

Originals in the Possession of Mrs. Meek

16th August, 1963.

Dr. S. Hollander,  
57, Armitage Road,  
Golders Green,  
London, N.W.11.

Dear Dr. Hollander,

I must apologise for not writing to you before this to thank you for sending me the enclosed article, which I have read with great interest.

It was good to find that someone had at last begun to concern himself with the implications and effects of the old classical assumption of fixed technical coefficients. I think you are absolutely right to see this as something very important: we are all too often liable to talk as if the present-day assumption of the variability of coefficients had always been made by economists, whereas it seems in fact to be a very modern innovation (made by Marshall and Pigou, I suspect). And very few people, apart from Maurice Dobb, have thrown any doubt upon its validity. This is strange, since this question is obviously very relevant to the critique of Keynesian economics.

You put forward a good case for the specific statements you make about Mill. I was not so sure about your main thesis - the idea that the assumption of fixed coefficients had a lot to do with the classical tendency to play down aggregate demand. I should have thought that most of the classical statements and assumptions about aggregate demand involved a denial that aggregate demand determined aggregate output in the long period. This attitude is not explained by showing that they believed that coefficients were fixed, since the latter belief implies merely that a change in demand will not affect output in the short period.

/I

I very much hope that you will work out all your themes more fully. What one would like to see would be an examination of the nature and causes of the assumption of fixed coefficients in the work of all the major economists from, say, Smith to Marx; an analysis of the way in which their leading doctrines were affected by this assumption; and finally a similar kind of discussion of the competing assumption of variable coefficients. This is a pretty tall order, of course, but the job would be well worth doing.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Ronald L. Meek.

Samuel Hollander, Ph.D.  
57 Armitage Road,  
Golders Green  
London, N.W. 11  
July 16, 1963

Dr. Ronald Meek,  
Department of Political Economy,  
University of Glasgow  
Glasgow U.2

Dear Dr. Meek:

May I take the liberty - a complete stranger to you - of introducing myself? I have just completed a Ph.D. at Princeton University; my undergraduate work was in London. I have a position for the coming year at Toronto teaching History of Economic Thought.

My problem, and the reason for writing to you lies in the view which is developing <sup>in my mind</sup>, as I read, that the Classical tendency to play down aggregate demand was not due solely to the acceptance of Say's Law, but also to an implicit assumption that the technical relationships between inputs, given 'technology', is relatively rigid so that the link between output and, say, the employment of labor (or any other input taken in isolation) is broken. In brief; it would appear that an almost exclusive emphasis on the monetary features of Classical doctrine has swamped attention on the technological relationships assumed. In my paper I have applied the interpretation to J. S. Mill

I have not submitted the paper to the Scottish Journal yet for I would first be very interested in your comments and any advice. <sup>Moreover</sup> ~~and~~ I plan to extend the idea at Toronto if I felt.

reasonably convinced that there was something worthwhile to extend.

May I mention that I have just completed your Economics of Physiocracy; it was in reading your papers at the end when I felt that you might be able to help me.

Needless to say, please do not hesitate to return the paper immediately if you consider I have gone 'over-board'. I realise that I have no claim on your time and patience.

With respect,

Yours very sincerely,

Samuel Hollander.