

October 27, 1969

Dear S.

My bout with surgery is over; I am home and well and by mid-November, I expect to return to work on the book. I do hope by then I will have a letter from you on the question of philosophy, that is to say on the draft of my book *Philosophy and Revolution* as well as some questions that I will raise with you here on the question of *Philosophy and Reality* in Czechoslovakia. But first, you make reference to the fact of an Introduction to Hegel by Ernst Bloch. I am very, very interested in that. Could you please summarize his introduction and include some direct quotations? Thanks very much.

Ever since 1956, when the question of *Philosophy and Revolution* became the reality of Eastern Europe, and the 1844 manuscripts of Marx the center of the philosophic discussion of Humanism, my interest in philosophy became both intense and twofold: to what extent was the dispute a question of working out the problems of a new society, and to what extent was it a mere jumping-off point for deviations in Marxism? For example, existentialism seemed to be something a great deal more acceptable to the East Europeans than to me. Kolakowski seemed the most original and yet there was always an ambivalence in his writing. To what extent was this deliberate and necessarily evasive, and to what extent was it due to the usual professorial isolation from the masses?

A very new stage was reached in the mid-1960s, especially in Czechoslovakia which excited me very much, mainly because it was closer to reality and the philosophers seemed very conscious of the fact that they must, under no circumstances, be isolated from mass activity and mass reasoning. It happened that at first the main attraction to me was Karel Kosik. He seemed definitely to be more Hegelian, more profound and yet whenever a question became too concrete, he somehow seemed to become deliberately abstract. Then it was said by some that he was, in fact, closer philosophically to Heidegger, and, moreover, too close to those who were considered "Kosher". Only one of the philosophers had some direct contact with the proletariat and I'm not now sure how sincerely he meant it.

What I would like you to help me trace is the development from 1963, the Kafka conference, and, especially, the development of Milan Prucha, Ivan Dubsky and Peter Kervas who had then declared that "dogmatism is today disloyalty to Marxism-Leninism"? And when they spoke of alienation and "culture", and "individuality" to what extent was it a deep, historic program and to what extent an intellectual's escape? In a sense, all of them were anticipated in the works of Ernst Bloch, especially in 1953. In that respect, I would like to know when had he written the Introduction to Hegel? He is so difficult a writer to translate that I know it will not be easy work for you, but believe me it would be very crucial in my work and I thank you very much beforehand.

I have not yet returned the *Grundrisse* because the Russian Volume 46 that you sent me is not the complete *Grundrisse*. That volume has two parts and you sent me Part I. Could you please buy me Part II, for which I enclose payment and many thanks. As soon as I check the translation of the part that I am doing for the book, I will be glad to return your *Grundrisse*. I do hope that you can get away for a little vacation. The whole family sends you their very warmest regards.

Yours

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