

January 27, 1983

Dear Franklin:

Jim showed me the draft of your essay on the anti-nuke movement; I asked for it because I do want to say something on the general form for essay-articles.

As you no doubt have heard me say innumerable times, the simple word, concrete, seems to be the hardest one for me to project in both a truly Hegelian manner of being not only specific, but universal, as well as fully integrated with what we call the four Ws, i.e. the Who, What, Where, When (with the Why as the purpose of all the Ws.), in such a manner that there is no division between the immediate and the universal.

Concretely, the first two paragraphs of your thesis seem both to be concrete and yet the one that you marked for possible deletion is the very one that should start the thesis, while the other should be deleted here though we may wish to reinstate it at the end of the article. Here is why: Reagan, I need hardly say, is not our subject, whereas the polls, referenda, and direct actions with 30,000 demonstrators is definitely the center of what our subject is. Indeed, that 2nd para. which I want you to put first should also include a "when" it happened as well as an indication that it is by no means the last of the confrontations that the rulers will have to contend with this year.

Your subject on p.3 -- in fact, I would say all the way to p. 5 -- should be put aside, either for later, or for an entirely different article; first, because it is not on the anti-nuke movement and you must always have your audience in front of you and realize how many of the "old ones" would reject your giving them a lecture on Marx's 1844 Essays, when something as urgent as the possible nuclear war is hanging over us like a Damocles sword. Both the expression of Marx about an "a priori lie" in his analysis of technology must not be brought in before the concrete of the day is discussed, but after. That is to say, dialectics always requires that the contradiction be seen as existing right here and right now, and historic must protrude in such a sharp way that even when the historic is the Civil War in the U.S., it must have a direct connection with the present contradictions both in economics and in science. .

For example, directly after your last paragraph on p.2 which ends at top of p. 3 (which is very moving) is where you should further develop the current events, and at length, before you ever touch Marx. What are the debates within the anti-nuke movement right now? Who is trying to limit membership in this mass movement to the single topic of anti-nuke rather than to ending imperialist war? What famous person -- say, Daniel Ellsberg -- is planning a trip to Russia or some atomic site in the middle of some ocean? And have there been any direct debates at any specific anti-nuke movement meetings on the direction of the movement? I would,

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for example, have ~~§§§§§§~~ jumped directly from the top of p. 3, where you mention Agent Orange, all the way to p. 10 in the penultimate para. where you talk about Dr. Pickering, and as the transition point -- a transition point is always quite pivotal in moving from one period to another without displaying an unawareness of the move -- you would have said something like this: long before the anti-Vietnam War movement, long before Agent Orange, long ~~§§§§§§~~ after Nagasaki showed us how genocidal the A-bomb was, Dr. William Pickering had already correctly warned us that it really didn't matter who pushed the button since we were all just 30 minutes away from destruction. Furthermore, it is not science that has the answer; it is a "new unifying principle." Indeed, the question that should have been asked even then is why was there a 40-year interval between Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and the splitting of the atom. Wasn't it a fact that only when an actual war was in the offing, was the government first interested in science/

Having established that fact, it would be in place to mention Marx as having said, way back in 1844 that to have one basis for life and another for science, is a priori a lie. Even then, I definitely would not go into Marx's chapter on the machine and the struggle for the working day. Instead, I would have returned to the subject at hand, i.e. the anti-nuke movement, and used the penultimate para. on p. 11, making sure, however, that "the Green revolution" is not left as a revolution only in agriculture but is made to draw attention to the fact that ^{the} the Green movement now is a threat to the West German government and puts fear in the heart of Reagan as well.

Your essay is really a very good talk on what Marxist--Humanism is, and should be used by you for a discussion with contacts who already show an interest in what Marxist-Humanism is. But for an Essay, in a Marxist-Humanist paper, it not only is altogether too long and quite repetitious of principles we expound in a variety of ways, but the ~~third~~ word -- besides concrete and universal -- is the word, now. That is the key word for an article in the paper. Therefore, I would say you should practice cutting fully 50 percent of the present article and that 50 percent that is left should be ~~not~~ a discussion of Marx and machinery and labor, but a current anti-nuke movement which, on the one hand, cannot be separated from the economic crisis, and on the other and more important hand, cannot continue without a philosophy of revolution and a concept of Marx's Humanism. What I originally meant when I spoke about the relationship of science to Marxism in general and revolution in particular, was to show that each time there has been a leap in science, there was actually a human revolution crying out for altogether different human relationships. Thus, 1903 to 1905, the theory of relativity came at the same time as the new stage of 20th c. revolution as well as the disregarded revolution in Africa, the Zulu rebellion. And ~~§§§§§§~~ at the time of the unified field theory -- 1950? -- we had moved to the concept of world revolution. That is not what I'm asking for now.

Yours,

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