

Oct. 13. 1968

Dear Friends:

This is my first letter since the convention assigned^{me} to devote full time* to trying to complete the draft of 'PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION'--2nd draft for most chapters and first for those chapters that have only heretofore been in my mind. Here is Chapter I, "Hegel's Absolutes as New Beginnings". As you see^{by} its expansion to 40 pages, it may become necessary to transform the sections, each of the 3 sections is devoted to an outstanding work of Hegel, into 3 chapters.

Beginnings are always difficult and none more so than the one that attempts for the first time to deal with all of Hegel's major writings from a Marxist-Humanist viewpoint. Insofar as specific works of Hegel are concerned, Marx left us his analysis only of The Phenomenology of Mind *** (plus, of course, the one on Hegel's Philosophy of Right, which first signalled Marx's break with the bourgeoisie. But this does not directly concern us here since I have restricted myself to the strictly philosophic works, not the philosophy of the political sphere (like Philosophy of Right, or Philosophy of Religion like the Lectures on same topic). Though Marx expressed his desire to write on the "rational" in the Hegelian philosophy, he did not live long enough to complete, to his own satisfaction, all his original discoveries, much less to demonstrate the dialectic process by which he arrived at his theories/ That task he left for future generation; it remains our task.

Lenin did leave us his Notes on the Science of Logic, but, indispensable as these are, they are only Notes, that is to say, they have a cryptic air since they are not fully developed except in his own mind where they remained to guide him through the thrilling but also heart-breaking 6 years of the Russian Revolution. Though Bukharin and Zhdanov went on to publish them at least in Russian, their introductions are worthless, full of meaningless abstractions, since, by then, Stalin had won the power struggle and none were brave enough to dare make them concrete. Not a single revolutionary opponent of Stalinism, from Trotsky down, bothered with laying a philosophic foundation for the struggle against Stalinism; each was too busy leaping like a bolt out of the blue to political conclusions as if these could signify total opposition without philosophy as both foundation and perspective for new revolutions. As a consequence, neither Trotskyism as stillbirth nor Existentialism's pretensions to Marxian Humanism are accidental. That is to say, Communism, having given up its moorings in Marxian Hegelianism, outsiders--those outside the revolutionary movement, movement and not merely "the Party"--tried filling the vacuum.

Those too young to have lived through one phase of our development--state-capitalism--must nevertheless see that it is no small matter that even a correct economic analysis of the new stage of world capitalism and a valiant attempt to face the philosophic challenge "stopped dead" (to use a Hegelian expression of incompleated dialectic of Kant) before Hegel's Absolutes and therefore

*As it happens, the "privileged communication" exception became an oral confrontation and thus took up nearly a week while the new form of a pamphlet for what was started on Czechoslovakia took up nearly another week.

**Actually, it is not "here" since there is only one copy per local and therefore only the full NEB member gets it in NY, LA, Detroit and it is up to comrades to work out with him or her how to make more copies for the local.

**See Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic appendix to 1st ed. of MARXISM AND FREEDOM: Critique of the Hegel's Philosophy of Right was never fully translated into English but an important section of it is included both in Sottomore's Early Writings of Marx and the Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat's Doubleday Anchor Book.

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Reason and Revolution. Karl Lowith: From Hegel to Nietzsche. J. N. Findlay: Hegel: A Re-Examination. Also, with much caution because this overly conceited latest philosopher to tackle Hegel thinks it can be done by reducing Hegel to his size: Walter Kauffman: Hegel: A Reinterpretation.

was overcome by the new impulses emanating from the Afro-Asian revolutions. Again, the task remains for us to complete even as the singling out of the humanism of Marxism as the theoretic need of our age came from us at the very moment when the movement from practice ~~into the theory~~ fulfilled the same task via actual revolutions, both in Europe and Africa as well as the black revolts in the US.

As for the bourgeoisie, its theoreticians have so little use for Hegel's abstractions precisely because they see in them "the algebra of revolution" that Hegel's Science of Logic, written in 1816-21, wasn't even translated into English till 1929! The French, who think themselves vastly superior culturally to the "Anglo-Saxons" didn't tackle Hegel seriously till the period between the two world wars, and mainly through "Lectures" and "Abstracts" rather than in the original. Despite the millions of words about Hegel's works, there is barely a work existing which tackles the whole of his works. It did take a new third world to arise, though these philosophers are absolutely unconscious of the impulses pulling at them, finally to bring about, at the end of the 1950's, one good, i.e., comprehensive analysis: Hegel: A Re-Examination by J.N. Findlay. I still consider the very finest work of analysis to be that of Karl Lowith's From Hegel to Nietzsche which is far superior even to Marxist works, not to mention the fact that his analysis preceded theirs without due acknowledgement. Moreover, it also has a superb analysis of the Left Hegelians which thereby gives us a chance to see them on Hegel, while they worked in collaboration with Marx, and later as they broke up.

It is true that, from a Marxist viewpoint, Herbert Marcuse's Reason and Revolution is outstanding. But since it is, as an intellectual, that he debates with the other interpretations, the "examples" are all about other philosophies without any examples arising either from practice or from history. The result is that even in the section on Marx, specifically on alienated labor where he does a magnificent job proving there is no difference between the young and "mature Marx", he propounds a "thesis", a thesis of humanism he has been denying ("modifying") ever since.

In a word, though I just have given you the bibliography**you asked for at the convention, it is, in fact, impossible to cite a bibliography that would "back up" the chapter enclosed for none have done what we are attempting to do. In truth, we must study it as the discoverers we in fact are.

Yours,
Raya

*I should have said published rather than translated. It was translated some 1/2 of a century before it was published, and it is as good a demonstration of the American roots of Hegelianism as was our proof of the American roots of Marxism, and again it remains an unknown chapter of American history. At the time of the Civil War there was, in St. Louis, a German refugee, Brockmeyer, and a New Englander, T.W. Harris who Brockmeyer taught to love Hegel and, in turn, he translated Science of Logic. He also started the first philosophic journal in this country, "The Journal of Speculative Philosophy" and that was Hegelian. Since Brockmeyer decided to run--and win-- Lieutenant Governorship of St. Louis and Harrison became First US Commissioner of Education, the "theoretical" work went by the board. By 1920's his heirs offered his translation of Science of Logic to many publishers, none of whom accepted, so England gets credit for first translation. (See fn. 33 in MOP)

**Perhaps it would be best to list them as a whole: HEGEL: Phenomenology of Mind, Science of Logic, Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences (specifically, Philosophy of Mind) and with it all the 4 vols. of Lectures on the History of Philosophy which is much easier to read than the written works. MARX: Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Engels: FEUERBACH, which was the standard we all lived on instead of studying either Hegel or Marx, and we are suffering ever since; still it is easier to read. Herbert Marcuse:

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