

January 2, 1970

Dear Miss Danayevskaya:

Thank you very much for sending me the manuscript of the chapter on Hegel from your new book. I enjoyed very much in reading it: there are not many people who have studied Hegel so thoroughly as you obviously did. From the point of view of scholarly competence the text makes a very good impression indeed. However, in addition to some specific comments on a separate sheet, which I enclose, I have two general remarks.

One is the lack of clarity in several passages. I have put the question marks on the margins. Some places are unclear: it seems to me, because of misprints in typing: one has the impression that in several sentences some words are missing. Some other places are not sufficiently clear either you don't explain what you mean, or (because) because you don't give reasons for your statements. Clarity is essential when writing on Hegel for English speaking readers because Hegel himself is utterly difficult to understand, and because Americans and English, with few exceptions, are quite ignorant of him, very reluctant to study him carefully, and, due to the influence of analytical philosophy, always ready to require high standards of

clarity <sup>and</sup> ~~of~~ precision.

Another remark of a less formal nature is concerned with the general character of your interpretation of Hegel, which is favourable to the point of one-sidedness. I fully share your view that time and again Hegel becomes theoretically relevant to our present day problems because dialectic is essentially a method of revolutionary thought and practice.

However, a critic of bureaucratic socialism, of fetishism and any repressive establishment, a fighter for real freedom cannot but also emphasize the other side in Hegel, especially older Hegel: his system is closed, his dialectics works in the past history, the future is not open and you feel to show that the principle of negativity, according to Hegel himself, could be applied to the Absolute mind once it has become conscious of itself.

You probably make it clear elsewhere in the book what you mean by freedom, one of your key concepts. I don't believe that you could possibly accept Hegel's notion of freedom within a strictly deterministic rational pattern of history.

However, even if you have no more time to change anything in your book, the chapter on Hegel would undoubtedly constitute a valuable contribution to the Marxist interpretation of that great thinker.

Yours sincerely  
Milan Marković

① As you know Zhdenov's intervention only followed an attempt to do justice to Hegel in vol. III of Alexandrov's History of Philosophy.

② p1 In addition to existentialists, we in Yugoslavia have rediscovered and very seriously studied early humanist writings of Marx immediately since after the break with Stalin in 1949. We wanted to explain what happened with Soviet Union and Soviet philosophy. My first book, written in 1950-51 was The Deviation of Marxism-Leninism in USSR.

③ p2 As far as I remember (I don't have Phenomenology of Mind with me) Stoicism and Scepticism are the forms of unhappy consciousness.

④ p9 p13 Hegel's dialectic is "senseless movement, a sort of permanent revolution" is the most questionable thesis in your text. Dialectic becomes that when it is interpreted as the structure of concrete history which is open and allows several possibilities. It is true Hegel in many places transcends the limits of his system and says things which are incompatible with his basic assumptions. However, in the totality of his philosophy dialectic is essentially the method of construction of a closed system: all motion and development takes place only within that system.  
[closed system, consciously but driven by it]

⑤ p10 In your formulation an important moment of dialectical process is missing: its progressive character, or in Hegel's terms: each stage in the development is a more complete truth than the preceding one.

(As does help)  
⑥ Action Emphasis on action as a means of overcoming the opposition seems in Hegel's philosophy, seem to me misleading. Not that one could not find passages in Hegel which sound more or less "Marxian". However the whole theory of praxis is the basic novelty of Marx. Action in Hegel is essentially activity of thought.

⑦ This is a place for a critical analysis of Hegel's concept of freedom. (P. 15) 1/16-17 / with many questions / esp. "Aufhebung" / "Aufhebung" / "Aufhebung"

⑧ 1/16 Instead of using this language of "perishing breaking down" it was necessary for the understanding of Hegel's negation of negation to explain the term "aufheben" + many of 1-14 / 1847 / esp. 1/18/19??

⑨ 1/19 The interpretation of the Absolute as the ideal toward which man or stone seems too free to me.

⑩ 1/20 The quotation from Lenin (on causality) does not support your thesis that (in Hegel?) "one cannot stop at an Absolute that has not suffered through absolute negativity". Anyway an Absolute would not be an Absolute if it could be negated. Precisely therefore, there is no Absolute in Marx's philosophy which, in difference of Hegel is consistently dialectical.

⑪ 1/21 Real freedom is incompatible with the assumption of Absolute Spirit whose manifestation is history.

⑫ 1/24 The revolt of the masses need not necessarily lead to the Aufhebung of the old social forms, it could be destructive or even reactionary. Therefore it is not possible to see the essence of dialectic in the revolt of the masses, what really is essential is the abolition of an internal limit of the given social formation.