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DR. WILLARD UPHAUS

May 18, 1964

Professor Gordon H. Clark
Department of Philosophy
Butler University
Indianapolis 7, Indiana

Dear Professor Clark:

Thank you for your letter of May 16. Identifying economic determinism with historical materialism is common and has been done for almost one hundred years. It is nevertheless in error, and the error has been pointed out and contested by Marxists, ever since Engels himself specifically did so. Some indication of this distinction is offered in the first chapter of my HISTORY & REALITY, first published in book form in 1956 and recently re-issued in a new edition under the title THE ERA OF MCCARTHYISM (Marzani & Munsell, N Y).

The work of Brown and McDonald have "demolished" certain aspects of Beard's work--and much of that had been done before either of them wrote a word. On the Constitution and an effort at an historical materialist, rather than a Beardian or economic determinist approach, please see my essay "The Constitution" published in 1954 in the anthology, LOOKING FORWARD, edited by J S Allen (International Publishers, NYC). The work of both Brown and McDonald is contested also by men like Staughton Lynd, Alfred Young and Merrill Jensen.

You might examine also my own two volumes in a projected 12-volume series--THE COLONIAL ERA (International, 1959) and THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (N.Y., International, 1960; reprinted in paper, 1963). On the distinction between the economic determinist view and the historical materialist as applied specifically to the U.S. Civil War, see my monograph, THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, published in paper in 1962 by International Publishers.

If you desire further references in other histories--including in Marx and Engels themselves--to the application of the historical materialist concept to specific areas of history, please let me know. Allow me also to suggest an examination of part five of the recently published READER IN MARXIST PHILOSOPHY, edited by H. Selsam and H. Martel (International, NY 1963).

Cordially yours,

Herbert Aptheker
Herbert Aptheker



The American Institute for Marxist Studies.

May 18 1964

Dear Professor Clark

Thank you for your letter of May 15. Identifying economic determinism with historical materialism is common and has been done for almost one hundred years. It is never-the less in error, and the error has been pointed out and contested by Marxists, ever since Engels himself did so. Some indication of this distinction is offered in the first chapter of my History and Reality, first published in book form in 1956 and recently reissued in a new edition under the title The Era of McCarthyism (Marzani & Munsell, N.Y.).

The work of Brown and McDonald have "demolished" certain aspects of Beard's work - and much of that has been done before either of them wrote a word. On the Constitution and an effort at an historical materialist, rather than a Beardian or economic determinist approach, please see my essay The Constitution, published in 1954 in the anthology, Looking Forward, edited by J.S. Allen (International Publishers, NYC). The work of both Brown and McDonald is contested also by men like Staughton Lynd, Alfred Young, and Merriam Jensen.

You might examine also my own two volumes in a projected 12-volume series - The Colonial Era (International, 1959) and The American Revolution (N.Y. International, 1960; reprinted in paper, 1963). On the distinction between the economic determinist view and the historical materialist as applied specifically to the U.S. Civil War, see my monograph, The American Civil War, published in paper in 1962 by International Publishers.

If you desire further references in other histories, including Marx and Engels themselves, to the application of the historical materialist concept to specific areas of history, please let me know. Allow me also to suggest an examination of part five of the recently published Reader in Marxist Philosophy, edited by H. Selsam and H. Martel (International, NY 1963).

Cordially yours

Herbert Aptheker

May 16 1964

Dr. Herbert Aptheker
20 East 30th St.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Aptheker,

Thank you so much for your three letters giving me references to economic determinism. I was interested in the last letter, which quotes Dr. Reichard to the effect that German writers are not exponents of this theory.

Your first letter mentioned Charles Beard. It seems that Robert E. Brown and Forrest McDonald have pretty well demolished Beard's thesis that the Constitution was dictated by the wealthy in opposition to the debtors. There seems to be no economic pattern either in the Convention or in the process of ratification.

There was, however, one phrase in your first letter (April 20th) that perhaps implies that I asked the wrong question. Do you make a distinction between economic determinism and historical materialism?

If so, can you show that changes in the methods of production and exchange determined the details of the Constitution, or determined Napoleon's invasion of Russia, or concretely determined any of the great events of history? My aim is to get away from vague generalities and abstractions and find very specific applications of the principle to individual events.

I trust I do not bother you by this request for references. I did not intend to ask a second time. And I hope I shall not put you to any further trouble. Thank you very much for your kindness.

yours sincerely,

Gordon H. Clark

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DR. WILLARD UPHAUS

May 12, 1964

Mr. Gordon H. Clark
Department of Philosophy
Butler University
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Mr. Clark:

As additional information in connection with your request re economic determinism, Professor Richard Reichard, of Cornell College in Iowa, whose area is German history, offers the opinion "that there is not really anything obvious in German scholarly literature which could reasonably be classified as economic determinism." He does suggest that one might possibly consider Keutsky's Thomas More as an example of such thinking, but thinks this would be stretching matters.

I hope the above is of some service.

Cordially,

Herbert Aptheker
Herbert Aptheker



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PROF. RALPH E. TURNER

DR. WILLARD UPHAUS

April 24, 1964

Mr. Gordon H. Clark
Department of Philosophy
Butler University
Indianapolis 7, Indiana

Dear Mr. Clark:

Professor Kaplow, who teaches French history at New York University, writes that the clearest case of economic deterministic writing in that area is Henri Sée, Les debuts du capitalisme moderne (Paris, c.1925). Professor Kaplow mentions also the same author's Histoire économique de la France, published in the 1930s and La France économique et sociale au XVIIIe siècle (1927).

It is likely that further replies will come in from people expert in other areas. As these arrive, I'll pass the information on to you. I hope this is helpful.

Cordially yours,

Herbert Aptheker
Herbert Aptheker

