

Dec. 15, 1989

Dear JB:

It was good to hear from you. There is one advantage to getting a scare in the hospital and that is that when all turns out well after all, you view everything, from friends to ideas, as something not only newly-born, but as if no one indeed had ever had that experience of life, a sort of cross between Pollyanna and the second coming of Christ!

I should be glad to write a piece for Dissent, provided I get an official invitation to do so. Although some of the editors, as individuals, are indeed my very dear friends, the decision-making body is, to say the least, aloof and, I'm sure you'll agree with me, I have no time to write for wastepaper basket. Yes, I looked over the recent issue of Dissent on trade unions; its most serious weakness is the absence of a single production worker. Charles Denby, editor of News & Letters, was going to take them to task for just that, but his preoccupation with his own pamphlet on Automation and the Production Worker left him no time. Our age is mature enough not to need some one to speak "for" the man on the line who is quite capable of talking for himself.

You'll recall that I wrote you from Leeds about the English translator of Marx's Early Essays whose translation was used by the Moscow Publishing House this year after he broke with them over the interpretation by them as if Marx was then an adolescent who need not be listened to seriously. His name is Martin Milligan and he happens to be totally blind so that I arranged to carry on communication with him through tapes. If his break is final then he would be just the person to collaborate on any work on Hegel, or at least to be a constant commentator and critic so that I could take another plunge into philosophy. There was a delay in beginning this sort of relationship because of the hospital stay, but as soon as I got out I made my first tape and sent it off. The only trouble is I speak into the microphone improptu and thus do not have copies of what I say as I do when I write, or at least I don't have it of first, to send you a copy because I believe you will wish to follow this philosophical development. Perhaps I'll be able to loan another old tape recorder and make a double recording. I'll see.

Have a good time as well as a fruitful one in Europe and elsewhere in your travel and when you have time, drop me some pretty picture postal cards--that's about the only way I know I was in Europe since that lecture schedule kept me going so that I did not have a single day off even for a concert, which made me feel quite frustrated, but I couldn't have otherwise packed into those 2 months all the work. If, while you are away, the Italian edition finally gets off the press, I'll send one to your library in NY.

Yours,

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