

RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

EVANSTON, IL 60202

For Humanism and Marxism session of the Midwest Sociological Society,  
co-sponsored by the Association of Humanist Sociologists, Prof. Kevin  
Anderson, Organizer and President, April 17, 1987.

It is an important first for the Midwest Sociological Society to create  
time for discussion of Marx's Humanism as articulated in the post-World War II  
world, and it would have delighted me to have been physically present. Though  
it's impossible for me to be present, I do consider it important enough to have  
Marxist-Humanism articulated, and therefore I ask you to please read my discussant  
comments.

The emergence of theoretical ideas which Marx called "a New Humanism"  
when he first broke with the Left Hegelians, which was followed by his break  
with capitalism, was indeed the discovery of a new continent of thought and of  
revolution. The Russian attack on this at first appeared in their major  
theoretical organ, Pod Znamenem Marxizma (no. 7-8, 1943) but was shrouded  
as if it were a question, not of Marxism, but only of the way Marx's greatest  
theoretical work, Capital, was being taught to the youth.<sup>1</sup> When I translated  
"The Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union" for the American Economic Review<sup>2</sup>  
I commented that this was the first time that Stalin had laid hands on Marx's  
greatest theoretical work, Capital, totally revising Marx's analysis of the  
dominant law; the law of value and surplus value as if it was something applicable

<sup>1</sup>"The Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union" was first published in  
Pod Znamenem Marxizma (Under the Banner of Marxism), No. 7-8, 1943.

<sup>2</sup>See "A New Revision of Marxian Economics," in American Economic Review,  
Sept. 1944. This includes my comments as well as the translation itself of  
the above.

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to "socialism." Nevertheless, it ordered that the first chapter of Capital not be taught as Marx wrote it. I insisted that thereby they violated the dialectical structure of Capital itself in its most crucial chapter which projected the reconstruction of Hegel's theory of alienation as the fetishism of commodities. I had been working through, from original Russian sources, the three five-year plans and had come to the conclusion that Russia had been transformed from a worker's state into a state-capitalist society. It is this analysis that I brought into my commentary on the Russian revision of the law of value, which led to a debate over that commentary in the American Economic Review that lasted for over a year, at which time I was glad to get the opportunity for a rejoinder.<sup>3</sup>

Until the 1950's all this seemed not to interest the West, who considered the whole debate a question of "hair-splitting." The climax came, however, in 1955, when this time there came a direct attack entitled "Marx's Working Out of the Materialist Dialectics in the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of the Year 1844," by V.A. Karpushin,<sup>4</sup> claiming that that was the young Marx who was still tainted with Hegelianism. To the Western philosophers, who still continued their silence, I wrote a letter to the editor of the journal Philosophy of Science, objecting to the fact that we are acting toward Communists exactly as they are acting towards us.<sup>5</sup> Instead of seeing the reality involved in an ideological struggle, <sup>they</sup> were consigning reality itself to a matter of "hair-splitting." over the negation of the negation.

<sup>3</sup> See "Revision or Reaffirmation of Marxism? A Rejoinder," in American Economic Review, Sept. 1945, which responded to the critiques of Oscar Lange, Leo Rogin and Paul A. Baran.

<sup>4</sup> See Questions of Philosophy, No. 3, 1955. In Russian only.

<sup>5</sup> "Letter to Editor," Philosophy of Science, Vol. 23, No. 3, July 1956.

Reality, however, should have made them realize that, though the first-ever open revolt from under totalitarian Communism, the June 17, 1953 East German revolt, had been put down, all of East Europe remained very restless, and that this new attack on the negation of the negation meant some revolts, somewhere in East Europe was about to happen. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 soon followed, and, with it, the re-discovery of Marx's Humanist Essays, but this time putting it on the live, historic stage. <sup>1</sup> Where the first discovery of this unknown but actual birth of that new philosophic moment of Marxism was very nearly buried altogether because the outbreak of World War II put all discussion to an end, this post-World War II re-discovery meant the creation of philosophy and revolution as not just an abstract unit, but a freedom to be fought for right here and now. It was the period that led me to translate Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks, written when the shock of the Second International's betrayal sent Lenin to dig deep into Marx's Hegelian roots. No publisher was interested in Lenin as a philosopher. To me the fact that at every great turning point in history there was a re-birth of dialectics, of the negative factor as a creating factor, and the making of Hegel into a contemporary, was most sharply exemplified in the case of a great revolutionary materialist like Lenin turning, of all things, to the Hegelian roots of Marx and writing that no Marxist had understood Capital "especially its chapter one" and that "cognition not only reflects the world, but creates it."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 38, pp. 180 and 212.

By this time, I had expanded my 1940's studies on the nature of the Russian economy to the whole of Marxism, especially its philosophy, tracing the relationship of philosophy and revolution, from the American and French Revolutions of the late 18th century to our post-World War II world of both automation and the Black Revolution. Where I couldn't find publishers for Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks earlier, I now appended this as well as the first English translation of Marx's 1844 Humanist Essays to my theoretical study, Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 to Today. It announced its goal in the Preface as "to re-establish Marxism in its original form, which Marx called a 'thoroughgoing Naturalism, or Humanism'", and to re-establish its American roots, from Abolitionism to Automation.<sup>7</sup> This work of Marxist-Humanism has been continuous ever since.

The most exciting and profound African statement of new passions and new forces, and calling itself, precisely, Humanism, was Frantz Fanon and The Wretched of the Earth. He wrote, "This new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others."<sup>8</sup> The point is that whether it is Africa or East Europe, Humanism is the philosophy that captures what Marx in his day designated as "revolution in permanence." Take Poland in the late 1950's, when Towards a Marxist Humanism by Leszek Kolakowski appeared. By the end of the 1960's, throughout Africa that was the cry of the struggle of the independent countries from Western imperialism,

<sup>7</sup> Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 to Today, by Raya Dunayevskaya, (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1982), p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, (New York: Grove Press, 1966), p. 197.

when they said they did not want their struggle confined to choosing between the stratification in Russia and the West's monopolization or what was in America, capitalist democracy. They wanted something new, totally new human relations, focused not only against class society and racism, but on Man/Woman relations. Indeed, Marx raised this fundamental concept in his great Humanist Essays, and we of the present live when Women's Liberation is not only an Idea but a movement.

Humanism has been chosen in many different forms; thus, in 1959 Castro embraced Humanism. He then said, "Standing between the two political and economic ideologies or positions being debated in the world, we are holding our own positions. We have named it Humanism, because its methods are humanistic...this is a humanist revolution, because it does not deprive man of his essence, but holds him as its aim....This revolution is not red, but olive-green."<sup>9</sup>

Clearly, the post-World War II world and the new passions and new forces that were arising in the struggle against what is, were neither just a question just of remembrance of things past, not even the past as glorious as the birth of Marx's new discovery of a new continent of thought and of revolution. Rather, it is the reality of today that makes us see that the period of 1843-83, that is, from when Marx first pronounced his philosophy to be a New Humanism to his very latest Notebooks on anthropology, the Ethnological Notebooks which proved that the concepts as well as struggles, passions as well as thoughts, had laid a trail for exactly the contradictory reality of post-World War II world and its myriad crises, including the fact that what Marx called pre-capitalist society we see as life and reason of the Third World.

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<sup>9</sup>See New Left Review, Jan-Feb. 1961.

The wretched of the earth--whether they are from Africa or Asia<sup>10</sup> or the Philippines, or from Latin America to the East Europeans, or from the Middle East to right here at home, and ~~max~~ let's not forget the rich, well-to-do intellectuals whose thought has been so polluted by the Reagan retrogression that they go to drugs rather than to philosophy--were all expressing the frustration at the total alienation from the reality that is so stifling. They were expressing the twilight that is not the night, but the new dawn that is about to arise when the self-determination of the Idea and the self-bringing forth of Liberty unite as a single power of Reason against this exploitative, racist, sexist society, to create a society of truly new human relations. In writing against the alienation of labor, Marx placed not a new property form, but "the full and free development of the individual."

*Raya Dunayevskaya*

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<sup>10</sup> For the left-wing statement to China's state-capitalism, the Sheng-wu-lien, see my Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao, (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1982), chapter 5.