Oct[illegible] 20, 1960

Dear JB:

I hope you'll embark with me on a little "voyage of discovery via Hegel. It may seem odd that such a letter is addressed to you rather than RM, who is the general recipient of these type[illegible] of letter from me. But you may recall that a couple of times before I addressed myself to you, especially when you outlined in your book on Viet Nam how you intended to follow up on the current scene. In sending you some material on Hegel's PHENOMENOLOGY, I stressed two opposites that I thought applicable to the present: (1) The type of Alienated Spirit , or "Honorouble Consciousness", which identifies itself with state power and thus lays the foundation for new and deeper contradictions than the ones dealt with under Alienated Soul or"Unhappy Consciousness", directly after the bondsman had gained a "mind of his own" only to be confronted with a world of slavery where Stoics endured and Sceptics scoffed but he could find no new place for himself. (2)As against the new rulers a la Mao, I asked, what about the "backward peasants" who fled Ho Chin-Minh's land despite hnorouble words and noble promises? Had they recognized the bureucra in the noble visage? What new stage of world development could we sense in those refugees?

I'm not sure I succeeded in clarifying my thoughts even after the brief in-person talk we had in N.Y. I want to try again, especially since now I am working on the philosophic foundations of the struggles for freedom in the underdeveloped countries. So great a leveller is the machine age that it doesn't matter that I will work mainly in Africa whose history and culture is very different from Asia, which was your field of concentration.

Though it must be very briefly, I do wish to take in all three major written works of Hegel: the PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND, the SCIENCE OF LOGIC and the ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES. As is obvious from the title of his first great work, Hegel is dealing with appearances, knowledge as it appears in life, in history in nations, in religion, in philosophic systems. (Later they will get worked out in his Lectures on Aesthetics, on Philosophy of History, on History of Philosophy, on Religion, on Law but they will lack the sweep, the thrill of the "voyage of discovery" when he saw all fields as one unfied field of the Absolute Reason and Freedom.)

Some detractors have been so foolish as to call the PHENOMENOLOGY a "psychology of sorts", but the experiences consciousness struggles through here (The subtitle of the work was, you know, "The Science of the Experience of Consciousness") is the human spirit through some 4,000 years of civilization. The center of all 6 principal stages of consciousness is the practical activity of Reason to the point where the world and she are not two separate worlds, but unite, and each stage of unity brings with it new contradictions until Absolute Knowledge is reached. The point is he reaches that stage in opposition to all previous idealisms from Aristotle to Schelling for he breaks both with slavery and introversion. The Whole, the entire ~~first~~ reality, including elements of the future, or "divine", pull at the present and bring it into the forward movement of history. Of course it is still history of mind, but the universal mind is opposed to the individual; the self-development of which is, in truth, "the people." [illegible]

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Now if even we did not know the early works [illegible]

that first system, which Hegel put away never to return to again, where he openly said "The absolute moral totality is nothing else than a people", (And Marx didn't know these works and yet grasped the revolutionary impact from the dialectic in the PHENOMENOLOGY), one couldn't possibly miss that this activist spirit is the human spirit and therefore has today's freedom struggles in it.

You might say: but if it is phenomenal knowledge, then i must be what Marx would have designated as "superstructure." Yes an no. Yes, if you mean appearance at creative moments in history when the class struggles have not yet so sharpened as to bring the whole system down as Art in the time of Greek city-states, classical political economy at the time of the industrial revolution, German idealist philosophy following the French revolution, etc. No, if it means, the superstructure at the point of the social structure's breakdown when, as Marx put it, the ideologists became "prize fighte for the bourgeoisie" like Senior's defense of the 11th hour, or the present "end of ideology" phillistines.

Now, with the SCIENCE OF LOGIC, Hegel becomes more abstract still, even in relationship to thought because now he cannc with how it appe rs in consciousness, now even the separate disciplines, whether they be the social sciences or the natural, mathematics or art, religion or biology, ethics or physics. Each has its individual categories and they all must be broken down into one single, whole-embracing one that covers them all, not to mention keeping history in mind as well.

At the risk of sounding like the most idealistic of idealists, let me say that it is good for our age that he was compelled to be that abstract as the categories of being, essence, notion and the dozens of categories each is in turn subdivided as it goes through the process of negativity for otherwise (1)it would have been impossible to work through to the logical end the development of each stage. That is one reason Hegel insists that principle of all rational knowledge is through the syllogism (shlusse); and (2)if the concrete and epoch development had been analyzed, then it couldn't have comprised further developments beyond his time.

Of course, the fact that he lived in "a birth-time of history", when the three revolutions opened our machine age and, thus, in germ, not only contained the contradictions of our age, but allowed that great genius the scope needed to work out these stages of self-development. Only one word of caution, if I may quote my MARXISM AND FREEDOM, let's not ever forget that there is nothing in the mind of man, not even that of a genius, that has not previously been in the activity of common man. In a word, man's actual struggles for freedom long preceded Hegel's working out of the Idea of freedom, and will follow until freedom is not an idea, but the reality.

Another word of caution, Marx who could ~~saving~~ and did save Hegelian dialectic from its idealistic trap when he couldn' work through the ~~first~~ negativity of labor, and not just of thought, had to break from arguing with intellectuals and thus moved from the history of thought (political economy in his case) to the histo of production relations. But he didn't throw "to the winds", not even bourgeois thought—he merely put over to the end of all volumes, instead of the center of CAPITAL. As for proletarian thought, there is never any sharp division between action and the

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When he said that philosophers had interpreted the world, but what was needed was to change it, he certainly didn't exclude thought.

But to return to Hegel and his contemporaneity, the process of becoming and passing away, of negation and yet ~~xxgx~~ retention of all previous systems of philosophy as the truth of their day as well as the error as a dynamic of the forward movement of mind to our day and freedom for man as man, as his destiny and his selfOfulfilment, we have a pregnant sense of relativity of all fields of knowledge as well as all historic periods of man's actual development that has Einstein's theory of relativity anticipated despite the fact that the actual sciences he dealt with have long sincebeen proven wrong. In that respect I certainly agree with Haldane who, in his Preface to the SCIENCE OF LOGIC, writes: "It is a mistake to suppose that Hegel deduces nature from his categories. Thought for him does not make a thing. It is exemplified in Nature in the form of externality. But mind in this abstract form is not yet actual. It only becomes so in a logical development later when both Logic and its other, Nature, in which both become actual for the first time.....It is the same single process throughout. Nature and thought imply each other, but neither creates the other."

As you see, I've plunged into the ENCYCLOPAEDIA which consists of what is known as the "smaller Logic", Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Mind. Now the "Smaller Logic" is an abbreviated (using abbreviate in the Hegelian tradition of abbreviating a whole span of historic development in a single category) Science of Logic, with something new added. That something new is the Preface which contains the Three Attitudes to Objectivity, which is not present in the Science of Logic. Here he again"abbreviates" all systems of philosophy into but three different relations to the objective world. When he reaches Philosophy of Mind, he again summarizes, this time very badly, his own PHENOMENOLOGY as well as Philosophy of Right, but it doesn't matter not only because you have these worked out in full in separate volumes, but because they are taken only as forms of appearance to come to the real objective, Absolute Mind, which, if you recall my letters on the Absolute, was equated by me with the new society. Now it is this self-developing subject as real, the masses who can and do change the world, which creates the philosophic foundattions for dealing with the underdeveloped countries in our era:

1)Both because the problems there and the problems underlying Hegel's thought at the beginning of the machine age have similarities in development of consciousness, and

2)Because of the great dissimilarities because our age is the age of absolutes which Hegel only reached at the end.

How Hegel labored so patiently through all stages of self-development, alienation, negation, fulfillment, realization so that he reached that stage that has become such good sport for our empiricist phillistines and pragmatic opportunists I'll never "really" know. But what seems to me obvious, as I look at the American worker confronted with the absolute of Automation and compelled to raise the questions of breakdown of division between manual and mental; or as I sense the Vietnamese peasant recognizing totalitarian Plan even when garbed in Marxist phraseology; or the African and the

Hungarian, very nearly simultaneously, raising the question of the Humanism of Marxism in opposition to the Russian stands of its "idealistic Hegelianist tone" and "inadequacy for our age"— what seems to me obvious, I repeat, is that the self-development of mind is so close to the self-development of freedom as destiny of man that the future begins to pull on the present so strongly that it propels it forward. In that way the ideal becomes real a-d in that way, and in that way only, ~~xxx~~ was Hegel impelled to an Absolute.

If that had not been the "pull", there could not have been a dialectic method which still has the "answers." Or so it appears to me.

As I work through other stages in the more concrete world of today, the philosophic foundations should become clearer. Meanwhile I wish my "vacation" didn't stop at the end of this week and I could proceed unhampered with my book. One thing, unfortunately is not for our world, or at least mine, that was true for philospphers who live in elisure: "In the still spaces of Thought which has come to itself and is purely self-existent, those interests are hushed which move the lives of peoples and individuals."

Yours Raya