

NOTES ON George Armstrong Kelly's HEGEL'S RETREAT FROM ELEUSIS
(Princeton Univ. Press, 1978)

(Since these notes are related mainly to Kelly's reference to the final chapter, 8, "Hegel in the 'Present Standpoint'" pp. 224-249 except that I wish to call attention to the following in chapter 1. on "Politics and Philosophy".)

p.9 "Hegel's is a 'philosophy of the concept' -- that is, it is a symbiosis of method, result, and self-developing particularity, entelechy of thought coming to grips with its constituent objects and processes. A correspondence is asserted between the method and the world's actuality."

p.9 "Hegel's philosophy is quite literally the 'history of philosophy' whose outlines are conditioned by the intellectual aculturation called 'phenomenology' and by the institutional acquisitions of 'objective' (that is, collective) spirit."

GAK here quotes Hegel's History of Philosophy, vol. I, p. 381

"We must not regard the ~~history~~ as dealing with the past, even though it is history."

p. 224 "If Hegel has not literally been to the barricades of strife-ridden cities, or explosive rural foci, he has been in the thick of current ideological combat."

On p. 232, GAK begins the references to the current writings by D'Hondt, Lucaks, Arendt, Aveniri. Regarding world history and the principle of "reconciliation, in a culture enabled by politics and through a politics justified by philosophical insight," GAK concludes :

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"It is not history that stops when this evidence is in hand and accepted, so much as the fear of the dark experienced in the caverns of human time. Tragedy or comedy? Tragedy, surely, in the sense that history is a record of slaughter and not much happiness. Comedy, perhaps, divine and human, if our reason assures us that spirits's purposes are served after their labyrinthine unfolding. Some irony, too: spirit makes its history, our history, by the use of unwitting human foils; and even the beautiful and best (such as Periclean Athens) runs against its intentions (the expansion of freedom). Epic, finally; especially the home-coming of Odysseus and the sober experience of Aeneas that sacrifice of one's person is the inevitable lot of the political architect. Or, as Hegel wrote about Napoleon: "It is an immense spectacle to see a mighty genius destroy himself."

p. 238: "...where the activity is incessantly involved with a fatiguing immediacy of choice, dialectics is a capacious way of explaining successions of acts whose logic is not straightforward..." (rd: work this out re activities of the mid 1960s)

On that same page begin the references to me, thus: "an arresting chapter of a new book by the unorthodox revolutionary Marxist, ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Raya Dunayevskaya, is entitled "Why Hegel? Why Now?" GAK then quotes the following pages in P&R -- p. 6, p. 257, p. 7, p. 286, as well as ...

p. 239: [For the complex linkage of culture, politics and philosophy within the matrix of the 'Absolute Idea' Madame D. proposes an unchained dialectic which she baptizes 'Absolute Method', a method that 'becomes irresistible...because our hunger for theory arises from the totality of the present global crisis...'] He then quotes p. 7 and p. 286 from P&R, saying, "According to Madame D.. '... ' "It remained then, only for Marx to demonstrate that action itself, surpassing thought, must be called to reconstruct society and 'realize' philosophy. However, Hegel felt ~~XXXX~~ his philosophy to be supremely valid precisely because it preserved and clarified culture in the memory, (not because it had ~~XXX~~ supplanted it.) Hegel told us not so

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much what we lack as what we have so tortuously acquired..."
(At this point GAK quotes a letter of Hegel's written Oct. 20, 1808 in which Hegel wrote ~~to~~ to Niethammer: "Every day I am more convinced that theoretical work brings more to pass in the world than practical work. Once the realm of thought is revolutionized, reality ~~can~~ can scarcely hold out.")

When he then quotes me from p. 287 about Marxist-Humanism, GAK says that he can "discern her strategic position in the intramural Marxist debate, that we find her judgement of the links between philosophy, history, politics, and culture alien to Hegel's intent."

Having called factionalism "intramural debate" he makes a reference to the fact that even though there has been a claim of the fact that Marx "revised" his strategy of proletarian revolution it is clear that Marxism has become deterministic. (rd -- write him about the EN and the Vera Zasulitch letter).

On p. 241, he once again quotes me from p. 287 about counter-revolution within the revolution, and then proceeds to taking up D'Hondt and Arnold J. Mayer, ending with "To say that their own contradictions betray them is not to dishonor their effort."
(p. 242)

He returns in the final para. to still one more reference to 'Absolute Method': "And thus aspects of an Hegelian melancholy very different in thrust from the unceasing bustle of the dialectic's ~~IX~~ 'absolute method' have helped to inspire ideas of a history ..."
(This quote followed a quote from Hegel "There is ~~less~~ less chill in the peace with the world that knowledge supplies." Whereupon GAK has to admit that that "may seem like cold comfort to anyone aspiring to stoke up the furnace of history.")