

22B  
Nov. 14, 1964

To the REB-NEB and Harry McShane

Dear Colleagues:

In preparation for our philosophical discussion at the end of the month on the three letters dealing with problems of the new book, I'm also enclosing copy of the review I just wrote of Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man. On the face of it this might appear written on so different a level—for college students—that it would have no bearing for us, especially since my criticism of Marcuse is, for this purpose, much toned down. However, in the crucial respect the class criticism is all there and once you have stated that the intellectual's horizon has been narrowed by not being within range of workers' attitudes, you have stated your opposition fundamentally enough, though not all its implications have been expanded as they would have been had the review been written for Marxist-Humanists.

There is one analysis of Hegel—Kroner's "Hegel's Philosophical Development" which appears as Introduction to Hegel's Early Theological Writings—which has always attracted me because he understood how very close a philosopher comes in collaborating with another of the same period just at the very moment when the break of the two systems come about. In this case, it is a question of the collaboration of Schelling and Hegel when their writings were so similar that they remained mistaken for each other for a century. That was in 1802-03. Then, suddenly, Hegel diverted so widely that it led to a total break with his PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND, 1807. On the period between Kroner comments: "But, in spite of this close collaboration, there was a definite divergence between the views of the two men, and the gulf widened the longer their association lasted." (My emphasis.)

Methodologically this is how an "enemy" is born and, since it is always, from those closest to you philosophically, it appears as if one were a "betrayal" of the other. And, of course, one always has to be prepared for such an eventual political development, but, philosophically, there is no other way to develop and this is why, on the one hand, I'm so glad that I have re-established a certain relationship with Marcuse. But, on the other hand, I want you to know the one section I did not bring out for criticism in the review, but which will become the real basis of the gulf as <sup>my</sup> progress. It is this:

After Marcuse states his thesis that automation has allegedly contained the antagonism between labor and capital, he continues: "In the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change, the critique is thus thrown back to a high level of abstraction. There is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action meet." (xiii)

Now, outside of the fact that his whole appeal for "negative thinking", that is to say oppositional thinking which tries to negate the conditions of status quo, is precisely rooted on the fact that the empiricists are "taken in" by "deceptive objectivity", when, in fact, the objective world is itself the product of both objective and subjective factors, that is to say, man-made, it is fantastic of him to ask for "proof", for "demonstrable agents"; in a word, for revolution at his bidding. Such a request does more than either reveal his pessimism or undo his own thesis of not being "taken in" by appearances. It cuts from under you the very ground you stand both in theory and in practice. Above all, however, as an intellectual, it means that you are saying you are forced to philosophize, "thrown back to a high level of abstraction" WHEN, IN FACT, THE HIGH LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION, FOR WORKER AND INTELLECTUAL ALIKE, AT THIS HIGH STAGE OF POLITICAL MATURITY, AND ON A WORLD SCALE, MEANS TO FIND THE JUMPING OFF POINT PRACTICALLY, THE NEW BEGINNING THEORETICALLY, THE FUSION FACTUALLY, FOR THE NEW SOCIETY. It is this philosophic preparation for understanding the coming revolutions which is, precisely, the reason for the new book.

Yours,  
Raya

13905