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Jan. 24, 1964

Dear Eugene:

This note is in the nature of a postscript to the letter to you sent a few days ago, and will be sent to the Standing Youth Committee to which the original letter was sent. When I mentioned archives material I had meant to refer to our own as well as those from Marx. As an example let me refer you to the article, "Labor and Society", published during what was known as the "Interim Period" in the development of the state-capitalist tendency, in Internal Bulletin #5, Aug. 14, 1947. This article is divided into 2 sections: (1) Labor and Society, and (2) Role of Labor in a Workers' State. The second part refers to the trades union debate, which is dealt with in great detail in M&P. But the first part, though parts of it are used in the book, is actually more simply told here, and is the first analysis of the Early Marx Essays, which was part of my 1943 manuscript on the nature of the Russian economy but which was refused publication by the Workers Party. In cutting the many manuscripts to the space allotted for a minority, this was one of the many sections cut out. For those with a historic sense, it should be stated that neither 1947 when it was finally published, nor 1943 when it was first written as part of the "Russian Question" is the actual first time it was dealt with by myself. The first time they were rapidly translated by me for Johnson was 1940, directly after the break with the SWP. This was before the publication of Marcuse's "Reason and Revolution", which was published in 1941 and which referred to these 1844 Manuscripts of Marx.

The significance of all this dating backward is not for purposes of getting the record straight, although this has its own importance as well. The importance lies, rather, in a methodology that at all times allows for a consciousness of today as history, the present that has logically arisen from a certain and continuous, just as logically, to an open but not disconnected future. You will have noted that I used "open", instead of the old standby, "inevitably" to describe the future. Inevitable has not only been mutilated by its seeming synonymous character with "automatic" but there is, in fact, in this age of reason and "second subjectivity", nothing inevitable unless man makes it so. In the specific case we are dealing with — analysis of Marx's Early Essays — the quintessence of dating lies in its relationship to the today of each specific instance. Thus, in 1940, when I first saw these essays, the excitement was over the fact that the nature of labor and society far exceeded the Russian boundary. The Marcuse 1941 analysis — and he must have seen it in the German when they were first published in the ~~early~~ late 1920's — had a dual purpose: to establish a continuous Marx the young and the old but, unfortunately, this was subordinated to negating philosophy by having sociology absorb it, Marxian sociology, it is true, but nevertheless, as the subtitle of "Reason and Revolution" tells you, his preoccupation was "the rise of social theory." In 1947 alienation predominated over humanism whereas the true reversal of Marxist-Humanism over either alienation or "social theory" or "the Russian Question" did not come about until the objective world of Automation in American production and revolutions in the East European world made this philosophy concrete. The problem we are faced with is to see just how the reversal of subjective to objective will become alive. So that as we turn to being "archivists" we are also dealing with the development of today into tomorrow. And you, Eugene, as editor of The Marxist-Humanist, must not only analyze the present but always open some new openings into the future so that your readers feel an urgency to get the issues and become participants in that future. Think about it and let me know your reactions.

Yours,

*The whole ~~Marxist~~ who-was-first episode is a fakery not only from the side of the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who now feel they do wish to reveal they knew about these Essays before the 1960's but prefer, in that sense, to acknowledge even the mimeographed 1947 version rather than M&P, but also from Johnson himself. Thus note that when he got around, in 1947, to publish what Shachtman refused to

in 1943, he made an old radical reviewer, one, to publish the issue after we announced publication of the Early Essays in "a first English translation" and thereafter published introductory to it so that it was made to appear that "Labor and Society" followed, rather than preceded, the Early Essays publications and, two, a convenient "error" left out an introductory line that was supposed to have been inserted — I was in France then, but I have a letter which not only states the promise to publish my manuscript but asks permission to make certain corrections in translation between my original translation from Russian and Grace's 1947 translation from German — which would have stated that this was originally written in 1943, and translated in 1940.

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