October 25,1960

Dear Saul:

I assume, and I am sure correctly, that your brief note was mere acknowledgment, not response to my varied letters on the philosophic foundations of the struggles for freedom in the underdeveloped countries, which is the subject of the new book. I want here to continue on the same subject, this time limiting myself to our past since 1947, which was the year of publication of Marx's Essays and thus open unfoldment of philosophic, not just political foundations. We had actually done that before when we fought Retrogressionism, but, as I see it now, for all the correct political reasons and all the wrong philosophic ones. That is to say, the dialectic was superimposed in the most superficial manner, which I assume is how "the new" G was first brought into the state capitalist tendency. In a word, while fighting the theory that the workers, with fascism, had moved so far backward that they would now need to fight for bourgeois democracy all over again, we came out with the theory that there is no such element as retrogressionism in the dialectic. This is not only wrong but fantastic --both in history and therefore in the dialectic there is one step backward before one leaps 2 steps ahead. No wonder G couldn't explain to me why Hegel had to assign a whole of only 3 attitudes to objectivity to Jacobi! But that is all in retrospect --and we did recruit on the basis of the forward movement of humanity. Had we had single pulse on Africa where the struggles were then going on full blast (NIGERIA By James S. Coleman, which details the General Strike of 1945 is of key importance here), we could have seen live dialectic instead of forced dialectic. (And that is why precisely it is so all-important not to leave the philosophic foundations to the intelligentsia--not even if ours is not the two-J-G--but at once have the all organization in on it.)

Now in 1947 when we published those Early Essays, you will recall that the Preface referred to the one on the Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic as one "our translator would write on later." But, as usual, J couldn't wait for G who didn't know, but had immediately to pick her brain and "apply". The result was that this was followed with the essay, "Dialectic and the Fate of Humanity," the essence of which was the quotation from Hegel on the corruption of the Catholic Church. For this, we threw out part I of my Russian study, leaving in only the conclusions. I tried hard to get some French intellectuals to think that that Essay by J was a contribution that merited translation into French, and when I couldn't, I thought <u>they</u> were backward. The truth is <u>we</u> were for the Hegelian analysis of the corruption of the church, profound as that is, is not on a par even with the laws of development that we had already used to analyze much more than the"corruption" of the Russian society, that is to say, its <u>transformation into opposite.</u> I might say here that J was forever coming out with some dialectical principle that brought us a <u>step backward</u> from our political analysis. Thus we were entering the SWP then, and he escaped to Nevada to work on his Dialectic Notes.(I wish to heck you would try once again to find G's letters to him objectiving to some analysis; I don't care if they were from a "bourgeois" point of view. That girl was far superior to him in her grasp of the dialectic--she simply always went off the deep end because she had neither the discipline of the proletariat nor of a party that would have stood on solid philosophic foundations, so her petty bourgeois mind wandered, but she <u>knew</u> her Hegel <u>within the context</u> of the philosophic enemies of his day.) There he came up with "error as the dynamic of truth." Outside of the fact that error is not <u>the</u> but "a" dynamic of truth <u>if</u> ...in Hegel,

that discovery was, again, only a rationalization of why we reentered the Trotskyist movement when we had already developed all our basic

position in opposition to it had been worked out, and when the objective situation, precisely dialectically, i.e, the self-activity of the masses called for independent activity.

The best place, then, to look how far we had reached in the Dialectic, is to see what G had done, and the best work was, of course, S*C&WR. She there not only had the basis of the economic and political analyses at the highest point we had reached, but was given freedom to write "The Philosophy of State Capitalism" exactly as she saw it. Now, if the 1947 publication of Marx could be said to have been without the Dialectic insofar as our comprehension was concerned, the 1950 was the Dialectic without Marx! Here is what I mean. Marxism, like truth, is always concrete. At each period, you say of that rich, manifold heritage of Hegel and Marx, this is it for us. Lenin for his period chose "transformation into opposite"; we went not ~~from~~ forward from that to the Absolute Idea we had talked so much about in unwritten form, but backward to its elementary principle of contradiction. But what was new in the period, if not in production which we have since seen with Automation, at least in the way it was reflected in the ideologies we had to contend with? It was Christian Humanism. This is what she rejected out of hand as "fascism", even though she should have known, that fascism having failed, the reactionary forces would absolutely look for a new form, a victorious form, like the state capitalism of Russia which won, not the state capitalism of Nazi Germany which lost.

Christian Humanism showed much greater perception of the realities of the enemy they had to fight than we did. They started not only with Russian Communism, but went back to Marx, discovered his Humanism, and tried to use that against the Communists. All the works of that period--and lasting unto ours which is why I am still concerned with it--that were solid studies on Marxism were done by the Catholics in France, the Evangilists in Germany, the Jesuits in Rome --and they did not just limit themselves to the "in general", but as to how the Russians were applying it to science. By rejecting merely, instead of "correcting" (as Hegel corrected Kant, by overthrowing him and yet incorporating the element that objectively held up), we lost out of seeing the essence: the Humanism of Marx applied to our age and we alone could interpret, not misinterpret a la Stalin or a la the Christians. Instead, that section in SC&WR exhorts, denies, and escapes the truth.

Now in 1953, on the eve when the self-developing masses moved from Africa to East Germany, I finally found my way to the Absolute Idea, and G, before J once again took her around the wrong corner, did sense the new, only she was limiting it to the way it appeared in "superstructure" (i.e., our break with the concept of party to lead)and not the individualistic, humanistic ground which was to become alive in Hungary and in Africa.

I will, in my first presentation to the group here, work over the whole of Hegel's works to break down the single element that we must still concretize for our period and that will become the link of advanced and underdeveloped economies. After you listen to that in a couple of weeks, and I listen to the whole discussion both in LA & Detroit, I will first work out an outline. Or I might decide to have an "in person" meeting with REB in the middle of November.

Yours,

cc - RGB

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