

... 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" and "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

RDW

* * *

May 12, 1953

Dear H:

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 to 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." (p. 791)

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 now 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, 1920-23, now). He ends Absolute Knowledge with:

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, or 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. (p.808)

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, 1920-23, etc., the recognition of the different manners of the existence of the 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 there fore 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 close to Hegel, "The method therefore is both soul and substance, and nothing is either conceived or known in its truth except insofar 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 chewing 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." (p. 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 International); 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, Lenin had gone further, saying that "Man's cognition not only reflects the objective world but creates it", 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 held 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 or 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 more 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 theoretists 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 paeons 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 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 a straight line, but an approach both rearward and forward so that we can see.../ "In the absolute method the Notion 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 have 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." (p. 483) 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 Abernism -- 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:

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. (p. 484)

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 which 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, (Hauser, 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 as 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 new 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, and 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, and 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 PM and 2 AM after putting in very full days and evenings in concrete organizational 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 politics from economics -- the German Social Democracy (trade union aristocracy of labor and the 1914 betrayal).

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

The party as suppresser of ranks and destroyer of revolutionism -- Stalinism -- (Spanish Revolution, CIO, National Resistance Movements). 1923-53

Now ourselves, 41-56 -- clarification of ideas, elaboration of theory, eyes on mass movements. '51-53 -- life in party and third layer as source of theory. Sometotally now 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

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 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 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, ie, 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 "soviets 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 realises 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 interferes...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 just 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 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 judgement, 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 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, in 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 its 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 reason'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.

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 idfferent 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, 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 the 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.