

Raya Dunayevskaya, reviewer

The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx by David MacGregor
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984)

The challenge contained in the title of this book, which holds that the communist ideal characterizes both Hegel and Marx, is further stressed in the very first paragraph of the Introduction to the whole work. There Professor MacGregor holds that Hegel's Philosophy of Right "parallels" the theory of Marx "and throws even greater light on our contemporary situation than the richly textured analysis of Capital." (p.3) He comes to this conclusion without grappling with, or even mentioning, Marx's detailed, paragraph by paragraph, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.

Instead, MacGregor reinforces his own view of parallelism between Hegel and Marx with his claim, this time in the Introduction to the first chapter, that: "Hegel's use of the dialectic is identical with that of Marx." (p. 11) Now that MacGregor has turned the parallelism into full identity, he further extends his analysis to political and social fields. It seems that nothing deters him from the concept of parallelism, even when he concedes that: "For Marx freedom or rationality is identical with communism and is ultimately reached through development of the consciousness of the proletariat and the overthrow of private property and social classes." (p. 27)

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Quite the contrary. Not only does he there repeat the claim that "Marx's vision of communism also animates Hegel's social and political theory," but, in the last chapter of his work, MacGregor explains that Hegel developed "a profound critique of bourgeois private property, economic crises, and imperialism, which anticipates and, in some cases, goes beyond Marx." (p. 239)

In that final Chapter 8 (pp. 236 to 259) Professor MacGregor gathers all the threads of his 312 page work, (whether the subject matter was Religion and Theology or Alienation and Kant, or even the modern world of Capitalism and Imperialism and what he calls "The External Capitalist State"), for the purpose of reinforcing his view that Hegel's vision and Marx's vision of a classless society are "identical." The rest of this review will, therefore, focus on that last Chapter 8.

Although, for this 23 page chapter, "Dialectic and the Rational State," Professor MacGregor has 132 footnotes, they hardly add up to a rigorous analysis of Hegel's dialectic. His concept of Hegel's dialectic method specifies that: "There are three aspects or moments of dialectic method." (p. 241) He calls the first moment "recognition," but what he quotes from Hegel is not from any first stage of consciousness or logic, but from Hegel's climactic, final chapter in Science of Logic, "The Absolute Idea". Here

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is the first sentence from Hegel which MacGregor abbreviated: "From this course the method has emerged as the self-knowing Notion that has itself, as the absolute, both subjective and objective, for its subject matter, consequently as the pure correspondence of the Notion and its reality, as a concrete existence that is the Notion itself." (p.826, A.V. Miller translation) Insofar as tracing and detailing what Hegel was developing of the dialectic in the Absolute, the textual dialectic simply fails to materialize. Instead, MacGregor turns to Hegel's Introduction in the Science of Logic where Hegel says: "the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic." (p.53) MacGregor, however, left out the two words, "of logic," so that you don't see that what Hegel is doing is contrasting what dialectic method is in the Logic and in Phenomenology.

For what MacGregor calls the "second aspect of dialectic method," naming it "method proper," he again does not follow Hegel on the dialectic in the Doctrine of the Notion, but this time turns to the Introduction of the ^{a reference to} Encyclopedie, footnoting/paragraph 12, but not quoting it. That paragraph 12 begins with a clear specification of its subject matter: "The first beginnings of philosophy date from these cravings of thought. It takes its departure from Experience..." This is nowhere near what the dialectic

is in the Absolute Idea.

MacGregor considers "exposition" to be the "third moment of the dialectic." He devotes the last section of his final chapter (which he entitles "Dialectical Exposition and the Rational State") to this. The one time he returns to quote Hegel on the dialectic as he develops it in the Absolute Idea as "the individual, the concrete, the subject," he not only disregards Hegel's warning against "the impatience that insists merely on getting beyond the determinate," but turns to Hegel's Philosophy of Right and with that turns against Marx: "But the rational society Hegel envisions has nothing to do with the abstraction of the 'withering away of the state.'" (p. 254)

It becomes imperative to establish unambiguously-- i.e., concretely -- that, far from the "withering away of the state" being a mere abstraction, it was the actuality of the Paris Commune that showed Marx the workers had created a non-state form of workers' rule. Just as MacGregor makes no reference to Marx's Critique of the Philosophy of Right, so there is no reference to the existence of the Paris Commune. What does exist for MacGregor is the non-existence of "Hegel's rational state." This is exactly why he could not grasp Marx's adherence to the Hegelian dialectic throughout his life and, at the same time, Marx's transformation of the revolution Hegel wrought in philosophy into Marx's philosophy of revolution.

Raya Dunayevskaya

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Is it because MacGregor adheres more rigorously to Hegel? Far from it. As we showed, MacGregor no sooner touches the Hegelian dialectic at its highest point in the Absolute Idea than he runs away from the Absolute Method.

-- Raya Dunayevskaya

April 12, 1985

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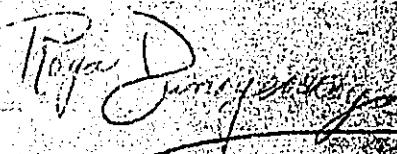
Dear Chris Huxley:

Here is my review of David MacGregor's book. It gave me a great many more headaches than I expected, because I love the two subjects -- Hegel and Marx -- so much that I thought the study would be a serious one. But he meandered all over the place.

I take for granted that you will send me six copies of the Insurgent Sociologist in which the review appears.

I enclose also the four pages from the most recent issue of News & Letters which will explain why I could not begin the review until after March 21 and my return from Detroit.

Comradely yours,



P.S. I'm happy to have this review finished so I can get back to the final page proofs of my new book, Woman's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future, which Humanities Press is bringing out.

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Reviewed by Raya Dunayevskaya, Chicago, Illinois

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MacGregor reinforces his own view of parallelism between Hegel and Marx with his claim, this time in the Introduction to the first chapter, that: "Hegel's use of the dialectic is identical with that of Marx." (p. 11) Now that MacGregor has turned the parallelism into full identity, he further extends his analysis to political and social fields. It seems that nothing deters the professor from the concept of parallelism, even when he concedes that: "For Marx freedom or rationality is identical with communism and is ultimately reached through development of the consciousness of the proletariat and the overthrow of private property and social classes." (p. 27)

Quite the contrary. Not only does he there repeat the claim that "Marx's vision of communism also animates Hegel's social and political theory," but, in the last chapter of his work, MacGregor explains that Hegel developed "a profound critique of bourgeois private property, economic crises, and imperialism, which anticipates and, in some cases, goes beyond Marx." (p. 239)

Professor MacGregor is so enamoured of his new discovery that Hegel "goes

beyond Marx" even in the critique of private property that he devotes the whole of that final chapter 8(pp. 236-259) to gathering all the threads of his 312-page work (whether the subject matter was Religion and Theology or Alienation and Kant, or even the modern world of Capitalism and Imperialism and what he calls "The External Capitalist State"), for the purpose of reinforcing his view that Hegel's vision and Marx's vision of a classless society are "identical."

Although, for this 23-page chapter, "Dialectic and the Rational State," Professor MacGregor has 132 footnotes, they hardly add up to a rigorous analysis of Hegel's dialectic. His concept of Hegel's dialectic method specifies that:

"There are three aspects or moments of dialectic method."(p. 241) He calls the first moment "recognition", but what he quotes from Hegel is not from any first stage of consciousness or logic, but from Hegel's climactic, final chapter in Science of Logic, "The Absolute Idea." Here is the first sentence from Hegel which MacGregor abbreviated: "From this course the method has emerged as the self-knowing Notion that has itself, as the absolute, both subjective and for its subject matter, consequently as the pure correspondence of the Notion and its reality, as a concrete existence that is the Notion itself."(P. 826,

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Insofar as tracing and detailing what Hegel was developing of the dialectic in the Absolute, the textual dialectic simply fails to materialize. Instead, MacGregor turns to Hegel's Introduction in the Science of Logic where Hegel says: "the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic."(p. 53) MacGregor, however, left out the two words, "of logic", so that you don't see that what Hegel is doing is contrasting what dialectic method is in the Logic and in the Phenomenology.

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MacGregor considers "exposition" to be the "third moment of the dialectic". He devotes the last section of his final chapter (which he entitles "Dialectical Exposition and the Rational State") to this. The one time he returns to quote Hegel on the dialectic as he develops it in the Absolute Idea as "the individual, the concrete, the subject," he not only disregards Hegel's warning against "the impatience that insists merely on getting beyond the determinate," but turns to Hegel's Philosophy of Right and with that turns against Marx: "But the rational society Hegel envisions has nothing to do with the abstraction of the 'withering away of the state.'"(p. 254)

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from it. As we showed, MacGregor no sooner touches the Hegelian dialectic at its highest point in the Absolute Idea than he runs away from Absolute Method.

No wonder MacGregor could not grasp Marx's lifelong adherence to the Hegelian dialectic, its Absolute Method, since, at the same time, Marx transformed the revolution Hegel wrought in philosophy into a philosophy of revolution.

Raya Dunayevskaya
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BOOK REVIEWS

The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx. By David MacGregor. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. Pp viii + 312. \$31.50. ISBN 0-8020-5616-4. LC 83-168024.

(Editor's note: The following review was originally published in the late Ms. Dunayevskaya's newspaper, *News and Letters*. It appears here for the first time with Prof. MacGregor's reply.)

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Raya Dunayevskaya
(deceased)

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Reply

Now that I have caught my breath after the monster "run away from the absolute idea," and feeling properly chastened for resorting to 132 footnotes in a single chapter (as the Emperor said to Amadeus: "Too many notes, my dear Mozart"), I want to point out some errors in Raya Dunayevskaya's review. Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* is mentioned first on page 7, and is cited throughout *The Communist Ideal*. Refuting Marx's criticism of Hegel is a central aim of the book. Dunayevskaya apparently does not agree that the bare structure of Hegel's dialectic contains the three moments, recognition, method proper, and exposition. She does not state why she disagrees, contending instead (correctly) that I have drawn this interpretation from more than one Hegelian source. Unhappily, she chooses to keep from her readers what I actually say about Hegel's logical method, in preference to an *ad hominem* attack on the political and intellectual credibility of my argument.

A major thrust of *The Communist Ideal* is to reveal the historical and sociological significance of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, and to display the deep interconnections between "the logic of pure thought" and the substantive analysis of society and the state in the *Philosophy of Right* and elsewhere. The absolute Idea is no night in which all cows are black, but constitutes instead a rigorous and startling examination of the relationship between the self-conscious human individual and the "social state." Far from an idle dabbler in political economy, Hegel produced a theory of private property that effectively concludes the liberal tradition and opens the way to democratic socialist property relations. He also constructed a theory of social class more cogent in my view than anything before or since. Contrary to detractors who argue that Hegel excluded the working class from the state, *The Communist Ideal* argues that Hegel's business class is precisely the contradictory unity of worker and capitalist that later appeared in Marx's social theory. The small army of zealous bureaucrats employed today by government (albeit reluctantly) to deal with problems of poverty, pollution, worker and consumer safety, and so forth, is prefigured in Hegel's universal class. Marx left the hope for communism up to a cataclysmic overthrow of capitalism; Hegel demonstrated the logical necessity (which of course includes opposition and bloody conflict) of democratic government founded on individual freedom and economic democracy.

Hegel did not live in one of those quaint Bavarian castles, merrily spinning theories with only incidental grounding in reality. A voracious consumer of British political economy from his youth, and a regular reader of the radical Benthamite *Morning Chronicle*, Hegel was profoundly disturbed by the misery and oppression brought by what Karl Polanyi called the "stark utopia" of nineteenth century capitalism. What was to be done about the ragged masses who huddled in Berlin, Glasgow, London? How could the industrial machine that churned away so many lives be subdued and controlled? These were the urgent questions that confronted Hegel and for which he developed the world-shaking solutions contained in the *Philosophy of Right*, some but not all of which were taken up by Marx. (The *Communist Manifesto*, not his early *Critique*, is Marx's first real paragraph-by-paragraph analysis of Hegel's textbook on politics.)

If I have tried in *The Communist Ideal* to show that Hegel was a better Marxist than Marx was an Hegelian, I have also attempted to reconstruct the

Hegelian elements that influenced Marx at every stage of his life, but especially when he wrote his masterpiece, *Capital*. To give only one example, the young Marx found very amusing Hegel's description of the bureaucrat as honest, upright, and polite; most commentators assume he kept his jeering attitude, but *Capital* does not bear this out. The true heroes of his analysis of capitalist production, along with class conscious workers, are the British bureaucrats who, like the famous factory inspector Leonard Horner, stripped bare the ugly dimensions of the profit system and fought to install a regulatory state that would further the interests, not of capital, but of the working class.

Most authors are spared double publication of a negative review, but in the case of Raya Dunayevskaya's critique of *The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx* (first published in *News and Letters* in December 1983) I have not been so lucky. Nevertheless, I am fortunate that such a well-known scholar found the book provocative enough to examine, however cursorily. Perhaps it is no surprise that Dunayevskaya rejected or ignored its arguments. But I am grateful to her for bringing my book to public notice. Like many others I have been saddened by her untimely death.

David MacGregor
King's College, London, Ontario

Die Idee als Ideal. Trias und Triplicität bei Hegel. By Katharina Comoth. (Beiträge zur Philosophie). Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1986. Pp. 90. ISBN 3-533-03706-1. DM 28.

This book is top rate in several respects. First of all, it is an outstanding philosophical work. But the time at which it appears is not irrelevant to the topic it addresses. It is essentially a work on Hegel, but more than that, a work that ties Hegel's triadic-triplicistic thought into the tradition of western speculation. It considerably deepens the current debate on "trinitarian" or "triplicistic" thought.

The major points of the book are: First, it traces triplicism back to Plato and Aristotle, and even as far back as Parmenides, not only to the Church Fathers. The book without much fuss identifies philosophy as theology and vice versa, but it pointedly does not erase their differences. Second, the book pro-

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