From: THE MAKING OF MARX'S CAPITAL (German ed. was 1968; English 1977)
by Roman Rosdolsky

On RL

On p. 22, i.e. the very introduction, he brings in RL at once, even though at that point he is critical of RL and supposedly for Marx's theory of accumulation; he says: "This does show, however, that Marx's theory of crisis had 'gaps' in the sense that he never again had the opportunity of dealing with the problem at its most concrete level.(rd -- which is ridiculous since Vol. III was written in the mid-1860s, Vol.II was much later and needless to say on the question of crises, Marx spoke up all the way until the end of his life.) To this extent RL's criticism contains an element of truthand the specific pages he refers to are pp. 165 -170.

The 2nd appendix to his introduction is wholly devoted to RL, "Methodological Comments on RL's Critique of Marx's Schemes of Reproduction"(pp. 63-72)

The peculiarity of this appendix is that he calls attention to the fact that all the criticisms of Vol. II written there seems to be a "total neglect of the methodological premises" which she adopted as the starting point of her criticism..."

Whereupon he supposedly will be completely methodological saying that her 2 methodological questions were: 1) Should the process be viewed from the individual or the aggregate social capital ? 2) "Is this latter method consistent with the abstraction of a society composed entirely of capitalists and workers?"

This is not RL's problem

On p. 66 RR has the most involved convoluted way of bringing in Trotsky's permanent revolution. He says that it is absolutely true that the accumulation of Capital is "as a historical process presupposes from 1st to last a milieu of pre-capitalist economic formations in which it ceaselessly interacts." It is at this point that footnote 9 comes in which says:"This is dealt with very nicely by Trotsky in his permanent revolution. "Capitalist development -- not in the abstract form of the second volume of Capital, which retains all their significance as a stage in analysis, but in historical reality -- took place and could only take place by a systematic expansion of its base." (p.153 of Perm. Rev'n.) "In the process of its development and consequently in the struggle with its internal contradictions every national capital turns in an ever-increasing degree to the reserves of the"external market," that is, the reserves of world economy. The uncontrollable expansion growing out of the permanent internal crises of capital constitutes a progressive force up to the time when it turns into a force fatal for capitalism."

This is true

He claims that it's easy to discover RL's error "once one has read the rough draft (rd -- i.e. Grundrisse) It lies in the complete neglect of Marx's categories, Capital in general... "

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Peculiarly enough on p. 169, he quotes from the Theories of Surplus Value, Vol. II, pp. 492 -493, which he says are the precise ones RL quotes "without giving the slightest attention to the most important thing there -- Marx's distinction between ' the general nature of capital' and the 'real relations'." (The whole of chapter 18 in Theories of Surplus Value is on Ricardo's theory of accmulation and of course a critique of it (pp.470-546) so that the three pages RR refers to is on the form of crises.

p. 71, "So one can see that the ' bloodless fiction' for which Luxemburg rebukes Marx is none other than the study of the social reproduction process in the context of 'capital in general.' This ddmonstrates the extent to which she misinterprets the method of Capital ..." Whersupon even though he praises VIL for calling attention to methodology, he is totally opposed to Lenin.

The last of the para.s in this discussion on methodology ends with "She retains the merit of having placed this perspective (rd. economic expansion) back in the center of the discussion; a perspective which follows directly from Marx's theory itself, but which posed [redacted]XX intractible problems for the reformist epigones of the Second International."

Finally, in his critical excursus, where he is especially sharp in the attack on Lenin (pp 472-482) he returns to Luxemburg (pp. 490-505) Once again it is the historic and methodological that he starts with. We are actually returning to the fact that a"since" the critics of RL rejectdd the theory of breakdown, they were wrong and therefore RL was right: "RL's [redacted] Accumulation whose central theme -- disregarding the seconday and subsidiary material -- involves stressing the idea of breakdown and hence the revolutionary kernel of Marxism, can only be understood ... as a reaction to the neo-harmonist interpretation of Marx's theory." (p. 491)

On .p492 ftn. 123, quotes RL's roccoco statement not only as if it were only "a passing mood" and a feeling of annoyance at the sham orthodoxy of her critics" but besides acts as if she had made that remark on Vol. 2 instead of Volume 1. And of course on p. 498 he comes to defend Lange

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SOME NOTES ON ROSDOLSKY RE RL, 1 -- The Methodological Import of Grundrisse

It's all devoted to the first three "books" which are listed very mechanically but every other word is "methodological assumptions". He does have one good point on the abstract and concrete regarding the fact that it's a movement from abstract to concrete because it is the way of apprehending concrete and reproducing it in thought, Q KM: "The concrete is concrete because it is a synthesis of many determinations, hence a unity of the diverse." Therefore, says Ros. , continuing KM's explanation: "process of synthesis".

Various, different levels of the concrete;

The 2 ways of answering RL are : (1) pp 63 - 72, which ares upposed to be on the methodology of the schema of reproduction; and (2) jumps all the way to part 7 , which is his critical excursus and the actual final part, and there it's on RL's critique, pp 490 - 505.

(He quotes KM on Fourier: "Labor cannot become play, as Fourier would like...Free time...has naturally transformed its possessor into a different subject ... materially creative and objectifying signs, as regards the human being who has become, in whose head exists the accumulated knowledge of society." ( p. 712 in the Grundrisse).

The key [redacted]X pages are pp 460-464, key in the sense that he goes back to the Narodnik debate with the legal Marxists in Russia on Vol. II, and that includes Engels' debate with Danielson, which has the following dates: (a) Dan. to Engels Feb. 3, 1887 and 11/24/1891.

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RR
RD: KM says "Concept as presupposition -- as a moment" is to be distinguished from the accumulation of capital which is still to become capital. Now finally, RR's own "Critical (!) Excursus" attacks VIL, (p. 472-476), blames"Stalinists" for appending Lenin's writings on Vol. II of Marx's Capital as something that VIL himself wouldn't have tolerated; half is devoted to defense of RL, and wholly an overestimation and defense of LT. So when(PP490-494)he gets on the "historic and methodological background" he says RL (p. 491) can be understood only"as a reaction to the neo-humanist interpretation of Marxist theory, and was directed against Hilferding and his rejection of her theory of breakdown." On p. 493 he says that KM's schema was only "a heuristic device" (!) to help in the illustration ... (p. 494): "RL's methodological error must seem all the more surprising in that she came very near to a correct understanding of the methodological assumption behind the schema."

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