

RD

April 4, 1982

Dear Kevin:

This is a sort of p.s. to my letter yesterday; though this has nothing to do with your thesis, the point is that I have been so annoyed at the way intellectuals treat Lenin's Notebooks and go gaga over Lukacs who knows a great deal more of Hegel in an academic way that they not only miss 2 very important historic points: 1) that his History and Class Consciousness (and that, insofar as I am concerned in "What is Orthodox Marxism", not in the overly praised "Reification") became so important because of the timing, i.e., Lukacs got his inspiration from an actual revolution, 1917, and his philosophy as re-establishing dialectic and as revolutionary in Hegel as well as in Marx led to his becoming a what he wasn't, a pointer of directions to those who didn't capitulate to Stalinism; and (2) he never understood Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks, not just because he capitulated to Stalinism politically and mixed up Stalin with Lenin plus sinking also to Engels that he had criticized in 1919 but not in 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, etc. but because inherent in him as "pure" intellectual was being ashamed of some "mistakes" Lenin made on "pure" Hegelianism so that even when he did admire --Lifshitz who was erudite in more than "economics"--he still was incapable of working out dialectics not just re economics as labor as active subject but also as dialectics "pure" "SELF LIBERATION". No, above all, they don't even know how to make a truly original new point about this, "their own" historic point so that Hegel remains as hidden from them as is unStalinized, unLukacsite Marx's Marxism.

Take Lukacs's "pure" dialectics where he is so very profound on those literary works Hegel analyzed, and the historic period out of which Lukacs emerged and broke with all other philosophers --THE YOUNG HEGEL, Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics. First and foremost it is absolutely fantastic to single out Alienation as the predominant, the core, the heart and soul of PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND, so much so that one, he devote a whole separate, last chapter to it. It simply isn't true either for Hegel or for Marx. Yes, Alienation was central in Hegel in Self-Consciousness; in a word, rather early in the work. Yes, Marx singled it out as central in showing Hegel from the start rejecting what is, and recognizing contradictions in everything, in all movement. BUT THAT WAS NOT WHERE MARX STOPPED. (And that is not where we stopped as we argued with everyone from Existentialism to Johnsonism and singled out Humanism.) QUITE THE CONTRARY. After all those brilliant, profound, historic, firstness of Marx's singling out of Alienation, Marx breaks with Feuerbach, returns to Hegel's "negation of the negation" and hits out not only against ~~capitalism~~ but communism "which is only "humanism mediated by the transcendence of private property" whereas what is needed is the 2nd negativity for "Only by the transcendence of this mediation does there arise positive Humanism, beginning from itself." (my tr. 1958 ed. of M&F, pp. 319-320) AND THAT MARX WAS FOREVER CONCRETIZING SO THAT in Vol. III of CAPITAL IT REAPPEARS AS "HUMAN POWER AS ITS OWN ITS OWN END."

If, on the other hand, you continue with Lukacs's THE YOUNG HEGEL and finally reach the "Synoptic view of the structure of PHENOMENOLOGY" and keep expecting from "Subjective Spirit" and Obj. Spirit which are quite excellent, that you will get to what Lukacs promises "Absolute Spirit", he TURNS OUT AND RUNS BACK TO

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Religion which is easy enough for a Left to refute but not only doesn't present anything relevant, much less new and original but even retrogresses as to grasping the full implications of the "Golgotha of Absolute Spirit" but let (beginning p.516) not bringing in the Golgotha then so that, instead of Hegel's subordination of Art to religion being the last word, Philosophy is subordinated by Lukacs so that even when he finally gets to the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit, it is not on Religion & not the emphasis ~~is~~ on that, but rather when he is at last chapter 2 has done with Absolute Knowledge, having contributed nothing to digging it out, & is on Alienation, he quotes those poetic 2 lines on God and his Infinitude(p.546) as if that were all Hegel had to say.

Lukacs needs to be reminded that the whole PHENOMENOLOGY was considered both "Introduction" and while it is Hegel's most creative, it is phenomenon, experience, and A.K. only to "introduce" you to Science of Logic, Phil.of Nature, Phil.of Mind. Actually when Hegel concludes that "This amounts to the self-annulment of history" he is exercising pure reductionism both on PHENOMENOLOGY and ALIENATION. No wonder he stops with Engels-as the authority (p.556) whose high point getting everybody stuck on exactly what Lukacs singles out"...what Engels called the contradiction between method and system" so none needing any diving.

O.k.let's stick more with Lukacs's reductionism-that last ch. From the very beginning I disagree, though that may be translator's rather than his choice of defining Entausserung as "Externalisation"; estrangement would have been a damned sight better, and since Lukacs says that both Entausserung and Entfremdung (Alienation) are same, why stick so much always to the legal explanation of alienation, which Lukacs is doing by suddenly going into definitions of words. It only leads him further to his greatest error, defining fetishism too (p.540) as mere alienation. It is certainly isn't true' it is as if ideology, false consciousness, was made the equivalent of Marx's philosophy of revolution. Fetishism is after all what the capitalists made out of that commodity-form in order to hide both that it is specifically capitalistic, and only capitalistic, and not, a la Stalin,(and Lukacs by his last work on Social Ontology)that the commodity-form existed before capitalism and will exist after,incl."socialism.), and because that reification of labor is what Marx insisted on what the transformation of labor into appendage of machine "actually production relations are at point of production." Enuf!

Yours,

Incidentally, you should both mention one of the latest surveys of Hegel literature (which evidently he hasn't yet finished) by James Schmidt, TELOS, #46 & #48, winter, 1980-81 & Summer 1981.

Also both in order not to look as if I am the only one you refer to and arouse more interest in Archives, refer, by name, to the 3-way correspondence, RD, CLRJ, Grace Lee on A.I. & give Vol.#. God knows they tried hard to break through on AIB that they couldn't does point to (1) ~~to~~ what the problem of the age of Marxists trying to recapture Marx's Marxism, and (2) to going beyond Lukacs.

Encl.is Olga's letter to Wartofsky in Left Academy.

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