

Nov. 8, 1964

Dear Peter:

It was good once again to resume our dialogue.

Here is the letter I wrote to Marcuse on which I am so anxious to get your views. I'm even enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope to make it easier for you to write me & meanwhile also to return the copy, at your convenience, but early I hope.

However, one thing I need immediately, and that is a check on Marcuse's translation of a few passages from the Grundrisse, which he ends off with "The mode of production which rests on the exchange value thus collapses...." I believe this sounds like discussion of a new society, not merely automated capitalism, as Marcuse implies. In any case he said it is on p. 592f Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie (Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1953); I assume it is the edition you have, and I may need to put in a call from here to ask you about it, so please have your copy near the phone on Tues. after 9 p.m. should I need to call you then:

"Human labor then no longer appears as enclosed in the process of production--man rather relates himself to the process of production as supervisor & regulator (Wächter und Regulator)....He stands outside of the process of prod. instead of being the principal agent in the process of production.. In this transformation, the great pillar of production and wealth is no longer the immediate labor performed by man himself, nor his labor time, but the appropriation of his own universal productivity 'Produktivkraft', i.e., his knowledge & his mastery of nature through his societal existence--in one word: the development of the societal individual (des gesellschaftlichen Individuums). The theft of another man's labor time, on which the (social) wealth still rests today, then appears as a miserable basis compared with the new basis which large-scale industry itself has created. As soon as human labor, in its immediate form, has ceased to be the great source source of wealth, labor time will cease, and must of necessity cease to be the measure of wealth, and the exchange value must of necessity cease to be the measure of use value. The surplus labor of the mass (of the population) has thus ceased to be the condition for the dev. of social wealth (des allgemeinen Reichtums) & the idleness of the few has ceased to be the condition for the development of the universal intellectual faculties of man. The mode of production which rests on the exchange value thus collapses...."

I cannot see how Marx could possibly have meant that capitalism, once automated as now, no longer rests on value. In any case I need to know a couple of sentences which follow where he has left off and Marcuse also refers to p. 596; and I also need to know the context in which the above was written; Marcuse introduces this long quotation by saying "Almost a century before automation became a reality, Marx envisaged its explosive prospects."

Do please give my warmest regards to your wife and son.

13904