

**NEWS & LETTERS, February-March 2006**

**Philosophic Dialogue**

## **Dunayevskaya's POWER OF NEGATIVITY: a critique**

Editor's note: The following review of Raya Dunayevskaya's *THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY: SELECTED WRITINGS ON THE DIALECTIC IN HEGEL AND MARX* (edited and Introduced by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson, Lexington Books, 2002) by Chris Arthur appeared last year in the journal *STUDIES IN MARXISM*. We publish Arthur's review along with a response by Kevin B. Anderson. The next issue of N&L will contain Arthur's response to Anderson and Anderson's rejoinder.

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by Chris Arthur, author of *THE NEW DIALECTIC AND MARX'S Capital*

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987) was an original Marxist thinker and activist. She once served as Trotsky's secretary; but, together with C. L. R. James, she broke with mainstream Trotskyism, and developed a theory of state-capitalism supposed to comprehend Roosevelt, Hitler, and Stalin. She and James took up the study of Hegel's *LOGIC*, following in the footsteps of Lenin in 1915. Having broken also with James, from the mid-'50s she developed her own self-styled "Marxist-Humanism." She was one of the first to study Marx's 1844 *MANUSCRIPTS*, and Lenin's philosophical notebooks. Indeed she had to translate both for herself since English language versions were still lacking.

The first fruit of this work was her pathbreaking *MARXISM AND FREEDOM* (1958). Digging still deeper into Hegel, she wrote *PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION* (1973), and many other books and articles. The volume before us, *THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY*, is a selection from her numerous letters, notebooks, and articles, on the dialectic in Hegel and Marx, written in her inimitable lapel-grabbing style. It should be said straightaway that this is not for the beginner. But for those already acquainted with Raya Dunayevskaya through one or more of her works, it provides fascinating background on the development of her thought.

The editors contribute a lucid introduction. However, they begin with the claim that the current return to Marx is characterised by "relative silence on Hegel and the dialectic." This is simply not true. Besides the book by Moishe Postone, which they do mention, there is a burgeoning "new dialectic" (as I once termed it in a review), marked by an interest in Hegel's logic as the key to the "systematic dialectic" required to come to grips with Marx's *CAPITAL*. For example the following Marxists have all in various ways appropriated the dialectic: R. Albritton; C. J. Arthur; J. Banaji; R. Bhaskar; M. Eldred; I. Fraser; I. Hunt; M. Lebowitz; J. McCarney; P. Murray; S. Sayers; B. Ollman; M. Postone; O. Reuten; T. Sekine; A. Shamsavari; F. C. Shortall; T. Smith; H. Williams; L. Wilde; M. Williams.

In Dunayevskaya's own time she had few interlocutors outside her own small circle; but this book includes letters to Marcuse, Fromm, G. A. Kelly, and others. Indeed Marcuse posed sharply the question which Dunayevskaya's appropriation of Hegel raises: why, he asked, did she need Hegel's Absolute Idea? Why translate Marxism into Hegelian idiom when she could speak the original language? (p. 104).

In the end I do not think she had an answer to that. This is because she fails to think through Hegel's problematic in its own terms, and systematically relate it to Marx's. Instead she uses Hegel externally, persistently picking up some figure, or mere phrase, ripping it out of context, and incorporating it within her own agenda (which largely concerns such questions as revolutionary agency, organization, and the new society--or "what happens the day after?"). Often this serves well enough to make a telling point, but not essentially.

A typical example is her drawing on Hegel's move from the Absolute Idea to the Realphilosophie in order to speak about the advent of socialism. The two topics have nothing whatsoever to do with each other. What might have been relevant to the meaning of revolution would be a study of Hegel's philosophy of history and his claim the modern state embodies the Idea of Freedom. Another example is the slogan (wielded liberally) she picked up from Lenin's notes on Hegel's LOGIC, viz "subjectivity = freedom" (Lenin, COLLECTED WORKS, Vol. 38, p. 164). In the context of a transition in the LOGIC this makes some sort of sense because it is the freedom of thought that is at issue there, and especially the ability of thought to be self-reflexive. But does this mean freedom as such is subjectivity?

Friendly commentators on Hegel deny he says that, citing the social philosophy which locates freedom in objective spirit. Unfriendly ones charge Hegel precisely with interiorizing all objectivity. Certainly Marx in 1844 and 1845 considers Hegel's great mistake to have been developing subjectivity one-sidedly to the extent of conflating "objectivity" and "estrangement."

Dunayevskaya's position reminds me of Bruno Bauer. Indeed, more generally Dunayevskaya provides a "Young Hegelian" reading of Hegel as the philosopher of absolute negativity; moreover, as a post-Marx Marxist she provides also a Young Hegelian Marxism in which philosophy and revolution are equal partners. It is significant that the only major work of Marx's that she does not cite is THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY.

Although Dunayevskaya tries to be scholarly within the constraints of the materials available to her, she occasionally makes bizarre mistakes.

a) A simple case is that of Marx's 1861-63 manuscript, in which he decided to bring forward the treatment of rent, consigned in the six-book plan given in the Preface of the 1859 CONTRIBUTION, to a place following CAPITAL. Dunayevskaya inexcusably says that at this date Marx took the topic out of Vol. I of CAPITAL and held it back to

Vol. III! (p. 130) It was never, ever, to be in Vol. I, where land was always to be "set at zero." Equally inexcusably the editors endorse this error (p. 135 note 7).

b) A more complicated case is that of Hegel's major triad (Logic/Nature/Spirit) discussed in three "syllogisms" at the end of his ECYCLOPAEDIA (paragraphs 575, 576, 577). Dunayevskaya makes a big thing about her claim that these were not in the original edition of the ECYCLOPAEDIA, and first appeared in the 1830 edition just before Hegel died in 1831 (see pp. 178, 195, 205, 330; plus an editorial endorsement p. 13 note 18; cf. also PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION, p. 39). But--alas-- these syllogisms were in the original edition of 1817! (paragraphs 475, 476, 477). They were unaccountably omitted in the (much larger) 1827 edition, where Hegel greatly expanded paragraph 574 (§474 in 1817) and then threw in a passage from Aristotle to conclude. In the 1830 edition the paragraphs come back in (§575-77) prior to the Aristotle quotation. (All three editions are now available in the GESAMMELTE WERKE.)

It is the double appearance of these paragraphs that explains variation in citations from paragraph 575 of the sentence "Nature, standing between the Mind and its essence, sunders itself/them...." "Them" descends from the first edition (trennt sie) and "itself" (trennt sich) from the third. According to Dunayevskaya (p. 330), A. V. Miller wrote her saying he should have corrected Wallace's translation from "itself" to "them"; but it is not clear if he knew Wallace's source was the third edition, and, if he did, why he preferred the first here (although modern editors generally do).

c) Finally a sin of omission. Dunayevskaya does her utmost, encouraged, by Lenin's views, to see Hegel "stretching out a hand to materialism" in so far as Nature is included in his system. But when speaking excitedly about "Hegel's Absolutes" she is silent on the fact that Hegel's dialectics culminate with Absolute Idea, and with Absolute Spirit, but where the PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE is concerned it culminates--not with an Absolute, but--with death! Hardly an equal partner with the other spheres! Yet anyone writing such a philosophy of Nature today would surely recognize, not merely the need for the universal-field equation, but the universal at work in the ecological system, and prefer to "the selfish gene" the "Gaia hypothesis" of James Lovelock, as the self-sustaining Absolute.

To conclude: Dunayevskaya is right to draw from Hegel the thought of "the power of negativity," just as she is right to read in Marx "the revolution in permanence." But what she lacks is a theoretical structure; all we get is the sticking together of discrepant elements. Sympathetic as I am to the project of illuminating Marx through a study of Hegel, Dunayevskaya's work is an instance of how not to do it.

**NEWS & LETTERS, February-March 2006**

## **Philosophy and revolution as equal partners: Response to Arthur's critique of Dunayevskaya**

by Kevin Anderson

Co-editor of Dunayevskaya's *THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY* and author of *LENIN, HEGEL AND WESTERN MARXISM*

Chris Arthur, a well-known British Marxist economist, begins his review of Dunayevskaya's *THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY* with a brief appreciation of Dunayevskaya as "an original Marxist thinker and activist," who wrote in an "inimitable lapel-grabbing style." More substantively, Arthur notes that she "was one of the first to study Marx's 1844 Manuscripts" and also terms her *MARXISM AND FREEDOM* (1958) a "pathbreaking" book. Additionally, he terms the introduction by editors Peter Hudis and me "lucid." When Arthur gets down to specifics, however, he becomes almost dismissive, after which he sums up his view of the book as follows: "Sympathetic as I am to the project of illuminating Marx through a study of Hegel, Dunayevskaya's work is an instance of how not to do it." I think this conclusion is totally unwarranted.

Arthur's most important criticisms of Dunayevskaya center on Hegel's absolutes, which Arthur rejects as any basis for Marxism. He identifies with Herbert Marcuse's early objection, in his correspondence with Dunayevskaya: why do we need the absolute idea to get at the subjectivity of self-liberation?

Of course, Arthur's own position is almost as far removed from that of Marcuse as it is from Dunayevskaya's, as is seen in his characterization of Dunayevskaya's position as a "'Young Hegelian' reading of Hegel as the philosopher of absolute negativity," referring also to her "Young Hegelian Marxism in which philosophy and revolution are equal partners." (For example, I doubt Arthur would agree with Marcuse that "Marx derives all that is essential to his view of dialectics from Hegel"--see his "Dialectics," in *MARXISM, COMMUNISM, AND WESTERN SOCIETY*, 1972, p. 416).

In dismissing the notion of absolute negativity, Arthur conveniently ignores Hegel's actual statements about absolute negativity, presumably counting on the contemporary reader's general aversion to any form of absolute. In fact, as we point out in our introduction to *THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY*, Hegel introduces the concept of absolute negativity in the *SCIENCE OF LOGIC* by calling second negation, or the negation of the negation--which he contrasts to "first negation" or "negation in general"--nothing less than "absolute negativity."

On the one hand, he calls such an absolute negativity "concrete." On the other hand, Hegel attacks negation in general or first negation as "only abstract negativity," because it lacks the positive content afforded by some form of determinacy (*SCIENCE OF LOGIC*, Miller trans., p. 116). Surely it would have been harder to dismiss "absolute negativity" as a vestige of a Young Hegelian sort of idealism were Arthur to have acknowledged that it is the source of a core category in Marxist dialectics, negation of the negation or second negativity. Thus, on absolute negativity or negation of the negation, Arthur disagrees with Marx as much as with Dunayevskaya.

In bringing in Dunayevskaya's exchange with Marcuse, Arthur is also suggesting something more specific--that contra Dunayevskaya, Hegel's absolutes are irrelevant to Marxist dialectics.

In her discussion of Hegel's absolutes, beginning with her 1953 Letters (published in THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY), Dunayevskaya uses the closing paragraphs of Hegel's major works on the absolute, especially those in THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND, the final volume of his ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES (1817-30)--often referred to as Hegel's "system"--to carve out a new concept of dialectic.

In her interpretation, Hegel's system did not end in closure, in the end of history, as Engels maintained, but in a process of self-movement and becoming, as seen particularly in the last sentence of the last paragraph (§575) of the last (1830) edition of the ENCYCLOPEDIA, where the topic is "self-knowing reason": "The eternal Idea, in full fruition of its essence, eternally sets itself to work, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute Mind" (PHILOSOPHY OF MIND, p. 315).

In probing the "final syllogisms" in paragraphs 575, 576, and 577, Dunayevskaya elaborated a concept of absolute negativity as new beginning, one in which a variety of liberatory forces--rank-and-file workers, Blacks, women, and youth--were reaching for philosophy by activities so creative that they challenged not only the structure of the system, but also its thought, especially the type of technocratic rationality that dominated postwar capitalism. (She had in mind events like the 1953 Berlin workers' uprising, as well as mass strikes by miners against automation and the Montgomery bus boycott in the U.S.)

The creativity of these liberatory forces needed to be met by an equal creativity in philosophy, one that would base itself on new readings of Hegel and Marx in light of the times. In those 1953 Letters, Dunayevskaya argues that the concretization of Hegel's final syllogisms for the social world would mean nothing less than, "We have entered the new society" (THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY, p. 30).

Admittedly, "the eternal idea" enjoying itself "as absolute mind" seems at first glance to be miles away from any form of Marxist materialism and it is not surprising that Arthur, who opposes the notion of "philosophy and revolution" as "equal partners," would strongly oppose this kind of appropriation of Hegel.

Although no other Marxist philosophers centered their entire dialectical perspective on Hegel's absolutes, Dunayevskaya is not the only prominent Marxist or Hegel scholar to have seen the discussion of absolute mind at the end of Hegel's system as having important implications for today. In his EROS AND CIVILIZATION (1955), Marcuse intones, "Hegel's presentation of his system in his ENCYCLOPEDIA ends on the word 'enjoys'" (p. 116). It is also important to underline that Hegel did not add the sentence in question until the third and last edition of the ENCYCLOPEDIA, in 1830. Several academic Hegel scholars have also taken up the final paragraphs of Hegel's system, in order to attack the notion that Hegel is ultimately a philosopher of closure and totality, as so many have charged.

For example, T. Geraets holds that this "eternal idea" acts "eternally, that is to say without ever putting an end to history." Further, as Geraets notes, "the changes [Hegel] brought into the 1830 edition are the most important" concerning the final syllogism in §575 ("Les trois lectures philosophiques de l'Encyclopédie," HEGEL-STUDIEN 10, 1975, pp. 254, 250). More recently, John Burbidge argues: "Whereas in 1817 [the three final syllogisms]

summarize what has gone before, in 1830 they offer the pattern of further developments" ("Hegel's Absolutes," OWL OF MINERVA 29:1, 1997, p. 32).

Arthur not only dismisses Dunayevskaya's pre-occupation with Hegel's absolute, but he also tries to argue that Dunayevskaya is an unreliable commentator on Hegel by examining what she says about the final syllogisms in the three editions of the ENCYCLOPEDIA--1817, 1824, and 1830. Specifically, he argues that Dunayevskaya was factually incorrect when she stated that Hegel had added these three syllogisms only in the last edition of that work, published in 1830, in a kind of culmination of his life's thought (see THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY, pp. 178, 195, 205, and 330).

In fact, although his claim is partially true, I do not believe that it seriously undercuts Dunayevskaya's interpretation of the three final syllogisms.

As Arthur points out, we can easily check these facts today through the three editions of the PHILOSOPHY OF MIND, each conveniently republished since 1989 in volumes 13 (for the 1817 edition), 19 (1827 edition), and 20 (1830 edition) of Hegel's GESAMMELTE WERKE. As against Dunayevskaya, Arthur writes that the three syllogisms appear first in the 1817 edition, are dropped in the 1827 one, and then "come back" in the 1830 edition. This is the main evidence for his charge that Dunayevskaya "occasionally makes bizarre mistakes" in her reading of Hegel and Marx. Unfortunately, the rigorous Arthur himself gets a bit confused as he winds his way through the various editions of Hegel PHILOSOPHY OF MIND in German. While it is true that some of the language of the three final syllogisms is already there in 1817, some of it is not, as attested to not only by Dunayevskaya, but also the Hegel scholars Geraets and Burbidge cited above.

In particular, the crucial sentence about the "eternal idea" engendering and enjoying itself as absolute mind is not included in the 1817 edition. It is introduced for the first time in 1830, as Dunayevskaya stresses correctly, and Arthur fails to notice. Therefore, as far as this crucial sentence is concerned, Arthur is wrong and Dunayevskaya is correct. (However, Dunayevskaya could have expressed herself more precisely on the changes from 1817 to 1830, and we certainly should have done so in our editorial notes, something we will correct in the next printing.)

Arthur also criticizes Dunayevskaya for suggesting that in the early 1860s, Marx moved the discussion of landed property to a later part of his "economics," from Vol. I of CAPITAL to what became Vol. III, while in fact this material was "brought forward." In other words, it was to come sooner (not later) than in the plan for "six books" on "capital, landed property, wage-labour; the State, foreign trade, world market" mentioned in the preface to THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY of 1859 (MECW 29, p. 261).

Again, while there is some technical imprecision here (both in Dunayevskaya and our notes), the main point for Dunayevskaya, which I do not think Arthur would contest, is that Marx left the discussion of landed property--as well as many debates with Ricardo and other theorists found in the CRITIQUE--out of Vol. I of CAPITAL in order to concentrate there on the capital-labor relation. As Dunayevskaya argued in her MARXISM AND FREEDOM (1958), in Vol. I Marx, "instead of keeping up a running argument with theorists," as had Hegel in the SCIENCE OF LOGIC, "relegated the history of theory to the end." In this way, she wrote, he "created a new dialectic instead of applying one," thus moving beyond the applied Hegelian structure of THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY of 1859 (p. 91).

As to Arthur's point on ecology and nature, I am not very familiar with the literature he cites, but I would mention that one of today's most important Marxist ecologists, Joel Kovel, has a very different appreciation of Dunayevskaya's work, as seen in his introduction to the 2000 reprint of *MARXISM AND FREEDOM*.

Arthur also criticizes our introduction for its claim that there is a paucity of discussion of Hegel and dialectics today, even amid a revival of interest in Marx's critique of capital. I think our claim can be easily upheld by contrasting our period with that of the 1960s and 1970s. In the earlier period, dialectical thinkers like Marcuse, Sartre, Gramsci, Fanon, and Lukács--all of them indebted to Hegel--dominated philosophical debate on the Left. Today, anti-Hegelian and anti-dialectical thinkers dominate that philosophical debate, as seen most prominently in the writings of Hardt and Negri, or the varieties of structuralism and post-structuralism in academia.

In particular, Arthur chides us for failing to mention the debate over "systematic dialectic" in which he has participated. We did not mention it because: 1) Its impact on the larger debates mentioned above has been fairly limited, something I am certainly not happy about. 2) This kind of systematic dialectic is somewhat removed from Dunayevskaya's work, not only in its assumptions, but also in the issues it addresses. I am sorry if Arthur felt slighted, especially since I have great respect for some of his scholarly work on Marx, especially in his edited volume, *ENGELS TODAY: A CENTENARY APPRAISAL* (1996).

In closing, I want to underline my disagreement with Arthur's rejection of a "Marxism in which philosophy and revolution are equal partners."

First, this would mean rejecting some of the best in Marx. Think of his magnificent 1843 statement, "The head of this emancipation is philosophy, its heart is the proletariat. Philosophy cannot be actualized without the abolition [aufhebung] of the proletariat; the proletariat cannot be abolished without the actualization of philosophy" ("Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in *MARX'S EARLY POLITICAL WRITINGS*, ed. O'Malley, p. 70).

Second, one can read Arthur's "philosophy and revolution as equal partners" against the grain. In critiquing Dunayevskaya, Arthur has created a felicitous phrase that describes, I believe, what we really need today as well: a radical reading of Marx that places philosophy at the center, one that would help us to move beyond the present impasse of the movements against global capital and imperialism.

To take one example, a Marxism grounded in Dunayevskaya's revolutionary humanist perspectives could help us to critique not only global capitalism and the American imperial agenda, but also those tendencies in today's anti-war movement that are willing to ally themselves with any forces--even if misogynist, heterosexist, or fundamentalist--as long as they oppose U.S. imperialism.

## NEWS & LETTERS, April-May 2006

### Further debate on Dunayevskaya, Hegel and dialectics

Editor's note: In the last issue of News & Letters, we published a review of Raya Dunayevskaya's THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY by Marx scholar Chris Arthur, as well as a response by Kevin Anderson, one of the editors of the book. Below we continue the debate with a response by Arthur and a rejoinder by Anderson.

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I do not at all discount the notion of absolute negativity. I am with the old Engels who counterposed Hegel's method, rooted in the absolute negativity of reason, a dialectic which is in essence critical and revolutionary, to Hegel's "system."

The problem with the notion of absolute negativity is its abstract character. It reduces all real movement to a purely logical category, complains Marx (MARX-ENGELS COLLECTED WORKS, Vol. 3, p. 343; MECW 6, p. 164). It is fine as a slogan against static closed metaphysics. But it cannot substitute for analysis (MECW 6, p. 163). This is a problem when the explanatory value of relating such abstract categories to reality comes in. As Marx said in 1843, Hegel does not provide the logic of the body politic but merely bodily trappings for logical categories (MECW 3, p. 16). So I am uneasy when Dunayevskaya finds all social struggles express the self-same "absolute negativity".

Moreover I disagree with Dunayevskaya in her attempt to recuperate for Marxism the "Absolutes" of Hegel's system. I am glad that Anderson acknowledges she was wrong to say the syllogisms linking Idea, Nature and Spirit first appeared in 1830. However, he is right to point out that the very last sentence first appeared then. But I fail to see the connection of this sentence with any "new beginning." This sentence says that everything that has happened, is happening and will ever happen is just Absolute Spirit playing with itself, a sentiment he already expressed in the Preface to the PHENOMENOLOGY. The problem here is that this "mystical subject-object" (MECW 3, p. 342; MECW 4, p. 167) internalizes every relation and transition. "Hegel replaces the real connection between man and nature by an absolute subject-object which is at one and the same time the whole of nature and the whole of humanity, the Absolute Spirit" (MECW 4, p. 167). As Marx complained in 1844, this Absolute has no objective relations, hence it is a mere thought (MECW 3, p. 337). Thus there is a deep connection between Hegel's monological ontology and his idealism.

In conclusion, my own appropriation of Hegel's Absolute is exactly opposite to that of Dunayevskaya. If capital becomes absolute, it excludes new beginnings by definition. The question arises whether and where there is a pure self-referring movement not requiring mediation in something outside itself? There are two cases: 1) the logic, in which thought deals with thoughts; 2) the form of value, generated through a practical abstraction from the natural bodily form of wealth, and gaining self-movement through the circuit of capital; but although having the inner drive to become absolute capital cannot produce its "others," labor power and nature. Hence "new beginnings" require the liberation of productive activity, and Nature, from their subsumption under the totalizing logic of capital.

--Chris Arthur, author of THE NEW DIALECTIC AND MARX'S CAPITAL

Are we really to go back to Engels's LUDWIG FEUERBACH AND THE END OF CLASSICAL GERMAN PHILOSOPHY of 1886 as ground for today? There, as is well known, Engels made the (in)famous distinction--not to be found in Marx--between Hegel's "method" and his "system." This ultimately untenable distinction has plagued Marxists ever since, especially when coupled with Engels's assertion, in the same paragraph, that Hegel's "absolute idea" put forward a notion of "the end of history" (MECW 26, pp. 360-61). In this way, Engels anticipated not the creative dialectical investigations of Lenin (after 1914), Lukács, Lefebvre, Marcuse, and Dunayevskaya during the 20th century, but the banal utterances of Fukuyama, who (mis)appropriated the work of the great revolutionary philosopher, Hegel, for his own neo-liberal ends. Another problem with Engels on dialectics is the notion that all of philosophy can be divided into two "great camps," that of "idealism" (conservative) and that of "materialism" (progressive). In this scheme, Socrates and Plato, the founders of the dialectic, are conservative, and the crude materialists Machiavelli and Hobbes progressive.

As to Marx's rejection of Hegel's absolutes, Arthur quotes most selectively.

For example, he does not mention Marx's formulation, "the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation," this in the discussion in CAPITAL, Vol. I of rising unemployment as an outgrowth of capital accumulation (Fowkes trans., p. 798, *emph. added*). Nor does he mention Lenin's view that at the end of the Absolute Idea chapter of the LOGIC, Hegel "stretches a hand to materialism" (COLLECTED WORKS, Vol. 38, p. 234). (Space does not permit a discussion of Dunayevskaya's attempt to go beyond Lenin on this point.)

I am glad that Arthur acknowledges that in criticizing Dunayevskaya's "errors," he misread the German original concerning the final syllogisms of Hegel's PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (1817-30). This was the last volume of Hegel's "system," THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES. Arthur now concedes that Hegel's final sentence, wherein the idea "engenders and enjoys itself as absolute mind," was added only in 1830, as Dunayevskaya maintained. But Arthur still fails to see how this sentence could be connected to new beginnings for human emancipation. Of course, if we adhere to the Engelsian framework, Hegel must be doing something reactionary here, since this is the end of his "system." No matter that Marcuse (1955) and Dunayevskaya (1953) thought otherwise, and used this passage to work out an emancipatory dialectic in anticipation of the 1960s.

Be that as it may, Arthur needs above all to consider this. Marx's core dialectical category, "negation of the negation," the one that he singles out in both the 1844 Essays and Capital, is but another way of saying "absolute negativity." For as Hegel writes in the SCIENCE OF LOGIC: "But in all this care must be taken to distinguish between the first negation as negation in general, and the second negation, the negation of the negation: the latter is concrete, absolute negativity, just as the former on the contrary is only abstract negativity" (Miller trans. pp. 115-6). If this passage is an expression of Hegel's "method," as against his "system," then why does it include the absolute at its very core?

Arthur now seems to regard his differences with Dunayevskaya as ones over interpretation, rather than her supposedly error-ridden Hegel scholarship. Nonetheless, it is too bad that Arthur, who has written some fine critiques of Engels on CAPITAL, would still attach himself to Engels on dialectics.

--Kevin Anderson, co-editor of THE POWER OF NEGATIVITY and author of LENIN, HEGEL, AND WESTERN