

Notes for draft Intro. to ebook edition of  
*Philosophy and Revolution*

It is a privilege for *News and Letters Committees* and the *Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund* to present this first ebook edition of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution – from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*. A half-century ago, as Dunayevskaya was completing the original edition of *Philosophy and Revolution*, the world looked quite different than today. The two nuclear-armed superpowers, Russia and the United States, were contending for global domination, with China beginning to emerge as a contender. The heady days of the late 1960s revolts and near revolutions were still fresh in the world's consciousness.

Yet to Dunayevskaya it seemed clear that the rebellions of the late 1960s would not soon return, and that even that high point of revolt by itself would not be sufficient. The incompleteness of the near revolutions was not a question of a lack of daring in action from below, but centered on a theoretical insufficiency, indeed a philosophical void, as to what would be necessary in working out revolutionary dialectical thought and thus action, to fully uproot capitalist class society with all its racist and sexist manifestations. The challenge not alone of negating capitalism, but a negation of the negation, the posing of the positive emerging from the negative, needed to be grasped and concretized. Revolutionary social transformation had a dual rhyme: the destruction of the old and the creation of the new. To leave it only as simple negation signified incomplete revolution that could be transformed into its opposite.

It was this reality of the post-1968 world that compelled Dunayevskaya to structure her new work toward a comprehensive examination of the needed movement from theory rooted in dialectical philosophy to meet ongoing emancipatory movements from practice. Hence, Part I of her work was titled and focused on "Why Hegel? Why Now?" with three chapters on the dialectic of Hegel's Absolute Negativity, on Marx's recreation of dialectic thought in actuality of ongoing revolution, and on Lenin's philosophic preparation for the Russian Revolution via Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

Part II, "Alternatives" to that foundation, focused on a critical analysis of the theoretical contributions of Sartre, Trotsky and Mao. Only then would Dunayevskaya return to the crucial importance of the movement from practice in examining the African Revolutions, the East European Revolts, and the movement from below of Black revolt, of women, of youth and workers in the United States. Thus, the centrality of theoretical/philosophic labors of the revolutionary dialectic became the focal point of *Philosophy and Revolution*.

The world of the 2020s is of course different in terms of superpower alignment. Capitalism's contradictions are if anything even graver, threatening humanity's very existence (pandemics and climate chaos). The revolts throughout the world both continue and are different, but remain deep and revolutionary. At the same time, there is a crucial,

disturbing, parallel to the period Dunayevskaya wrote in: the profoundly disturbing, theoretical-philosophic void, when it comes to emancipatory dialectical philosophic thought, remains as stark as ever.

We would argue that *Philosophy and Revolution* can speak to this present moment and assist us in posing for our time the hugely difficult, yet urgently needed task of filling the philosophic void. This is not a question of repeating what a Hegel or a Marx or a Lenin or a Dunayevskaya wrote. It is the immensely more difficult challenge and task of, at one and the same time, internalizing their philosophic labors as a point of departure, while creating that revolutionary dialectical methodology anew for our time and place.

What *Philosophy and Revolution* can do is assist us in creating that liberatory thought joined with the movement from practice to forge revolutionary new human beginnings. It is with that hope that we present this new edition of Dunayevskaya's philosophic-revolutionary labors.

*August, 2021*

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