

Dec. 9, 1957

Dear Fess and Olga:

You have been assigned an especially crucial task in being asked to report on both the Marcuse Preface and my Introduction as well as being the first to launch the entirely new type of educational. Although LA makes an entirely different setting for such a presentation than does W.Va., and, frankly, my eye is more on LA than W.Va. where the workingclasscounter-weight to any intellectual wandering would automatically assure a balanced discussion. On the other hand, I would not waste a minute in LA with any further explanation of why such a Preface was important. Any one who doesn't understand it by now never will.

What is important now is the content, not the wherefore, the content being what it is, why the invitation to the professor to introduce. The Professor summarizes nothing individual and nothing simple, I can assure you. He is the most sensitive of any scholar who "really wants to" be with the workers. He has been exposed to HML in general and to me in particular. He never wavered, despite all the pressure put on him and many were the pressures and subils, to associate his name with mine. He says I went further than the 1920's, which was the highest point ever reached in Marxism, and while he gives a lame excuse (that, in part, this was due to the fact that the Grundrisse had not been published till 1939) he can't really mean to excuse the Marxists for not seeing what is in CAPITAL—the humanism of the dialectic is certainly not present in Grundrisse which is economically and philosophically something a good deal less than what appeared after Marx grabbed on to THE WORKING DAY and made it central to CAPITAL. Yet, despite all this, he could not break through and had to disassociate from me on the current scene, although, according to him, I use nothing short of "the whole arsenal of Marxism" for analysis of state capitalism, on the one hand, and the beginnings of the end of totalitarianism, on the other hand.

What I am trying to say is that if he is stuck there, it is an objective, not a subjective, phenomenon, and many a person who can repeat what I say, will be no further than him when the movement of unity between theory and practice begins to assume actual organizational form. That is why you must treat the letter I sent to the HML on theory as integral part of your report. Theory is hard taskmaster because the actual/struggle does not stand still for a moment and its form is myriad.

As you return, therefore, from his Preface to my Introduction, the emphasis is not to be my "superiority" to college professors but how the objective-subjective situation since the 1950s has compelled theoreticians who were lucky enough to be "in the field" to catch the impulse. These little articles in The Militant on that strike that evoked even from Breitman to write, "It brought a fresh spirit which the field always is supposed to but seldom does." It is not only Trotskyites that didn't see the new style significant or rather reflective of the new theory—just compare the style of Preface and Introduction and see who writes "better". I feel almost like giving a lecture on new art forms but I'll control myself in order to stick clearly to the first lecture and see that these two lay the basis for all other lectures and the road for 200 years and the process instead of merely the conclusion. Let's not forget dear old Hegel, that when a philosopher deals only with results, these of necessity become "the pillow for intellectual sloth."

Good luck to you—and do please let me know your experience in making up that first presentation and in the actual delivery and discussion it provokes.

Yours,  
Rae

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