Oct.22,1964

Dear Morgan:

Your letter came the day before the removal of Khrushchev, with which phenomenon I had to deal before answering you, especially since I had the chance to comment for the daily press in Detroit.(No doubt by now you got the copy from the office; I happen to be in NY.)

To make the answer to your questions as direct and brief as possible, I will not really deal with Hegel till afterwards:1)You seem to think that state-capitalism has changed the nature of the proletariat. It is not true. What is true is that ever since monopoly in its imperialist dimensions transformed a section of the proletariat into its opposite--the aristocracy of labor--every form or stage of capitalism cuts into the ratio of employment. Marcuse seems to think that automation would cut out all employment; machines would run by themselves and all people would become "intellectuals" whose joy would be the measure of the new society. To the extent to which this is due to a misinterpretation of Marx's Grundrisse, here are the facts:

a)Marx, in fighting for the "abolition" of labor, i.e., of value-producing labor for a surplus-value exploitative society, stated that the only measure of "wealth" in such a society is labor-time, whereas when new men would think of true wealth as the new human dimension, this would no longer hold. (Grundrisse has never been translated into English, so, unfortunately, the only quotations you can work on are those used by Marcuse and myself; however, my basic quotation from Marx is not from this version of Capital which he reworked into the final version we know and from which I use the quotation on automation.)

b)Marx, young, old, and in-between, always stressed the humanism, not the machine. The machine was the proof not merely of the material production which is now possible sans capitalists but, in the concrete is itself but a form of dead labor oppressing living labor. He simply did not go in for blueprints such as Marcuse is trying to go into regarding whether automation can be or cannot be fully realizable under capitalism. One thing,however, he never varied from and that was that no machine, no "thing", neither automated or otherwise, can dig capitalism's grave; only living being can, only those strategically situated in production can be decisive in that grave-digging.

You seem to think that the movement from/concrete theory to analysis would be more fruitful than working on philosophy. Concrete analyses are always useful, and can never be stopped--no dialectician was ever a greater empirical man than Marx (or for that matter Hegel insofar as history was concerned) on both economics and history. I worked on "the" analysis of TNEC, etc.etc. for years on end, but then decided that at this stage they do not change matters fundamentally whereas philosophy can throw new and profound illuminations still. (Incidentally, I did return to economics in my TW for the issue of N&L which is coming off the press now, but it had to be removed because of Khrushchev's fall and China's atomic explosion, so it will first appear in next issue.)

Now the reason for this attachment to philosophy, or, more specifically and only Hegelian philosophy and Marxian humanism, is that, in this sphere, abstraction is a help because it is not abstraction from reality but a generalization based on reality whose logic reveals also the pull of the future. Marx and Lenin did for their respective ages (Lenin not as well as Marx, but he at least broke through to the new though life became too short at

the point of revolution to have developed all the implications of that new.) We have to do it for ours. Marcuse cannot help because he has diverted both technologically and politically, although I have by no means given up on him. (I have a "personal" letter from him which states that, on the one hand, my writings, this time referring to the one on Sartre, give him "great joy", and, on the other hand, "great irritation" and he just has never met such a "case."

You could help if the attitude to Hegel was not demanding the impossible, i.e., that I prove to you what you can only prove to yourself--that Hegel has something profound to tell this age. All I can do is tell you that the "cases" cited in M&F--regarding Marx's debt to Hegel on dialectic as self-development, and by our analysis of the 1955 attack on Marx via Hegel helped us anticipate the Hungarian Revolution--and the constant references to him in all theses etc.point to the need to grapple with him for the sake of this age, today. Specifically, the Doctrine of the Notion the categories of self-development--the relationship of the universal to the particular and individual or concrete; the relationship of objective to subjective and v.v., or the constant reappearance of second negation not only for "the day" but daily--are the categories of freedom, or attainment of new society.

Perhaps if you reread, first, the Introduction and Preliminary Notion, and then skipped to the Doctrine of Notion, in what is known as the"Smaller" Logic, you would get something from it you didn't get before, and we would have a basis for a dialogue on how you can help if you wish to; or perhaps rereading the section on the Three Attitudes to Objectivity which follows the Introduction, and thinking of your own attitude to objective world when compared to those empiric, critical, intuitional,etc.that entered history, you would come up with your own answers to your own question. Try.

Yours,

Raya

Do you have Paul Goodman's phone? He is not listed, so I cannot call him and I do want to; I'll be here for a week, so drop me a card c/o Hotel Webster, Rm.58, 40 W. 45th St., New York, N.Y.10036.
I'll be back home in Detroit by Nov.1.

13897