

17th February 1953.

Professor F.J. Hayek,
Committee on Social Thought,
University of Chicago,
1126, East 59th Street,
Chicago, 37,
Illinois,
U.S.A.

I was pleased, as always, to hear from you and most fascinated by the contents of your letter. I think that perhaps I did once know that Wittgenstein was a relation of yours, but I had forgotten that fact.

Unlike you, I have never met him, and yet in a way seem to know him rather well!

The Keynes papers have passed out of my hands now, and I suppose that they are being duly sorted and catalogued in the Marshall Library. I do not recollect any correspondence between Keynes and Wittgenstein. There was, however, a correspondence between Keynes and his father, about the mechanism of getting the allowance to W.B. Johnson (referred to on my page 162) without Johnson's knowing who it came from. However my paragraph contains everything you would need to know about that, and I think it would be a considerable, needless trouble to search out that particular letter or letters to his father.

Long ago, namely in the 'twenties, I talked a good deal to Keynes about Wittgenstein; I talked still more to Frank Ramsey, who was a friend of mine and used to stay with me here some times, and I with him in Cambridge. He was a devoted admirer of Wittgenstein's, and himself a philosopher of some brilliancy. So that at that time I seemed to be quite au fait with his affairs and had knowledge of his idiosyncrasies, although I never got to the bottom of his philosophical position and have always, I confess, had a slight suspicion that he had a touch of the mystery-monger, and that his Cambridge admirers over-rated him a little. I am not implying that your cousin was not a very distinguished man indeed!

P.T.O.

I feel that you have taken on, if you have indeed taken it on, an exceedingly difficult task. All depends on how much you can do from your family sources on the one hand, and your personal knowledge of him on the other. I feel that you will have the most extreme difficulty in screwing any information out of anyone else. The difficulties that I had in my study of Bloomsbury would be nothing to yours in this matter. He was extremely secretive and periodically went into complete retreat. He spent the last period of his life in Oxford, but I think I am right in saying that no philosophers in Oxford ever saw him, although some of them might be described as his followers and certainly admired him very much, and would have been anxious for an interchange. He was jealously guarded by Miss Anscombe, and she kept everyone else away. The fact that you have not had a reply from her may be significant.

However one may rate his philosophy, there is no doubt of his profound importance. Not only did he exert this strong influence on Cambridge philosophers, but it extended also to Oxford.

But he was reluctant to publish. Copies of his notes were handed round a very select circle of people. It was a great privilege to see them. There was the pink book and the blue book and mumbo-jumbo of that sort. I could not help feeling that it was all rather unsatisfactory. Of course when he was professor at Cambridge, he was bound to give public lectures. A really proper biography ought, I suppose, to analyse his philosophical influence and trace out the effects he has had on these various disciples. But it may be that you are aiming at something less ambitious.

I think that Keynes was the one person who was able to influence his conduct. He stopped him from going to settle in Russia during the 'thirties. He had this strong streak of the aesthetic. I remember being told that when he served in the army in Austria he got a rupture, but did not reveal it to the medical authorities since he thought he must bear it, until the complications became too serious.

So I am afraid that the result of all this is rather negative. My definite recollection is that there was nothing in the Keynes papers. There are occasional references in some of the letters of a casual kind.

Professor F.J. Hayek, (contd.)

17th February 1953.

I do not know if I can now recall anything of interest. It would be easier to do this in conversation, if you are over here. But I doubt if I can remember much. But you would no doubt wish to have interviews, not only with the Cambridge men you mention, but also with Gilbert Ryle, A.J. Ayer, etc.

No, I do not think that any agency has sent me your review. But in view of what you say, I think I will not search it out, as I am a sensitive author! Not that I imply that there was anything unjust or truly painful in it.