

## TWO WORLDS

By Raya Dunayevskaya  
Author of **PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION**  
and **Marxism and Freedom**

So many anti-Hegelians who consider themselves Marxists have surfaced to attack Philosophy and Revolution that I felt it only proper to give the floor to a German revolutionary Marxist of the Old Left whose individual view objectively sums up the others.

— Raya Dunayevskaya

Dear Raya:

I do not believe in "Hegel Now". I think it can only lead to more confusion. Sure, I am for studying Hegel now as I was in the '20s when "Lenin's Notes" appeared. But not much more than for studying Spinoza, Herder, etc. I am afraid it is, again, a smuggling away from Marx. It is the same, exactly the same, as when the great intellectuals started to go back to the "Young Marx". I enjoy, and will agree with, every word of the "Young Marx", but I do not need the "Young Marx" (he really meant what he said about the "nagging mice") since I have a much better (concrete) one from the year 1852 on.

Engels hit it right when, at Marx's funeral, after summarizing the great theoretical, philosophical and scientific achievements, he said: "For Marx was before all else a revolutionist." You, Raya, are the one who, rightfully, speaks so much about theory and practice—where was Hegel's practice? Hegel ran away. He was first a journalist (practice) and then took refuge in the university, while Marx ("turning Hegel on his feet") started to become a professor, but decided to accept the editorship of the "Rheinische Zeitung".

I do not believe, even without having to see your book, that you know your Hegel better than Lassalle did. Lassalle went to Bismark. Lassalle was not a renegade; it was the logic of Hegel to go to Bismark. Walking through the streets of East Germany, I saw plenty of Lassallean socialism, and nowhere is Hegel taught as much as at the university in Leipzig. Everywhere at the walls you see the good Hegelian word "people" (Volk), but not once "proletariat".

I AGREE, HEGEL introduced the idea of freedom into philosophy by saying: "The people will learn to feel the dignity of man." Here truly is the genius of Hegel. But "Hegel Now"? When he lived 30 and 40 years after Marat and Babeuf—and still did not go as far as they? His horror against them is somewhat the same as yours against Mao. What other effect can your Hegelianism have than winning friends for something which is away, and backwards, from the real Marx? (What the real

## Why Hegel? Why Now? — a critique

Marx is, you know from his letter to Weydemeyer from 1852, the decisive year, by the way.)

Lenin was right that one should study Hegel to be better able to understand Marx, but one does not need Hegel to understand Marx. Lenin spoke to revolutionaries who fell for Kautsky, etc.—like he, himself, did, before he had studied Hegel. You, however, speak, through the Dell company, to people who at best are on their way to becoming revolutionary. One can be a revolutionary without Hegel!

WHY HEGEL NOW? Why not Feuerbach Now? After all, Feuerbach was just as important as Hegel. Feuerbach, and not Hegel, was the first in the whole history of Philosophy who introduced consciously the idea of "WE" instead of the "I". (For Hegel even "the people" were still "I".)

If you give today's intellectuals only Hegel (or at best Marx via Hegel), they will never understand the proletariat and Marx's and Engels' discovery from the "Holy Family" on. More important than Marxism as a whole is the development of the thoughts of Marx and Engels, and if you wish, the development from Hegel, but from many, many others than Hegel. They learned much, much more from Fourier than from the whole of Hegel. Why go back to Hegel who still, contrary to the French and English thinkers, bothered with theology, no matter what his God really existed of? Today's intellectuals will never, and that was Lukac's mistake, understand the proletariat from studying Hegel. The task is not only to understand the dialectic of class struggle and thereby discover our Freedom and Humanism, but the role of the proletariat. That, and that alone, the young people have to be taught, and that one can get only from Marx and Engels and Lenin and Luxemburg and from Trotsky and Mao (I for one can say such things since I never, never agreed with anything typically Trotsky) — and never from Hegel. Any one of the proletarian revolutionaries is worth more than the whole of Hegel.

ISN'T IT TYPICAL that the official intellectuals in the West as well as in the East fall for "Alienation"? Sure, a good word, very Hegelian and Marxian, but there is a very, very good reason why Marx since 1852 did not use this word any more except in connection with labor in the production process. Every liberal you can impress with the slogan "Alienation", but he will still be a liberal. Indeed, the best way to become and feel a liberal is the outcry against "Alienation", because the best way to reduce (not abolish) "Alienation" is to make the fellow "interested"—if the horse could only be in-

terested in the beauty of its harness, it would pull much better. . . .

One can accept every word in Hegel, and still not be a revolutionary. Kautsky, etc., tried to do it with Marx. It did not work. The Parteivorstand had to cut out sentences from Marx and Engels, "explain" and in the end to say openly that Marx and Engels, after all, were humans and made mistakes—or were valid for a certain time only. . . . The Russians still talk Marxism-Leninism (too bad Stalinism was taken out, it will come back), but the introduction of "values" etc. into "socialist economy", as you had shown, clashed too much with Marx's Fetish character of commodities. Don't tell me that Hegel understood the real meaning of Napoleon on the white horse. I do not think he did, but even if he did, the whole of Hegel cannot reach up to the few pages of section 4 in the first chapter of Kapka. Again, what does one need Hegel for? Why today?

Concrete Humanism starts with Marx, with nobody else! Up till Marx it was the great dream! Before Marx it was an abstraction; also for Hegel though he undoubtedly went after the experience of the French Revolution further than all Humanists (Philosophy) before him. . . . Just as Spinoza started Philosophy (as Hegel rightfully said), and thereby started the end of Theology—so the end of Philosophy started with Marx. Why go back?

— P.R.

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By Raya Donayevskaya

Author of **PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION**  
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Dear P.B.\*

It is sad, indeed, that so abysmal is the theoretic void which has persisted in the revolutionary movement ever since the death of Lenin in 1924 that the moment there is mention of Hegelian dialectics—the ground that made possible Marx's discovery of a whole new continent of thought, Historical Materialism, which, in turn, made necessary a return to that self-movement which Marx had declared to be "the source of all dialectic"—at that moment even an independent Marxist like you hauls out the three old, very old, red herrings: 1.) Hegel's institution of "theology", 2.) Hegel's failure to understand the real meaning of Napoleon on the white horse", after which comes the clincher, 3.) "where was Hegel's practice?"—as if that ever were the reason Marx continued grappling with the Hegelian dialectic throughout his life as a proletarian revolutionary.

You, however, go about your merry way, violating both philosophy and history, not only by imputing the reason for Lassalle's "going to Bismarck" to Hegel's Logic, but bringing your clincher up to date as well as "personalizing" it by further dragging in me and Mao, writing that Hegel's "horror" at Marat and Babeuf "is somewhat the same as yours against Mao."

### NO PLACE FOR PSEUDO POINTS

Were I as interested as you in scoring totally irrelevant, pseudo-points, I could end the discussion right here by simply showing my "horror"—and this one is real and is of today—at your gratuitously supplying revolutionary red coating to that state-capitalist ruler continuing to mouth Marxist phrases while rolling out the red carpet for every leader from Nixon to Arafat after he had turned his Army loose against the Chinese proletariat whom he called "economists" for daring to

—\*P.B. is the German revolutionary who wrote the critique "Why Hegel? Why Now?" that appeared in N&L, August-September, 1974.

## Answer given to 'Why Hegel? Why now?'

ask for better conditions of labor, and against the Sheng Wu-lien\*\*, the youth rebels who took him at his word that "it was right to rebel" and worked to develop communes in the manner of the Paris Commune, the form of workers' rule that Marx recognized as the "dictatorship of the proletariat".

It is high time, instead, seriously to get down to working out the inner connection between Marx's theory of revolution and Hegelian dialectics.

It is high time, instead of counterposing endlessly Feuerbach's materialism as "the superior" of Hegel's idealism, that we understood fully why Marx, despite the fact that Feuerbach helped the Young Hegelians (Marx included) "complete" the break with Hegel's idealism, credited Hegel, not Feuerbach, with developing "the active side" of self-developing "Subject":

"The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object . . . not subjectively. Hence, in contradistinction to materialism, the active side was developed abstractly by idealism . . ."

Of course, neither Feuerbach's materialism, nor Hegelian idealism, understood proletarian praxis, "revolutionary", "practical-critical activity." That was Marx's

—\*\*Sheng Wu-lien is the acronym for the 20 organizations comprising the Hunan Provincial Proletarian Revolutionary Great Alliance Committee which issued their Manifesto "Whither China?" asking that the "Cultural Revolution" not remain "a revolution of dismissing officials, nor a movement of dragging out people, nor purely cultural revolution, but 'a revolution in which one class overthrows another.'" Calling the Maoist leadership "the 'Red' capitalist class", the manifesto concluded "Let the new bureaucratic bourgeoisie tremble before the true socialist revolution that shakes the world! What the proletariat can lose in this revolution is only their chains, what they gain will be the whole world." (See the manifesto quoted in Chapter 5 "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung" in *Philosophy and Revolution*, pages 176 to 182).

and only Marx's, original contribution—a whole new continent of thought which not only united idealism and materialism, but spelled out the role of the proletariat as both revolutionary force and as Reason, as living human, practicing of absolute negativity. Which is why when Marx left Feuerbach, it was for good (a fact, I'm sorry to say, that even Engels didn't understand, much less the post-Marx-Engels generation raised on his Feuerbach).

### MARX RETURNS TO HEGEL

But when Marx left Hegel, he constantly returned declaring that, because Hegelian dialectics was "the speculative expression for the movement of history", its "summation"—2,500 years of it—we can see in its "transcendence" an objective movement. Therefore, when we get to the actual movement of history through very specific class struggles, and see proletarian "Aufheben", we

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see not only abolition of capitalist private property by communism, but "the second negativity": "Only by the transcendence of this mediation . . . does there arise positive humanism beginning from itself."

You're absolutely right when you write: "Concrete Humanism starts with Marx, with nobody else!" But that doesn't explain why Marx himself, after his own discovery and the actual class struggles which marked the true "non-speculatively"-expressed history of mankind's development; after the 1848 revolution followed by his theory of permanent revolution; after the development of all his economic theories of value and surplus-value and collapse of capitalism "reverting", in that genius's magnificent work, the Grundrisse, to such Hegelian language as "absolute movement of becoming" to describe the proletarian's "Aufheben"; and, finally, in the second edition of his greatest theoretical work, Capital, published after the Paris Commune, when the greatest civil war in his life-time showed "freely associated men" finally stripping "fetishism off of commodities", Marx first then made crystal clear that the exploitative capital/labor relationship assumes "the fantastic form" of an exchange relationship between things (commodities) because that is "what it really is" at the point of production—reification of labor. This phenomenon become Notion, however, far from transforming us all into "one-dimensional men", first concretizes "the quest for universality" as the proletariat taking destiny into its own hands, so that the greatest achievement of the Paris Commune, as he tells us in The Civil War in France, is simply, "its own working existence."

### HEGEL CRUCIAL TO MARX AND LENIN

I can hear you grinding your teeth in impatience at my repeating such "ABC's" of Marxism. No doubt you believe that your reference to 1852 as "the decisive year" has already (and more cogently and surely more briefly) dealt with the problematic of our age since in that letter to Weydemeyer Marx had developed from class struggle through the dictatorship of the proletariat to a classless society. Why then do you persist in (1) separating philosophy from economics so that even when we agree on a point, such as the still-not-surpassed greatness of Marx's "Fetishism of Commodities", you say it in order "to prove the need to dispense with Hegel?" (2) continue further to degrade Hegel to one of many philosophers—"Spinoza, Herder, etc." (I love especially the "etc." which shows just how intellectualistic a revolutionary can become once he begins allowing for "culture!"); although you know very well that, whatever other philosophers and utopian socialists and "materialists" Marx "learned from", one and only one—Hegel—he not only "came from", but said the task of the proletariat was "to realize" his philosophy, i.e., freedom: And (3) claim that the reason for Lenin's studying Hegel, in the midst of the holocaust of World War I, was because he "spoke to revolutionaries who fell for Kautsky, etc.—like he, himself, did before he had studied Hegel."

Now supposing that was true—it wasn't, as he fought those politically, not "philosophically", and for those The Renegade Kautsky sufficed—but supposing it was true, how could that possibly explain how Lenin in his Will summed up a lifetime in the revolutionary movement, leaving as a legacy what to look for to extend the Russian Revolution to a world scale? How could what you say show why Lenin who had initiated the Great Divide within revolutionary Marxism, philosophically as well as in actuality—and, remember, I am not talking of Stalin or Trotsky or Zinoviev-Kamenev, but of Bukharin who, Lenin says, "is not only a most valuable and major theorist of the Party (Bolshevik, not Kautsky, etc.)—rd); he is also rightly considered the favorite of the whole Party"—draw the considered conclusions:

"But his theoretical views can be classified as fully Marxist only with great reserve, for there is something scholastic about him (he has never made a study of dialectics, and, I think, never fully understood it)."

No, my dear P.B., what you say is far from any truth about the Hegelian dialectic. Where you single out Hegel's Logic as that which is supposed to have led Lassalle to Bismarck, Lenin writes: "It is impossible fully to grasp Marx's Capital, and especially its first chapter, if you have not studied through and understood the whole of Hegel's Logic." Where you make it a matter of "studying" only, and that of Hegel "not much more than for studying Spinoza, Herder, etc." Lenin made it a question of break with Plekhanov who "followed" Spinoza, and above all with himself, as a theoretic preparation for proletarian revolution, breaking with co-Bolsheviks who did not understand either "self-determination of the Idea", or the "self-determination of nations" as "the dialectic of history!" And where you stress "the end of philosophy started with Marx," both Marx and Lenin considered it was first necessary "to realize" it—AND THAT, IT IS TRUE, COULD NOT BE DONE BY HEGEL BUT BY PROLETARIAN REVOLUTIONARIES WHO, HOWEVER, UNDERSTOOD "SELF DEVELOPING SUBJECT" AND PRACTICED IT.

That's what I am trying to do in carrying out philosophy as action. Having so heatedly rushed to criticize "Why Hegel? Why Now?" (Part I, of Philosophy and Revolution) by just the title, may I now ask you to read the book, especially Part I? Ray

**TWO WORLDS****Philosophy and Revolution: critique vs. attack**

by Raya Dunayevskaya

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Generally, *News & Letters* reproduces criticisms of any of our writings under the title, "As Others See Us." In the present case, I felt it important to reproduce it in my own column because, as against Howard Parsons' scurrilous attack on *Philosophy and Revolution*, in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (June, 1975), the sharp criticism of my work by the scholar, George Armstrong Kelly, in his own work, *Hegel's Retreat From Eleusis*, will, I believe, stimulate a serious discussion on the chapter "Why Hegel? Why Now?"

From *Hegel's Retreat From Eleusis*, by George Armstrong Kelly, Princeton University Press, 1978 (pp. 238-242):

An arresting chapter of a new book by the unorthodox revolutionary Marxist Raya Dunayevskaya is entitled "Why Hegel? Why Now?" These questions are broadly answered in the following manner: "No matter what Hegel's own intentions . . . how could he have stopped the ceaseless motion of the dialectic just because his pen reached the end of his *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Science*?" (p. 6)\* This writer, who finds even Mao's "cultural revolution" deficient in the full utilization of Hegel, opts decisively against the interpretation of Hegel that I have been exploring. For the complex lineage of culture, politics and philosophy within the matrix of "absolute Idea," Mme. Dunayevskaya proposes to substitute an unchained dialectic, which she baptizes "Absolute Method", a method that "becomes irresistible . . . because our hunger for theory arises from the totality of the present global crisis."

\*Except for footnote 33 we have inserted text pagination references to *Philosophy and Revolution*.

(p.7) To the question I have raised about the contemporaneity of Hegel, she answers with a resounding affirmative: "What makes Hegel a contemporary is what made him so alive to Marx: the cogency of the dialectic of negativity for a period of proletarian revolution, as well as for the 'birth-time' of history in which Hegel lived." (p.7) According to Dunayevskaya, "Hegel moved from 'culture' to 'science', i.e., the unity of history and its philosophic comprehension." (p. 286) It remained, then, only for Marx to demonstrate that action itself, surpassing thought, must be called on to reconstruct society and "realize" philosophy. However, Hegel felt his philosophy to be supremely valid precisely because it preserved and clarified culture in the memory, not because it had supplanted it.<sup>33</sup> Hegel told us not so much what we lack as what we have so tortuously acquired; how it constitutes us, not our latitude in rejecting it or turning it to other purposes. Thus, when our author concludes "that Hegel's tendencies in the summation of the past give us a glimpse of the future, especially when materialistically understood in a Marxist-Humanist, not vulgar economist, manner" (p.287), we recognize the partial aspect of Hegel she is appropriating, and we discern her strategic position in the intramural Marxist debate, but we find her judgment of the links between philosophy, history, politics, and culture alien to Hegel's intent . . .

To quote Dunayevskaya once more: "The (Hegelian) dialectic disclosed that the counter-revolution is within the revolution. It is the greatest challenge man has ever had to face." (p. 237) . . .

(33) Cf. Hegel to Niethammer, 28 Oct., 1808, Briefe, I, p.253: "Every day I am more convinced that theoretical work brings more to pass in the world than practical work. Once the realm of thought is revolutionized reality can scarcely hold out."

Certain strains of Marxism play with it (the Hegelian vision of the spirit's progress and goal in history as facilitated by politics), invert it, or re-compose it in ways that are frequently more profound than other solutions to the riddle of history in our times. If they are more profound, it is because they are more convinced that man has a meaning and history a destiny. To say that their own contradictions betray them is not to dishonor their effort.

PROFESSOR KELLY, I FEEL SURE, knows that "Absolute Method" is not an expression of mine, but of Hegel's. There is no doubt whatsoever that he is more adept than I with knowing the direct references to that expression, whether that be the two pages (pp. 839-40) on Absolute Method in Miller's translation of *Science of Logic*, or Johnson and Struthers' translation (Vol. II, pp. 481-2). Or for that matter, the reference in the original German to "absolute Methode" (p. 567, 1969 edition). Therefore, he must have meant to say that "an unchained dialectic" is not something that Hegel would have considered his second negativity (which he called Absolute Method) to be. It nevertheless remains a fact that absolute negativity is not something I "baptized" as Absolute Method, but Hegel did; and that Marx's singling out "negativity as the moving and creative principle" was precisely because of his profound com-

prehension not only of economics and politics, but culture and philosophy—and revolution. And it is again at the period of world crisis, this time World War I, that Lenin singles out that section as “not at all bad as a kind of summing up of dialectics” (Collected Works, Vol. 38, p. 231).

Where Professor Kelly stresses Hegel's statement that “Once the realm of thought is revolutionized, reality can scarcely hold out”, may I call attention to Hegel's statement on his praise of the Idea because of its relationship to reality, “the pivot on which the impending world revolution turned . . .” (Philosophy of Right, p. 10). In a word, what we are disagreeing on is today, and our attitude to philosophy and revolution, when in the contemporary world it becomes philosophy of revolution.

**IN CONTRAST TO THAT** scholarly discussion, and with full appreciation of the deep difference between a Marxist and an academic scholar, consider the following deceitful as well as obscene attack on my work by Howard Parsons in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, which passed for a review of *Philosophy and Revolution*: “This is philosophical idealism—a real aid and comfort to the counter-revolutionaries sitting on their mounting piles of nuclear bombs.”

This is not the only time that that scholarly (sic!) journal created space for a Stalinoid type of professor to pose as “independent”. A decade back, when, after a whole century's delay in finding and translating Marx's Humanist Essays, these were finally published with serious commentary in the U.S., another such type of “independent” — this time Maoist-tinged — Prof. Donald Clark Hodges, vulgarized Marx's Humanist Essays: “In

the manuscripts of 1844, alienation involves a specific economic transaction between the alienor and alienee.” (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Dec. 1966). Not only had the editor of the journal published this uncritically, but refused to publish my critique, which held that, more intolerable even than Hodges' pontifical about Marx's “alleged (sic!) humanism”, was the journal's allowing Prof. Hodges to initiate ideological McCarthyism, creating an amalgam with his claim that every U.S. scholar who, according to him, was engaged in “a salvage operation from Marx's own wastebaskets,” thereby creating “a humanistic image congenial to the academic community,” was in fact “closely allied to the corresponding economic and political development within the Soviet Union.”

What *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* has been doing, by giving free rein to people like Prof. Hodges to attack Marx's Humanism, and now to Howard Parsons to attack *Philosophy and Revolution*, while excluding not only my rebuttal but also that of other scholars who came to the defense of Marx, was to close off any objective discussion. It is for this reason that I repeat what I wrote in my critique on Jan. 22, 1967: “At the risk of being considered ‘soft’ on the philosophical community, I dare conclude that it would have been far better for freedom of thought, for academia and all others, if Prof. Hodges hadn't become so ‘increasingly irritated’ at all interpretations of Marx other than his own as to be ready to create instant amalgams!” (“Instant Vulgar Materialism vs. Marx's Humanism”, *N&L*, Oct. 1967.)