Sun.,Jan.4,1970,midnight

Dear Fredy:

I greatly appreciate your serious (though non-philosophic) 12-page critique of the rough draft of Philosophy and Revolution, which you brought me this evening. As you know, I cannot take timeout of the limited free time I have for the rewriting to comment comprehensively on your critique, though I will take into most serious consideration in the rewriting. I hope we can continue the dialogue begun in the spirit of your first paragraph which states that you are not treating my book-outline as something external to you, "as a finished object, but rather treating it as a 'movement of becoming', from within, as a project which is also mine", and not in the spirit to which your anti-Leninism as brought you on the last page :"You restrict your search to a bureaucratic world within which the only definable humanism is a 'humanist imperialism.'" For in the latter spirit no dialogue is possible.

The two-fold purpose of this very limited commentary is (1)to expand a bit on what I mean by philosophy not only as both distinct from and related to practice, but also as distinct from and related to theory; and (2)to ask whether, despite your hostility to Lenin, you would be willing to "Americanize" (edit) my Russian-German endless sentences once I'm finished with the rewriting somewhere late Spring or early summer.

Now then the question of philosophy is not the "simple" question of theory as "guide" to practice. Dialectical philosophy catches the movement of history not, it is true, as "eternal" laws, but a great deal more comprehensively than theory which is very specifically the summation of the "immediate" period, the working out of the tendencies and praxis for that period. The historic expanse of philosophy, on the other hand, has seen the dialectic of revolution and counter-revolution repeat itself so often since the Great French Revolution and Industrial R volution which has ushered in our machine age that it remains true, once it has been concretized by Historical Materialism, until we have achieved a classless society. This is what Jean-Paul Sartre comprehended fully when he decided his Existentialism had only "tended the garden" when Marxism became "frozen" and now wished to "return" to Marxism. This is why he chose only 3 moments in history from the 17th century to the 20th --Descartes-Locke, Kant-Hegel, Marx-- and this is why he alone (what "friends" I chose!) is not afraid to call himself a metaphysical writer, nor declare existentialism to be "ontological", and yet deny that it is abstract as against the concreteness of existence or reality. Wish I were quite as brave in declaring that without Hegel's Absolutes we cannot "comprehend" actuality and the New Subject. This is what everyone who is serious (not in the Sartrean existentialist meaning of the word as if it were derogatory, but in the Hegelian-Marxian and actual common sense meaning of the word) about revolution is always striving to find, and the minute petty-bourgeois intellectuals (including such Marxists as Marcuse) get impatient, declare it to be, not the proletariat, but the intellectual.

O.k. Hegel is not just one of the many "sources" of Marxian theory from Ricardo to Rousseau, or from Proust (why did you bring him in?) to Babeuf. The Hegelian dialectic remains the source of "all dialectic", as Marx expressed/and meant his own. When Marx transcended Ricardo, he found no need " to return" to him--he relegated him to Vol.IV where he would deal with all theoreticians, but the bulk, the heart, the soul of Capital would be Vol.I, where production relations, including the actual class struggles for shortening the working day, and the Fetishism of Commodities, would present in a positive way his own uniquely original philosophy of liberation. And in the working out of this Volume I, there was a return to Hegel (although he had transcended him in his 1844 critique with his Humanist attack on both idealism and materialism) in 1858 when he worked on the Grundrisse but was dissatisfied with its form and reread the Logic, and in 1867-1872-5 when he reworked the Fetishism of Commodities and the Accumulation of Capital and was so inspired by the Paris Communs.

If all this does not come through in sections 3 & 4 of Ch.2, then something is definitely wrong, and it must be thoroughly reworked. But I must also ask you to ask yourself whether only the Workers' Councils was the new from the Hungarian Revolution or also Marx's Humanism and the Dialectics of revolution? That the Hegelian dialectics has been recognized (and not by a Marxist, but by Herzen) as "algebra of revolution"--is that not the stuff which emerges out of revolutions? Or is the fact that Stalin could never stop fighting the dead Hegel and in 1943, in reversing himself on Marx's law of value, asked that the dialectic structure of Capital not be followed, and Chapter 1 be cut--does that mean nothing that we have to confront as seriously as movement from practice?

Only technically when one "transcends" one cannot "return to", or, as you put,"it makes no sense". The whole point is that there are concrete universals, and, though they are not "eternal" but "only" limited to class society of the industrial age, these must be grasped, or theory will continue to be inadequate. They remain both presuppositions and jump up as the new at each turning point in history. This is what struck Lenin, that he found more "in common" with Hegel than with his socialist, Marxist, materialist, co-leaders of 2nd Int. You are right that the chapter is "not serious", if by that you mean incomplete. But what it says at the end of the abbreviated ch.is that that's where State-Capitalism and Marxist-Humanism enters. In a word, in addition to rewriting, the pamphlet which places the question of "Subject", of the dispute with Bukharin, and as it reappears in our age, is part of this chapter. I always like to test "theory" by submitting it both to the "masses", those I can reach, and "others", theoreticians like yourself who are not the closed group, is part of that warped chapter. However, you are right also that this book will concern itself with the thought of Lenin, first and most important, because I'm tracing through relationship to Hegel in 19th &20th c.&then asking why us?, and because the Lenin of the Party was dealt with in 3 chapters in M&F; therefore here it becomes something that has been worked out, and I return to the elitist Party that I so thoroughly detest and reject in its Trotskyist-Stalinist-Maoist form. Unfortunately, when Trotsky rejected it --1904--it was both non-serious and untested in revolution; when he accepted it, it was not as Lenin changed concepts, but in its 1903 form plus degeneration in Stalin's hands. There is ambivalence of course, not only in thought, but in the actions, but at all times Lenin tried not to hypostatize that whereas, etc.etc.

Sartre chapter will,of course, be rewritten; I told you some of the reasons why it will be sent in more positive form, and will not go into these here, but you are quite wrong to take "even glorifies terror" out of context as if I am always opposed to terror, instead of pointing to the fact that it isn't revolutionary "terror" which Sartre glorifies--transforms into a universal would havebeen a more correct phrase--but Stalinist terror is made as the inevitable, the inescapable, the forever element of all revolutions; that is Sartrean metaphysics! His Critique de la Raison Dialectic is not only a metaphysical apology for Stalinism of our era, but made into a veritable eternal "historical law" from time immemorial to...! all of man's history is rewritten to fit that concept.

Part III is so unfinished that it perhaps should not be given you at all; I thought my titling it "outline" "protected" me, but I see it only exposed me to...Let's leave this there. If you answer the question I asked on p.1,par.2, we will know whether this dialogue has a chance of developing.

Yours,

(Ftn.top.1)And not only Marcuse, but Lukacs. It is true that Lukacs accepted the vanguard Party,(which is why I seldom refer to him, although his comprehension of Hegel was far beyond any in the 1920's--unless you knew Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks which were unpublished and Lukacs did not then know them). But he did not make recantations and all that went with them until after Lenin's death, until Stalin was in power, and that is what I referred to.

1408!