

4/6/57

Dear Rag,

The page footnote you asked me to do on the St. Louis movement turned out to be quite a project. When I started looking up the material I had used originally some five years ago I became dissatisfied with my understanding of that time. Not wanting to mar the big book with any ~~extraneous~~ intellectual slovenliness on my part I have waded through all of the material again to prepare what you asked me for.

You will undoubtedly have to recast parts of it. As it is written it is heavy in quotations (basically because you asked me to "mention" two books, Yankee Teacher and one other - and I was not sure which "other" you meant.) As I see it the quotes of Denton Snider on his projected State-capitalist society can be eliminated and but frankly, if any book should be mentioned as reference it is the Schneider, "History of American Philosophy" from which I got summarized the Snider quotes and not "Yankee Teacher." Leidecker is good from the point of view of dates, Harris as a personality and Harris as a teacher but he really has damn little philosophical understanding of the period in history, of the movement from Transcendentalism to Hegelianism, of Brockmeyer, and of what ~~became~~ became of the whole movement. He did a capable job of reading the material and summarizing it but ~~where~~ where he touches the philosophical problems he is not the master of Harris but Harris masters him.

In case you ever need it again here is some of the <sup>source</sup> material I have on the St. Louis movement aside from what I mention. It is probably more than most libraries.

Harris: The Spiritual Sense of Dante's "Divina Commedia"  
Poetry and Philosophy of Goethe  
(Milwaukee Literary School Lectures  
Harris on Goethe and German Philosophy  
and Literature)  
Report of Commissioner of Education, 1894-95

Snider: Books on Shakespeare, ~~Comedies~~ (Comedies; and one on Histories)  
Homer (Odyssey and Illiad) (Shakespeareiad)  
The State  
Education  
Poetry & "A Writer of Books"

In addition I have a number of volumes of the Appleton Education Series with introductions by Harris. Among these is the very important one on "Philosophy of Education" by Rosenkrantz

Yours,

Arthur

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Correct Spelling - Brockmeyer is correct

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It should be noted at this point that a non-Marxist formal Hegelianism flourished in the United States when it was necessary to have a philosophy that could grapple with the dialectical content of the civil war. It was in 1858 that a group of intellectuals in St. Louis led by the New Englander, W.E. Harris, and the German emigrant, Brockmeyer, went away to Europe for a copy of Hegel's Logic. This group was becoming critical of the individualist philosophies of Emerson and Thoreau. Brockmeyer, who had learned of Hegel at Brown University in New England, told the St. Louis group that Hegel was the great man among modern philosophers and his large logic was the work to get.

The St. Louis group spent the next years studying and making the first English translations of the Logic and other writings of Hegel. As Harris said later about these early years, "Philosophy came to mean to us, therefore, the most practical of all species of knowledge... We studied the 'dialectics' of politics and political parties and understood how ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ measures and men might be combined by its light. But our chief application of philosophy was to literature and art." (W.E. Harris, "Hegel's Logic - A Critical Exposition," published by S.C. Griggs and Co, Chicago, 1890; page 13 of the Preface.)

The St. Louis group became the center of a national concern with Hegel. Beginning in 1867 they published the first definitely philosophical periodical in the English language, "The Journal of Speculative Philosophy." They made noteworthy Hegelian interpretations of Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare, Homer, etc. both in their Journal and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in separate books. They became the center of a national network of clubs and schools which lived on their Hegelian interpretations and translations. The Journal itself published the early writings of such later well-known philosophers as William James and John Dewey and these pragmatists were from the first compelled to deal with Hegel. Brockmeyer himself became Lieutenant-Governor of Missouri and drafted that states constitution. Harris became U.S. Commissioner of Education and used his high position in Washington to spread a knowledge of Hegelianism and its application to school teaching.

These American Hegelians supported the North in the Civil War because a Northern victory would mean the ~~xxxxxx~~ victory of industrialism. While they were sympathetic to the morality of Abolitionism (and later to the struggle for Women's rights) they were concerned most with the development of capitalism as the foundation for what they called the Ethical State. After the Civil War, when it became apparent that Northern industrialism was creating as many new problems as it had solved old ones, was fostering reaction on Wall Street on the one hand, and the rise of a militant working class on the other, Harris was very disturbed. He wrote, "It almost looks as though our trade unionism, our free silver, our Wall Street trusts... threaten the stability of democratic government. The only thing that settles

1784  
Harris &  
Brockmeyer

our faith is the desperate thought that there is no possible return to monarchy in its old form. Well, Hegel devoted nearly one third of his Phenomenology to the French Revolution." (quoted by Herbert W. Schneider, "A History of American Philosophy," Columbia University Press, 1946; p. 182)

Another member of the St. Louis movement, Denton Snider, went so far as to anticipate a state-capitalist society. "There is no doubt that wealth can become and does become grasping, tyrannical, negative to the very social order whence it ~~was~~ sprang... Thus individual ownership must be followed or transformed and corrected by another institutional form which we have here called Civic Communism... The Community must again hold property... Where (Individual Ownership) has become destructive of freedom and indeed self destructive it must be saved from itself." (Schneider, p. 183)

Snider looked to the individual captain of industry as being in training "for becoming the recognized institutional administrator of the Social Whole... and work for all socially, and not simply for himself... His authority will no longer be capricious or even patriarchal, but institutional, perchance constitutional, like the President of the United States." (Schneider, p. 184)

With this administrative orientation the American Hegelians could not accept the growing labor movement as the ~~main~~ true bearer of the flag of freedom. Harris and his friends therefore "prudently overlooked the element of exploitation inherent in industrial expansion and became somewhat of a mouthpiece for the bankers, railroad men and industrialists of the city whose gospel was a bigger and better St. Louis." (Eurt F. Deidecker, "Yankee Teacher - The Life of William Torrey Harris," Philosophical Library, 1946; p. 283. 1908, the year before his death found Harris discussing the project of writing a series of popular leaflets for workmen to avert the danger of social revolution.