

LAUREL EDITIONS

DELTA BOOKS

DELL PUBLISHING CO., INC. 730 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 YU 6-6300

September 1, 1972

Raya Dunayevskaya
8146 Ward
Detroit, Mich. 48228

Dear Raya:

With the exception of five or six pages in which he speaks specifically of you and the book, Professor O'Neill grinds his own philosophic axe, with not exactly glittering clarity. I do think we could do without it, unless he'd be willing to allow us to cut it severely to make it much more pertinent.

I guess you will have to apply to Allen & Unwin for permission to use the Hegel extract. We can't have repercussions after publication.

I did complete the reading of Book I, part 1, and the sequel are my observations concerning it.

p.ii, lines 6-8: "It is not true...anything by Hegel." This is not easy to credit. Where is the evidence beyond your saying "Nothing else can account for the today-ness of Marx's Humanism"? I think it is incumbent upon you to adduce more tangible testimony that there is widespread reading of Hegel, and not merely that of his interpreters.

p.ii, 8th line from bottom: "the concept...to a man."
The meaning here is not clear, to me at least.

p.iii, 9th line from bottom: "those opposites, intellectual and worker." Of course you do not mean to say intellectuals and workers are mutually exclusive conditions, except in a special sense. I think you ought to indicate what that sense is. (An interesting aside: Why "white" and "Black"? Would you write "man" and "Woman"?)

Chapter I - Absolute Negativity As New Beginning

V Absolute negativity needs defining and concretizing.

p.15 et seq.: The section of Absolute Knowledge could be made clearer if you were to show a concrete-historical example of "the method of how the opposition between self-consciousness and its object is transcended in life."

I think this is true of much of Part I of the book. I am afraid that almost 200 pages of abstract explication of one of the most abstruse systems of thought in Western philosophy will begin to discourage almost all but the already initiated Hegelian scholars and students. If a

- more -

14151

B. Dunayevskaya 9/1/72 . . . cont'd.)

Notion = new creative energies
new forces
new creative forces
in signifying

Causality
against
mind
without
freedom
Subject
Vind.
man

picture is sometimes worth a thousand words, an example may explicate a dozen abstractions.

(2) There is a need for a glossary of key Hegelian terms such as absolute negativity, Notion, Moment, concrete universal, concrete totality, absolute idea, etc., each defined in a way that whole sections of Hegel's system suddenly become illuminated.

p.20: We are missing specific page number for footnote 15.

p.45, last sentence: "Is it just...which men aims?" As it stands the sentence seems to be a disjunction in which only one of the alternatives is possible. But why can't it be ontological Idealism's "delusion" to think it can 'absorb' the objective world into itself and at the same time have it as an ideal toward which man aims?

p. 57, 1st line: "Jammed up." This is not a felicitous phrase. Do you mean "condensed," "concentrated," "reduced," "incorporated," etc.? Take your pick or come up with one of your own.

(The burden of the proof that Hegel's philosophy is "not only saturated with reality, but lives, moves, transforms reality," rests upon you. I contend that but for a comparative few Hegel's influence upon reality is, for the vast majority who are aware of that influence at all, recognized through a scant knowledge of the vulgarization of concepts of dialectical movement, thesis-antithesis-synthesis, etc. I believe that you will be severely circumscribing, and unnecessarily so, the prospective audience for the book by taking for granted that the first chapter will be comprehensible to those without previous training in Hegelian thought. You'll have to root Hegel in the concrete, as Marx is rooted in the concrete.)

Chapter II - A New Continent of Thought, etc.

p.83 Check the two extracts, please. Either the translations or the elisions interfere with the comprehension of the passages quoted.

p.84 The first extract, with "Hegel" as subject, is not really a sentence and the thought is not quite clear, at least to me.

p.91, footnote 129: Is "Tring" O.K.?

p.96, lines 6 and 7: "It also analyzed...Greek art." This is awkward and obscures the meaning. Please recast.

- more -

14152

22 II
Start at 1415
see in
Inquiry Cogn
merely
of world
without
July - 14/72
but in
of world
where
14 men
found
achieve
clear 12
15
7/1/72
Dunayevskaya

p.57
w many
observations
coming up in
at home
that is a
new book
for 5/75-7

(R. Dunayevskaya 9/1/72 cont'd.p3.)

p.102, last sentence: "Although Marx...concept of theory." This sentence is not clear to me. Please clarify.

p.109, line 3: Don't you mean "traversed"?

p. " , line 14: "his day's reality." This is ambiguous. Please clarify.

p.113, 1st line: What Institute? You haven't identified it before, I don't think.

p.123, line 5: What is the antecedent for "they"?
(Parenthetically, I refer you to page 136: "Whether it was because Marx had not completed Capital, or the critique must be supplemented by the concrete historic works, such as The Civil War in France... is proof... of the fact that Marx did not go in for abstractions, that for him 'the truth is concrete'..." I suggest we emulate him.)

4 p.136, last line: Can you come up with a more felicitous term than "statification"?

Chapter III - The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin

p. 142, 2nd extract: "Cause and effect...development of matter." Are you quoting this correctly? There seems to be some incompleteness here, as if some word or phrase were missing.

p.144, line 21: "jamming up opposites." See my comment above, p.57, 1st line.

p.156, lines 10-15: "Long before...questions of the day." This is an incomplete sentence.

p.162, first line: is "rest" O.K. or should it be "rests"?

p.163-164 "Ever since...the historic stage." One of my intermittent reminders to you that abstract abstractionism is to be constantly guarded against. It is up to you to carry out Lenin's dictum that "theoreticians must bring dialectics to the masses," to quote you, and to others, I would add.

What was it Roxanne says in "Cyrano de Bergerac": "Improvise! Rhapsodize!" I add: "Concretize!"

Ever,

Richard Huett
Richard Huett
Editor-in-Chief
Laurel Editions-Delta Books

RH/jh

14153