

NOVEMBER 1955

# PHILOSOPHIC NOTES

- I. FOREWORD
- II. EXTRACTS FROM LENIN'S NOTEBOOKS  
(First English Translation)
- III. AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS ON  
HEGEL'S ABSOLUTE IDEA

75¢

NEWS & LETTERS  
8067 GRAND RIVER  
DETROIT 4, MICH.

2431

FOREWORD

Part I of these Philosophic Notes consists of extracts from Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks. These were written in 1915, at the time the holocaust of World War I made a shambles of the world in general and of the "vanguard" (official Marxism) in particular. It was at this critical point in history that Lenin felt compelled to study Hegel's Science of Logic. Far from being an evasion of the political tasks of the moment, it was a recognition that the time demanded infinitely more than the mere counterposition of a correct political policy against a wrong political policy.

What sent Lenin to examine the very foundations of Marxism—its Hegelian philosophic base—was the very fact that he was so shocked by the German Social Democracy's voting war credits to the Kaiser that he considered the issue of Vorwarts, which announced it, as a forgery perpetrated by Imperial Germany, instead of the actual mirror of the Second International's thinking.

These Notebooks mark the great divide in Marxism. They were Lenin's preparation for his writings on Imperialism, and State and State and Revolution, as well as for the actual Russian Revolution in November 1917.

This is the first English translation of the remarks which Lenin made to himself as he studied Hegel's Science of Logic and History of Philosophy. I made the rough translation of Lenin's Notebooks in 1948. It is impossible here to reproduce the whole text as it is a book unto itself, consisting mainly of Hegel's works, with underlinings of all sorts and side remarks and aphorisms by Lenin. I hope the extracts will send the readers to the entire text by Lenin as well as Hegel's Science of Logic itself.

In 1950, under the impact of the miners' strike sparked by automation (the continuous miner), I returned actively to the writing of a book on Marxism which I now called "the Lenin book" because I conceived Lenin's Notebooks as central to the work. I wanted a worker present at the oral presentation of the thesis because the whole point was that unless the most profound ideas of Marx were expressed so simply and directly that the average worker would understand, it had no meaning at all. Otherwise it would have lost all its purpose for the new impulses can come from nowhere but out of the struggles, thinking, and aspirations of the working class—especially American workers.

Where Lenin, in 1915, could keep his philosophic discoveries in private notebooks, we could not do so in the 1950s. It did not matter in 1915 because by 1917 the Russian workers had, in actuality, transformed the old order. But now that Russia, far from being a workers state, is the greatest tyranny on earth, we had to face the question that is in everyone's mind: what happens AFTER workers gain power? Are we always to be confronted with a labor bureaucracy? Our age has so matured that we must begin with the workers themselves participating in the working out of the philosophic, that is to say, total outlook. That is the reason the recent series of lectures have been undertaken before the writing of the book.

Part II consists of an exchange of letters on Hegel's Absolute Idea, which I call the concept of a new society. They were written in 1953. That was the year of Stalin's death, on the one hand, and the East German Revolt, on the other hand. A new era of struggle for freedom had opened with the East German revolt, and within a few weeks it was followed by a revolt in the slave labor camps of Vorkuta inside Russia itself. Clearly, Stalin's death symbolized the beginning of the end of totalitarianism. The maturity of the age could be seen in the fact that the average man on the street and the philosopher were asking one and the same question: Can man be free in this age of totalitarian bureaucracy? We leaped generations ahead when the workers in a satellite country and those in slave labor camps took matters into their own hands and thus illuminated the road ahead to a new society.

1950 had opened a new era in production with the first serious introduction of automation in the form of the continuous miner. From the first industrial revolution, the newly-born factory proletariat gained the impulse to struggle for the shortening of the working day, and thereby established a new philosophy. "In place of the pompous catalogue of the 'inalienable rights of man'!" Marx wrote in his greatest theoretical work, CAPITAL, "comes the modest Magna Charta of a legally limited working-day, which shall make clear 'when the time which the worker sells is ended, and when his own begins.' What a distance we have travelled!"

The second industrial revolution was being translated by the workers the world over into a new humanism. Never have they posed the question more clearly as not being one of material possessions nor annual wages but of conditions of labor in a fundamentally new way of life. Without this universal philosophic form, state capitalism as a tendency would remain economist and incomplete. Although we, as a state capitalist tendency, had been saying for years that we live in an age of absolutes, that the task of the theoreticians was the working out materialistically of Hegel's last chapter on The Absolute Idea, we were unable to relate the daily struggles of the workers to this total conception. The maturity of the age, on the other hand, disclosed itself in the fact that, with automation, the worker began to question the very mode of labor. Thus the workers began to make concrete, and thereby extended, Marx's profoundest conceptions, for the innermost core of the Marxian dialectic, around which everything turns, is that the transformation of society must begin with the material life of the worker, the producer.

In 1953, when we were preparing to come out with a paper that would be a break from all previous radical papers, I turned to philosophy and saw in the Absolute Idea the breakdown of the division between theory and practice in the movement for total freedom. What was new was that there was a dialectic not alone in the movement from theory to practice, but from practice to theory. That, in essence, was the gist of the letters to Hauser, the philosopher-designate, who, after demurring a day or so, came back with her usual hyperbole: "I think that these notes represent our Philosophic Notebooks, comparable to those of VL in 1915."

Johnson, the titular founder of the state capitalist tendency, however, had other ideas. He never acknowledged receiving the letter, and when Hauser came to him with enthusiasm for all the "discoveries" I

had made, he managed to shut her up too. What had previously been a literary clique now became a philosophic clique as well.

The titular head of the state capitalist tendency, far from looking at the stage of production and stage of workers revolt, was busy examining the "social personality" of "original characters" and the "uniqueness" of the great literary writers, to which the new humanism of the great East German Revolt played a secondary role.

It is high time to abolish the division between the "theoretical leaders" and "the rank and file" as well as between "the inside" and "the outside". While the form in which the ideas first evolved in the mind of the author are rough and even abstruse, no stage in the evolution of the book need be kept private. These notes and these letters are being published for all who are interested.

Detroit, Michigan  
November, 1955

EDW

\*\*\*\*\*

This first English translation of Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks, is made from the Russian, as published from Lenin's handwriting by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, first in 1929, and again in 1947.

Lenin used a German edition, Hegel's Verka. All of Lenin's references are to that edition.

To make it easier for the English reader to follow Lenin's references to Hegel, the translator has used the standard English edition. All page numbers cited herein in brackets [ ] refer to Hegel's Science of Logic translated by Johnston and Struthers, MacMillan Co., 1929.

\*\*\* \*\*

LENIN'S PHILOSOPHIC NOTEBOOKS

Outline of Hegel's Science of Logic

Vol. I, p. 45

Logic is the doctrine not of external forms of thought but of the laws of development "of all material, natural and spiritual things," i.e., of the development of the total, concrete content of the world and of its knowledge, i.e., the result, sum, conclusion of the history of the knowledge of the world.

Vol. I, p. 67

After quoting Hegel on "objectivity of appearance" and "inherent negativity" as "the principle of all physical and spiritual life," Lenin goes on to say:

Is not this the thought, that appearance is also objective, since it is one of the aspects of the objective world? Not only Wesen (Essence) but also Schein (appearance) are objective. Even the distinction between subjective and objective has its limits.

Vol. I, p. 135

Dialectic is the doctrine of the unity of opposites — how they can be and how they become — under which conditions they become identical, transforming one into the other — why the rind of rap must not take these opposites for dead, blocked, but for living, conditioned, mobile, transforming one into the other. Excellent Hegel... (On reading Hegel)

Vol. I, p. 142

(Thoughts of dialectic en lisant  
Hegel [on reading Hegel])

NB

Acute and profound; Hegel analyzes concepts which usually appear dead, and he shows that there is movement in them. The finite? That means movement has come to an end! Something? That means not what Other is. Being in general? That means such indeterminateness that being = Not-Being. All-sided universal flexibility of concepts -- flexibility reaching to the identity of opposites. This flexibility, subjectively applied = eclecticism and sophistry. When this flexibility is objectively applied, i.e., reflecting the all-sidedness of the material process and its unity, then it is dialectic; it is the correct reflection of the eternal development of the world.

Vol. I, p. 180

[After quoting Hegel on "The ideality of Being-for Self, as totality transformed into reality," Lenin continues:]

The idea of the transformation of the ideal into the real is profound. Very important for history. But also in the personal life of man it is evident that there is much truth in this. Against vulgar materialism. NB. The difference of the ideal from the material is also not unconditional, not excessive.

Vol. II, p. 31

[After quoting Hegel on Kant's Critique of Judgment, Lenin notes:]

Thus here also Hegel accuses Kant of subjectivism. This NB. Hegel is for the "objective validity" (sit venia verbo) of show, "of the immediate given"

(the term, given, is common with Hegel in general.) The little philosophers dispute whether one should take as basic essence or the immediately given. (Kant, Hume, the Machists) Hegel substitutes "and" for "or," and explains the concrete content of this "and".

Vol. II, pp. 66-68

[After quoting Hegel on the Law of Contradiction, Lenin writes:]

Movement and "self-movement" (this NB! arbitrary (independent) spontaneous, internally-necessary movement,) "change," "movement and life," "the principle of every self-movement," "impulse" (Tribes) to "movement" and "activity" -- opposite of "dead-being." Who would believe that that is the core of "Hegelianism," of abstract and abstruse (difficult, absurd?) Hegelianism? We must reveal this core, grasp it, save it, shall it out, purify it -- which is precisely what Marx and Engels have done.

The idea of universal movement and change (1813, Logic) was disclosed before its application to life and society. It was proclaimed in reference to society (Communist Manifesto, 1847) earlier than in relation to man (1859, Origin of Species).

NB

1) Ordinary perception grasps the difference and the contradiction, but not the transition of one to the other, but this is the most important.

2) Intelligent reflection and understanding. Reflection grasps the contradiction, expresses it, brings things in relation to one another, compels the "concept to shine through the contradiction" but does not express the concept of things and their relation.

3) Thinking reason (notion) sharpens the blunted difference of variety, the more manifold of imagination, to the essential difference, to opposition. Only when the contradictions reach the peak does manifoldness become regular (regam) and lively in relation to the other -- acquire that negativity which is the i n n e r p u l s a t i o n o f s e l f - m o v e m e n t a n d l i f e.

Vol. II, pp. 93-94

[After quoting Hegel on the transition from Ground into Condition, Lenin writes:]

If I'm not mistaken, there is much mysticism and pedantry here in the conclusions of Hegel, but the basic idea is magnificent: all-world, all-sided living connection of everything with everything else, and of the reflection of this connection -- standing Hegel materialistically on his head -- in the concept of man, which must be so polished, broken-in, flexible, mobile, relative, mutually-tied-in, unified in opposition as to embrace the world.

And a "purely logical" working out? It coincides. It must coincide as does induction and deduction in Capital.

The continuation of the work of Hegel and Marx must consist in the dialectical working out of the history of human thought, science and technology.

.....  
The unfoldment of the whole totality of moments of actuality NB = essence of dialectic knowledge.  
.....

Vol. II, p. 192

[After Hegel's "... Substance attains Actuality only when it has become Cause," Lenin notes:]

On the one hand, we must deepen the knowledge of matter to the knowledge (to the concept) of substance, in order to find the causes of appearance. On the other hand, actual knowledge of causes is the deepening of knowledge from externality of appearance to substance. Two types of examples should explain this: 1) out of the history of natural science and 2) from the history of philosophy. More precisely: not "examples" should be here — comparison n'est pas raison — but the quintessence of the one and the other plus the history of technology.

Cause and effect, ergo, only moment of the universal interdependence, connection (of the universal), the concatenation of events, only links in the chain of the development of matter.

NB All-sidedness and all-embracing character of world connection, only one-sidedly, desultorily and incompletely expressed by causality. NB

[Lenin concludes his notes on Book II (Essence), Vol. II:]

At the end of the second volume of Logic, Vol. IV, before the transition to the Notion a definition is given: "the Notion, the realm of Subjectivity or of Freedom":

NB Freedom = subjectivity  
("or")  
goal, consciousness, striving NB

Vol. II, pp. 221-222

[After making copious extracts from the section on the Notion in General, Lenin notes for the above given pages:]

Hegel is essentially completely right against Kant. Thought, emerging from the concrete to the abstract, does not separate — if it is correct (NB) (and Kant, as all philosophers speak about correct thinking) — from truth, but goes toward it. Abstraction of matter, of natural law, abstraction of value, etc., in a word, all scientific (correct, serious, not nonsensical, absurd) abstractions reflect nature more deeply, truly, fully. From living observation to abstract thinking, and from this to practice — such is the dialectic road to knowledge of truth, the knowledge of objective reality. Kant degrades knowledge in order to make place for belief; Hegel elevates knowledge, believing that knowledge is knowledge of god. The materialist elevates knowledge of matter of nature, throwing God and the philosophic rabble defending him into the dunghheap.

Vol. II, p. 301 ff.

[The following are all from the section on Syllogisms:]

One must return to Hegel in order to analyze, step by step, current logic and theory of knowledge, Kantian, etc.

NB: Marx has applied the dialectic of Hegel in its rational form to political economy

The forming (of abstraction) of notion and the accompanying operations already include the presentation, the conviction, the consciousness of the law of the objective world connections. To single out causality from this is nonsense. To reject the objectivity of notions, the objectivity of the universal in the particular and in the individual is impossible. Consequently, Hegel considerably more profoundly than Kant and others, investigates the reflection of the movement of the objective world in the movement of notions.

NB  
The question of the true significance of Hegel's Logic

Just as the simple value form, the individual act of exchange of a given commodity with another, already includes, in undeveloped form all major contradictions of capitalism, -- so the simplest generalization, the first and simplest forming of notions (judgments, syllogisms, etc.) signifies the ever-deeper knowledge of the objective world connections. Here it is necessary to seek the real sense, significance and role of Hegelian Logic. This MB.

The question of the criticism of contemporary Kantianism, Machism, etc.

Two aphorisms:

1) Plekhanov criticizes Kantianism (and agnosticism in general) more from the vulgar materialistic than the dialectic materialistic point of view, insofar as he only a limine rejects their argumentation, does not correct them (as Hegel corrected Kant), by deepening, generalizing, broadening them, showing the connections and transitions of all and every notion.

2) Marxists (at the beginning of the 20th century) criticized the Kantians and Humists more in a Feuerbachian (and Buchnerian), than in a Hegelian, manner.

Aphorism: It is impossible fully to grasp Marx's Capital and especially its first chapter, if you have not studied through and understood the whole of Hegel's Logic. Consequently, none of the Marxists for the past  $\frac{1}{2}$  century have understood Marx!!

Very profound and wise! The laws of logic are the reflection of the objective in the subjective consciousness of man.

Vol. II, pp. 381-383

[In the Section on Objectivity, Lenin noted that the embryo of historical materialism is present in Hegel. In the following quotation from Hegel's section on Means and Ends, the emphasis is Lenin's: ]

"Insofar as the Means is higher than the finite Ends of external usefulness: the plough is more honourable than are immediately those enjoyments which are procured by it, and are Ends. The instrument is preserved, while the immediate enjoyments pass away and are forgotten. In his tools man possesses power over external NATURE, EVEN ALTHOUGH, ACCORDING TO HIS ENDS, he frequently is subjected to it."

Hegel and  
historical  
materialism

In reality the aims of man are generated by the objective world, and presuppose it, find it as the given, the existing. But it appears to man that his aims are taken outside of the world, independent ("freedom") of the world ((N.B.: all this is in and about & "Subjective End": N.B.))

NB  
The categories  
of Logic and  
the practice  
of man

When Hegel tries -- sometimes even strains himself and worries to death -- to subsume the purposeful activity of man under the categories of logic, saying that this activity is the "syllogism," that the subject plays the role of some sort of "member" in the logical "figure" of the syllogism, etc., then this is not only a strain, not only a game.

There is here a very deep content, purely materialistic. It is necessary to turn this around: the practical activity of man, repeated billions of times, must bring the consciousness of man to the repetition of the various logical figures, in order that these could achieve the significance of an axiom. This Nota Bene.

From subjective  
notion and sub-  
jective end to  
objective truth.

Remarkable: Hegel goes through  
the practical, expedient activity of  
man to get to the "Idea" as corres-  
pondence of the notion with the object,  
to the Idea as truth. A close approach  
to this, that man by his practice  
demonstrated the objective correctness  
of his ideas, notions, knowledge,  
science.

Vol. II, p. 395 ff.

[When Lenin reaches Section Three: The Idea, he asks himself to  
read Idea as knowledge of man, and Thought as man, then:]

Knowledge is eternal, infinite  
approachment of thought to object.  
The reflection of nature in the  
thought of man must be understood  
not in a "dead," not in an "abstract"  
manner, not without motion, not  
without contradictions, but in an  
eternal process of movement, emergence  
of contradictions and their solution.

[At the end of the chapter, "The Idea of Cognition," Lenin remarks:]

Undoubtedly practice in Hegel stands  
as a link in the analysis of the process  
of cognition and precisely as a tran-  
sition to the objective ("absolute,"  
according to Hegel) truth. Marx,  
consequently, clings to Hegel, intro-  
ducing criteria of practice into the  
theory of knowledge. Cf: Theses on Feuerbach.

Theoretic cognition must give the  
object in its necessity, in its all-  
sided relations, in its contradictory  
movement an-und für-sich. But man's  
understanding "definitively" embraces  
this objective truth of cognition,  
lays it in, masters it only when

Hegel about  
practice and  
the objectivity  
of cognition

understanding becomes "being for  
itself" in the sense of practice.  
I.e., the practice of man and  
humanity is the verification,  
criterion of objectivity of cognition.  
Is that the thought of Hegel?  
One must return here.

Vol. II, p. 460

thus: ] [ And then "translates" Hegel's practice in the theory of cognition,

Alias:

Man's cognition not only  
reflects the objective world, but  
creates it.

] [ Later in the same "translation," that is to say, quoting Hegel and,  
side by side, rephrasing him materialistically, Lenin concludes, on the certainty  
of man's "own actuality and of the non-actuality of the world": ]

i.e., that the world does not satisfy  
man and man, by his action decides to  
change it.

NB

The activity of man, composing for  
itself an objective picture of the  
world changes the external  
activity, transcends its determinate-  
ness (= changes these or other of  
its aspects, qualities) and thus  
takes away from it the traits of  
show, externality and nullity, gives  
it being in-itself and for itself  
(= objective truth).

Vol. II, p. 466

] [ After quoting Hegel at the beginning of Chapter III, "The Absolute  
Idea has now turned out to be the identity of the Theoretical and the Practical  
Idea: each of these by itself is one-sided." Lenin states: ]

The unity of theoretic ideas  
(cognition) and practice -- this NB --

2444

and this unity precisely in theory of knowledge for the result is the "Absolute Idea" (and Idea = "objective truth").

We can, if you please, present them (elements of the dialectic) in a more detailed way, thus:

- 1) The objectivity of the notion (not examples, not digressions, but the thing in itself).
- 2) The whole totality of the manifold relations of this thing to the others.
- 3) The development of this thing (respective appearance), its own movement, its own life.
- 4) The internally contradictory tendencies (and sides) of this thing.
- 5) The thing (the appearance, etc.) as sum and unity of opposites.
- 6) The struggle respective the unfolding of these opposites, the contradictions of the impulses, etc.
- 7) The unity of analysis and synthesis, -- disintegration of the particular parts of the totality, the summation of these parts together.
- 8) The relation of each thing (appearance, etc.) is not only manifold but general, universal. Each thing (appearance, process, etc.) is connected with every other.
- 9) Not only unity of opposites but transitions of every determination, quality, characteristic, side, feature into every other (into its opposite).
- 10) Infinite process of unfolding of new sides, relations, etc.

11) Infinite process of the deepening of man's cognition of things, appearances, processes, etc., from appearance to essence, and from the less profound to the more profound essence.

12) From co-existence to causality and from one form of connection and of mutual dependence to another, deeper and more universal.

13) The repetition at a higher stage of certain features, characteristics, etc. of the lower, and

14) The apparent return to the old (the negation of the negation)

15) The struggle of the content with the form and the reverse. The shedding of the form, the transformation of the content.

16) The transition of quantity into quality and vice versa. (( 15 and 16 are examples of 9 ))

.....  
Briefly the dialectic can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. Thereby is the kernel of the dialectic grasped, but that demands explanation and development.  
.....

Vol. II, pp. 477-478

[On Hegel's "innermost and most objective moment of Life and Spirit, by virtue of which a subject is personal and free," Lenin says:]

Here what is important is:  
1) the characteristic of the dialectic:  
self-movement, source of activity,

movement of life and spirit;  
correspondence of notions of the  
subject (man) with reality;

2) objectivism to the highest  
degree ("most objective Moment")

Vol. II, pp. 485-486

[At the end of the chapter - and the whole book - Lenin puts the  
date, 12/17/1914, and says:]

It is remarkable: in the whole  
chapter on "The Absolute Idea" there  
is almost not a single word on God,  
(scarcely a "godly" "notion" slips  
out even accidentally) and, moreover --  
this NB -- this chapter almost does  
not contain idealism specifically,  
but its main object is the dialectic  
method. The sum and summation, the  
last word and gist of the Logic of  
Hegel is the dialectic method -- that  
is extremely remarkable. And another  
thing: in this most idealistic  
work of Hegel, the most materialism,  
Contradictory but a fact!

\*\*\*\*\*

[Lenin gives the contents page of what is known as the Smaller Logic --  
(Encyclopaedia) -- and comments:]

The Notion (knowledge) in Being  
(the immediate phenomena reveal the  
essence (law of cause, identity,  
difference, etc.) -- such actually  
is the universal course of all of  
man's knowledge (of all of science)  
in general. Such is the course also  
of natural science and political  
economy (and of history). The  
dialectic of Hegel is the generalization  
of the history of thought.

Extremely productive seems to be the task to follow this through more concretely, in greater detail on the history of individual sciences. In the Logic the history of thought, must, in general and as a whole, correspond with the laws of thought.

If Marx did not leave a Logic (with a capital letter), he left the logic of Capital, and this should be doubly utilized on the given question. In Capital, the logic, dialectic and theory of knowledge of materialism (3 words are not necessary: they are one and the same) are applied to one science, taking all of value in Hegel and moving this value forward.

Commodity -- money -- capital

production of absolute surplus value  
production of relative surplus value

The history of capitalism and the analysis of the n o t i o n s summing it up.

The beginning -- most simple, ordinary, evident en masse, immediate "being": an individual commodity ("being" in political economy). Its analysis, as a social relation. The analysis is a dual one, deductive and inductive, -- logical and historical (forms of value). Verification of facts respective the practice is here in every step of the analysis.

Cf., with question about essence versus appearance  
-- price and value  
-- demand and supply versus "value"  
    (= "crystallized labor")  
-- wages and price of labor power.

[The following are excerpts from the Notebooks on Hegel's History of Philosophy.]

[After quoting Hegel on dialectic when he deals with the Eleatic School:]

About dialectic  
and its objective  
significance

With "the principle of development" in the 20th century (yes, and also at the end of the 19th c.) "all agree." -- Yes, but this is superficial, not-thought-out, accidental philistine, "agreement" is the kind of agreement which stifles and vulgarizes truth. -- If everything develops, that means that everything transits from one into another since development known beforehand is not simple, general and eternal growth, increase (respective decrease) etc. Since it is so, then, firstly, it is necessary more precisely to understand evolution as the rise and disappearance of all transitions. -- And secondly, if everything develops, then does this relate to the most general Notions and categories of thinking? If not, this means thinking is not connected with being. If yes, it means there is a dialectic of Notion and dialectic of knowledge which has objective significance.

I. Principle of development

Besides the general principle of development, it is necessary to connect, tie up, put alongside with the general, the principle of unity of the world, of nature, of movement, matter, etc.

NB

II. Principle of unity

[Toward the end of the philosophy of Socrates, Lenin says:]

Intelligent idealism is nearer to intelligent materialism than is stupid materialism.

Dialectic idealism instead of intelligent; metaphysical, undeveloped, dead, vulgar, static instead of stupid.

[And then:]

NB:: Work out:

Plekhanov wrote on philosophy (dialectic), probably near 1,000 pages (Bel'tov plus against Bogdanov plus against Kantians plus basic questions, etc.)

There is in them nil about the Larger Logic, about its thoughts (i.e., dialectic proper, as a philosophic science)!!

NB  
the dialectic  
of knowledge

The significance of the universal is contradictory: it is dead, it is unclear, not complete, etc., etc., but it is only a step to the knowledge of the concrete because we never know the concrete fully. The infinite sum of general notions, laws, etc. gives the concrete in its fullness.

[After the philosophy of Aristotle as dealt with by Hegel, Lenin says:]

Not only is the transition from matter to consciousness dialectical, but so is it from feeling to thought, etc.

NB Hegel, the exponent of the dialectic was incapable of understanding dialectically the transition from matter to movement, from matter to consciousness — especially the second.

Marx corrected the mistake (or weakness?) of the mystic.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear H:

III

May 12, 1953

I am going to take the plunge and if it turns out that I have behaved like a bull in a china shop--well, I simply have to take my chances or I will never get to sleep nights at all. There is no concrete problem that I meet daily, no matter how minor, that doesn't send me scurrying to the LOGIC and by now I'm so drunk with it all that I brazenly shout that in the dialectic of the Absolute Idea is the dialectic of the party and that I have just worked it out.

Just like that. I have taken the plunge. But I will restrain myself from beginning with the conclusions and the differentiation of us from Lenin and even us from 1948 but I will have you bear with me as I go through the whole last chapter of the Logic. However, before I do so, let me state what I am not doing: 1) I am not touching upon the mass party; the workers will do what they will do and until they do we can have only the faintest intimation of the great leap. 2) This is not 1948, but 1953; I am not concerned with spontaneity versus organization, nor with Stalinism which the workers will overcome.

I am concerned only with the dialectic of the vanguard party of that type of grouping like ours, be it large or small, and its relationship to the mass.

Let's begin with the beginning: "The Absolute Idea has now turned out to be the identity of the Theoretical and the Practical Idea..." At this moment this means to me that the party is the identity or unity of the activity of the leadership and the activity of the ranks. "Each by itself is one-sided and contains the Idea itself only as a sought Beyond and unattained goal; each consequently is a synthesis of the tendency and both contains and does not contain the Idea...." And further down on the same page (466) we have the warning that the Absolute Idea "contains the highest opposition within itself."

While the staggering truth of this last phrase sinks in, I will make one more quotation from that page: "The Absolute Idea is the only object and content of philosophy. As it contains every determinateness, and its essence is return to itself through its self-determination or particularization, it has various phases. It is the business of philosophy to recognize it in them. Nature and Spirit are different manner of presenting its existence...."

Because the party is the only object and content of our philosophy here, I wish to make two jumps here. One is to contrast to the manner in which Other is explained on this page where "Notion ..." as person, is impenetrable and atomic subjectivity; while at the same time it is not exclusive individuality, but is, for itself, universality and cognition, and in its Other has its own objectivity for object." Here then Other is the proletariat outside. What I wish to contrast to it is the description of Other when the Notion is further developed on p. 477 where Other turns out to be, not the proletariat outside, but the party itself. Hegel says:

"The second or negative and mediated determination is at the same time the mediating determination. At first it may be taken as simple determination, but in truth it is a reference or relation; for it is negative--the negative, however, of the positive, and includes the latter. It is not therefore the Other of a term to which it is indifferent, for thus it would be neither an Other, nor a reference or relation; it is the Other in itself, the Other of an Other. It thus includes its own Other, and so is contradiction, or the posited dialectic in itself."

The other jump that I referred to that I wish to make is to leave the Logic for a moment and go to the last chapter in the PHENOMENOLOGY. In that chapter on Absolute Knowledge Hegel writes: "The object as a whole is the mediated result (the syllogism) or the passing of universality into individuality through specification, as also the reverse process from individual to universal through cancelled individuality or specific determination." (p791)

Take a second look at the phrase, "the mediated result" and remember that our object is the party and that we are working out the triangular relationship not only politically but philosophically; that, syllogistically speaking, the party is the totality, the mediated result of the three layers and at the same time it is what it is by its relationship to the proletariat outside, on the one hand, and to the universal of socialism, on the other hand, except that the two are not "on the one hand" and "on the other hand" but interpenetrated.

Hegel goes on. (p.804): "Spirit is the movement of the self which empties (externalizes) itself of self and sinks itself within its own substance and qua subject, both has gone out of the substance itself, making its substance and object and a content, and also supersedes this distinction of objectivity and content."

So Socialism too as it "externalizes" itself in parties, and in this case I mean not the vanguard grouping but the Paris Commune, the Soviets, the CIO, and so is Hegel talking of history: "The other aspect, however, in which Spirit comes into being, History, is the process of becoming in terms of knowledge, a conscious self-mediating process--Spirit externalized and emptied into Time." (p.807) But he does not leave it at history (which includes historic development for us not only of the above, but the historic development of the party 1903, 1920-3, now). He ends Absolute Knowledge with: (p.808)

"The goal, which is Absolute Knowledge or Spirit knowing itself as Spirit, finds its pathway in the recollection of spiritual forms (Geister) as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their spiritual kingdom. Their conservation, looked at from the side of the free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; looked at from the side of their intellectually comprehended

organization, it is the Science of the ways in which knowledge appears. Both together, the History (intellectually) comprehended (begriffen) form at once the recollection and the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit, the reality, the truth, the certainty of its throne, without which it were lifeless, solitary, and alone."

Now the way I see this connect with the Logic, p.466, where I left off before I began jumping around, is that where the "various phases" could have meant stages of development within the party such as 1903, 1920-3, etc., the recognition of the difference manners of the existence of Absolute Idea as Nature and Spirit, or the country and something like the CIO rather than a "strict party" meant you are a fool if you cannot recognize the party in that for that is socialism just as at one time it was sufficient to define it as "electricity plus soviets." The world concepts, the American roots, and us. We will come back to that, but now I wish to return to Hegel as he develops his Absolute Idea logically. On the next page (467) he writes: "Thus the logical Idea has itself as infinite form for content....As opposed to form, content appears as Other and as given....."

"The Absolute Idea itself has only this further content, that the form-determination is its own perfected totality--the pure Notion....what remains therefore to be considered here is not a content as such, but the universal element of its form--that, is the method."

In the party both as political organization and as the realization of the theory of knowledge, the "form-determinations" or form of relations between leaders and ranks, between the various layers, and within each layer tells the whole story. There is no content outside of that. Or, once again to stick me close to Hegel, "The method therefore is both soul and substance, and nothing is either conceived or known in its truth except in so far as it is completely subject to the method...." (p.468)

Hegel brings this development of method to a climax by contrasting sharply what it is to inquiring cognition where it is "in the position of a tool, of a means which stands on the subjective side, whereby the method relates itself to the object" to what it is in the dialectic: "But in true cognition the method is not merely a quantity of certain determinations: it is the fact that only because it equally has the significance of objective, so that in the conclusion, it does not merely achieve an external determinateness through the method, but is posited in its identity with the Subjective Notion."

It is directly after this that Hegel discloses to me the secret of something that I have been chowing over like a dog does a bone, for many a moon--the intuition of the leader which he calls "internal intuition". First, let's watch the process of arriving at internal intuition: 1)method only has to have a beginning and so that is where we must begin 2)but this beginning

(and he warns later that "neither in actuality nor in thought" is there any beginning "so simple and abstract as is commonly imagined) is not "the immediate of sensuous intuition" which "is manifold and individual". 3)no, this beginning is "internal intuition."

Secondly, note the contrast between "the immediate of sensuous intuition" and which comes from that which is, from the way, we would say, the third layer lives, and "the internal intuition" of the leader which comes from the way he thinks.

Jam these two opposites together, and you will first understand a sentence back on p.467: "The self-determination therefore in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak ....." In a word, the self-development of socialism, objectively and subjectively, gives off impulses which come one way to the leader, another way to the class as a whole, but what is important is that it is determined to appear "to hear itself speak". And the beautiful part about the "internal intuition" is that this "beginning must be inherently defective and must be endowed with the impulse of self-development." (p.471)

So that, finally, we reach Hegel's conclusion that nothing in life or in thought has a beginning so simple as is imagined but that "every beginning must be made from the Absolute, while every progress is merely the exhibition of the Absolute....The progress is therefore not a kind of overflow, which it would be if in truth that which begins were already the Absolute; rather the progress consists in this, that the universal determines itself and is the universal for itself, that is, is equally also individual and subject. It is the Absolute only in its completion." (471-2)

So although we began with the universal of socialism and although we have seen socialism in the various phases of the Commune, the Soviets, the CIO, it is not yet IT for it can be it "only in its completion." The new society will not be until it is; now we see only intimations, approximations, but it is nevertheless all around us, in the lives of the workers and in the theory of the party, so until the solution of the conflict and the abolition of the division, we are back to stages of development: "cause is the highest stage in which the concrete Notion as beginning has an immediate existence in the sphere of necessity, but it is not yet a subject which, as such, preserves itself also in its actual realization." (472)

Here I wish you to remember that in this page and in the next is where Lenin made his own 16-point definition of the dialectic, the essence of which was threefold: 1)the transformation of anything into its opposite (collapse of 2nd Int.); 2)the absolute in every relative which is the transition to something else (Monopoly as eve of socialist revolution); and 3)thought reflects reality (objective world connections). That we can fit Lenin in too here historically can now be seen from the fact that in the previous section on The Idea of Cognition

-5-

Lenin had gone further, saying that "Man's cognition not only reflects the objective world but creates", but when he reached the Absolute Idea it was not the creativity that he developed but the objective world connections because to him in 1915 the Idea as "objective truth" of necessity predominated over any actual reconstruction of society, or the 1917 "socialism looking at us through all windows".

We, however, can go further, and not only further than Lenin but further than we ourselves did in 1948 when the Nevada Dialectics so profoundly hold forth on the positive in the negative. But holding fast to the positive in the negative then meant only the general development of socialism through overcoming Stalinism, whereas now we can be more concrete, at least in relation to our own organization where the mediating determination is a negative "but the negative of the positive and includes the latter." Now you can see why some 11 pages back I called attention to this further determination of Other as "its own Other"... "the posited dialectic of itself.":  
 "--The first or immediate term is the Notion in itself, and therefore is the negative only in itself; the dialectic moment with it therefore consists in this, that the distinction which it implicitly contains is posited in it. The second term on the other hand is itself the determinate entity, distinction or relation; hence with it the dialectic moment consists in the positing of the unity which is contained in it."

We have reached the turning point despite the unity of the party as a totality, since "The negativity which has just been considered is the turning point of the movement of the Notion. It is the simple point of negative self-relation, the innermost source of all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement, the dialectic soul which all truth has in it and through which it alone is truth; for the second transcendence of the opposition between the Notion and Reality, and that unity which is the truth, rest upon this subjectivity alone.--The second negative, the negative of the negative, which we have reached is this transcendence of the contradiction, but is no mere the activity of an external reflection than the contradiction is: it is the innermost and most objective moment of Life and Spirit, by virtue of which a subject is personal and free." (pp.477-8)

NOW STAND UP AND SHOUT PERSONAL AND FREE, PERSONAL AND FREE, PERSONAL AND FREE AS LENIN SHOUTED LEAP, LEAP, LEAP WHEN HE FIRST SAW DIALECTICAL DEVELOPMENT TO BE THAT AND ALSO THE OBJECTIVE WORLD.

I will return to freedom, and where our age proves it has abolished the distinction between theory and practice and that which is the preoccupation of the theorists freedom out of one-party totalitarianism is the preoccupation of the great masses, but now I must still stick close to Hegel for when he reaches that point he goes not into passages of freedom but an attack on all old radical parties from the Social-Democracy (Kant to Hegel) to the SLP (formalists to Hegel) and he does

2455

not let go until the method itself extends itself into a system: (p.480)

And on p. 482 he says "The method effects this as a system of totality... This progress determines itself, first, in this manner, that it begins from simple determinateness and that each subsequent one is richer and more concrete," It has not been in a straight line, but an approach both rearward and forward so that now we can see "In the absolute method the Motion preserves itself in its otherness, and the universal in its particularization, in the Judgment and in reality; it raises to each next stage of determination the whole mass of its antecedent content, and by its dialectical progress not only loses nothing and leaves nothing behind, but carries with it all that it has acquired, enriching and concentrating itself upon itself."

So that none of the other philosophies (parties to us) just degenerated or died, but their achievements has been incorporated in the new philosophy or party and this new has been enriched "concentrating itself upon itself" for we have that new source, the third layer.

Now watch this: "Each new stage of exteriorization (that is, of further determination) is also an interiorization, and greater extension is also higher intensity." (p483) What a more perfect description of going outward with B, and becoming richer inward and more intense.

"The highest and acutest point is simple personality," continues Hegel, "which, by virtue alone of the absolute dialectic which is its nature equally holds and comprehends everything within itself because it perfectly liberates itself.. .." So we are back at liberation and until the end of The Absolute Idea that will be the theme, liberation, freedom and an absolutely uncompromising, Bolshevik attack on impatience. If you are right and the Unhappy Consciousness should somehow go as part of Abarism--and I agree with you there--then nevertheless I will not let go of Leland. Just listen to the absolutely devastating analysis by Hegel, and remember Hegel does it as he has already approached freedom and we met that type when we approached independence:

p484: "That impatience whose only wish is to go beyond the determinate (whether in the form of beginning, object, finite, or in any other form) and to be immediately in the absolute, has nothing before it as object of its cognition but the empty negative the abstract infinite,--or else would-be absolute, which is imaginary because it is neither posited nor comprehended.

I am shaking all over for we have come to where we part from Lenin. I mentioned before that, although in the approach to the Absolute Idea Lenin had mentioned that man's cognition not only reflects the objective world but creates it but that within the chapter he never developed it. Objective world

connections, materialism, dialectical materialism it is true, but not the object and subject as one fully developed--that's what he saw. Then he reaches the last paragraph: "For the Idea posits itself as the absolute unity of the pure Notion and its Reality, and thus gathers itself into the immediacy of Being; and in doing so, as totality in this form, it is Nature."

There Lenin stops--it is the beginning of the last paragraph--and he says: "This phrase on the last page of the Logic is exceedingly remarkable. The transition of the logical idea to Nature. Stretching a hand to materialism. This is not the last phrase of the Logic, but further till the end of the page is unimportant."

But, my dear Vladimir Ilyitch, it is not true; the end of that page is important; we of 1953, we who have lived 3 decades after you and tried to absorb all you have left us we can tell you that.

Listen to the very next sentence "But this determination is not a perfected becoming or a transition,...." Remember how transition was everything to you in the days of Monopoly, the eve of socialism. Well, Hegel has passed beyond transition, he says this last determination "the pure Idea, in which the determinateness or reality of the Notion is itself raised to the level of Notion, is an absolute liberation, having no further immediate determination which is not equally posited and equally Notion. Consequently there is no transition in this freedom,....The transition here therefore must rather be taken to mean that the Idea freely releases itself in absolute self-security and self-repose."

You see, Vladimir Ilyitch you didn't have Stalinism to overcome, when transitions, revolutions seemed sufficient to bring the new society. Now everyone looks at the totalitarian one-party state, that is the new that must be overcome by a totally new revolt in which everyone experiences "absolute liberation". So we build with you from 1920-3 and include the experience of three decades,

But, H, (Hausser, not Hegel) I have not finished yet, not that last paragraph in Hegel, nor my summation, for we must retrace our steps to the paragraph before and as we do, let's keep in mind Marx's last chapter of Capital (Vol.I). Hegel writes: "In so far the pure Idea of Cognition is enclosed in subjectivity, and therefore is an impulse to transcend the latter; and, as last result, pure truth becomes the beginning of another sphere and science. This transition need here only be intimated." (p.485) And then he goes into how the Idea posits itself and is liberation. That, he says, he cannot fully develop here; he can only intimate it.

Now you will recall that that is precisely what Marx does in the Accumulation of Capital when he reaches the laws of concentration and centralization of capital and socialization

of labor. He says he cannot develop those, but he can give an intimation, and this intimation turns out to be that (1) the ultimate would be centralization of capital "in the hands of one single capitalist corporation" (2) that it would not matter if that occurs peacefully or violently, (3) but that with the centralization grows also the revolt, and it is not just any revolt but one that is "organized, united, disciplined by the very mechanism of capitalist production."

H, are you as excited as I? Just as Marx's development of the form of the commodity and money came from Hegel's syllogistic U P I, so the Accumulation of Capital (the General Absolute Law) is based on the Absolute Idea.

Remember also that we kept on repeating Lenin's aphorism that Marx may not have left us "a" Logic, but he left us the logic of Capital. This is it--the logic of Capital is the dialectic of bourgeois society: the state capitalism at one pole and the revolt at the other.

At one stage we tried to divide socialization of labor from revolt, the form being still capitalistic, and the latter the beginning of socialism. We didn't get very far because that socialization was capitalistic but revolt liberates it from its capitalistic integument. Marx, however, dealing with the dialectic of capitalist society did not make the negation of the negation any more concrete, but, on the contrary, in the last chapter returns to the origins of capitalism.

Now we are ready to return to the last few sentences of the Logic ending with "But this next resolution of the pure Idea--to determine itself as external Idea--thereby only posits for itself the mediation out of which the Notion arises as free existence that out of externality has passed into itself; arises to perfect its self-liberation in the Philosophy of Spirit, and to discover the highest Notion of itself in that logical science as the pure Notion which forms a Notion of itself."

(Please, Hauser, can you get a hold of a copy of Philosophy of Spirit or is it Mind? I am brazen enough to want to swim there too. I have an instinct that we couldn't get very far there when we tried it before because we equated Mind to party, but now that I believe the dialectic of the Absolute Idea is the dialectic of the party, I feel that Mind is the new society gestating in the old, and I feel sure we could get a lot of very valuable dialectical developments there, and what is so significant about that also is the building of the new within the old makes it possible to stop jumping from high point to high point but rather to follow concretely since this now is in the daily struggle.)

Somewhere in the letters about Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks it is stated that Lenin was aware of the gap between his Universal ("to a man") and the concrete Russian proletariat,

where we are more aware of the identity of the Universal and the concrete American proletariat. What, further, these two years of our organization showed was the high stage of social consciousness of the new layers attracted to us: they practice in the paper before they join and yet they appreciate leadership. Perhaps I'm stretching but I feel that in the Absolute General Law when Marx was developing the dialectic of bourgeois society to its limit and came up with the revolt "united, organized, and disciplined" he also set the limits to the dialectic of the party which is part of bourgeois society and will wither with its passing as will the bourgeois state. It appears to me when objective and subjective are so interpenetrated that the preoccupations of the theoreticians of the man on the street is can we be free when what has arisen is the one-party state, the assertion of freedom, "personal and free" and full liberation takes precedence over economics, politics, philosophy; or rather refuses to be rent asunder into three and wants to be one, the knowledge that you can be free.

Do you remember the letter of May 20, 1949: "We are poles apart from Hegel but very close to him in another respect. As materialists we root man in his environment, but now that the real history of humanity is about to begin, the Hegelian concept of speculative reason, comes to life with us, as never before, the on our basis."

W.

May 20, 1953

Dear Hauser:

Please do not interpret this as any prodding of you to commit yourself on my analysis of the Absolute Idea; it is only that I cannot stand still and so rushed directly to the Philosophy of Mind. I then reread the Preface, Introduction, and Absolute Knowledge in the Phenomenology of Mind, the Introduction, Three Attitudes to Objectivity, and the Absolute Idea in the Smaller Logic and the Absolute Idea in the Science of Logic. After that I read from cover to cover Lenin's phenomenal Vol. IX which is the Absolute Idea in action, reread Marx's Accumulation of Capital and the Fetishism of Commodities in Vol. I of Capital, the final part in Vol. III, and the Civil War in France. All this I did on my own time, so to speak, that is to say, between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. after putting in very full days and evenings in concrete org. activity. I note these facts only in order to show how this Absolute Idea has me coming and going. Along with keeping all these in the back of my head then as I read the Philosophy of Mind, I made up the following outline of the development of the vanguard party and its relationship to the mass movements:

The party as a "simple" class instrument--Communist League, the First International (reflecting 1848 class struggles and the Paris Commune)

The party as divider of tendencias within Marxism--Lenin's party of 1903-17 (1905 & 1917 revolutions)

The party as divider of politics from economics--The German Social Democracy (trade union aristocracy of labor and 1914 betrayal)

The party as different social layers--1920--(in Russia Lenin to leaders and ranks; in Germany ranks to leaders)

The party as suppressor of ranks and destroyer of revolutionism--Stalinism--(Spanish Revolution, CIO, National Resistance Movements)

1923-53

Now ourselves, 41-50--clarification of ideas, elaboration of theory, eyes on mass movements. '51-'53--life in party and third layer as source of theory. Something totally new appears--100 years becomes practically no more than mere background for listening and digging--B, Woman, Youth--all come from ranks--something like the Great Beginning in Russia. What is so remarkable is that it comes not as direct result of any

2460

revolution, but rather as the accumulated experiences and feelings and social thinking when placed in the proper theoretic and climatic atmosphere of live people.

To this the paper is the climax not alone because it has never been but because it could never have been. Only one who knew it could be could go through the toil of the negative, the labor and suffering, of not a single break in the cadre of the "continuator" of Leninism. And (Note the "and" rather than a "but") only when it did appear can we have perspectives that we have. This therefore is not just a general interpenetration of objective and subjective but one so concrete that it is impossible to say where theory leaves off and practice begins. This can be so only because the elements of the new society are everywhere in evidence.

First now you are where I was as I read the Philosophy of Mind which, to me, is the new society. That's what materialistic reading of the final chapters of Hegel means to me. (To say the end of Hegel is highly idealistic is to deny that the dialectical laws apply in their totality. Perhaps I am very rash but that is how I feel at this moment. Unfortunately, in this field I can do no more than feel for I most certainly have no knowledge or practice and I am totally dependent on you.)

I limit myself to the following sections of the Philosophy: Introduction, Free Mind, Absolute Mind.

In the Introduction Hegel states what the three stages in the development of the Mind are: 1) in the form of self-relation where "the ideal of totality of the Idea" is, it is "self-contained and free." 2) Moving from the Mind Subjective he comes to the second stage or "the form of reality" and in this objective world "freedom presents itself under the shape of necessity." 3) From Mind Objective we reach Mind Absolute "that unity of mind as objectivity and of mind as ideality and concept, which essentially and actually is and for ever produces itself, mind in its absolute truth."

Hegel continues (#386): "The two first parts of the doctrine of Mind embrace the finite mind. Mind is the infinite Idea: thus finitude here means the disproportion between the concept and the reality--but with the qualification that it is a shadow cast by the mind's own light--a show or illusion which the mind implicitly imposes as a barrier to itself, in order, by its removal, actually to realize and become conscious of freedom as its very being, i.e., to be fully manifested. The several steps of this activity, on each of which, with their semblance of being, it is the function of the finite mind to linger, and through which it has to pass, are steps in its liberation. In the full truth of that liberation is given the identification of the three stages--finding a world presupposed before us, generating a world as our own creation, and gaining freedom from it and in it. To the infinite form of this truth the show purifies itself till it becomes a consciousness of it.

"A rigid application of the category of finitude by the abstract logician is chiefly seen in dealing with Mind and reason: it is held not a mere matter of strict logic, but treated also as a moral and religious concern, to adhere to the point of view of finitude, and the wish to go further is reckoned a mark of audacity, if not of insanity, of thought."

(Remember "sovicts in the sky"?)

If we go from this audacious thinking directly to the Free Mind or end of Section 1 of Mind Subjective, we will meet with free will in a new social order: "Actual free will is the unity of theoretical and practical mind: a free will, which realizes its own freedom of will, now that the formalism, fortuitousness, and contractedness of the practical content up to this point have been superseded. By superseding the adjustments of means therein contained, the will is the immediate individuality self-instituted,--an individuality, however, also purified of all that interferes with its universalism, i.e., with freedom itself."

In a word, not the free will of the Ego, the unhappy consciousness, but the free will of the social individual, "an individuality...purified of all that interferences...with freedom itself."

To get to the "will to liberty (which) is no longer an impulse which demands its satisfaction, but the permanent character--the spiritual consciousness grown into a non-impulsive nature", Hegel cannot avoid history, the concrete development:

"When individuals and nations have once got in their heads the abstract concept of full-blown liberty, there is nothing like it in its uncontrollable strength, just because it is the very essence of mind, and that as its very actuality. Whole continents, Africa and the East, have never had this idea, and are without it still. The Greeks and Romans, Plato and Aristotle, even the Stoics, did not have it. On the contrary, they saw that it is only by birth (as e.g. an Athenian or Spartan citizen), or by strength of character, education, or philosophy (--the sage is free even as a slave and in chains) that the human being is actually free. It was through Christianity that this idea came into the world."

(I'll be d---d if for us I will need to stop to give the materialistic explanation here. I'm not fighting Hegel's idealism but trying to absorb his dialectics. Anyone who can't think of the Industrial and French Revolutions as the beginnings of modern society, or know that when will to liberty is no longer mere impulse but "permanent character", "spiritual consciousness" it means and can mean only the proletariat that has absorbed all of science in his person, that person better not try to grapple with Hegel.)

Then a rejection of property, the "have" of possession, and directly to the is of the new society: "If to be aware

of the idea--to be aware, i.e., that men are aware of freedom as their essence, aim, and object--is matter of speculation, still this very idea itself is the actuality of men--not something which they have, as men, but which they are."

We are ready for the Absolute Mind. I will limit myself to the concluding four paragraphs, #574-577.

Hegel begins his conclusions about philosophy which "is the self-thinking Idea, the truth aware of itself" by referring us to the Absolute Idea in the Smaller Logic, and there Hegel issued a warning, "It is certainly possible to indulge in a vast amount of senseless declamation about the idea absolute. But its true content is only the whole system of which we have been hitherto examining the development."

Back to #574: "the logical system, but with the signification that it is universality approved and certified in concrete content as in its actuality."

I'm here reminded of that total Introduction to the Smaller Logic (or perhaps it is time to begin calling it by its right name, Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, since the SL is Part I of it and the Philosophy of Mind that concerns me now Part III) where he says "the Idea is not so feeble as merely to have a right or an obligation to exist without actually existing." And most certainly Socialism "is not so feeble as merely to have a right or obligation to exist without actually existing". Quite the contrary the new society is evident everywhere, appears within the old.

Let us return to Hegel, still #574, "In this way the science has gone back to its beginning: its result is the logical system but as a spiritual principle: out of the presupposing judgment, in which the notion was only implicit and the beginning an immediate--and thus out of the appearance which it had there--it has risen into its pure principle and thus also into its proper medium."

This appearance "gives the motive of the further development." So, like all rational thinkers, we are back at the form of the syllogism: "The first appearance is formed by the syllogism, which is based on the Logical system as starting-point, with Nature for the middle term which couples the Mind with it. The Logical principle turns to Nature and Nature to Mind."

The movement is from the logical principle or theory to nature or practice and from practice not alone to theory but to the new society which is its essence: (Note scrupulously how this development, this practice, sunders itself)

"Nature standing between the Mind and its essence, sunders itself, not indeed to extremes of finite abstraction, nor itself to something away from them and independent,--which, as other than they, only serves as a link between them: for the syllogism is in the Idea and Nature is essentially defined

as a transition-point and negative factor, and as implicitly the Idea."

Thus the sundering of practice has been neither to mount the "extremes of finite abstraction" nor as mere link between practice and theory for the triangular development here means that practice itself is "implicitly the Idea".

"Still," continues Hegel, "the mediation of the notion has the external form of transition, and the science of Nature presents itself as the course of necessity, so that it is only in the one extreme that the liberty of the notion is explicit as a self-amalgamation."

By all means let's follow Hegel and hold back from skipping a single link. But also let us not forget that this is only the first syllogism, while "In the second syllogism this appearance is so far superceded, that that syllogism is the standpoint of the Mind itself, which--as the mediating agent in the process--presupposes Nature and couples it with the Logical principle. It is the syllogism where Mind reflects on itself in the Idea: philosophy appears as a subjective cognition, of which liberty is the aim, and which is itself the way to produce it." (#576)

Here then Mind itself is "the mediating agent in the process". I cannot help but think of Marx concluding that the Commune is "the form at last discovered to work out the economic emancipation of the proletariat", and of Lenin in Vol. IX saying that the workers and peasants "must understand that the whole thing now is practice, that the historical moment has arrived when theory is being transformed into practice, is vitalised by practice, corrected by practice, tested by practice," and on the same page (420): "The Paris Commune gave a great example of how to combine initiative, independence, freedom of action and vigour from below with voluntary centralism free from stereotyped forms." And so I repeat Mind itself, the new society, is "the mediating agent in the process."

This is where Hegel arrives at Absolute Mind, the third syllogism: "The third syllogism is the Idea of philosophy, which has self-knowing, the absolutely-universal, for its middle term: a middle, which divides itself into Mind and Nature, making the former its presupposition, as process of the Idea's subjective activity, and the latter its universal extremes as process of the objectively and implicitly existing Idea."

No wonder I was so struck, when working out the layers of the party, with the Syllogism which disclosed that either the Universal or the Particular or the Individual could be the middle term. Note carefully that the "middle which divides itself" is nothing less than the absolute universal itself and that, dividing itself into Mind and Nature it makes Mind the presupposition "as process of the Idea's subjective activity" and Nature "as process of the objectively and implicitly existing Idea."

Here, much as I try not once again to jolt you by sounding as if I were exhorting, I'm too excited not to rejoice at what this means for us. But I'll stick close to Hegel and not go off for visits with Lenin and Marx. Hegel says that the two appearances of the Idea (Socialism in the form of the Commune and the Soviets) characterizes both its manifestation and in it precisely is "A unification of the two aspects":

"The self-judging of the Idea into its two appearances (#575,6) characterizes both as its (the self-knowing person's) manifestations: and in it there is a unification of the two aspects:--it is the nature of the fact, the notion, which causes the movement and development, yet this same movement is equally the action of cognition. The eternal Idea, in full fruition of its essence, eternally sets itself to work, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute Mind."

We have entered the new society.

W

May 22, 1953

Dear W:

I can't let yours of May 20 on the Absolute Idea pass without this note, even though, as you can imagine I am very rushed.

I think that these notes represent our Philosophic Notebooks, comparable to those of VL in 1915.

When I woke up on the morning of the 16th and decided to send you a special delivery retracting what I had originally said about your last two pages on the Absolute Idea, this is what went through my mind. Hauser, you're a damn fool. Have you any idea what it means for Weaver, with 25 years of Bolshevism behind her, to become enamoured of the Absolute Idea and Hegel's concept of self-relation? Now your letter of the 20th makes it even clearer what a damn fool I was. When you, Weaver, make this leap, it is the final leap of the part from all separation of the party from the mass, and of the leadership from the party.

This is what occurs to me concretely.

1) Hegel's contemplation of the Absolute Idea is different from Aristotle's. Aristotle's was based on a slave society, the concept of man as a "rational animal", an idealism which was socially based. Hegel's was the result of the dialectical movement of the history of society and the history of the pure form of the movement, and moved from the Absolute Idea to Nature, showing the same dialectical development in Nature as had been in Mind.

Why then didn't Marx and Lenin see this? That is a very important point. To the extent that they didn't, they had not, because they could not, in the existing historical circumstances, make the complete break from all ideas of the party separate from the mass and leading it.

That is the historical task that remained for us.

2) When the leader and the party (Not the vanguard party in the sense of an elite but a party in the sense of ourselves representing a reflection of the world outside) makes this leap, it is a reflection of the stage which the masses themselves have reached. Do you recall Blaine's questions to me about Part IV of Document #1? That absolute patience on the part of the mass, that knowledge of powers, that unity of conditions and purpose which is not separate from activity, is the invading socialist society.

3) We can now make as a theme of Document #2 what has been missing from it up to now--the getting rid of all forms of small mass partyism and cliquism. From West Virginia (Fall of 1951) to this on the Absolute Idea (May 1953) is the history both of the development of the leadership and of the organization --ourselves, as well as of the process from the post-World War CP to ourselves.

H.