

JULY 12, 1966

Dear John,

This plan to present no less than three papers on the dialectics of liberation, focusing some of them on the correspondence between HD and HJ is very impressive to me. For all the talk on the part of your circle, "the thesis of the paper, in essence, is that because she plunged into Hegel's absolute and because Marcuse stopped short of it... that was Kellner's answer?"

Though we were both revolutionaries (even if HD expressed that only from an academic chair) we reached very different political conclusions for our own activities which is why we considered ourselves "friendly enemies". Where on the surface it looked as if he were certainly more philosophically (Hegelian) rooted, the truth is that our relation to Hegel himself showed just how far apart we were directly to Hegel, especially to the Absolute Idea. One pivotal letter--his response to my letter on the absolute when we asked why do I need the Absolute when I'm doing very well politically--tells the whole story. That is to say, perhaps I didn't need the Absolute and that precisely because I had broken through the mystical veil that Hegel had imposed upon the Absolute, Marcuse surely did. Instead, he dismissed it from "on high", i.e., the twentieth century maturity looking down upon the religiosity of the early nineteenth century. So what exactly was "greater", more mature about the lavish praise bestowed upon Angela Davis as the "greatest" student he ever had, and luxuriating in the post of guru that the youth of the 1960's who disregarded the hard labor needed for theory and acting as if that was something that could be caught "en route".

Philosophically, it is that he remained in the Doctrine of Essence, at most reaching the threshold--the threshold only--of the Absolute. Or, to put it differently, he spoke of the difference between content and form as if form related to essence as an "inferior", despite the fact that he knew very well when he was talking abstractly that form was not just form vs. content, but had a Universal Form, i.e., the Absolute Idea's manifestation as Absolute Method. Here is what I mean:

Every new beginning must start from the Absolute, i.e., from a totality that is not only a numerical sum-up but the ground for a new beginning. A new beginning is not just something new like an update, it is a new beginning, a new ground. Here is where Objectivity is crucial not alone philosophically but in our everyday work. The objective world exists before ever we were born. It exists independent of us but does not free us from dependence upon it. That is to say, we live in a world we didn't make but we certainly can reshape it, as did each age and that precisely because our subjectivity is not just petty-bourgeois subjectivity, nor is it separated from thought. Our individual Subjects individuality is what Hegel stressed as "Subjectivity that lets nothing interfere with its Universality". In a word, social subject--masses in notion--subjectivity dug deep into the objective world and emerging from the unity of the subjective and the objective at a very specific historic stage.

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Objectivity is inseparable from attitudes to Objectivity. Objectivity is a determinant whether the historic period is a turning point in slave states, or free, or slave slavery under capitalism. Naturally, I'm not talking about Subjectivity, that subjectivity which is not really an ego trip, but is a Universal Form, i.e. the truth because it was not only Subject, but the whole, but philosophy, the Mind. I mention it one of the most profound achievements of the Hegelian dialectic to be those three chapters on Attitudes to Objectivity in the Encyclopedia. Three (actually four)! Please note that Hegel did not list the dialectic numerically, but that, of course, is the whole of the dialectic.

Think of it. Hegel summed up not only the 23 years between his first great philosophic banner of a new age that philosophers failed to keep up with that Objectivity-- the French Revolution-- from his Phenomenology of Mind to the final book of the whole "system", the Philosophy of Mind. Nothing less than the whole range of human development and thought-- 2,500 years of it-- comprised in just three attitudes to objectivity. The significance of this historic leap gains further urgency from the fact that these three attitudes follow the Preliminary Notion. Mind a word, all the Absolutes-- Knowledge, Science, Nature, Mind-- even more specifically, all from the phenomenological attitudes to Objectivity through the Doctrines of Being, Essence and Notion (I repeat, after Preliminary Notion), -- all were permeated with the Absolute. That was the "system"; however, that was not a system, but a dialectic.

Pause a moment to consider what is signified by Objectivity becoming a determinant to a philosopher like Hegel at every turning point in history. How could it possibly be that the long trek from 1) Faith, 2) Empiricism and Criticism (please do not skip over the fact that Empiricism and Criticism are one attitude to Objectivity-- the second), comes to, not the dialectic-- uninterrupted advances-- but is still so fragile that a single step slip off the rails of development produces a backward step, back to Faith, to Intuitionism at which point it is not the dawn of religion or thought or philosophy, but retrogressionism. Talking about counter-revolution from within, the already great development of humanity through Experience (Empiricism) and Critique-- which does recognize that Experience isn't sufficient so that it remains abstract thought, leaving it to "men of good will"-- makes the world what it "should" be, a return to the Ought. That is what brought about all of Hegel's ruthless critique of Kant who introduced the dialectic into the modern world, saving it from burial after the great Greek civilization. And yet, that is exactly where Hegel says that Kant himself "stopped dead". This ruthless critique wasn't said against anyone minor of the philosophic contemporaries, but the greatest before Hegel and teacher of all. And it took Hegel no less than a quarter of a century of "patience, suffering, seriousness and labor of the negative" to come to that conclusion.

When I first broke through on the Absolute in 1953, it preceded the actual first revolt from under totalitarian Communism in East Germany, and followed three years after the simultaneous work on the works of Hegel, Marx, Lenin, and especially Capital. Moreover, there was the theory of state-capitalism, plus the movement from practice as itself a form of theory on the level of the workers' battle against automation. Finally, there was the intense individual activity with masses in motion. In the "background" came the first new Latin American Revolution, in Bolivia, before ever I expressed those Absolutes, (though I had been working them out for years),

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of Hegel, Marx's, Lenin's and our own age in Marxism & Revolution at which point I didn't separate the American route from the world Humanism dimension, calling it Marxist Humanism.

I still didn't think that I couldn't get either East Europe or the Third World or Japan to become collaborators with a second America as the working out the ramifications of the new breakthrough. The breakdown occurred in that period of 1965-68 when on the one hand Mao's so-called "Cultural Revolution" by no accident ~~was~~ *had* that pull on the very turbulent 1960's youth and on the other hand even the state-capitalists in Japan whose youth had broken with the CP and not gone to Mao and translated the early Humanist essays, but still would not venture into the now organizational responsibility for the new dialectical paths in philosophy that the return to Hegelian dialectics in our age made imperative. And that the responsibility rested all on American Marxist-Humanists and there would be no collaborator for Philosophy & Revolution, though the American Black dimension, deeply active on the immediate front of Moham did listen to the projection of PAR which was central to the Black-Red Conference.

The whole point of this is the organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism becoming an historic imperative, something Marcuse never understood though he had come closer during the McCarthy period and helped found a worker's paper though he himself was working on One-Dimensional Man. Funny, these intellectuals--intellectuals who do lean toward revolution but who do not wish to take organizational responsibility.

When it comes to our age, in which we may look on the American scene somewhat isolated, though there is no ongoing revolution anywhere that somehow doesn't find us, *the full* truth is that the very first meeting, by special invitation that you attended, the Expanded REB, was once again centered on New Beginnings that Determine the End. It is this which brings me to the concrete local conclusion re resignation which makes me differ with you. I do not consider one who joins an organization one day and leaves it the next day (or a week or a month) to be serious either about organization or about philosophy. After all, philosophy too, indeed especially philosophy, at first appears only phenomenologically. To become a "science" (Hegel's expression for a total philosophy) it has to have reached Organizational conclusions. It is true that so far as Hegel is concerned, the organization he speaks of is organization of thought. May I ask you to re-read the final paragraph of the Phenomenology on Absolute Knowledge as the Golgotha nevertheless: "The goal, which is Absolute Knowledge or Spirit knowing itself as Spirit, finds its pathway in the recollection of spiritual forms as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their spiritual kingdom. Their conservation, looked at from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; looked at from the side of their intellectually comprehended organization, it is the Science of the ways in which knowledge appears. Both together, or History (intellectually) comprehended, form at once the recollection the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit..."

* I never contributed money and tried to get a publisher for Mr F Revolution
 + I started a workers' paper.

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Marxist-Leninist organization that has accumulated, that is
inwardized--(in sich gehen)--worked out, such an organization of thought,
the one who joins, joins not only as a "self-liberating" experience but
also precisely because he finds he has something to learn from it, even
if his acquaintance is only with our Who we Are and What we Stand for
Statement. The impatience for a dialogue on the individual's ground
at the very moment when the world has become a changed world and in
the offing has no less than 90 days open for discussion is not, I repeat,
a serious person*.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the Convention at which time
I also hope I'll have some time for a talk with you on your ~~written~~
papers.

Yours,

Taya

*Not so incidentally, a non-response is ~~also~~ a very loud response
if one takes the patience of asking himself: why?

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