PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION

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EXCERPTS FROM THE GRUNDRISSE

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ENGLISH

FRONTISPIECE FOR

PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION

"...when the narrow bourgeois form has been peeled away, what is wealth, if not the universality of needs, capacities, enjoyments, productive powers, etc., of individuals, produced in universal exchange? What, if not the full development of human control over the forces of nature — those of his own nature as well as those of so-called "nature"? What, if not the absolute elaboration of his creative dispositions, without any preconditions other than antecedent historical evolution which makes the totality of this evolution — i.e. the evolution of all human powers as such, unmeasured by any previously established yardstick — an end in itself? What is this, if not a situation where man does not reproduce himself in any determined form, but produces his totality? Where he does not seek to remain something formed by the past, but is in the absolute movement of becoming?

— KARL MARX

13318

INTRODUCTION

Because the transformation of reality is central to the Hegelian dialectic, Hegel's philosophy comes to life, over and over again, in all periods of crisis and transition, when a new historic turning point has been reached, when the established society is dug up by its roots and a foundation is laid for a new social order. The fact that there were a record number of Hegel studies, Hegel publications, Hegel translations and Hegel congresses in 1970 crisscrossing with celebrations of Lenin as a philosopher, may have appeared to be pure coincidence: it was the two hundredth anniversary of Hegel's birth and the one hundredth of Lenin's. The brute fact, however, is the all-pervasiveness of the world crisis -- economic, political, racial, educational, philosophic, social. Not a single facet of life, prisons included, was not weighed down by the crisis -- and its absolute opposite in thought. A passionate hunger for a philosophy of liberation upheaved.

Not many professors of philosophy may have related to the Soledad Brother who was shot down in 1971. But so deeply grounded is the Black dimension in "absolute negativity," in the desire for new beginnings through the "syllogistic" resolution of alienation, that George Jackson's discovery of the dialectic of liberation in that hellhole, San Quentin Prison, can by no means be brushed aside as "accidental," or as a Black Panther reduction of philosophy to political Maoisms such as, "power comes out of the barrel of a gun." Hegel himself had, after all, lived during a turning point in world history as the Bastille was stormed and the Great French Revolution

initiated as new as expanse in thought as in the freedom of people. For good and sufficient reason the Hegelian dialectic has been called "the algebra of revolution."

It is true that the extraordinarily wide public interest in Hegel (and in the most remote corners of the globe as well as in the metropoles of the world) has emerged via Marx, Lenin and Mao. It is not, however, true that this new public has stopped dead with these and other interpretations of Hegel without ever bothering to read anything by Hegel). Be they Blacks or Women Liberationists, anti-war youth or rank and file laborers — all those "new passions and new forces" strive to unite philosophy and revolution without which the "system" cannot be uprooted and human creativity released. Nothing else can account for the today-ness of Marx's Humanism.

Marx, the discoverer of a totally new continent in thought — Historical Materialism — grounded his philosophy of liberation in the praxis of the proletariat as well as in Hegel's dialectic. At the outbreak of World War I and the shocking collapse of the great German Social Democracy, Lenin felt a sudden compulsion to turn to the Hegelian dialectic as he dug deep for a new "concrete universal," the concept of the population "to a man" who would not only uproot capitalism but create a totally new society.

The objectivity of today's thirst for theory has led this author to view from the vantage point of today's needs both Marx's analysis of the proletarian "quest for universality," and the "in-itself-ness" of Hegel's Absolutes. Whereas these Absolutes are usually analyzed as "ends," as if absolute negativity were not inherent in them, this author views them as new points of departure. Absolute negativity is the inseparable,

all-pervasive, immanent motive force, the very reason for being of Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Idea, Absolute Mind. Because Marx's rootedness in, and Lenin's "return" to Hegel at crucial historical moments illuminate the problems of our day, their philosophic developments are as central as are Hegel's own works to this book's Part One, "Why Hegel? Why Now?"

Part Two, "Alternatives," attempts to see why both Marxist revolutionaries — Leon Trotsky and Mao Tse-tung — and a non-Marxist philosopher — Jean-Paul Sartre, who was just as desirous of changing rather than just interpreting the world — could do nothing to fill the theoretic void in the Marxist movement subsisting ever since the death of Lenin, much less stop the global march to state-capitalism. The holocaust of World War II notwithstanding, no proletarian revolutions upsurged anywhere to match the scope of the Russian Revolution that emerged out of World War I. Whatever new there may have been in Sartrean Existentialism as philosophy, it was no polarizing force for the masses, and, isolated from the masses, could break no new ground. A totally new turning point in history was needed before those opposites, intellectual and worker, could meet.

It was not until the emergence of a movement <u>from practice</u> in the mid-1950's brought the Humanism of Marxism and the Hegelian dialectic front center on the historic stage with the East European revolutions, that the new stage also in cognition became actual. By 1960, "Africa Year," and the birth of a whole new Third World, which also heralded the Black Revolution in the U.S., the upsurge was overwhelming. Even U.S. intellectuals, who, through the McCarthyite 1950's, had luxuriated in the euphoria of the illusion of an "end of ideology," were rudely awakened out of their lethargy. A whole new

generation of revolutionaries, white as well as Black, was born. They refused to separate their own feelings of alienation in the ivory towers of education from their opposition both to racism and the United States' imperialistic war in Vietnam. In a word, the movement from practice — whether it was in the form of outright revolutions in East Europe, in Cuba, in Africa, or missed revolutions in Paris and Czechoslovakia, or revolts in Japan and in the United States — the movement persisted, refused to be stilled either in practice or in theory. It is these "new passions and new forces" that become central to Part Three, "Economic Reality and the Dialectics of Liberation."

I must confess that the temptation to begin at the end, with the immediate concerns of our critical period, was hard to resist for one living in a land whose empiricism is part of its very organism. But to have begun with the end would, in fact, have made it impossible to comprehend the "why now" of the "why Hegel?" The preoccupation with what Leon Trotsky called "the small coin of concrete questions" has ever been the road away from not the mystical Absolutes of Hegel, but the revolutionary principles of Marx. It was so during the life, and collapse, of the Second International. It characterized the Third International following the death of Lenin. The theoretic void in the Marxist movement has persisted to this day, when mindless activism thinks it is the answer to today's hunger for theory. The hard truth is that there is no way to work out new beginnings without going through what Hegel called "the labor, the patience, the seriousness and suffering of the negative." Which is why the mature Marx persisted in repeating long after he had broken away from "Hegelianism" that the Hegelian dialectic was "the source...of all dialectic," and worked out his original

proletarian philosophy of liberation.

It has always been the belief of this writer that in our age, theory can develop fully only when grounded in what the masses themselves are doing and thinking. I deeply regret that I cannot acknowledge by name the East European Marxist-Humanists who collaborated in the writing of Chapter VIII, "State-Capitalism and the East European Revolts." For the chapter, "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung," I am indebted to a young scholar from Peking, Chiu-Chao, whom I interviewed in Hong Kong in 1966, and who then helped with research. As for the last chapter, it had been turned over to the new voices of the Blacks, the youth, the rank and file workers and women's liberationists; indeed two drafts of the whole work were submitted for discussion and editing to special Black/Red and Women's Liberation conferences. Philosophy and Revolution is as much their work as mine.

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Raya Dunayevskaya

PART ONE

WHY HEGEL? WHY NOW?

CHAPTER I — ABSOLUTE NEGATIVITY AS NEW BEGINNING

The dialectic of negativity [is] the moving and creating principle.

Just as Prometheus, having stolen fire from heaven, begins to build houses and settle on the earth, so philosophy, having extended itself to the world, turns against the apparent world. So now with the Hegelian philosophy.
— Marx

...insofar as it [our age] has made us touch our limits I shall say that we are all metaphysical writers... For metaphysics is not a sterile discussion about abstract notions which have nothing to do with experience. It is a living effort to embrace from within the human condition in its totality.
— Jean-Paul Sartre

History has its own way of illuminating a serious work of philosophy. And the history of World War I — which, on the one hand, caused the collapse of established Marxism (the German Social Democracy), and, on the other hand, led the most militant materialist of all, Lenin, to a new study of Hegel's idealism — has lessons for our day. Lenin's study led him to the conclusion that: "Intelligent idealism is nearer to intelligent materialism than is stupid materialism. ¶ Dialectical idealism instead of intelligent; metaphysical, undeveloped, dead, vulgar, static instead of stupid."(1)

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(1) I happen to have been the first to translate Lenin's philosophic commentaries on Hegel's works, and I am using my own translation, which appears as Appendix B in the first edition of my work, Marxism and Freedom, Bookman, N.Y., 1958, p. 354. I will also cite the "official" translation which Moscow brought out in 1961; Lenin's Collected Works, (hereafter referred to just by volume number), Vol. 38, p. 276.

In our day, ironically enough, there are Hegelian scholars who are so eager to return Hegel to academia, cleansed of the "subversions" first by Marx and then by Lenin, that they find themselves in veritable agreement with "Communists" who, for their own reasons, wish Hegel kept in a closed ontological world. In any case, whether one feels that Hegelian philosophy is an impenetrable closed ontology, or the open road from which to view mankind's development as a totality and so turns to the dialectic, as "the algebra of revolution," the point is that Hegel himself did not displace reality when he entered the realm of "pure thought."

Quite the contrary. The pull of objective history grounded Hegelian philosophy in the principle of freedom, so much so that the successive "manifestations of the World Spirit" are forever finding themselves inadequate to the task of realizing this principle and "perishing." But the more the varied manifestations perish, the more "the self-thinking Idea" keeps reappearing, especially in "Communist" lands where they are forever busy separating the "scientific materialism" of Marx from Hegel's "mystical Absolutes." Hegel's Absolutes have ever exerted a simultaneous force of attraction and repulsion.

This hate-love relationship has caused not only materialists but idealists, not only pragmatists but neo-Cartesians, to cast a veritable shroud over "absolute negativity." Each time, however,

as a deep crisis engulfs the world, the reason for the ambivalent attitude comes out. Thus, during the Depression, Charles A. Beard, in his essay on Hegel for The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, stressed that it was not Marx who "imposed" a revolutionary interpretation upon the Hegelian dialectic; its very nature was "revolutionary." Thus, in Cartesian France the most profound encyclopedic mind of the early 19th century, who had "translated" the movement of the Great French Revolution into the dialectic method, remained very nearly unknown until the Depression. He has, however, been very much alive there since that time. Jean Hyppolite considered it natural that in 1907 in Italy, Benedetto Croce should have thought it was time for "a final reckoning" with Hegel (What Is Living and What Is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel), so unforeseeable was the "strange paradox [that] Hegel would become associated with the exictentialist current whose precursors had been critics of the Hegelian system."(2)

It is true that Existentialism, from its origins in the religiosity of Kierkegaard, through Heidegger's ontological Being and Time, to Sartre's revolutionary elan, was a revolt against Hegel's "system." Yet after Being and Nothingness, after Sartre's experiences in the Resistance and in the postwar period debates

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(2)See Jean Hyppolite's Preface to the English edition of Studies on Marx and Hegel, trans. by John O'Neill, Basic Books, N.Y., 1969.

with Communist ideologues, Sartre found it necessary to express his indignation at the trivialities uttered about the Absolute: "It is unfortunate that a man can still write today that the absolute is not man."(3) On the face of it, both subjectively and objectively (the Resistance), Existentialism, it would seem, should have been drawn to Marx's sharp distinction between economic solutions — abolition of private property — and creative human relationships, especially as the nature Marx expressed it: "the development of human power which is its own end, the true realm of freedom."(4)

Later we will analyze why Existentialism did not then come to grips with Marx's own expressions that Communism was "not the goal of human development, the form of human society." Here it is sufficient to note that during the turbulent decade of the 1960's, it was no longer enough to act as if "Man is absolute" meant only the individual rather than social, historic man and women. The "lack" that Existentialism felt was not so much in its relationship to Hegel-Marx, as it was to existing reality. And it is this lack which also characterized the new generation of revolutionaries in the United States. So integral is empiricism, so a part of the very organism "American," that even those who wish to uproot capitalism — the youth who have become aware

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(3) Situations, IV, trans. by Benita Fisher, George Braziller, N.Y., 1965, p. 315.

(4) Marx, Capital, Vol. III, trans. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, Charles H. Kerr and Company, Chicago, 1915, p. 954.

of themselves as revolutionaries through relating their feeling of alienation in academia to Marx's theory of class alienation -- still separate what history has joined together: Marx's beginnings as a "new Humanism" and the culmination of the Hegelian philosophy in the Absolute Idea. At the same time, the maturity of the age compels a confrontation with existing reality and with the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic.

This is not to say that we can dismiss out of hand the contention that Hegel's Absolutes are a mere restatement of Aristotle's Absolutes, if not a throwback to Plato's concept of philosopher-king, which reflected Greek society where slaves did all the labor and the intellectual class, who did no labor, did all the philosophizing. That the division between mental and manual labor has characterized all societies, especially ours, is hardly disputable. But the general principle does not explain the concrete question: why, as against the Greek philosophers who remain in academia, are there constant, multiple and new rebirths of Hegel studies? If, as Hegel expresses it, "nothing is either conceived or known in its truth, except insofar as it is completely subject to method,"(5) why not subject Hegel's Absolutes to that method? Why not roll the film of Hegel's Absolutes back

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(5) The Science of Logic, trans. by W.H. Johnson and L.G. Struthers, Macmillan, N.Y., 1951, Vol. II, p. 468. (All citations are to this edition.)

to their first crucial public appearance in The Phenomenology of Mind and subject Absolute Knowledge to the test? Why not test the logic of Hegel's Science of Logic, its Absolute Idea, and its "self-liberation" at the apex of his system, Absolute Mind?

No matter what Hegel's own intentions, political conservatism, speculative theodicy; if the discoverer of absolute negativity had even claimed the knowledge of producing "miracles," how could he have stopped the ceaseless motion of the dialectic just because his pen reached the end of his Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences? In any case, what we have to do is examine Hegelian philosophy as is, its movement. We need to do this not for the sake of Hegel, but for our sakes. We are the ones who are in need of a philosophy to meet the challenge of our times. 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. Marx never tired of repeating that it was impossible to turn one's back on the Hegelian philosophy because it had penetrated deeply into the actual movement of history despite Hegel's own "estranged insight." Because our hunger for theory arises out of the totality of the present global crisis, Hegel's "Absolute Method" becomes irresistible. The fact that even simple journalistic analyses reach for "absolutes," like the description of our era as one that is both an age of "revolution in

revolution," and "counter-revolution within revolution," reflects the objective compulsion for a new examination of Hegel's concept of "absolute negativity."

It is high time to encounter Hegel on his own ground — the Absolute Method — which is supposed, at one and the same time, to be in constant motion, and so "adamant" as to refuse to bow to any Absolute Substance. This is because, precisely because, it is the dialectic of the Subject, the continuous process of becoming, the self-moving, self-active, self-transcending method of "absolute negativity."

Section A — The Phenomenology of Mind, or Experiences of Consciousness

> Our epoch is a birth-time, and a period of transition. The spirit of man has broken with the old order of things hitherto prevailing, and with the old ways of thinking...
> — Hegel

The Phenomenology of Mind and The Science of Logic — Hegel's "voyage of discovery" and his logic of abstract categories — are a summons for men "to let the dead bury the dead"(6) while the living go forth to meet the challenge of the times, and "give ear to its [spiritual] urgency."(7) But where The Science of Logic is without "concretion of sense," the excitement of the actual, of the arrival of a new epoch, permeates the whole of the Phenomenology. So alive is this "presence" in the struggle, a life and death struggle, of consciousness with the objective world, with self-consciousness, with Other — be it between "Lordship and Bondage," or between self-consciousness and its own unhappiness; so exciting are these "Experiences of Consciousness"(8) — historical and "absolute,"

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(6) The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. by J.B. Baillie, Macmillan, London, 1931, (hereinafter referred to as Phenomenology), p. 130. See also The Science of Logic, Vol. I, p. 35: "There are no traces in Logic of the new spirit which has arisen both in Learning and in Life."

(7) Lectures on the History of Philosophy, trans. by E.S. Haldane and Francis H. Simson, Humanities, N.Y., 1955, Vol. III, p. 583.

(8) Hegel's original subtitle of the Phenomenology.

individual and universal, all breathing the "World Spirit" whose "time has come" -- that the reader is ready to follow Hegel upon the long, tortuous, 2,500 year trek of Western philosophy. We follow from its birthplace in Greece around 500 B.C. to its leap to total freedom in the Great French Revolution of 1789, to 1806 when Napoleon entered Prussia on horseback just as Hegel was completing the Phenomenology.

It becomes impossible to separate reality and spirit, not because Hegel has imposed spirit upon reality, but because spirit is immanent in reality. Throughout Phenomenology's 164 year existence, "the immanent rhythm of the moment of conceptual thought"(9) has cast a spell on critics and followers alike. The discoverer of Historical Materialism, Karl Marx, criticized the old materialism for its failure to grapple with actuality, which led to the "active side"(10) being developed by Idealism:

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(9) Phenomenology, p. 117.

(10) "The main shortcoming of all materialism up to now (including that of Feuerbach) is that the object, the reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object, or of the intuition [Anschauung]; not however as sensuous human activity, praxis; not subjectively. Hence the active side was developed abstractly in opposition to materialism by idealism... Feuerbach wants sensuous objects really distinct from the objects of thought; but he does not conceive of human activity itself as an activity aimed at objects [gegenständliche Tätigkeit]... He therefore does not comprehend the significance of 'revolutionary,' practical-critical activity." I have used Nicholas Lobkowicz's translation of Marx's Theses on Feuerbach not only because it is an excellent translation, but also because the particular chapter has a critique of Sidney Hook's "questionable way of proceeding" on the whole question of Marx's Philosophic-Economic Manuscripts. See Nicholas Lobkowicz, Theory and Practice, History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx, University of Notre Dame, London, 1967, p. 423, 409, 425.

> The Phenomenology is...the hidden, still unclear even to itself, and mystifying critical philosophy. However, to the extent that it holds fast the alienation of Man -- even if Man appears only in the form of Spirit -- to that extent all elements of criticism lie hidden in it and are often already prepared and worked out in a manner extending far beyond the Hegelian standpoint. The sections on "Unhappy Consciousness," the "Honorable Consciousness," the struggle between the "noble" and "base" consciousness, etc., etc., contain critical elements -- although still in an alienated form -- of whole spheres like Religion, the State, Civic Life, etc.(11)

In a word, despite the fact that Man is nowhere present in the Phenomenology; despite the fact that Hegel analyses the development of consciousness and self-consciousness as disembodied spirits; despite the fact that Freedom and Reason likewise appear as activities of the mind; despite the fact that Hegel's "estranged insight" has caught only "the abstract, logical and speculative expression for the movement of history," Marx concludes that the dialectic reveals "transcendence as an objective movement.". Marx did not single out transcendence as an objective movement merely in order to show what was "behind" the struggles of consciousness and self-consciousness -- mankind's actual history. Marx was also arguing against the narrow materialists who had failed to see self-development in actuality, just as they had

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(11)Marx, Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic. I happened to have been the first to translate into English the now-famous Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, 1844, and I am quoting from my translation, which appears in Appendix A, Marxism and Freedom, 1958 edition, p. 309. Since then, many translations have been published; see Bibliography for a listing.

failed to see it in the struggles of consciousness. In contrast, understanding the fact that no outside force propels a movement forward allowed Hegel to see the development of thought as "parallel"(12) to world history.

Whether one accepts Marx's critique and sees the multitudinous stages of alienation -- of subject and object, of Consciousness and Self-Consciousness, of reason and revolution, of Spirit in Self-Estrangement, not to mention the division within the Absolute itself -- as an "estranged" insight into self-development of labor and its production relations; or whether one remains with Hegel, confined to the realm of thought; or whether one bows to Sartre's concept of "Other" as "Hell is other people"; the crucial point is not only that, for every stage of phenomenological development, there is a corresponding historic stage, but also that thought molds its experience in such a manner that it will never again be possible to keep these two opposites in separate realms. The method of uniting the two dialectically is irresistible because it comes from within. Although the historic periods are not specified by Hegel, neither are they "superimposed" on the stages of consciousness. History remains the innermost core of all of Hegel's philosophic categories. J.N. Findlay is absolutely correct when he writes that, "Much of the intense obscurity of Hegel's text is here [section on Spirit in Self-Estrangement] due to the concealed presence of an historical

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(12) Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Vol. III, p. 547.

framework."(13) In a word, Marxists and non-Marxists alike have grasped the truth, the deeply rooted historical content of Hegelian philosophy.

Because Hegel was analyzing universals as not separate from the individual's "experience," a single stage of alienation gets as great an illumination as does Alienation as a totality. How many exegeses — from Josiah Royce's religious preoccupation with the "Contrite Consciousness" to Herbert Marcuse's preoccupation with "technological reality" and its alleged "Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness,"(14) have not depended on Hegel's Alienated Soul or Unhappy Consciousness?

The constant reappearance of one and the same movement — the dialectic as a continuous process of self-development, a process of development through contradiction, through alienation, through double negation — begins with sense-certainty and never stops its ceaseless motion, not even at its apex, Absolute Knowledge. It is the development of mankind's history from bondage to freedom. It is the development of thought from the French Revolution to German Idealist philosophy. It is Hegel transforming the dialectics of the French Revolution into "Absolute Method."

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(13) Hegel: A Re-Examination, (1938), Collier, N.Y., 1962, p. 119.

(14) One Dimensional Man, Beacon Press, Boston, 1964, pp. 56-83. Cf. the 1941 analysis of alienation in Marcuse's Reason and Revolution, as well as "A Note on the Dialectic," the 1960 preface to that work, Beacon Press, Boston.

The plenitude (and suffering) of consciousness in self-development that Hegel has gathered together for his "Science of the Experience of Consciousness" allows for a great variety of interpretations (very often by the same discerning reader upon each re-reading of a passage). But such varied analyses can be made because, and only because, Hegel created his dialectic out of a most painstaking and rigorous examination of the movement of no less than 2,500 years of history. The fact that this laborious development of mankind culminated in the period of the French Revolution drove the genius to break with the introversion of his philosophic contemporaries.

Were one even to go to the extreme and superimpose just two divisions upon the whole of the Phenomenology, even this would not be "wrong." Thus, "What Happens Up to the Day of Revolution?" could be the heading over Consciousness, Self-Consciousness and Reason, and all the remaining stages of development — Spirit, Religion, and Absolute Idea — could then be titled "What Happens After the Revolution?" Even such oversimplification or, if you wish, vulgarization, would not be violating the spirit of Hegel, providing it were done for the purpose of penetrating Hegel's analysis of the dialectic of development, of method as self-movement. For it is the self-development that is the sum and substance, the soul and spirit of the dialectic, in thought as in life, in history as in society, in philosophy as in literature. All of world history was to

Hegel a history in the "progress and the consciousness of freedom."(15)

So steeped in history, so rich in experiences and profound in philosophic penetration, so simultaneously individual and universal are the endless forms of alienation, from the "Unhappy Consciousness" through "the giddy whirl of perpetually self-creating disorder" of Scepticism, to the "Spirit in Self-Estrangement," as the whole history of world's culture is traversed, that it is impossible here to follow Hegel's multitudinous development even in faint outline. For our purposes it will be sufficient to attempt to come to grips with Absolute Knowledge where, if we are to believe "the materialists," the Absolute swallowed the actual and left it as mere notion of freedom, and, if we are to take the work of the academic scholars, the Phenomenology proves itself to be "a speculative theodicy in the essential form of a metaphysics

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(15) The Philosophy of History, trans. by J. Sibree, Willey, N.Y., 1944, p. 12. So natural do actual revolutions come to mind when one is writing in so critical a period as Germany in the early 1920's, that Karl Korsch, in quoting Hegel on the view of German Idealism as a whole — "revolution was lodged and expressed as if in the very form of their thought," — passionately stressed the fact that Hegel was "not talking of what contemporary bourgeois historians of philosophy like to call a revolution in thought — a nice, quiet process that takes place in the pure realm of the study and far away from the crude realm of real struggles. The greatest thinker produced by bourgeois society in its revolutionary period regarded 'revolution in the form of thought' as an objective component of the total social process of a real revolution." Marxism and Philosophy, (1923), New Left Review Editions, London, 1970, p. 381.

of process and method."(16) The truth is that nowhere is the historic character of Hegel's philosophic categories more evident than in Absolute Knowledge. Marx, who certainly did not fail to see that the chapter "contains both the summation and the quintessence of the Phenomenology," singled out absolute negativity as so overpowering a "result" that, though the vision was "abstract" and "estranged", nevertheless one could not escape "the movement of history." Let us enter then that sacrosanct intellectual haven and see for ourselves, this time not just in faint outline, but in detail.

Hegel begins and ends the final chapter, "Absolute Knowledge," by stressing that recollection of all stages of development is one way of grasping the method of how the opposition between self-consciousness and its object is transcended in life. He begins his recall with the first section, with immediate "sense-experience" and its relatedness to "Other," partly as perception, and essentially as understanding. However, instead of going on to the next sequence — self-consciousness, either as it expresses itself as Lordship and Bondage, Stoicism, Scepticism, or the Unhappy Consciousness — Hegel stops in order to draw out what is the quintessential, not only of Section I, but of the entire Phenomenology

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(16) See Reinhart Klemens Maurer, Hegel und das Ende der Geschichte; Interpretationen zur Phaenomenologie, Stuttgart-Berlin-Cologne-Mainz, 1965, p. 60. Since the part that concerns us is the ingenious analysis of the final three paragraphs of The Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences and how these are supposed to relate to the Phenomenology, we will return to Maurer's work when we deal with The Philosophy of Mind.

and, indeed, of the whole "system," not a page of which had yet been written. Here is what he writes:

> The object as a whole is the mediated result (the syllogism) or the passing of universality into individuality through specification, also the reverse process from the individual, to universal through cancelled individuality or specification.(17)

The deceptive simplicity of this logical conclusion is likely to catch the reader unaware that Hegel is here introducing the three central categories — the Universal, Particular and Individual — of the *as* yet unwritten Science of Logic. It is to be noted that, though these categories are bound together into a syllogism, each remains itself, or more precisely, none is reducible to the other. Hegel underscores the fact that double negation, which characterizes the movement from Abstract (the Universal) to the concrete (the Individual) "through specification" (the Particular), holds true also when the process is reversed. In a word, negation of the negation, not "synthesis," also characterizes "the reverse process from the individual to the universal."(18) In his summation, Hegel demonstrates that this is so in every single stage of the development, and, therefore, from the very first section to the last, it is this which characterizes the <u>whole</u> of the

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(17) <u>Phenomenology</u>, p. 790.

(18) <u>Ibid.</u>

Phenomenology.(19)

It is crucial to grasp this movement from the abstract to the concrete as a self-movement, and not to view it as if it adheres to some sort of static triadic form. Though it was not Hegel, but Fichte and Schelling, who spoke of philosophy as a development of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, this statement has often been misread as an expression of the Hegelian dialectic. We must stop a moment longer to show that the three categories mentioned here are not a "triplicity,"(20) not a synthesis, not synthetic cognition, but the dialectic of self-development through a double negation. No matter what the phenomena are, thought molds the form of experience in a way that determines both the

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(19) For the most concrete working out of the relationship of the French Revolution to the Phenomenology, see Jean Hyppolite, Genèse et Structure de la Phenomenologie de Hegel, Introduction a la Philosophie de l'Histoire de Hegel. Those who do not know French should consult Hyppolite's Studies in Marx and Hegel, especially the chapter on "The Significance of the French Revolution in Hegel's Phenomenology," and the one on "The Concept of Life and Existence in Hegel." The latter concentrates on the section on "Lordship and Bondship," on which Hyppolite comments: "Here we can see the concrete significance of the Hegelian principle of negativity. Hegel's system, far from being a logomachy, is a logic of the life of thought." (p. 17)

(20) Later, when we grapple with the Logic, we shall hear Hegel laugh at the whole construct of triplicity, insisting that it is really a quadruplicity: "If number is applicable, then in the whole course this second immediate is the third term, the first immediate and the mediated being the other terms. But it is also third of a series composed besides of first (or formal) negative and absolute negativity or second negative; now, since the former (the first negative) is itself the second term, the third term may now be counted as fourth, and the abstract form of it may be taken as a quadruplicity in place of triplicity. The Science of Logic Vol. II, p. 478.

experience and "the ways in which consciousness must know the object as itself." Nor is the negation of the negation a "Nullity." The positive is contained in the negative, which is the path to a new beginning. This characterizes-not only the Logic, but life; or, more correctly, it is a movement in the Logic, in the Phenomenology, and in dialectics in general, because it is a fact of history as of life. It is ceaseless movement, a veritable continuous revolution. It is the lifeblood of the dialectic. This is not because Hegel "imposed" it upon his Logic, or the Phenomenology, or The Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences. It is the nature of development. It is a fact of life.

Having underlined "this method of grasping the object," Hegel sends the reader back to the remembrance of things past, at the stage of Reason where he had made his critique of the philosophies based on "pure ego." He notes that "the moment" came before consciousness as Pure Insight and Enlightenment, which is more relevant to our age.(21)

> This enlightenment completes spirit's self-estrangement in this realm, too, whether spirit in self-alienation turns to seek its safety as to a region where it becomes conscious of the peace of self-equipose. Enlightenment upsets the household arrangements, which spirit carries out in the house of faith by bringing in

(21)In talking to working class (especially Black) audiences, I have found the following quotation is not only among the most popular sections, but also brings out the most cogent examples from their lives. See Black/Red Conference, News and Letters, Detroit, 1969.

> the goods and furnishings belonging to the world of Here and Now,[22]

The point is that in each case, there was no resolution of contradiction. It turns out to be but first negation and must undergo a second negation. Thus, though the Enlightenment "upsets household arrangements in the house of faith" and succeeded in "bringing in the goods and furnishings belonging to the world of Here and Now," "pure culture" could not negate the "universal inversion of reality and thought, their entire estrangement, the one from the other":

> What is found in this sphere is that neither the concrete realities, state-power and wealth, nor their determinate conceptions, good and bad, nor the consciousness of good and bad (the consciousness that is noble and the consciousness that is base) possess real truth; it is found that all these moments are inverted and transmuted in one into the other, and each is the opposite of itself.[23]

No heaven is reached at the end of the highway of all other stages of alienation. The needed revolutions[24] never end. As

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[22] Phenomenology, p. 512.

[23] Ibid., p. 541.

[24] No doubt Hegel would have objected to the word, revolution, but he himself, in the preface to the Phenomenology (p. 106) fears that his description that "the method is nothing else than the structure of the whole in its pure and essential form," when contrasted to his consideration that hitherto the question of philosophical method was dealt with in absolutely obsolescent forms, "may perhaps seem somewhat boastful or revolutionary..." He kept denying this. Yet, in the Encyclopaedia, he boasted that "thought deprived existing institutions of their force. Constitutions fell a victim to thought: religion was assailed by thought... Philosophers were accordingly banished or put to death, as revolutionists..." (Para. 19, Addition)

Hegel himself expresses it in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy:

> All revolutions, in the sciences no less than in general history, originate only in this, that the spirit of man, for the understanding and comprehension of himself, for the possessing of himself, has now altered his categories, uniting himself in a truer, deeper, more intrinsic relation with himself.(25)

The crux of the matter is that this movement through double negation characterizes the transcendence of each stage of alienation as well as the whole "Science of the Experience of Consciousness," not excluding the Absolute, though the goal has been reached and a new unity of opposites achieved. If there is finally to be "a release,"(26) a plunge into freedom, it can come only through the overcoming of internal opposition. Each new unity of opposites reveals that the opposition is within.

The overcoming of the opposition can only occur through action. Though the reference is only to the activity of thought, practice does here become pivotal. "Action," writes Hegel, "is the first inherent division of simple unity of the notion, and the return out of this division."(27) It would appear that this means action in thought only. Hegel, as the young Marx put it, "has separated thinking from Subject," from the human being who thinks, and by such "dehumanization" of ideas has created the

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(26) Phenomenology, p. 808.

(27) Ibid., p. 793.

illusion that the activities of knowledge can transcend the alienated world, whereas it can only be abolished by actions of real people. Nevertheless, even within Hegel's abstractions, one cannot help but feel the drive of existence — time and reality. Hegel considers them integral to "the last embodiment of spirit — Absolute Knowledge," and notes that science does not appear in time and in reality till spirit has arrived at this stage of consciousness regarding itself.

Hegel, it is true, remains in the realm of thought and idealizes time "as spirit's destiny and necessity." All the same, Time straightaway does things. Hegel himself tells us not to forget the sensuous feelings, just because we have reached Absolute Knowledge: "...nothing is known which does not fall within experience, or (as it is also expressed) which is not felt to be true..."(28)

No matter which way you look, it is the movement, the self-creating "Subject," which is the principle underlying the Absolute, thereby distinguishing it from "the empty Absolutes" of other philosophers. Over and over and over again, Hegel points out that:

> It is inherently the movement which is the process of knowledge — the transforming of that inherent nature into explicitness, of Substance into Subject, of the object of consciousness into the object of self-consciousness, i.e., into an object that is at the same time transcended — in other words, into the notion. This transforming process is a cycle...(29)

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(28) Ibid., p. 800.

(29) Ibid., p. 801.

It now turns out that this "transforming process" is nothing short of History: "The process of carrying forward this form of knowledge of itself is the task which spirit accomplishes as actual History."(30) So that all the shadowy phrases on the following page which seem to project philosophers from Descartes, Leibnitz, and Spinoza, to Kant, Fichte and Schelling, actually deal with specific historic periods. Nor can the serious reader fail to recall that his present attacks on "empty Intuition" were indicated as early as the Preface* (which was actually written after the work was completed). "The arbitrary caprice of prophetic utterance"(31) was not Hegel's concept of "the seriousness, the suffering, the patience and the labor of the negative."

In opposition to such "arbitrary caprice," Hegel thrusts us straight against a new negativity: "Knowledge is aware not only of itself but also of the negative of itself, or its limit. Knowing its limit means knowing how to sacrifice itself... This last form into which Spirit passes, Nature, is its living immediate process of development..."(32)

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(30) Ibid., p. 803.

*The reader should consult, along with the standard Baillie translation from which we quote here, the new translation of the Preface by Walter Kaufmann: Hegel, Reinterpretation, Texts and Commentary, Doubleday, N.Y., 1965, pp. 360-458.

(31) Ibid., p. 107.

(32) Ibid., p. 807.

This is certainly an upside-down way of presenting Nature. Some famous philosophers have analyzed this literally, as if Nature "came out" of Spirit. Wrong as they are, the truth of the statement is nothing so simple as standing Hegel right-side up. For one thing, Hegel quickly enough shows that the other aspect of Spirit is History. And today's commentators make no such gross errors in interpretation. The difficulty arises because Hegel seems here to shut the door on all reality as we reach the climatic last paragraph. Absolute Knowledge is said to have found

> ...its pathway in the recollection of spiritual forms [Geister] as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their spiritual kingdom... Both together, or History (intellectually) comprehended [begriffen], form at once the recollection and the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit, the reality, the truth, the certainty of its throne, without which it were lifeless, solitary and alone.(33)

In truth, as we see, we have reached not heaven, but the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit! Hegel tries softening the shock of reaching death at the very pinnacle, Absolute Knowledge. Theologians, among others, have of course not failed to call attention to the fact that Hegel was replacing Christian theology with his own philosophy. This view of Hegel is true and not true at the same time. Theology has been replaced by philosophy here; but

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(33) Phenomenology, p. 808.

Hegel, having spoken about a new form of the world spirit, having been "born anew from the womb of knowledge — the new stage of existence, a new world, and a new embodiment or mode of Spirit,"(34) has been referring to more than other "embodiments" of "World Spirits."

The whole chapter has been an outpouring of the "simple mediating activity in thinking"(35) which has led to this "release" of Spirit in History and Science, in Nature and Recollection, and in the birth of "a new world." This "new world," it is true, is nothing tangible.(36) It will continue as the pure conceptual thought-categories of The Science of Logic, for which the Phenomenology was the "Introduction." But this cannot obscure the fact that Absolute Knowledge was not, after all, the end. From the very start of the Phenomenology, in the Preface, Hegel stressed the uniqueness of his outlook: "In my views...everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well."(37)

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(34) Ibid., p. 806.

(35) Ibid.

(36) Not without interest for the American reader, however, is the attention Hegel was paying to a real new world. In his Studies on Marx and Hegel, page 47, Hyppolite quotes Hegel from the Dokumente zur Hegels Entwicklung: "The tax imposed by the English Parliament upon tea imported into America was minimal, but the belief of the Americans that by accepting the payment of that sum, however insignificant in itself, they would be yielding at the same time their precious right, made the American Revolution."

(37) Phenomenology, p. 80.

And now that we have reached the final chapter, he keeps reiterating over and over again, as we saw, about the "movement," the "transforming" of Substance into Subject. The "ultimate" turns out to be not the Absolute which has just suffered its Golgotha, but a new beginning, a new point of departure. In a word, Hegel is not standing stock-still just because he reached the Absolute and its negation, which will become the foundation for a new level of truth he will work out in The Science of Logic. The objective world and the self-thinking Idea have likewise not come to a stop. The movement is ceaseless.

Section B — The Science of Logic, or Attitudes to Objectivity

The self-determination in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak.
— Hegel

Philosophy is not an illusion; it is the algebra of history.
— Merleau-Ponty

Hegel's concept of philosophy as "the thought of its time" involved, at one and the same time, a separation from the "empty Absolutes" of his philosophic contemporaries, and a meeting of the challenge of the times in a way which would absorb past philosophies and yet be a historic continuity that was totally new, as new as the age of revolutions. Whether one feels that Hegelian philosophy is an impenetrable closed ontology, or the open road from which to view mankind's development as a totality, and its dialectic as "the algebra of history" or "of revolution," the point is that Hegel himself had not abandoned Reality when he entered the realm of "pure thought." Although, as against the more tangible struggles of consciousness and self-consciousness in the Phenomenology, Hegel, in The Science of Logic, deals with abstract philosophic categories, he nevertheless does not depart from the principle of freedom in which his entire philosophic system is grounded.

A single dialectic process upsurges from actuality and from

thought, allowing neither the "thing-in-itself" nor any empty Absolute to escape the test of this new dialectic. In place of any ladder to the Absolute, the structure of the Logic reveals itself and each of its realms as a circle, and each realm — Being, Essence, Notion— starts afresh with new categories, on new grounds. When we do reach the Absolute Idea, it too becomes a foundation for still other "Manifestations" — Nature, Mind. Moreover, Hegel from the start makes it clear that the acceptance of any category at face value is an "uninstructed and barberous procedure."(37)

The first question that Hegel poses is: "With What Must Science Begin?" Here we are in The Science of Logic, having already gone through the whole of the Phenomenology and reached Absolute Knowledge, only to have Hegel ask, "With What Must Science Begin?" We are told, further, that if we are looking for an immediate, bland something that has as yet not undergone any mediation, we should know "there is nothing in Heaven, Nature, Spirit, or anywhere else, which does not contain immediacy as well as mediacy."(38) The same theme will be repeated at the very end of the Doctrine of the Notion(39) — The Absolute Idea — when we are confronted all

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(37) The Science of Logic, Vol. I, p. 49.

(38) Ibid., p. 180.

(39) The word, Notion, rather than Concept, the more precise translation of Begriff, is being used here because that is the word used in the standard translations by Wallace and Baillie.

over again with the need for new beginnings! "There is neither in actuality nor in thought anything so simple and abstract as is commonly imagined. Such a simple entity is a mere illusion."(40)

Two movements emerge out of the Logic. Although a unique single dialectic process contains both Thought and Actuality, the reader is made also to confront — and that at once — a polemical movement. Thus, after three short paragraphs, two of which, Being and Nothing (on a single page!), perish into Becoming, there follow no less than twenty-two pages of "Observations." This neutral designation cannot hide the veritable "Bolshevik," uncompromising impatience with his contemporaries, whose abstractions Hegel likens to "the Indian...rehearsing his Om Om Om...had one name for all these concepts — Brahma. This torpid and vacuous consciousness, taken as consciousness, is Being."(41) Hegel's Doctrine of Being is, of course, a Doctrine of Becoming. Indeed, this is the red thread that runs through the whole of the Logic. To comprehend fully the movement of "pure thought," we must see why Hegel singled out Jacobi. He did so first in his Observations on Being, and then, more than a decade later, devoted the entire Third Attitude to Objectivity to Jacobi's Intuitionalism. Obviously, though in 1812 he had referred to Jacobi's views as "perhaps

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(40) Ibid., Vol. II, p. 471.

(41) Ibid., Vol. I, p. 109.

already forgotten,"[42] by 1827 he had decided that such an attitude to ...jectivity would always recur when, in the process of battling contradiction, the Subject becomes impatient with the seemingly endless stages of negation it must suffer through, and therefore, instead, slides backward into Intuition. Because nothing is more cogent for the impatient ones of our day than the Third Attitude to Objectivity, we will here turn to the Smaller Logic,[43] where Hegel created no less than three chapters devoted to "Attitudes of Thought Towards the Objective World."

The Third Attitude to Objectivity, far from signifying any sort of "synthesis," signals a dismemberment. There is a forward movement from the First Attitude, which covers all pre-Kantian thought -- simple faith, the old metaphysics, abstract understanding, scholasticism and dogmatism -- to the Second Attitude, devoted both to Empiricism and Kantianism. Instead of an uninterrupted forward movement from Empiricism and the Critical philosophy to the Hegelian Dialectic, Hegel traces a retrogression into Intuition, "the school of Jacobi which rejects all methods."[44] Nothing appears

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(42) Ibid., Vol. I, p. 107.
(43) What has often been referred to as the Smaller Logic, published in the United States as The Logic of Hegel, is the Logic as Hegel recast it as the first book of his Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences, Para. 1-244; Para. 245-376 constitute The Philosophy of Nature; and the Philosophy of Mind, Para. 377-577, completes the Encyclopaedia. Since 1970, all three are finally available in English, and since, both in English and other languages, references to the Encyclopaedia are most easily traced by citing paragraph numbers rather than pages, this will be done in referencesto any of the three books of the Encyclopaedia.
(44) Encyclopaedia, Para. 77.

more incomprehensible to Hegel than absence of method. So deep are the roots of Hegelean thought in the objective world that nothing so enrages him as intuition gone "wild." It is this, he maintains, which forced Jacobi to return to the "dogmatic metaphysic of the past from which we started." In that, its "reactionary Nature" (45) was disclosed.

This retrogressive step is seen in the fact that Jacobi has reduced "mediation to the immediative, the intuitive" with "its passwords, 'Either-Or'."(46) Hegel draws a sharp line between such reductionism and his own Doctrine of Essence which he considers wholly "a discussion of the intrinsically self-affirming unity of immediacy and mediation." The sensitive reader can hear Hegel's anger rising to a crescendo at the "one-sidedness" of the Intuitionalists whom he sees reducing Truth itself from something arising from the "nature of the content" to pure subjectivism:

> Since the criterion of truth is found, not in the character of the content, but in the fact of consciousness, all alleged truth has no other basis than subjective knowledge, and the assertion that we discover a certain fact in our consciousness, what we discover in our own consciousness is thus exaggerated into a fact of consciousness of all and even passed off for the very nature of the mind.(47)

In short, the trap that awaits all who fail to grapple with what transforms philosophy into a science, how it all emerged out of actuality — the historic process — is that of the transformation

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(45) Ibid., Para. 76.

(46) Ibid., Para. 66.

(47) Ibid., Para. 71.

of the personal consciousness "into a fact of consciousness of all and even passed off for the very nature of the mind."* As Hegel expressed it from the start, in the Observations following the first three paragraphs on Being, Nothing, Becoming: "What is first in science has had to show itself first too historically."(48)

In setting off his Absolutes from the "empty Absolutes" of his philosophic contemporaries, Hegel demonstrates that each realm — Being, Essence, Notion — has, so to speak, its own Absolute. This is what Sartre may or may not have meant when he said that what was original with Existentialists was that the War and the Occupation "made us rediscover the Absolute at the very heart of relativity itself."(49) Insofar as Hegel is concerned, the form of the Absolute that emerges in the Doctrine of Being was found to be relative, even as its categories — Quality, Quantity, Measure — were found wanting.

Conceptually, the Absolute that emerges in any specific realm is found to be "wanting." This is so, not merely because the Absolute, say in the Doctrine of Being, is of a rather lowly kind — Absolute Indifference — and, as such, does not "attain to Essence,"(50) though it is a transition to it. Even when we reach the ground of Essence, are done with Being and its quantitative

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(48) The Science of Logic, Vol. I, p. 101.

(49) Jean-Paul Sartre, What Is Literature?, Washington Square Press, N.Y., 1966, p. 148.

(50) The Science of Logic, Vol. I, p. 460.

* See Chapter V, "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung," where I try to show how this applied to our age.

13355

measurements, turn to such essentialities as Identity, Difference, Contradiction, Appearance, Existence, Actuality, the contradiction only becomes the sharper. The varying categories are not so much synthesized as gathered for a life-and-death struggle.

Now, whether one thinks of the categories in the Doctrine of Being as early stages of thought-development, or as early stages of development of freedom of mankind, or as separate stages of development within a given society, as, for example, Marx thought of the commodity under capitalism, these categories simply fall apart as one moves to a different stage of development, whether that be in history, philosophy or "economic" production relations. Thus, when Marx left the marketplace where "alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham"(51) (even as Hegel left the Doctrine of Being with its quantitative measurements), to enter the crucial labor process and there meet relation of labor and capital at the point of production, he had fully transcended the restricted Hegelian concept of labor.(52) He accused Hegel of limiting his own

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(51) Capital, Vol. I, p. 196.

(52) Nicholas Lobkowicz is about the only philosopher-theologian who, despite his antagonism to Marx, pinpoints what it was that Marx criticized in Hegel's analysis of labor: "In short, Marx does not accuse Hegel of having treated labor as if it were a thought activity. Rather he accuses him of having in the Phenomenology described human history in terms of the dialectic of consciousness, not in terms of the dialectic of labor. When he shows that the only labor which Hegel recognizes is abstract mental labor, he has in mind the structure of the Phenomenology and, in fact, of Hegel's whole philosophy, not the passages of labor in the Phenomenology and other writings of Hegel." (Theory and Practice, p. 322) Marx called it the "dehumanization of Ideas."

dialectic to the exterior (consciousness) rather than the interior form (man). But Marx did not end his greatest theoretical work with the analysis of the labor process, as Hegel had not ended his Logic with the Doctrine of Essence. What is exciting in that section is the form in which the Absolute makes its appearance.

The categories from the Doctrine of Being had broken down as it became necessary to move from the abstract sphere of Being to reflect essential reality. Hegel introduces new categories — Identity, Difference, Contradiction. To this day, philosophers have not "forgiven" Hegel for placing contradiction in the center of reality. Hegel would not budge. "Contradiction," he insisted, "is the root of all movement and life, and it is only insofar as it contains a Contradiction that anything moves and has impulse and activity."(53) As he continues on his separate way from the old metaphysics, moreover, it is clear that Essence is not merely something "behind" Appearance. From the very start of the Doctrine of Essence, Hegel establishes the reality even of Show, for Essence, too, must appear. We get to Essence only from the unity of Existence and Appearance. The truth is always concrete.

All contradictions, grounds, conditions develop, become more acute, as we reach Actuality, in which historic materialists see the totality of the crisis of capitalism. What Hegel does is have

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(53) The Science of Logic, Vol. II, p. 67.

the Absolute make its appearance directly in Actuality, at its very start. What seems even less understandable to adherents of "empty Absolutes" is that the Absolute fails to develop Actuality in a satisfactory manner. The contradiction between the Absolute and Actuality becomes explicit. It is true we are not facing Absolute as it will culminate in the Doctrine of Notion, the Absolute Idea. The self which does the transcending of opposites here has moved from the abstract principle of so doing (Leibnitz) to Absolute Substance (Spinoza).

> Determinateness is negation — this is the Absolute principle of Spinoza's philosophy, and this true and simple insight is the foundation of the absolute unity of Substance. But Spinoza does not pass on beyond negation as determinateness or quality to a recognition of it as absolute, that is, self-negating, negation... Therefore, Substance lacks the principle of personality... (54)

The fact that the polemical movement in the Logic here occurs in Actuality illuminates the objective drive as well as the historic conflict in a manner far beyond a conflict of categories. One needs to be almost oppressively aware of this polemical movement as a conflict of fact that is in the objective movement as well as thought. (55)

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(54) Ibid., p. 168.

(55) "Free, philosophic thought has this direct connection with practical freedom; that as the former supplies thought about the absolute, universal and real universality... On account of this general connection between political freedom and the freedom of thought, Philosophy only appears in History where and in as far as free institutions are formed." Lectures on the History of Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 95.

Dunayevskaya

As we shall see later when we consider Lenin's attitude to Hegelian philosophy, Lenin felt the more confident in erecting the Great Divide within the socialist movement, precisely because the parallels he drew between tendencies in the movement and changes in capitalism were both materialistically and philosophically grounded in the dialectic. The point here is that, whereas on the surface it would seem that once we reach the Doctrine of the Notion, we have come to the end of the polemical movement, this appearance is deceiving. It is true that, as against some thirty "Observations" in the Doctrine of Being and fourteen in the Doctrine of Essence, there are only two in the whole of the Doctrine of the Notion. It is not true that the polemical movement as philosophical "tendencies" have ground to a halt. On the contrary, the battle of ideas then becomes so integral to the whole presentation of the Absolute Idea that other philosophies, instead of being dealt with separately as if they were "side remarks," appear directly in the text. Through this contradiction, "the positive in the negative" — Hegelianism as against "Others" — comes to a head.

Ironically, academic philosophers, though they show a marked preference for history of thought as against actual history, have kept sky of the polemical nature of the attitudes to objectivity, as if Hegelian philosophy as a "summation" of all previous philosophy were a mere quantitative designation for Hegel's "encyclopedic mind." This is the same term used by Communists who never weary of attempting to separate the "scientific materialism" of

Marx from Hegel's "mystical idealism."(56)

Insofar as Hegel is concerned, the drive of the idea of freedom and the objective pull of history are inseparable: "When individuals and nations have once got in their heads the abstract concept of full-blown liberty, there is nothing like it in its uncontrollable strength, just because it is the very essence of mind, and that as its very actuality."(57) And it is this which literally breaks down the categories of the Doctrine of Essence at the stage where Actuality moves from the form of the Absolute as Substance to its form as Contingency, Necessity, Causality and Reciprocity, as we approach the Doctrine of the Notion that Hegel characterized as "the realm of Subjectivity or Freedom."(58)

Now that we are in the Doctrine of the Notion and meet its central categories of Universal, Particular and Individual, these powerfully illuminate what Hegel intimated in the Phenomenology,

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(56) For the role this played in the turbulent Germany of the early 1920's, see Karl Korsch's Marxism and Philosophy. (Ftn. 15 above)

(57) Philosophy of Mind, Para. 482.

(58) The Science of Logic, Vol. II, p. 205.

when Absolute Knowledge "announced" that these categories define the movement of the whole "system" — The Science of Logic as well as Phenomenology, The Philosophy of Nature as well as The Philosophy of Mind. The movement from abstract to concrete through particularization necessitates double negation. Hegel leaves no room for forgetfulness of this absolute creativity, the motive force that it is for the whole development, its awesome creative power. Very obviously we are approaching the turning point of the whole movement of the Notion — the second negativity which will finally transcend the opposition between Notion and Reality. To be prepared for this critical negation, Hegel writes:

> To hold fast the positive in its negative, and the content of the presupposition in the result, is the most important part of rational cognition; also only the simplest reflection is needed to furnish conviction of the absolute truth and necessity of this requirement, while with regard to the examples of proofs, the whole Logic consists of these.(59)

No simple "remembrance of things past," this. Recollection here must include what Herman Melville called "the shock of recognition."

The Doctrine of the Notion develops the categories of freedom, of subjectivity, of reason, the logic of a movement by which man makes himself free. Despite the fact that its universals are thought universals, they are concrete. Hegel keeps reiterating

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(59) The Science of Logic, Vol. II, p. 476.

that even when Notion realizes itself through "otherness," which turns out to be "its own Other"; even when "through the transcendence of this reality" it has "established absolute reality" so that the "result" is "truth"; in a word, even when the Subject has "comprehended" it all, even then it has been misunderstood. It has not been "properly comprehended by forms of judgment like 'the third term is immediacy and mediation,' or it is their unity, for it is not a quiescent third term, but, as this unity, is self-mediating movement and activity."(60)

The movement has not come to a halt. The dialectic is still at work. It cannot be otherwise: "The beginning was the universal; the result is the individual, the concrete and subject..." Nor is subjective any longer separate from objective; the negation of the negation "is the innermost and most objective movement of Life and Spirit."(61)

The Doctrine of the Notion expresses man's subjective determination, the need to master himself. What is being worked out in thought categories is the real history of humanity. Whether or not the Hegelian concept of self-relation is being "subverted" as revolution in Marx's "translation," the point is that to Hegel, too, it is a constant transformation of reality and of thought which prepares for a "new world." This is why from the outset of

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(60) The Science of Logic, Vol. II, p. 479.

(61) Ibid., p. 478.

the Doctrine of Notion we see Hegel constantly trying to set his dialectic apart from Kant's:

> It will always remain a matter of astonishment how the Kantian philosophy knew that relation of thought to sensuous existence, where it halted for a merely relative relation of bare appearance, and fully acknowledged and asserted a higher unity of the two in the Idea in general, and particularly, in the idea of an intuitive understanding: but yet stopped dead at this relative relation and at the assertion that the Notion is and remains utterly separated from reality; so that what is announced to be finite knowledge, and declared to be superfluous and improper figments of thought that which it recognized as truth, and of which it established the definite notion. (62)

For the next 250 pages Hegel keeps developing from the spot where Kant "stopped dead" by putting an impenetrable "thing-in-itself" between thought and experience. The Great Divide between Kant and Hegel is reached in the final chapter which is both quintessence and summation of the whole work. Not only is the Idea "Absolute," so is Method. To any to whom it appeared that the dialectic of practice and dialectic of thought continue on their separate paths, the very first sentence of that final chapter states: "The Absolute Idea has now turned out to be the identity of the Theoretical and the Practical Idea; each of these by itself is one-sided..."(63) Neither can pass beyond the contradiction. Not only that. Anyone who was looking for the end of all contradictions once we reached the Absolute Idea better look elsewhere, for at this point the reader is confronted with a real

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(62) Ibid., p. 226.

(63) The Science of Logic, Vol. II, p. 466.

shocker. Hegel unequivocally states that "the Absolute Idea contains the highest opposition within itself."

It is true he will, in the same paragraph, also tell us that the "Absolute Idea alone is Being, imperishable Life, self-knowing truth, and the whole of truth." But, far from stopping there, it is there he first turns to self-determination which is both method and Idea: "The self-determination, therefore in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak."(64)

Our contemporaries are, of course, more concerned with the self-determination of nations than of the Idea, but the goal, Freedom, and "the path of self-construction" by which to achieve it, are not so far removed from the self-determination of the Idea, Freedom, as may appear at first sight. In any case, what Hegel is driving at is that, having been witness to the overcoming of the opposition between content and form in thought, the only thing that still remains to be done is to consider "the universal element of its form — the method."

The development of what the dialectic method is is as far removed from the mechanical triplicities of thesis, antithesis, synthesis (which never were Hegel's formulation) as earth is from heaven. And it is the earthy character of liberation which is

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(64) Ibid., p. 467.

the very bones and sinews of Hegel's universals. Though they are enclosed in thought, these universals are concrete, full of life and development. Not a single unification, whether of subject and object, or theory and practice, or concept and reality, is merely subjectivist and external, not even the critiques of other philosophies whose "truth" he has absorbed. They actually give us an insight into the movement of history itself. Hegel, moreover, is not excluding his Absolutes from the need to be subjected to this dialectic of development. "The method therefore is both soul and substance, and nothing is either conceived or known in its truth except insofar as it is completely subject to the method; it is the peculiar method of each individual fact because its activity is the Notion."(65)

Though to a historian of philosophy, thought is the "real," the impulse to negate what is before him, if it is not the drive to transform reality itself, it is the preparation for such transformation. When Hegel jammed Synthetic Cognition against the Analytic, he wrote: "This equally synthetic and analytic moment of the Judgment by which the original universal determines itself out of itself to be its own Other, may rightly be called the dialectic moment."(66)

The dialectic does not of course "throw out" the Analytic,

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(65) Ibid., p. 468.

(66) Ibid., p. 473.

nor "abolish" definitions which go with synthetic cognition. It does relate the concept of facts to the facts themselves, the universal to the particular. The "defective" element resided in the fact that before the "absolute method" engaged in battle, those opposites sort of peacefully co-existed. Instead of allowing the negation of the negation to transcend the opposition, they were lying alongside each other, or, as Hegel expressed it, they came "before consciousness without being in contact."(67) Now that "the dialectic moment" has arrived, the movement will be ceaseless.

Whereas up to now Notion, though the climax of the three books of The Science of Logic, was only the first section of this third book, now, Notion is everything and its movement is "the universal and absolute activity, the self-determining and self-realizing movement."(68) As opposed to the method of inquiring, analytic cognition, where it was a mere "tool" in "true," that is to say dialectic, cognition, there is here no distinction between means and end. There is no other way to reach the goal, except through the means. Once again there is a need for new beginnings. Now that we have reached a concrete totality, the key concept of Hegel's philosophic system: "as concrete, it is internally differentiated..."(69) This is the type of differentiation that serious

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(67) Ibid., p. 477.

(68) Ibid., p. 468.

(69) Ibid., p. 472.

revolutionaries of our day are confronted with in Stalinism's transformation of a workers' state into its opposite, a state-capitalist society. The confrontation with the counter-revolution within the revolution demands new beginnings greater than any Hegel searched for philosophically. This is what makes Hegel a contemporary.

The concrete Universal manifests itself as absolute activity, activity without restriction, either external or internal; for the method is the form of the Absolute Idea, self-movement as method. It allows no opposites merely to co-exist peacefully, or, to use Hegel's words, to come "before consciousness without being in contact," "but engages all in battle."

The movement of the Absolute Idea, as of the Logic in general, has been from the recognition of oppositions and the refusal to stop in sight of them as if they were "fixed" to seeing them as transitions "in and for themselves"; from awareness of just how objectively grounded the universals are to the realization that the Absolute Idea too will undergo self-determination. To put it differently, the movement from abstract to concrete is an awareness that the beginning is not merely the empirically "given," that the immediate is itself a mediated result, and that the further developments then lead to the concept of the concrete as concrete totality, the new concrete which contains self-differentiation.

No wonder that the revolutionary materialist Lenin, as he watched both the self-determination of the Irish and the self-determination of the Idea, exclaimed that the chapter on the Absolute Idea was the "most materialistic." It was Lenin's simultaneously objective-subjective preparation for outright revolution.

13367