galiev, (the Georgian comrade, who argued with VIL, and who fought for extending the Second CI thesis to consider the whole nation as a proletarian nation) meant so much to me. In any case, I urged Asadkar to develop his full thesis. But then, one day, I looked into one of my old favorites -- Soviet Russia and the East by Eudin and North -- which I had not read since writing MAF, and by golly what the book opened to was pages 98 to 100; all circled in red was what Zadeh has said in support of VIL. In a word, when I was first working out the Stalin chapter in MAF, I studied everything on the National Question, and how absolutely chaviniest he was to the Georgian delegation, and what had led Lenin, literally on his death bed, to ask for Stalin's removal. I believe I didn't think that much of that chapter until the Iranian Revolution. When I reported all this, Neda was very interested (in fact, found one error in a name in the book), but what she singled out to talk about at the local was all the new in the struggles of the Muslim women after the 1917 revolution. I can't exactly say why I didn't like what she singled out, because it definitely was an important aspect -- sometimes instincts are very funny things, so I'll let it drop at that. The point now is that what is happening in EAA may appear as only "time", or "smallness of numbers", and as the need for one who is truly Middle-Eastern and Marxist-Humanist. I don't think so. Eugene, Mike and Olga hope to meet with Neda before she leaves, and she certainly will help, but I just feel that you ~~SHHH~~ must know all I've written here.

Hurriedly yours, J. J. J.

16837