

# On Philosophic Battles of Ideas, Past and Present

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Black offers a dialectical critique of Alfred Sohn-Rethel's materialist interpretation of ancient Greek philosophy, which has influenced a number of current and recent Marxist philosophers, among them Adorno, Postone, and Arthur. Another problem is how some on the left have been uncritical of Islamism, while others like Dawkins have put forth a "new atheism." A more dialectical view of religion is presented, rooted in Marx, Hegel, and the last writings of Dunayevskaya on the dialectics of organization and philosophy. —

Editors

## **Introduction**

There are very few on the Left who share the Marxist-Humanist view on the inseparability of philosophy from revolutionary politics. Post-Marx marxism's one-sided hostility towards philosophy was historically warranted by Engels' notorious statement (in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*) about Marx's philosophy: "That which survives independently of all earlier philosophies is the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics. Everything else is subsumed in the positive science of nature and history." In this report I dispute that Engelsian claim, which pervades all sorts of discussions we need to jump into, not only the ones I take up.[\[1\]](#)

## **1 – The "Roots" of "Materialism"**

The work of Alfred Sohn-Rethel, recently the subject of a conference in London (June 2010), has had considerable influence within post-Marx Marxism, especially on the work of Theodore Adorno, Moishe Postone, Slavoj Zizek and the "Value-Form" school, whose best-known English representative is Chris Arthur. Sohn-Rethel had the youthful insight

just after the German Revolution of 1918 that “in the innermost core of commodity structure there was to be found the [Kantian] ‘transcendental subject’.” Whereas in Kant’s theorisation of Galilean science the objective origin of categorical thought is an unknowable thing-in-itself, for Sohn-Rethel the basis of all abstract thought is located in the social nexus of exchange.

In England in 1935 Sohn-Rethel found a co-thinker in George Thomson. Sohn-Rethel took on board Thompson’s argument that “civilised thought has been dominated from the earliest times down to the present day by what Marx called the fetishism of commodities, that is, the false consciousness generated by the social relations of commodity production.” Such a misreading and misuse of Marx’s theory, it must be said at the outset, was compounded by attempts by Sohn-Rethel (and subsequently others) to build on it.[\[2\]](#)

Thomson sought to locate the source of philosophical abstraction in the monetary exchange of Greek Antiquity. Thomson saw that the spread of gold coinage in Greek Antiquity was followed by the emergence for the first time in history of a cosmology of pure abstractions (the One, the Many, etc), which we find in the philosophies of Parmenides and Heraclitus. Money, in its material existence as silver and gold coins served as the abstract equivalent of heterogeneous goods, and as the medium of social synthesis of a new society based on the “cash nexus.” This development gave the vital stimulus for the emergence of formal systems of thought such as logic. Following Thomson, Sohn-Rethel in *Intellectual and Manual Labour: a Critique of Epistemology* argues that *all* concepts in the history of philosophy have “one common and all-pervasive mark: the norm of timeless universal logic,” and need to be understood “historically” as “objectively deceptive.” [\[3\]](#)

As well as George Thomson, Sohn-Rethel was heavily influenced by Thomson’s Communist Party colleague, Benjamin Farrington. In *Science and Antiquity* (1936) Farrington writes about a “secular” scientific movement beginning in the sixth century B.C.E. among the Greeks (starting with Thales, then Anaximander, then Epicurus) which “offered a general explanation of nature without invoking the aid of any power outside nature.” Farrington asserts that the atomistic philosophy of Epicurus was scientifically true, potentially useful for material progress, and philanthropic as a popular philosophy. Farrington even claims that “the kind of things that Anaximander was saying in his book *On Nature* were the same kind of things that an up-to-date writer puts forward to-day in a scientific handbook of the universe,” and that Anaximander drew his conclusions about the universe from observation and reflection.

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These claims were challenged at the outset by the leading British classicist of his time, Frances Macdonald Cornford (1873-1943), in a forgotten essay entitled ‘The Marxist View of Ancient Philosophy’. Cornford comments: “What sort of observation could have taught Anaximander that the earth is a cylindrical drum, three times as broad as it is high; or that the fixed stars, the moon, and the sun, in that order, are respectively distant from the earth by 9, 18, and 27 times the diameter of the earth?” Cornford goes on to attack Farrington’s view of “materialism” as “frowned upon by the ruling class a subversive”:

“I venture to say that no spectator, listening to Prometheus’ recital of the arts bestowed on man to alleviate his miserable condition, could possibly have associated those arts with the atomic theory or with any Ionian system... Prometheus is called by Mr Thomson ‘the patron saint of the proletariat’, and the proletariat of antiquity were, he tells us, the slave population. But it was not an audience of slaves, or of workers or peasants, that met in the house of the wealthy Callias to hear the great sophists, Protagoras, Hippias, and Prodicus.”

Farrington argues that “primitive materialism” was the emancipatory ideology of the “little people” in the struggle against the idealism of Plato, who wished to deny them access to truth and “poison their minds with outworn superstitions.” Thomson claims that following the Peloponnesian War, Athenian thought was divided between those supporting the city-state (who were rich, such as Plato) and those prepared to see it fall (who were not rich, and were inclined towards “materialism”). Cornford comments, “The implication that the abolition of the city-state would have entailed the abolition of social inequalities, including slavery, is hard to justify in the light of history.” Cornford thus challenges arguments of Farrington and Thomson, which informed Sohn-Rethel’s thesis on the metaphysics of money and exchange value, as based on the unjustified presupposition that primitive “materialism” was an ideological weapon of ancient class struggle, in which “idealism” emerged as the ideology of reaction and class oppression.[\[4\]](#)

According to Richard Seaford, in *Money and the Greek Mind* (2004), exchange-value is only one of a series of factors making for the Greeks’ metaphysical representations of reality. The abstraction involved in both money and philosophy is also related to a number of innovations actualized in the “Greek Miracle”: democracy, tragedy and comedy, the popular religions, relations of production and private life, etc. In short Seaford puts forward, in my view, a very compelling argument that money can be understood as the diremption and subsumption of the communal principle of distribution in religious feasting and animal sacrifice. This principle actualised an accumulation in religious sanctuaries of valuable metal artifacts invested with “sacred” value, which were smelted, coined and vested with the “communal confidence” of the *polis*. This suggests that

philosophy might be understood as “abstraction” of the social developments and class struggle which brought about the “real abstraction” of monetized exchange in the first place, and which persisted in new forms.

Theodore Adorno, similarly to Sohn-Rethel, sees the philosophical Subject as constituted in conformity with the abstraction that reflects the separation of mental and manual labour. Like Sohn-Rethel, Adorno over-emphasises exchange-value as the “social a priori” and tends to ignore the distinction Marx makes between labour in the concrete and the abstract. More recently Moishe Postone and Anselm Jappe have extended the “real-abstraction” in what Sohn-Rethel calls the “practical solipsism” of the exchange-act to labour-abstraction, in such a way as to see the subject not as the alienated labourer, but as *capital*. For Postone, Hegel’s concept of the absolute subject resembles the concept of capital as self-moving, self-grounding substance, and expresses the logic of capital as self-expanding value. [5] Chris Arthur also sees Hegel’s Logic as expressive of the “Logic of Capital”, except that Arthur thinks labour only becomes abstract in exchange, and that labour itself does not produce value. Arthur argues for extending Sohn-Rethel’s “critique of epistemology” from Kant to Hegel. Arthur puts the question: “cannot we employ the Marxian insight into the relation of social being and social consciousness in a critique of Hegel’s dialectic?” Here Arthur refers to the claims by Thomson about the relation of money to the development of philosophy, and refers to what Sohn-Rethel says in regard to Galilean science and the Kantian a priori underpinning the transcendental synthesis of the “cash nexus.” “Strangely,” says Arthur,

“Sohn-Rethel did not take me next step, which is to grasp the self-differentiating, self-developing, and self-synthesising Absolute of Hegel as the ideological expression of the rule of capital. There is more than a Weberian ‘elective affinity’ between the self-movement of thought in the Logic and M-C-M’ [in Marx’s *Capital*]. The great difficulty capital has in passing from the sphere of frictionless circulation, where it is at home with itself, to production, where it has to grapple with its ‘other’, where it gets bogged down in the finitude of rusting machinery and striking labourers – all this is paralleled in the difficulty Hegel has in giving an account of how the logical forms go over to the real world.”[6]

Arthur thus extends Sohn-Rethel’s positing of an affinity between the Kantian transcendental synthesis and the commodity to an affinity between the circulation of money and the movement of the categories in Hegel’s Logic, which culminate in the self-synthesising Absolute as an ideological projection of the rule of capital in its pure monetary form. But this argument for a homology between the money form and

philosophic universalism reduces the commodity form to the money form, and prioritises circulation over production. It also blocks the view that certain kinds of “philosophic idealism” point more toward socialism than the expression of capitalism.

The main issue for us is not whether or not “philosophy” first emerged in response to the emergence of the money-form, but what certain tendencies within Marxism make of the claim that it did. For one thing we have to recognize that the massive amount of historical and scholarly knowledge about antiquity that has accumulated in the last fifty years makes it difficult as yet to make any authoritative claims about the matter one way or the other. Secondly, even if it were true that philosophy first emerged in response to the money form, that wouldn’t necessarily justify the negative value judgments we have seen about the role of philosophy. A phenomenon can outgrow its origins. And as Adorno argued, metaphysical categories express the nature of the social system, and in their changes are precipitated the central experiences of socio-historical development.<sup>[7]</sup>

### 2 – The Limits of Secularism

The British philosopher Gillian Rose in her last work, *Mourning Becomes the Law* (1996), describes a post-modern world in which “philosophic ‘truth’ or ‘reason’... are charged with legitimizing forms of domination which have destroyed or dispossessed their ‘others’ in the name of universal interest.” Homologous with the onset of the attack on the welfare state and bureaucratic “socialism” in the 1990s there emerges a sort of anti-statism in the forms of libertarianism and communitarianism – which, while opposites, are not absolute opposites. Because the libertarian argument presupposes “formal rationality,” and because communitarianism presupposes “traditional authority,” both are types of “legitimising domination as authority.” The consumerist “rights” of libertarians presuppose the inequalities of capitalist society and the reinforcement of police coercion. Communitarian “empowerment” politics legitimises the “potential tyranny of the local or particular community,” in which it is “the abused who become the abusers.”<sup>[8]</sup>

In the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we can now see how this has played out on the Left. The Anti-War movement in Britain led to the strange communitarian popular front of Leftists and Islamists in a new political party named “Respect” which got George Galloway elected as MP. Another wing of the Left, concerned with rights of women and gays, and the intrusion of religious factions into education and the policy-making bodies of civil society, takes its ideology (“formal rationality”) from the “New Atheism”, best represented by Richard Dawkins, about whom Terry Eagleton says, “Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the *Book of British Birds*, and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology.”<sup>[9]</sup>

Hegel, as I will point out, was opposed to both the mysticism of religious reactionaries and the rationalism of enlightenment liberals. In the 21st Century these two forces, which we are invited to (and sometimes ordered to) bow down before, all too often assume military forms: Crusades and Jihads for the reactionary religionists, and “humanitarian (imperialist) intervention” for the liberal secularists. In the case of the latter the right-wing stances taken on some issues by “New Atheists” such as John Gray and Christopher Hitchens should give the “secular left” pause for thought at the very least.[\[10\]](#)

The credibility of “secularism” as a truly “progressive” force is questioned by Roland Boer, in the article for *Hobgoblin*, entitled ‘Marx and the Christian Logic of the Secular State’. Boer identifies a “turn” by the young Marx and Engels away from what was essentially the Kantian “secular state” position.

“If we grant Marx’s point that the secular state arose as an attempted resolution of the tensions within the Christian state of the nineteenth century, then it follows that secularism cannot escape religion, since religion is the reason the secular state exists at all. In other words, religion and secularism are two sides of the one coin. Look at one side and it says, ‘church and state, forever separate’; flip it over and you read, ‘church and state, never to part’ “

In his conclusion he says:

“Perhaps the way forward is to recognise that secularism is not necessarily progressive and that religion is not a default reactionary position. Would it not be wiser to seek the progressive dimension of both so that the concerns of this age and this world might be addressed? Is it not possible that a politics of alliance might develop between progressive elements within various religions and secular movements? Perhaps a ‘new secularism’ is in order in which this politics of alliance takes place.”[\[11\]](#)

Certainly the “new secularism” Boer calls for would be an improvement on the actually-existing secularism we have now. On the “other “ side, the “progressive” wing of Christianity, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams has alluded to Marx’s theory of commodity fetishism, while giving it a biblical spin:

“Marx long ago observed the way in which unbridled capitalism became a kind of mythology, ascribing reality, power and agency to things that had no life in themselves; he was right about that, if about little else. And ascribing independent reality to what you have in fact made yourself is a perfect definition of what the Jewish and Christian Scriptures call idolatry.”[\[12\]](#)

But the real *human* emancipation that might make the issue less divisive (if not irrelevant) would mean going beyond the parameters of bourgeois civil society and the limits of political emancipation to challenging the material basis of commodified value production, and uprooting it. To take the issue further we might consider a very good question posed in 1994 by Gillian Rose (a philosopher greatly admired by Rowan Williams). As against the willful ignorance of post modernism regarding its own historical and political pre-suppositions, she called for posing anew the question raised by Marx which Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* sought to avoid at all costs: "How do we stand in relation to the Hegelian dialectic?"[\[13\]](#)

### 3 – The Power of Abstraction

Some post-Marx marxists, such as the late Cyril Smith, whom we had a substantial dialogue with, have invoked Marx himself against philosophy, especially Marx's 1844 critique of Hegel, in which Marx accused Hegel of the making the philosopher the "yardstick" of the alienated world.[\[14\]](#) This is worth examining in detail. Merleau-Ponty, as quoted in Raya Dunayevskaya's letter to her auto-worker comrade Charles Denby of 10 March 1960, is praised for his attack on the so-called "scientific objectivity" of the Second International and his highlighting of Marx's conception of totality as the "human factor" in the struggle against the fragmentation of the personality in the capitalist workplace. As regards the "yardstick," Merleau-Ponty says that if the philosopher "abandons the illusion of contemplating the totality of fulfilled history and feels himself, like other men, caught in it, and before a future to *build*, then philosophy realizes itself and vanishes as separate philosophy." Merleau-Ponty says that classical philosophy, in taking up the "human object" was "carrying to its concrete consequences the Hegelian concept of 'spirit phenomenon'."[\[15\]](#)

This theme of the "concrete consequences" of "abstract" philosophy is taken up again by Dunayevskaya 25 years later (8 Dec 1986) in a dialogue with the academic philosopher, George Armstrong Kelly.[\[16\]](#) Dunayevskaya writes, "Ideas 'think', not sequentially, but consequentially, related to other Ideas that emerge out of historic ground, and do not care where all this might lead to, including transformation into opposite." Such consequences of ideas are discussed in her letter to Marcuse (27 Oct 1964). Dunayevskaya writes:

"The finest attack on organizational vanguardism I have read anywhere is Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion*, in his attacks on the church – and what a totalitarian monolithic party medieval Catholicism was! Whoever it was who said that he who turns his back on history is doomed to relive it must have our age in mind."[\[17\]](#)

Hegel's thinking on the history on the Christian religion presupposes the separation of law and custom in the Roman Empire, which allows Roman law to distinguish between those who have the right to own property (defined as "persons") and those who have no rights at all (defined as "things"). The "religion of the state," as Gillian Rose puts it, "actively represents the gods to the people in way which enables it to impose its own ends on them." In Rome, as the contradiction develops between the formal freedom of property law for the few and the "spiritual" freedom of all, the Christian religion inherits from the Romans the "infinite value" of the free person. Christian inwardness and subjectivity acquires a "soul" only by rejection of the Romans' institutional corruption. But because of this rejection, the early Christians downgrade all public ethical life, even family ties, in favour of the duties of discipleship. Hegel says that Jesus, because of his "passivity under the domination of an alien might which was despised" could "find freedom only in his heart, only in the void." The precept to give to Caesar what is Caesars' and to God what is God's, ignores the question of what belongs to Caesar and what to God. As Rose points out, failure to answer this question leads to imperialism: "the encroachment of Caesar on God, or God on Caesar. Each will be corrupted... and only capable of suppressing":

"The history of the Christian religion is the history of its relation to secular power and to ethical life, and this history is the perversion of the Christian ideal of freedom, Christianity perpetuated the lack of freedom of Roman institutions, and the even greater bondage of feudal property forms and political institutions."[\[18\]](#)

Hegel regarded the Reformation in Germany as having overthrown the "terrible discipline of culture" in the Christian world and having made the "principle of free spirit" the "banner of the world." Hegel knew that this had been more a subjective than objective development. Whilst Hegel saw the French Revolution as representing a more "objective spirit" than the German Reformation, he thought that the French had made a revolution without a much needed reformation. [\[19\]](#)

Dunayevskaya in her lecture in Japan of 2 Jan 1966 discusses the French Revolution and the problem of how the person self-identifies with the faction or the state, and how neither Reason nor Spirit kills off the alienation. Hegel's writing on "discipline of culture" in the *Phenomenology* is the "foundation of Marx's criticism of the super-structure." Culture, having waged a life-and-death struggle against religious "superstition," now "has imprisoned us by what Marx calls the fetishism of commodities." She then repeats the point she made to Marcuse about the *Philosophy of Religion* as the greatest attack we have ever seen on the "so-called vanguard party." On the church Dunayevskaya interprets Hegel as saying that "as against only a few being free who were great enough to be

philosophers, Jesus insisted that man as man is free. But this one little church, the Catholic Church, said they were the only interpreters and would not let us have a direct contact with God.” Hegel may be a Lutheran protestant correcting the excesses of Catholic dogma and Jacobin terror, “and yet Hegel comes down and says that is not it – I have to go to philosophy.” The point is that “Spirit is still alienated” and imprisoned by the fetishism of commodities, and that “Religion has been perverted and [so] man, not the church must decide as what will finally evolve. It brings us to the final stage of Absolute Knowledge [in the *Phenomenology*].”[20]

In ‘The Power of Abstraction’ (August 1985) Dunayevskaya says that Hegel’s “Self-thinking idea” (or “thought-thinking-itself”) “does not – I repeat, does not – mean you thinking.” She goes on to say that the abstraction allows us to see what the Logic does to the concrete Idea.[21] In her letter to George Armstrong Kelly, Dunayevskaya says of the “Third Attitude to Objectivity” in Hegel’s *Smaller Logic*, “What excited me most about this attitude to objectivity is the manner in which Hegel brings in organization.” And, referring to the Catholic church, she says:

“As we see, Hegel now has suddenly equated organization to principle, doctrine: ‘And secondly, the Christian faith is a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine; while the scope of the philosophic faith is so utterly indefinite, that, while it has room for faith of the Christian, it equally admits belief in the divinity of the Dalai Lama, the ox, or the monkey’.”[22]

Hegel’s statement that, “Philosophy of course tolerates no mere assertions or conceits, and checks the free play of argumentative see-saw” (para 77) is linked here to “organizational responsibility.” It would be wrong however to crudely amalgamate “proof” and “copious body of objective truth” solely in regard to some organizational form whose “rules” might supply the determinant for what is to be “proven.” Hegel, whose “organizational” concerns were never so narrow, saw the intuitionist challenge to the Enlightenment as “reactionary” and as playing into the hands of pietist fundamentalists who feared philosophy as stirring up a hornet’s nest of pantheism and atheism. The “proof” does not reside in the “organization” of the church or in Kantian conclusions drawn out of barbarously-assumed categories, but in philosophy’s organisation of thought as **totality**.

This becomes clearer in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Religion*. There Hegel says that philosophy “seems to be opposed to the church” because, as in “culture” and Kantian reflection, it refuses to be bound to the “form of representation” found in revealed religion. Hegel recognises the historical and logical necessity of that form of representation, and he takes a swipe at the Enlightenment for its “indifference towards the content... [and the] mere

opinion [and] despair involved in its renunciation of the truth.” The closing pages of both the *Phenomenology* and *Philosophy of Religion* deal with Hegel’s spiritual (Christian) “community.” In the *Philosophy of Religion* Hegel, writing about the doctrine of the revealed religion as “appearance in particularization,” says that, as the element of *representation*, this form must be *universally* accessible (through the medium of the church). But here in the “locale” of biblical and church history its representation is the world of the *past*. It cannot and must not rule over the present. In the world of the present the inwardisation is a “spiritual now,” which at the same time is the negation of immediacy; and the grasping of its consummation “as a future.” In the representation and particularization of life lived through the church (and church history), spiritual being is only implicit; it lacks the inwardising “return from appearance” to “absolute singularity of presence to self” through the *Concept*, i.e. the thinking reason of the free spirit, returning into the “inner place” of *the community and its organization*.

Like Aristotle’s “practical intelligence” the community imitates the higher realms of thinking and the “good”; and for Hegel the community can only raise itself from the earth towards heaven because in the world it has “heaven within itself.” Hegel doesn’t put philosophy above religion, but he does, in no uncertain terms, put philosophy above mere faith. After the kingdom of “naïve religion” and the Enlightenment comes “the third estate,” the “*community of philosophy*.”[\[23\]](#) And the “*proof*” is, as Hegel says in the *Smaller Logic* (para 75), “to show that in point of fact there is a knowledge which advances neither by unmixed immediacy nor unmixed mediation, we can point to the example of the *Logic* and the whole of philosophy.”

In Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, the Doctrine of the Concept (or Notion) transforms Kantian practical reason; it is no longer a formal law but the “idea of the good” (which “simply is,” having developed from “Life” and the material world).[\[24\]](#) In Kant and Fichte the idea of the true and the idea of the good both, by themselves, present and suppress actuality. The idea of the true is empty without the content of the world and the idea of the good is certain of itself as actuality but denies the actuality of the world. In Hegel the idea of the good posits the realization of substantial freedom, although Hegel knows that freedom cannot be realized by thinking abstract concepts. As Rose puts it: ‘The unity of being (theory, nature) and essence (practice, concept) yields the overall unity by continuing to recognise the lack of unity and without justifying or stating the unity.’[\[25\]](#)

Nevertheless, Hegel says of the treatment of the external world by the Practical Idea’s as “intrinsically worthless.”:

“When external actuality is altered by the activity of the objective notion and its determination therewith sublated, by that very fact the merely phenomenal reality, the external determinability and worthlessness, are removed from that actuality...” (para 1778)

In Hegel’s words a few paragraphs earlier:

“The Idea of the realised good is, it is true, an absolute postulate, but it is no more than a postulate, that is, the absolute afflicted with the determinateness of subjectivity. There are still two worlds in opposition, one a realm of subjectivity in the pure regions of transparent thought, the other a realm of objectivity in the element of an externally manifold actuality that is an undisclosed realm of darkness. The complete elaboration of the unresolved contradiction between that absolute end and the limitation of this actuality that insuperably opposes it, has been considered in detail in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.” (para 1769)

Dunayevskaya, referring (13 June 1987) to the final paragraphs of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, says that “because History to Hegel was contingency, he had to add ‘intellectual comprehended’ ... to show that he is talking about History not as contingency but **Notion-ally (i.e. as concept)**.”<sup>[26]</sup> In her text of 1 June 1987 on the ‘Dialectic of Organisation and Philosophy’ Dunayevskaya reflects on Marx’s *Critique of the Gotha Program* as a manifestation of how the “self-development of the idea” has “concretized itself.” She says that the French edition of *Capital* “has philosophy spelled out in the most concrete terms from fetishism of commodities to the new passions and new forces that go against the accumulation of capital. And [Marx] has the experience now of both political parties and forms of organization emerging spontaneously from the masses, *plus philosophy*.”<sup>[27]</sup>

### Conclusion

Dunayevskaya has left us a rich legacy in her copious body of work for renewing Marxist-Humanism after the various organizational failures that have occurred since her death in 1987, leaving a void on the dialectics of organization and philosophy and a failure to address the question of “what happens after the revolution.” Hopefully we have left behind the intellectual sloth of interpreting the text in reference only to the text itself, the repeating of conclusions, and the unhistorical fetishising of organisational form. But we have to prove it by doing the work. As I said at the outset, my contribution has been limited to a few issues and engagements with a few thinkers and schools of thought. Other comrades will have other interests and other battles to fight – and not just in the realm of

ideas. This is not about doing one's own thing; it's about the single-mindedness that comes from collective organizational discipline combined with a critical openness to all of the subjective and objective developments in the world.

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[1] This presentation owes much to discussions with members and friends of the Hobgoblin Collective. Our determination not to confine our efforts to “academic” concerns was given tremendous impetus by our comrade Ian MacDonald who died in November 2009. Ian, with his militant work as a public sector trade unionist, was our right arm as regards class politics, which for him was informed by the in-depth discussions he fully participated in.

[2] George Thomson quoted by Sohn-Rethel in ‘The Historical Materialist Theory of Knowledge’, *Marxism Today*, March 1965. For a critique of this position see David Black, “‘Reification a Myth’ Shock (or What Gillian Rose Tells Us About Sohn-Rethel, Adorno and Ancient Greece)’ [[http://www.thehobgoblin.co.uk/2010\\_gillian\\_rose\\_sohn-rethel.htm](http://www.thehobgoblin.co.uk/2010_gillian_rose_sohn-rethel.htm)]

[3] Alfred Sohn-Rethel in *Intellectual and Manual Labour: a Critique of Epistemology* (London 1978) p203

[4] FM Cornford, *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays* (Cambridge 1950) pp120-26

[5] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labour and Social Domination* (New York and Cambridge 1993)

[6] CJ Arthur, Review of H Williams, *Hegel. Heraclitus and Marx's Dialectic*; G Reuten and M Williams, *Value-Form and the State*; and T Smith, *The Logic of Marx's Capital*, *HSGB Bulletin* 23/24

[7] Theodore Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (London 1974) p148

[8] Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, (Cambridge 1996) pp 2-5

[9] Terry Eagleton, ‘Lunging, Flailing, Mispunching’, *London Review of Books* 10 Oct 2006

[10] See Stephen Harper's critique of Gray's book, *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* [[http://www.thehobgoblin.co.uk/2008\\_15\\_Gray.htm](http://www.thehobgoblin.co.uk/2008_15_Gray.htm)]

[11] Roland Boer, ‘Marx and the Christian Logic of the Secular State’ [[http://www.thehobgoblin.co.uk/2010\\_Roland\\_Boer.htm](http://www.thehobgoblin.co.uk/2010_Roland_Boer.htm)]

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[12] Rowan Williams, 'Face It: Marx was partly right about capitalism', *The Spectator*, 24 Sept 2008 [<http://www.spectator.co.uk/essays/all/2172131/face-it-marx-was-partly-right-about-capitalism.thtml>]

[13] Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (London 1981) p70

[14] Cyril Smith, 'Critical comments on Raya Dunayevskaya's Notes on the Smaller Logic'  
[<http://www.thehobgoblin.co.uk/journal/H5cyrilsmithonrd.html>]

[15] Raya Dunayevskaya, *Power of Negativity* (Lanham 2002) p111

[16] Ibid. pp 331-33

[17] Ibid. pp 133

[18] Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (London 1980) pp116-17

[19] Ibid. pp117-18

[20] Dunayevskaya, op cit. p141

[21] Ibid. pp309-14

[22] Ibid. 332

[23] Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, Section in part 3 on 'Christianity as the Consummate Religion', trans P C Hodgson in *GWF Hegel: Theologian of the Spirit* (Nashville 1993)

[24] Dunayevskaya, op cit. pp70-71

[25] Rose, op cit. p186

[26] Dunayevskaya, 'Talking to Myself' Dunayevskaya Collection 10923-41 Emphasis mine.

[27] Dunayevskaya, *Power of Negativity*, pp1-11

Source: <http://www.usmarxisthumanists.org/articles/copy-on-philosophic-battles-of-ideas-past-and-present/>