

October 27, 1955

Dear Herbert Marcuse:

The amazing thing about this tour on the book is the accidental feature rather than the planned for groups of workers and intellectuals. It turned out that some universities on the coast had heard that I was coming and invited me to speak before various classes. Although my articles that they were acquainted with (American Economic Review) were a decade old, they were being used as standard text reference both in the history of social thought classes and in the classes on economics and economic systems. They are starved for any non-Communist Marxist views. I told them that my interest had shifted to the philosophic foundations rather than the economic aspects and even that did not seem to surprise them because they said that they gathered from my economic articles the philosophic interest and saw a prediction in them: where I spoke of the Stalinists violating the dialectic structure of CAPITAL I said it was not for pedagogic reasons but what they taught and that by 1947 when it was followed up by Zhdanov's saying that Russian theorists better find "a new dialectic law" rather than the one of contradiction since the "classless society" operated only on "criticism and self-criticism", etc.etc.

In any case, in Berkeley I spoke to a small seminar on The Philosophic Foundations of Marxism. I was amazed that they had not heard of your Reason and Revolution and recommended highly there as everywhere else. The Professor (Oscar Landauer) it then asked me whether by any chance you were the son of Julian Marcuse whom he knew well in Germany and who has since died. I told him I would find out. By the time I reached LA and spoke to UCLA, UC and Occidental, I convinced not only the economics and sociology classes but a philosophic seminar to let me speak to them on Hegel's Absolute Idea: A Marxian Interpretation. I thought it was strange of me to address a metaphysics class but 4 professors came just to hear what it is a Marxist would say on Hegel, especially since various seminars they tried holding on Hegel's Works fell apart before ever they reached their end. Here, on the contrary, the excitement was as genuine as in the topical classes and no one could make the students leave when the bell rang. They thought it was my "pedagogic talents" but I assured them it was the topic itself and if you really believe in the dynamism of ideas, especially in the dynamism of the dialectic, that the whole self-movement adds a greater dimension to the human being than any Cinemascope invention. They thanked me for giving them "a new frame of reference" to make Hegel's abstractions more concrete.

All this and the book itself as I now think of it I would like to discuss with you. I have not heard from you so do not know when or if you can get to NY when I reach there Nov. 15th. I doubt I could make it to Boston unless some university there invites me and pays fare from NY to Boston. I will be back in Detroit by the time you get this letter, so please let me know there your plans.

Yours,

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