

Dear Please return this to me R

Dear Nathan - As I run for train to Boston, before  
I've yet read your message, here are D/1853 or 1854 letters - Hegel's  
Absolute Idea - & a letter as draft for me abt. in my new book -  
Please return both to me as I have no other - In return  
No official letter in return directly from ~~the~~ ~~new~~ ~~letter~~ office - as of  
204.  
It was delightful to meet you, your wife - hope it is  
only the beginning of a new friendship - Yours - Kohn

WHY HEGEL? WHY NOW

It has 3 subsections: 1) Marx's Debt to Hegel,  
2) Lenin's Shock of Recognition and  
Ambivalence toward Hegel and  
3) The Task Before Us

1) Not because Marx was a "Left Hegelian" as a student, but because  
the Hegelian dialectic speeded him on his voyage of discovery  
of a totally new philosophy ("thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism")  
Marx never forgot his indebtedness to Hegel. From the first to  
the last of his writings, which recreate the dialectic, not as "a  
science of logic", but "science" of revolution, Marx's works show  
how it is impossible to "shake off" Hegel, as he easily enough  
shook off classical political economy once he transcended it, and  
his "economics" in every respect, from value and surplus value  
through rent as it applies to landlord class, to accumulation of  
capital and collapse of capitalism, discerned in its law of motion,  
was, not a new political economy, but Marxism, a philosophy of human  
activity.

It was otherwise with Hegel, despite the fact that his  
break came first from Hegel, and for a while indeed, in his struggles  
with utopians, particularly Proudhon, he was hardly more than  
counterposing political economy as the "real" against the "bourgeois  
idealism" of philosophy. Thus, his very first, and most thorough  
and profound attack on Hegel, the very one which led to nothing  
short of his greatest discovery--the materialist conception of  
history--was, however, by no accident, via A Critique of Hegel's  
Philosophy of Right. A lesser man, a lesser Hegelian than Marx,  
would have finished at that point. Marx, on the contrary, proceeded

1888-1889  
1891-1892

at that point directly to Hegel's rigorous and non-political strictly philosophic works, PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND and ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PHILOSOPHIC SCIENCES, breaking off just as he got into the last section "The Philosophy of Mind." But, though "that dismal science"--political economy--never gave him rest enough for the rest of his life to be able to tackle in consistent form, or as he put it, "rational form of the dialectic", he kept returning to Hegel every time he came to a turning point in political economy: in 1848 when he writes that his "accidentally" finding Hegel's works gave him some "new developments" for his Critique of Political Economy; then in 1861-3, when he first reworks the structure of CAPITAL in order to part company with Ricardo on land rent and make the most crucial decision insofar as "economics" is concerned--to take out what was to become Volume III of CAPITAL, and put it as Volume III, rather than as a part of Volume I, (which would intervene between capital and before he came to wage labor as the landlord class ~~is~~ the fundamental class); and finally, after the ~~entire~~ restructuring on basis of The Working Day in 1866, after actual publication in 1867, (and nothing short of the Paris Commune which so illuminated the "form" of value--the fetishism of commodities, ~~and~~ perverted relations of dead to living labor--chooses strictly Hegelian language.

from  
would  
find  
of, after

(\*Ercuse makes me laugh, as one of the only, if not the only, Hegelians who do wish to remain Marxists, trying to excuse themselves for not seeing all there was to see in Marx because the Grundrisse, the first form of CAPITAL which Marx discarded, (except for the 2 chapters that became Critique of Political Economy) had not been available to them. First, the Grundrisse, which uses more Hegelian language, is still in the "application" not creative stage; is still without all he learned from the workers' own struggles which led him to the break with bourgeois conception of theory. Secondly, and above all, --at least it should be above all from their point of view--the strict use of form not as opposite to essence, but form as "the universal" which combines form and essence as the form of the future and undermines totally the form of the past, and not only in actual relations of production, but in thought --occurs, not in 1858, but lat in 1867, then in 1872.) This is precisely why Lenin wrote that it was impossible to understand CAPITAL "especially its first chapter" without the whole of Hegel's Logic. It is that first chapter where you need Hegel most; it is that first chapter which Stalin decided in 1943 should be thrown out as any first in "teaching" of Capital; it is that first chapter with all that is perverse in actual relations nevertheless assuming "the fixity of a popular prejudice" in the highest bourgeois thought, classical political economy, which is exactly what perverts philosophy into nothing but an "ideology", that is to say a false consciousness.)

Therefore I will need to divide this chapter of Marx's debt to Hegel into what he meant to Marx at each stage since the break from bourgeois society, (1) in 1844, as expressed in the Essays, and as our age should help us see through the realization that had it been otherwise, Marx's materialist conception of history would hardly have been more than a species of determinist materialism, which is exactly what the Second International made it out to be. (2) 1857-8 when dialectic was "applied" rather than recreated from class struggles. (3) 1863-73, from "turning everything around" to the new in fetishism of commodities, not only, as I go to great pains in M&F to show, as that which results from the Paris Commune, but as, in thought, it returns to the Hegelian dialectic, let us call it, in strict Hegelian language, "the self-developing subject", and name it, with Marx, the masses or "human power", the positive Humanism beginning from itself, or "second

negation" for it is that second negation which answers not only the ultimate which we expressed as "what happens after" each revolution, but the daily of our age, which will allow us to transcend each negation of the immediate, through unity of theory and practice.

Finally, we must deal also with why, at certain points, the abstract can help more than the concrete. CAPITAL is concrete and therefore "exhausts itself" in that one topic. But LOGIC is "without concretion" of sense and "applies" to all "sciences" so when a new stage is reached, you need yet another aspect, as Lenin, who knew CAPITAL very well long before he read "the whole" of LOGIC, saw the minute "self-movement", "self-activity", "self-transcendence" suddenly began to mean something NEW to him. What I am trying to say is that the minute the actual cannot be expressed in old terms, it is because a new stage in cognition has not kept up with the new challenge from practice, and philosophy then opens new avenues, and only then can you also see the "old" but concrete terms in CAPITAL in a new way as monopoly capital not only as a "stage" of centralization of capital, but as a "transformation into opposite."

Lenin's  
2) Ambivalence to Hegel and Shock of Recognition

The duality in Lenin's heritage can no longer be put into a footnote, as it was in M&F. It is this duality that has ~~allowed~~ allowed Trotsky, and then Trotskyism, from bringing those Notebooks to the public in 1948 when I first translated them and was all too willing to give them to the Trotskyists. This is not a simple problem nor a "fractional one"; it is what has laid the foundation for Trotskyism tailending Communism on the question of Marx's Humanism as something Marx "passed through." Above that, it has allowed the Communists to pervert them by quoting both Lenins alongside of each other as if they were one and the same. *as inevitable Lenin who never offers a thing before with his own Phil. Journal Ground.*

Once, however, this is expressed clearly, then it is precisely Lenin who allows us to jump off from the 20th rather than 19th century precisely because ~~his~~ his greatest aphorisms were expressed in "Subjective Logic" ~~and had his identify~~ subjectivity with freedom. ~~Also~~ ~~he~~ had not heretofore, paid great attention to Lenin's emphasis on the fact that philosophy (Logic, 1813) expressed "the universal movement of change", and only after that (1847) did Marx express it in the C.M., or "social science", whereas natural science (Origin of Species, 1859) came last. Also his statement that "The continuation of the work of Hegel and Marx consist in working out dialectically the history of human thought, science and technology." This allows us to jump off from "Cognition not only reflects but creates" to our age and how it will

be able to restate Marxism for its age only through a return also to Hegel.

3) Why Now, then would take off from something like Freedom as the innermost dynamic of life has pushed itself to the surface where all can see it, as actuality, and still that brave it as philosophy. Perhaps the title of the new book could be PHILOSOPHY AND HUMAN LIBERATION.

Yours,

*Engel*

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