

May 25, 1983

Dear Ted:

Concentration as digging, digging, digging in a single topic and being concrete, concrete, concrete, including the concrete Universal is not only something you need, but is of the essence for any Marxist-Humanist work. Otherwise one cannot intellectualizing, being abstract and getting nowhere by not escaping the dilettante-way of being a good conversationalist at cocktail parties but contributing nothing either to history, or dialectics of liberation, theoretically and practically.

This is my way of saying you're listening to too many ~~persons~~ persons and touching so many different different places as to make an "ordinary" person, a non-intellectual, say "Oh, well, you know too much, and I can't understand", but really meaning: Ah, well, there is another big shot who understand nothing at all of real life." So, please, please, stop mentioning so many different topics that it is clear you really don't know where you're going. How can "Interim period"--which, by the way, is in the Archives--possibly help you in your thesis as well as leaving roots in Utah as you leave for where M-H needs you organizationally, etc? And, pardon me, but neither can Kevin's suggestions for still other new, latest books.

First and foremost, concentrate, at one and the same time, on M-H, precisely, as you work out, for thesis, on economics and dialectics by concretizing what, precisely, under that that topic, wide-ranging as ~~xxx~~ it is, will complete your stay in Utah, and make a contribution to M-H. It seems to me that in this Hunt's interest is in: relation of history to theory.

Specifically, and more precisely still, the relationship of history to theory when it comes to economics, means looking at one bourgeois and Marx, incl. M.H. today. The bourgeois I am referring to is Schumpeter's History of Economic Analysis, that and very nearly no other of bourgeois is needed. That is so because, though he is very, very opposed to Hegel as only another German theoretician who can't escape Hegel can be, he is the one who had that sentence I often quote, in opposition to Marx, he thought but I naturally love as profound in summing up Marx: transforms historic narrative into historic reason.

He said this when he was showing that here is Marx who wrote the most profound critique of Ricardo, a terrific economist, et. etc., but how can one argue with him when, everytime he is concrete, every time he tells a tale it suddenly becomes not just a narrative but reason, Hegelian, dialectic Reason as witness suddenly raising 1844 weaver's strike to a higher level than French Revolution?

O.k., my point is you get all of history of economic analysis through many different historic ~~point~~ periods--and alongside, you see what I did with that same period, and now you can jump to mathematical analysis of the moderns who keep escaping living people and, just as economics moves from Ricardo to Keynes, to micro/macro analysis and living workers

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get not pushed down, as Marx shows, to appendages to machines but pushed out altogether by robotiks. Whereupon wildcats or actual events make modern man/woman see that Marx's analysis of fetish meaning thingifying labor itself as commodity instead of living laborer. Whether you show it in Vol.I, and in Vol.II, as a single sentence, and in Vol.III as topsy turvy world in a whole last unfinished ch. where he comes back again in that very sentence we use as N&L's motto.

as fetish In a word, we can live dialectics as adventures of commodity both in P&R and finally in RL, WL, KM as all post-Marx Marxists, including revolutionaries, greatest, nevertheless using only 1-way dialectic when it comes to concretising revolutionary force as Reason so that even Luxemburg who had such a flash of genius on Imperialism and so eloquent on those Black women in Kalahari desert being murdered by General von Trotha and yet not seeing that rev.ry force but only as suffering humanity instead of a new category of national liberation, while Lenin who does recognise that great revolutionary new force but sticking to elitist party and thus laying ground for Stalinism. In a word, it isn't only the break with concept of theory, as Marx had done it on Working Day, but as do it today not by answering fully the absolute challenge, but working it out and asking others to meet that challenge in RL, WL, KM.

Now what you have to do is decide, concretely, what in economics, in dialectics, i.e., which period? Do you wish to deal with state-capitalism, or so-called post-capitalism, or which "beyond"--robotiks? Japan? what, precisely, is it in history and theory? Reaganomics? imperialism as world or "internationalism". These horrors are now retrogressing so, whether it be on "free speech" when it means returning to religion too on monkey trial or what? After all, so-called Left too is using imperialism as a way to escape Khomeinist capitalism by attributing everything to "Satan" US and thus escaping state-capitalism.

Even C/v can become abstract if you leave out specific historic period, today, or leave out Russian s-c, or leave out Japanese statism; I mean you must decide US imperialism in Latin America. On the other hand, Black could not mean you need to start anew when we have everything already from ACOT to 1950 pamphlet by participants and you'd have to start abstractly. No, we don't need you on Black dimension. No, use where you can shine in economics and dialectics in world history. Make up your mind, and stick to it, on specificity of rel. of his. to th..

Have something black on white, not as letter, but as thesis and bring it to convention.

And do work who will come to it in Sept., and also are you working on "entertainment" by corresponding to NY? And the class is of the essence. It sounded great that you do have 10, and anthropologists and internationalism, concrete, concrete, concrete. Yours,

History / 1st / His. 40 min

Conc. 2/28/87

Living labor to dead capital
Be back
Thurs

May 6, 1983

Dear Raya,

Yesterday, 165 yrs. after Marx's birthday, I attended a lecture on "Karl Polanyi as a Post-Marxist". I didn't know what I was going to say before I raised my hand, and honestly it took me a while to figure out what I had said after I stopped talking. What I realized was that this very nice "Institutionalist" professor continues to separate the young/old Marx by keeping Marx's "economics" wedded to Ricardo's "embodied labor" and Marx's "holistic, social values, or axiology" limited to his vision of 1844 or "non-scientific statements". He thinks that Marx's core idea of the way people produce their living is "materialist" and excludes the "social values or axiology". I chanced to read footnote 33 in M&F last night and once again underwent second negativity as I read "they keep separating the question of personality from the mode of production."

What was sad was that privately this professor sings a different tune. "Have thumb, will travel" could also be seen as the need to travel the distance from those who "privately" think one thing, yet will not "politicize" their philosophy "publicly". My own experience reminded me of Hegel's quip about Kant, (paraphrasing), "You have to get into the water in order to learn to swim". Though I didn't know how to respond to this learned professor at first, my practice, when there is a Marxist-Humanist Trilogy of Revolution, and when News and Letters exists, meant that I didn't drown as many other voices did "privately".

Bay HERE

If you haven't heard yet, the study group did become actual with ten people attending. The discussion was on passion/intellect in the context of the third world's confrontation with Nurt Americans and Europeans... Our group has members from Africa, L.A., Norway, Austria... Any way, we'll see what develops. I am feeling the need for study group participants out of the university community. (The tape recording of your talk is of good quality. I'm told and I will send a copy to the center. We also are trying to get a transcript typed up, which will follow as soon as we are able to get it done. The radio show is also recorded and a friend is editing out the commercials.

As for my dissertation, I again feel that I'm getting "into the water" but not yet "swimming". My idea was originally center on your singling out the relationship of Constant to Variable capital as a key to the Marxian Dialectic of Dead over Living Labor. I proposed to keep this in mind with Marx's section on "erroneous conceptions of Political Economy" where he talks about Smith's "incredible aberration". It seems to me that all I have heard in presentations by "Marxist Economists" is never ending focus on the Market or Wages. I was impressed that Kalecki, and Sraffa, and Robinson, all made these errors and that a very vocal group of "marxists" continue the attack on the Labor Theory of Value and "orthodoxy" today. The social democratic, and state capitalist politics of

(Bowles, Gintis, Gordon)
wage theorists

these "scientific" marxists concerned with distribution is beginning to emerge for me. I thought that I might choose a few important thinkers and ask what was the attitude towards "Constant Capital" on one hand, and did this have any relation to their attitude towards Hegel on the other. Do thinkers who miss the living laborer confronted with dead labor also fail to confront the Hegelian Dialectic? Another way of saying this is that I wanted to take some Post-Marx Marxist Economists, measure them against Marx's concept of "constant capital" confronting laborers and ask if there is any relation to the method they practice as against dialectics.....

May 10, 1983

*On 15 Nov
is attitude
clear?*

My concern with the first topic was that I not stop at critique of other intellectuals, i.e., "apply" a dialectic, but also show an "attitude" towards the "creation" of dialectic by living subjects. I had then wished to follow on one hand the Post-War debates on automation, "constant capital", and show in contrast to those who say "nothing new" happens when capital substitutes for labor, that a new stage of production and revolt was reached. This is not original, as you have already worked this out. I wished to inwardize the dialectic and "extend" it (though not as a workers' movement does) by confronting other tendencies that I meet in the world of URPE and academic economics, as you called them in another letter the "pragmatists and empiricists".

11/99

I had thought of helping to produce the pamphlet on the miners' strike as part of the "dissertation" too. Kevin thought that a more theoretical topic would be best, given my resources though. I would be willing to help though and think that I could get a project accepted that included "our theoretical attitude" to the strike. One person did an oral history of communist involvement in the formation of the CIO here.

W.K. Oxt

I have also thought that the key concept for those who cannot see what we are talking about is the "Law of Motion" that cuts through the tangle of markets. So many get caught up with going back and forth to market, that I thought I might make a contribution by collecting and developing Marx's comments on the relation of production to the market and once again contribute to the Battle of Ideas with Post Marx Marxists. (Again taking particular Post Marx Marxists.)

kt

My own interest is deep and continuous in Hegelian Philosophy. Recently Kevin recommended a book, Hegel Contra Sociology by Gillian Rose (a woman). She argues that all sociology is Kantian or Neo-Kantian, including the Neo-Marxists. This bars them from directly grasping Marx's philosophic foundation. It's a confusing, difficult book for me, I have just scanned it. However, the point is I have a deep abiding interest in Hegel and would welcome a topic that let me develop Hegel Contra Economics. The mathematical fetish has cut the discipline off from "history and its process".

I am supposed to prepare a half hour talk on the "American Civil War, The Eight Hour Day Struggle, and Marx's Capital" for my history class. I use my time to study M-H whenever possible. In going through the Supplementary Material you recommend at the back of M&F I was impressed with the depth of Beard's, Parrington's, Sherwin's, and Garrison's childrens' scholarship on America. If we have a perspective to develop an organizational relationship to the Black Dimension in Denver and with new Black intellectual contacts, would it make sense for me to continue to search in the area of the Black movement for a topic? I think that part of my "problem" is that I am too obsessively intellectual, theoretic/philosophic and a confrontation with a movement from practice would help to develop me as an active Marxist-Humanist.

*There could be
measure
with which
we're able
have don't
come to a*

Another direction might be on the question of "personal development" and the dialectic. The books on Phillips, Garrison, or Luxemburg show that the Phenomenology can be starting point to grasp "quest for universality". Here I would try to establish that "personality is not separate from production" or revolution. I might take an individual american revolutionary and show the relationship between revolution and personal development. Here I would have some support from K Hunt and Randa, but I'm sure they would insist that I link the study to economics. The topic that comes to mind was the founder of institutional economics and the economics profession, either R. Ely ~~and~~ or Commons and relating this to to the black struggle and groups or individual revolutionaries in this period.

*Phil
History
Theory*

As I am just beginning to practice RLWLKM, ways to write in relation to the "new moments" haven't yet gelled. EK Hunt ~~says~~ says a deep concern he has is the relation of history to theory. I of course point to your work in M&F and the chapter on the Working Day. However, the new book deepens your development of the topic to show that revolutionary developments effect the economic laws. I might think about that and develop something...How could anything I conceived at now not have permanent or continuous revolution in it! The meaning of my first approach would be to emphasize the Dialectics of C/V for the West, but what about the peasantry and Third World? Perhaps learning Spanish and taking a central american or Latin American Revolution would be an expansion out of my american-centeredness.

I will make work in the Archives crucial for the dissertation. Art Kunkin has interim papers and other documents not included in the Archives that might be turned into a chapter that shows how your development differed from CLRJ's and others. Perhaps this could dovetail with the production of the new pamphlet?

I am "in the water" but not yet "swimming". Your comments are a lot to ask for but given that I'm trying to find my way in a land that you helped chart there really is no-one else who understands where I'm trying to go. I deeply appreciate your attention.

Yours, Ted

PS: Did you read Ritters' Hegel and the French Revolution? It's in the "Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought" series edited by Thomas McCarthy (MIT press). Kevin asked me to send a note to Gillian Rose mentioning you along with my interest in her book on Hegel. I'll do that this week.