

POST-CONVENTION

DISCUSSION # 3



Reports to the 1982 News & Letters Committees National Convention

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Subreport to Perspectives Thesis
News and Letters Convention

September, 1982

POLITICALIZATION AND THE NEW BOOK: A TWO-WAY ROAD

by Olga Domanski

Nothing better shows why this report on "Politicalization and the New Book" is called a subreport to the Perspectives we heard this morning, than the very title of that Perspectives this year: What To Do? Because that is exactly what politicalization is all about -- how we concretize our philosophy and thus help to realize it. In fact, all reports are subreports to the Perspectives.

Politicalization, however, is not a simplistic or mechanical question of looking around for some way to "make" your philosophy concrete. It is a matter of being so involved in the world and all its battles that the politicalization -- the concretization of your philosophy -- comes out of your very activity. Nothing shows that better than the way that methodology helped to shape the finished work, Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution. It is a two-way road -- one we have to get to know in terms of the development of Marxist-Humanism as clearly as the new book demonstrates it throughout the whole 40 years of the development of Marx's Humanism.

It was precisely because Raya was actively in the real world, in the real battles going on, and in the daily organizational development during these years when she was supposedly "away" writing the book, that the book was given life. There is scarcely a chapter in the finished work that does not show this very dramatically -- whether that is the relationship between the unfolding revolution in Iran and the working out of the chapter on the 1905 revolution -- which then turned out to include everything from finding the first women's soviets ever, to finding actual new young revolutionaries trying to work out the problems of a revolution in a technologically undeveloped country ahead of one that is so-called "advanced"; or whether it is the way the battle for the minds of young revolutionary feminists like Sheila Rowbotham, who had fallen into Hal Draper's trap of identifying Marx and Engels as one, meant digging into the Ethnological Notebooks and finding that, so much more than an expose of the Hal Drapers was needed, that the door was opened wide to examining everything Marx was doing in that last decade of his life, which others had considered a "slow death," and winding up with making post-Marx Marxists not a chronological description, but a category that became central

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to the whole book.

For the truth is that -- whether it be an intervention in an actual movement activity, or an analysis of one of the seemingly endless bloody wars of imperialism on the one hand, and, on the other, the ceaseless new revolts erupting everywhere; or a critique of a false ideology that has just come out as a book somewhere -- in short, whatever the objective development, it is precisely through politicalization on current events that you can most clearly catch where discontinuity (that is, the new for our epoch) meets continuity with the liberation philosophy for our age, Marx's Marxism. In fact, that kind of discontinuity is the only way the continuity can be achieved.

It's with that in mind that I'd like to take up the way the process of the new book demonstrates "two-way road" in three different foras: first, I want to take it up in relationship to a single category, like the Black dimension; second, in terms of the relationship between all three parts of the book; and finally in terms of process of the new book as a ceaseless development.

(I.) It will surely come as no surprise to anyone here that, very early in the process of the book, Raya knew that the Black dimension would have to figure as an important category. It is not only that, from the very beginning, Marxist-Humanism has seen Black masses in motion as "vanguard" of any American revolution -- but that it has been a global dimension both as revolutionary force and Reason. The question was -- how on earth do you connect this with Rosa Luxemburg? Black was certainly not a dimension either for Poland, or for Russia, or for Germany. Yet Black did emerge. In her revulsion against the horrors of German imperialism and her castigation of Kautsky's daring to glorify German history as "a century of Prussian glory," Luxemburg lashed out in her 1910-11 polemic against Kautsky with that searing description of the 1904 Herero war and General von Trotha's extermination of the Hereros. And that never left her thought.

In 1913, her best writing (though she would not have agreed with that) in her theoretically wrong Accumulation of Capital, was precisely her description of the real process of accumulation, including the way the war between the Boers and the English was fought "on the backs of the Negroes." When World War I broke out, from her jail cell she wrote that burning letter

to Mathilda Wurm in which she refused to put any special priority on the conditions of the Jews, making it clear that "the poor victims on the rubber plantations in Putumayo, the Negroes in Africa with whose bodies the Europeans play a game of catch" were just as dear to her. And in the "Junius" pamphlet, she literally made you hear the cries of the tens of thousands of Hereros that had filled the Kalahari desert. How much more alive and today could that Herero war possibly be than in the new revolt in Namibia we heard in the Perspectives Report this morning?

But the truth is that when Luxemburg's letter to Mathilda Wurm was included, at first, in the single chapter on Women's Liberation -- at the point where the internationalism of the Black dimension was taken up -- it somehow didn't "flow", it didn't really belong there. Now watch! By the time that single chapter was developed into a whole Part II, the chapter on Luxemburg had become a truly powerful revealing of her hitherto totally unprobed feminist dimensions, but the moving material on Luxemburg's impassioned feeling for the Black victims of imperialism was developed, instead, throughout Part I -- indeed, it flows there like a torrential stream through chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5, connected to all the questions taken up there; and the Black dimension as it flows through Part II is seen totally in its true dialectic -- that is, nowhere as suffering humanity, which is how Luxemburg had seen it, but as force of revolution and above all, as Reason.

That view of Reason is the dialectic of history that Marxist-Humanism alone has made into so powerful a category that, when it was jammed up with the category of woman as Reason, it suddenly revealed totally new depths and heights. 1831 -- the year of Nat Turner's revolt -- which in Philosophy and Revolution was jammed up as an historic moment with both Hegel's death and Marx's young manhood, was here far more directly seen as a point of affinity with Maria Stewart's dramatic plea to the daughters of Africa to awake. Here was the very first American-born woman, white or Black, to speak publicly -- and not as preacher but directly on women's liberation and directly on Black dimension -- and where else in all the anthologies, all the excavations of women's history, all the treatises on Black women -- from Gerda Lerner, to Eleanor Flexner, to Angela Davis -- has that meaning of 1831 as a world historic moment, as a turning point, ever been caught?

It is not a question of research. It is a question -- when you have

caught "woman as Reason" -- of seeing how much wider the dimension of freedom is when it is handled by a Black woman than it is by even the greatest of the Black men. That is what is so new and so important to grasp in the unhesitating manner in which Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth separated themselves from even a Frederick Douglass. Believe me, that is a lesson in concrete and total that cannot be matched.

The question at this Convention is where do we take that process now? Where are the battles we will engage in this year, with the Angela Davis, and the Shelia Rowbothams, and the Feminists Against Militarism, and all the others -- in book reviews as well as on picket lines, in letters as well as at meetings -- with the book in hand to project this concept as Marxist-Humanism?

(II.) What is the most important point of all to grasp, however, and then really work out further in our own forms of politicalization, is the relationship of all three parts of the book and how that evolved in so profound a way that it really proves that, far from politicalization being a question of applying your philosophy, you can almost feel the development, the deepening, of the philosophy flowing from the truly profound kind of politicalization that the book entailed.

You bet this is a book first, last, and always about Marx's Marxism. But it is a book in which the three parts are a unity and cannot be wrenched apart because the unifying force for all three parts is the dialectical principle of the transformation of reality which the author calls "the warp and woof of the Marxian dialectic." What is important to understand and project is that the title of the book is not correct just because it is timely. The title is philosophically, politically and timeliness-wise correct.

What I'm referring to is what it means that Raya began this book as a Rosa Luxemburg book -- not as a book on Marx in which she could "use" Luxemburg and/or women's liberation to "expound" her positions, but because there was something new that the women's liberation movement had made her see in Luxemburg that she was compelled to dig and dig and dig into. The Call put the motivation about as bluntly as it could be put, when it said that Luxemburg's break with Kautsky in 1910, 4 years ahead of Lenin, "was meant to be a climax, intended to prove that Luxemburg (Woman) was greater than Lenin (Man)." But, at the same time, it was precisely because the greatness

of today's women's liberation movement was seen as a most unfinished question -- and nowhere more demonstrated than in their own short-minded attitude to a revolutionary like Luxemburg -- that Raya felt she really had to do battle with the women's liberation movement for a revolutionary direction. In the process, not only did today's movement reveal Luxemburg's own true feminist dimension but the uniqueness of this age's women's liberation movement disclosed -- to the founder of Marxist-Humanism -- what Luxemburg herself meant as "woman as Reason as well as revolutionary force." By the time the book was finished Raya saw Luxemburg's highest revolutionary contribution to have been raising nothing less than "the problematic of our day -- the question of socialist democracy after the revolutionary conquest of power."

[And the truth is, that so unending is the process of politicalization, and so powerfully revealing, that that conclusion was stated that clearly only after the book was already on the press and the publisher asked for a few short paragraphs summarizing what this book was really all about, "suitable for a book jacket." And just consider it took Raya almost a week of writing and rewriting to come up with the result you have all read.]

The point is that it was only through the process of working out all the questions that the book became not only a new look at Luxemburg, and a new look at the women's liberation movement, but, above all, a new look at Marx -- that takes the measure of all revolutionary Marxists -- with the result that what we will have in our hands by early Fall is an expression not only of Marx's Marxism but of how that is expressed in terms of today -- that is, Marxist-Humanism. The crucial key to all forward movement lies in the relationship between continuity and discontinuity. That is what is involved in grasping the difference between Marx's Humanism and Marxist-Humanism. And that is why the final chapter 12 -- the summation of the whole work -- kept being reworked and expanded even after the book was already being set in type.

(III.) Just consider that it was exactly one year ago that -- between the time the Draft Perspectives was written in June and the actual Perspectives Thesis was presented to the Labor Day Plenum -- the author had first decided to add a new final chapter to a book already at the typesetters. It was because in the original final chapter she had thought she was emphasizing the first part of the title: "The Theorist of Permanent Revolution", but it soon

became clear that what we loved best was the second part of the title: "Creates Ground for Organization." But it was because it was still just ground that the book could not end there. And it was because this is the problem that our age has to solve, that Luxemburg's posing the question of revolutionary democracy after power -- even though she certainly did not have the answer -- could be seen at the conclusion of this book, as, indeed, the problematic of our day.

The new "addition" we heard in the Perspectives this morning, on Organization, is one more powerful demonstration that the trail to the 1980s from the last decade of Marx's life is a two-way road -- the one we will all be travelling as "have thumb, will travel" moves from slogan to practice.

It isn't that there is something "mysterious" in the "new moments of the last decade." It is that Marx's revolution-in-permanence, in his own development and in his own thought, was so never-ending that he continued to keep his eye on everything new that was developing in the world -- whether it was a new study of primitive society like Morgan's Ancient Society, or the new labor developments in the U.S. after he had just sent the First International away to the U.S. to die peacefully, or a letter from Vera Zasulich about what the Populists and Marxists were arguing about in Russia, or new parties that were trying to merge and give ideas an organizational home -- but that wound up instead with the Gotha Program. And though all these new events started Marx off looking at possible new pathways and new forces for revolution, he couldn't develop them in the fullness we are trying to do today.

That it took 100 years before all the new moments were picked up again is both because it is only in our age that great new movements -- whether in the Third World or in Women's Liberation -- began asking new questions and demanding new answers and because it is this age which has witnessed the development of a body of thought and a movement like Marxist-Humanism.

The continuity of the process of the new book, of course, is not in the number of paragraphs that have been added before, during, or after it was set in type. It is how all these ideas will be expanded in the real world. And that real world -- especially in the centenary year -- will certainly be including a whole host of new books on Marx and Marxism. But the sensitivity to books like the two by Hobbes and Rubel -- which Raya couldn't wait to tear into in the Theory/Practice column in the last N&L -- rests on the sen-

sitivity to our own new books, even though -- did you notice? -- the new book is mentioned explicitly in that article only in the footnotes. What we did get was a whole new expansion of the question of the Marx-Engels myth, in terms of Anti-Duhring -- which was not developed in the new book. The question now is what do we do with this column? Kevin is already trying to take advantage of the centenary year to get it printed in another journal. But doesn't the whole question of What To Do? on this one very concrete article begin with seeing to it that the article itself becomes a special part of the post-Convention discussion?

Our development of politicalization this year rests on being in all those battles of ideas that are raging in the world out of which, if we have absorbed the newness of this book, the politicalization will not be forced, but will flow, and so will organizational growth. We will grow when we can project this work to others so concretely that they demand to join us -- not because we promise them an elitist "leadership of the masses" but because we have proved philosophy is imperative for their immediate and concrete problems.

All you have to do is just look through the final section alone -- "A 1980s View" -- to see all the specific events and movements singled out there (in the text and in the footnotes) that amount to almost a literal listing of where that kind of urgent need for politicalization will upsurge -- whether that is Poland and the development from "bread and Freedom" in 1953 to Solidarnosc today, or the Afro-Asian revolutions, the Latin American revolutions, the peasant dimension everywhere, or Iran, or whether it is the women's liberation movement after the defeat of the ERA, or the Black dimension -- or the anti-nuke movement -- where the very last footnote added, and this time after the book was already in page proofs! -- was impelled by the ever-swelling anti-nuclear movement and wound up making the reference to our specific 25 Year History and our anti-war record, the very last word in the text.

In short, ^{the} politicalization that is demanded of us this year is to see the 1983 centenary as the objective situation which will surely open all sorts of new doors, as a celebration not of the death of Marx but as a rebirth in our age on new beginnings -- as something that is both the true continuation of the revolution in permanence that is Marx's Marxism, and the development of something totally new in the world -- the revolution-in-permanence that is Marxist-Humanism.

Subreport to Perspectives Thesis
News and Letters Convention

September, 1982

POLITICALIZATION AND "THREE BOOKS, NOT ONE"

by Andy Phillips

Unlike Olga's report which concentrated on Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, this one deals with all three books, and from somewhat different vantage points. The first aspect involves the experiences of developing the covers for Marxism and Freedom (M&F) and Philosophy and Revolution (P&R); the second with the impact that editing the latest book had in illuminating not only the new elements disclosed in the work, but also the relationships between the three books, which have hewed out a dialectical trail in their own right.

Working out the cover designs for M&F and P&R proved to be both exciting and challenging. There were literally thousands of alternatives involved, including choice of colors, typefaces, graphics and how each would be arranged so as to be visually attractive as well as make a political statement reflective of the content. And what is not always apparent is that for all books, there are actually three surfaces to be considered: the front cover, the back cover and the spine, and all three had to be integrated -- not only insofar as each book is a unity in itself, but in this case, a conscious effort was made to effect a design that would establish a visual unity between the books.

There were two limitations: we could use only two colors, and the space was restricted to the dimensions of the book itself. The choice of colors was the simplest decision -- red and black -- and reflected a number of considerations. Not only is it simply a matter of fact established by considerable research that black and red are among the most visually impactful of colors; the political significance that red and black connote for Marxist-Humanists derives from historical developments that have shaped our philosophy and organizational form and content from the very beginning -- and by beginning I don't merely mean our founding as News & Letters in 1955, but everything pre-dating that, which has its fullest expression in our Archives.

On the book front, we obviously wanted the title and the author's name. However, for M&F, there were two other copy elements: one referring

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to Marcuse's Preface, the other to a new Introduction by the author. The reference to Marcuse entails much more than the obvious fact that he is well-known and justly regarded as a Marxist theoretician. Far more critical is the fact of his rejection of Raya's conclusions based on her Marxist-Humanist analysis of the world and her unshakable insistence on the workers as revolutionary subject.

Far from this insistence stemming from Raya's revolutionary will, it flowed concretely, objectively from the actions and thoughts of workers on both sides of the Iron Curtain. This critical perception was the legacy not only of the discovery by Raya that the decline in productivity of the Russian workers and peasants following Stalin's consolidation of power was a measure of their revolt against that dehumanized totalitarianism, but also, and more importantly, of her direct exposure to the revolt of the U.S. coal miners against automation and their raising onto the historic stage the question, "What kind of labor should man do?"

It is true that the coal miners and their wives, in their thoughts and actions being closely watched and absorbed by Raya, did concretely, historically transcend the previous working class stage of "What are to be the fruits of one's labor," i.e., the traditional trade union economic considerations. The more profound and greater truth, however, is that of all of the analysts who were following those developments, one and only one was able to comprehend and philosophically articulate what the miners had achieved in their thoughts and actions. These experiences received further buttressing and illumination by the East German revolt of 1953, the stunning Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, the stirrings in Africa and Asia which resulted in the emergence of a new Third World, and, just as the book was coming off the presses, by the Hungarian Revolution in 1956.

Marcuse, failing to retain the vital link with revolutionary subjectivity or even to recognize it in the painstaking analysis Raya had made, reached his own logical conclusion -- in not only one-dimensional man, but in one-dimensional philosophy. The lesson Marcuse dramatically illustrates is what is at the heart of not only M&F, but in all three books: the failure by intellectuals to recognize the todayness of Marxism as expressed specifically in the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism leads either to abandonment of the revolutionary struggle or tail-ending one or another of the state world powers. What is at issue is Marcuse's relevance for

today and how looking at him in light of objective historical developments can help today's revolutionaries to avoid the dangers of one-dimensionality.

The new Introduction by Raya to M&F importantly notes, not only that nothing needed to be changed from the time it was written, but how valuable that work is for understanding current crises, with special reference to a recognition of that value by Iranian revolutionaries who translated -- and are still translating -- parts of M&F to help explain Ayatollah Khomeini's counter-revolution in Iran following the overthrow of the Shah, and the urgency for absorbing Marxist-Humanist philosophy to move the revolution forward. Indeed, the same urgency is manifest everywhere in the world -- where revolutionary upsurges have taken place, are currently underway, or are more or less imminent.

These escalating crises are, of course, evident throughout the entire earth, and how to visually depict all this on the cover of M&F presented the challenge. The resolution was achieved by creating original type in the configuration of a globe, with a map of the world backdropping the type. The spine concerns itself with legibility -- and having white copy coming from a black background is an effective way of achieving that -- which was done on both M&F and P&R. The back covers of both books are visually similar, containing a picture of Raya and biographical information; reviews of the book involved; plus reference to the forthcoming new book.

The cover of P&R presented a different problem: how to convey the impression of the unity of the abstract and concrete. The abstract as representing the first part of the book -- "Why Hegel., Why Now?" -- the concrete as that flowing from the "abstract" philosophy and reflected in Chapter 9's "New Passions and New Forces." The illusion of abstractness found its expression in closely spaced parallel lines traversing the length of the cover, butting into the solidity of a heavy type face which was in turn sliced at a slight offset that created the effect of both continuity and discontinuity. A different kind of concreteness and solidity was given to Raya's name and the reference to her new Introduction by having the type outlined in black and come out as white against the parallel red lines.

The new Introduction to P&R is especially important, because that dissertation, in addition to being a summation of the essence of the entire

work, also illuminates in an entirely different way the critical urgency of grasping the revolutionary significance of the Hegelian dialectic -- the source of all dialectic -- in order to fully appreciate not only why Marx was able to build so concretely on the foundations that Hegel's philosophy permitted, but also why Lenin, driven to Hegel by his own inability to find answers to why the Second International collapsed, gained through that experience in "abstract" philosophy both insights into why the Social Democracy betrayed and his own philosophic reorganization which culminated in the first successful proletarian revolution in the world.

Lenin's philosophic reorganization was also developed in M&F, of course. However, the new content given to Hegelian philosophy as articulated in the first chapter now endows the historical narrative with such profound import that it permits a much more concrete evaluation of the importance of Lenin's grounding in the Hegelian philosophy, and at the same time reveals how an absence of this grounding led to the practical, critical failure of revolutionary leaders such as Trotsky and Mao, as well as the sterility of existentialism's outsider-looking-in, Sartre.

The "new passions and forces" obviously did not come to a halt with P&R; to the contrary, they have deepened as the international crises reached chronic proportions and deepened the comprehension and elicited new responses from ever broader and deeper layers of society at home and abroad. Which is precisely what all three books are about: the methodological arming of revolutionaries to permit them to both avoid experienced pitfalls and to help assure the continuation of revolution in permanence not only as that relates to the practical tasks of overthrowing the capitalist systems, East and West, but also to lay the practical foundations on which to build the new human society.

Lenin remains a pre-eminent example of many important philosophically dialectical developments. From his early youth to the date of his death, he always considered himself a Marxist -- and few studied and absorbed what was available on Marx more than did Lenin. Yet, as unequivocally revealed in his Materialism and Empirio-Criticism of 1908, there was no one before or since who displayed a greater passion for "exorcising the ghost of Hegel from Marx" than did Lenin. He bitterly, ruthlessly and mercilessly excoriated Hegel's idealist philosophy, charging that it was one of the greatest -- if not the greatest -- enemy of Marxism, materialist philosophy, the working

class and all serious revolutionaries.

That is why his profound philosophic transformation upon reading Hegel following the collapse of the Second International in 1914 is so astonishing. That encounter with the Hegelian dialectic did indeed disclose to Lenin how transformation into opposite had gained concreteness in the Second International's betrayal of the working class, but it also discloses the magnitude of Lenin's own philosophic transformation. The perceiver of the principle of transformation into opposite concretely at work in the working class relationship to the state in the era of imperialism also concretely manifests his own subjective-objective transformation. There is no more sharper break in philosophic thought expressed anywhere than in Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks, where he declares, "Cognition not only reflects the world, it creates it!"

Thus, whether it is dealing with Marx or Lenin, the object is not to "improve" on their methodology, but to practice it as resolutely as they did and with the same understanding and appreciation of how critical dialectical methodology is for the achievement of successful revolutions today.

It is true that we have described M&F as a reflection of the movement of practice to theory which reveals practice as a form of theory, and it is true that P&R stresses the movement from theory to practice. But I hesitate to use these expressions because too often there is a substitution of rhetorical expression, as profound as it may be, for actual comprehension of what is being talked about. The proof is not in the words, but in our ability to make the words meaningful to people we talk to in our activity. (I also know that the new book incorporates both of these movements and adds the concrete dimension of spontaneity -- developed by Luxemburg -- but that serves as another illustration of the possibility of substituting rhetoric for comprehension.) It may also be added that merely saying this does not necessarily imply resolution of the problem. That, like everything else, is demonstrated in practice, by what is done.

Much of what I've said at this point is related to the last aspect of this report, which deals with the activity involved in editing the new book. That experience was very much a matter of having the privilege of being in a front row seat on a historical process of creation. While it is true that I did not have the kind of close and immediate relationship as did Olga in

the writing of the book, what I did have was both compelling and illuminating.

What it compelled was a re-reading of many works by Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg, Lukacs, and others -- but mostly Dumayevskaya. And in that experience I gained not only a new appreciation for the great historic stature of these revolutionaries and their contributions to us to use today, but all of that was illuminated by the seminal work and contributions made by Raya. I can speak only from my own experience alone, but out of this maelstrom of thoughts -- continued, discontinued, juxtapositioned and mediated -- perhaps the most significant discovery I made was that there is not only a dialectical unity in each of the three books, but that there is a deepening of that unity with each new book.

It is not a matter of saying so; it is a matter of the concrete experiences of masses in motion -- as the force of reason -- that confirms it. In other words, it is not a dialectical unity that could possibly have been pre-determined when each book was written. It could only be confirmed by concrete historical events. That is the nature of the amazing profundity and reaffirmation of the greatness of the three works -- both as three books not one, and as three books as one.

And last, though certainly not least, we have the new brochure prepared specifically for Raya's lecture tour next year. This, probably as much as any single item, will be crucial for the implementation of the most important aspect of the perspectives projected for next year -- the national lecture tour by Raya. The brochure itself was crafted to meet clearly defined objectives. Of course, we wanted it to be attractive in appearance, and as is evident, we maintained the same color choices selected for the books -- black and red -- with bold type and the picture of Raya arranged to provide dramatic impact.

The narrative itself established the following major points: the primacy of the newest work, Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, as well as situating its publication and the republication of Raya's two other major works on the centenary of Marx's death -- and thus providing an important focus for what we believe will interest academia. Secondly, the solidity and seriousness of the intellectual contributions represented by the development of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, as reflected in the 40 years of works, the critical appraisals of those works

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by prestigious and knowledgeable sources and individuals, as well as the international recognition evidenced by the foreign publications of many of Raya's works. Thirdly, the additional stature represented by Raya's formal academic credentials as teacher and researcher, as well as her activism in the practical work related to Black, labor, women's liberation and youth movements.

The brochure is what you will be working directly with as you make your contacts at the universities or other facilities in your areas to obtain speaking engagements. It is believed that the brochure will help, but your own personal and creative intervention will be essential for success. All in all, I'd say we have a lot going for us.

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Report to the Internationalist Marxist-Humanist Youth Committees Meeting, 9/3/82

New Moments in Marx and Youth Revolutionary Journalism
by Sheila

During the past year, a new youth movement has been developing in this country with the growing threat of nuclear war and registration for the draft, and worldwide with the rise of counter-revolution in different forms. But it is precisely the depth of the counter-revolutions of our period and the experiences of the last massive youth movement of the 1960s which makes us want to go beyond single issue activisms and deal with philosophy as integral to revolution. Philosophy is concrete for our age not only because of the historic periods of unfinished revolutions that we come out of but because each of us as youth has ideas about what we want a future society to be like. Contrary to the beliefs of the capitalist society which treats philosophy as abstract for people, especially for youth, it is our task to show that precisely because we are youth, sensitive, open to new ideas and in revolt, we can make philosophy more concrete than ever for revolution.

Listen to what an 18-year-old high school student from East Germany has to say about philosophy:

In political education, I sometimes have the feeling that the teacher does not really understand. When we want to discuss truth, we are told, "That is not necessary for the final exam; you don't have to bother." But I am interested in such things. It is our first contact with philosophy, and some start thinking immediately that this is something abstract and dry, and we will never in our lives need it. I feel stupid when I ask questions. And then the questions are answered in such a way that you lose all desire to ask another question. Our clergyman has the kind of personal contact with people which the teachers don't have. One guy in my class wanted to study theology because the clergyman is so great and does not argue against Marxism in such a primitive way.... If the teachers were able to make Marxism as interesting as this clergyman does religion, then the clergyman would be out of work. Young people like to argue; that is nothing unusual. They don't want ready-made truths which they just have to swallow.

This desire to separate youth from philosophy isn't just limited to the Eastern bloc but can be seen right here in this country where philosophy in colleges is reduced to a lifeless and abstract concept which you discuss not for the sake of today but for the sake of the past, and where Marx's philosophy is reduced to economics or politics.

It is the refusal of the youth to accept "ready-made truths" that makes Marx's Humanism and his philosophy of revolution so concrete for our day. We have discussed the young Marx often before; however, Raya's letter to the youth (8/16/82) which makes you see that dimension of Marx in a new light. We are concentrating on that period not to merely show that Marx too at some point was young, but because it was the nature of his youthful, creative mind that led him to break with the

bourgeois society in a total way in 1844. Here lies one of Marx's greatest contributions to the youth movement.

It was before 1843, the year of his break with bourgeois society, that Marx prepared the ground for his total break, by developing Hegel's concept of absolute negativity as the moving and creative principle. Thus, it was in his doctoral dissertation which dealt with an "abstract" concept like the difference between the Epicurean and Democritean philosophy that he singled out Prometheus as one who fought slavery, even if it were only slavery to the gods. By preparing in his thought such a ground for revolution, Marx was then able to search for new creative forces which were fighting oppression in real life, i.e. those forces who were practicing absolute negativity. Finally in 1844, Marx singled out the Silesian weavers revolt because in recreating absolute negativity, those workers were fighting not just property but alienated labor. From then on Marx was in search of even newer forces against capitalism but it was the ground that he had laid before 1844 -- the ground of freedom -- which allowed him to see these new forces as ones who gave depth to the concept of freedom.

Marx's Promethean vision, as Raya says in her new book, "didn't allow room for any stagfying." It is that kind of Promethean vision which enables us to fight single issue activism in today's radical movements. But most important of all the way in which a birth-time of history is presented in the new book -- that is, when a "breaking point becomes the translucent direction forward" -- can give us direction to the kind of break with the past that a new youth movement requires. If we do want to break with the mere activism and unsuccessful movements of the 1960s, we need to create a new beginning with those forces of revolution who are practicing absolute negativity, like Blacks, Latinos, women and youth, at the same time that we realize that it was the anti-philosophy nature of the 1960s movement which did not allow the ideas of freedom of these youth to develop to their fullness.

It is in searching for the creative ideas of all the different forces of revolution that we are recreating Marx's dialectics of revolution and in that sense this year's youth bulletin is very new. Just as Marx prepared ground to be able to appreciate the Silesian weavers revolt, we are printing the ideas of a worker about nuclear war and nuclear energy along with articles from youth about how they want to bring about a total change, as our contribution to the anti-nuclear movement and as preparation for a very different kind of youth movement in the 1980s, before the day of revolution.

Marx's break with bourgeois society was so total because it was on such a high ground. How can we make the year 1982 a new beginning for ourselves by developing such a high ground for action? It is to that end that I think our youth page

needs total reorganization next year. What sums up the perspective that we have for next year is how to break the division between philosophy and reality, i.e. how do we make philosophy so concrete that it never separates itself from reality while its aim is to transcend that reality?

In going over the youth pages of last year, one can see that in many cases we have not been successful in making philosophy concrete. It is necessary for us to say what we mean by a new human society, the need for a philosophy of revolution, or the fullness of what we are for. Thus, I would like to go over three types of articles in an effort to see how our youth page can be concrete and philosophical at the same time.

One very important type of article is activity reports of which we definitely need more. But it is necessary to define what kind of activity reports we mean. What one encounters in the youth page are activity reports which limit themselves to explaining the "four W's" (who, what, where, when) and then commenting upon it without giving us a feel for how the participants themselves think they can continue their fight. Perhaps we can reflect the ideas of the participants by quoting them and using some of their exact words, i.e. finding out what they are for. For example, we can take a look at an activity report in the December issue about a demonstration protesting Edwin Meese. Instead of merely criticizing the demonstration for being only "anti-Reagan" and then saying that we need a new banner of total opposition, let us define what we mean by total opposition. Surely there must have been some people in that demonstration who had ideas which went beyond anti-Reaganism and were about what they wanted in a new society.

Or we can take up articles which we elicit from others whether from students or unemployed youth. In the April issue there is an article from a young Black ex-enlistee. However, instead of merely asking a Black youth to explain his experiences, how can we elicit some of the ideas which that youth has about changing this world? It is true that when you elicit ideas you may get a lot of contradictory responses and yet there any other way of overcoming contradictions except to present them first?

Now, it is by presenting a true sense of where the movement is through activity articles and articles which we elicit, that the columns in the youth page can truly mean something. What I could see by reviewing last year's columns was that in many cases we tend to have tacked on conclusions. If we take two very different columns, the November issue on anti-militarism and the August-September issue on new campus activism, we see a tendency in both to jump to conclusions too

soon. In the November issue the column ends by stating the need for Marx's philosophy of revolution without making connections with the rest of the content, and in the Aug.-Sept. issue the column, although it brings in some quotes that are elicited from youth, is so anxious to get to conclusions that it does not let those youth speak for themselves.

If we let the contradictions within the youth movement be reflected in our youth page through the words of those youth, we can then find concrete ways of addressing the movement by bringing in the relevance of Marx's philosophy of revolution and the contributions of Marxist-Humanism for our age.

For example let us take a look at how Marx's concept of critique can relate to our youth page. Marx says: "It is a psychological law that the theoretical mind once liberated in itself, turns into practical energy ... but the praxis of philosophy is itself theoretical. It is the critique that measures the individual existence by the essence, the particular actuality against the idea."

Have we been able to project that concept of critique in the youth page? i.e. have we always tried to see that we do measure our ideas against the particular actuality? In the May issue, we have three articles as "Debate and dialogue in anti-nuclear weapons movement." Yet wouldn't that have been a real debate if we had someone within the anti-nuclear movement who was not necessarily a Marxist-Humanist, to have a say in there? If we did have a voice representing an insider, then we could truly show that our ideas in contrast to the other ideas have been able to grasp the "particular actuality" of the anti-nuclear movement on a higher level.

One of the best ways to project the three books as a totality is through the process of critique. Instead of taking the ideas in the three books as a separate entity and trying to make conclusions out of them for our articles, we can let the process of critique determine which concepts we would like to develop in relationship to what we are critiquing.

For example let us take a look at the Women's Liberation discussion article on Emma Goldman. The idea of critiquing Goldman originally did not signify a projection of the three books and yet through the process of measuring Emma Goldman's theories against the actualities of her day, writing a critique of her became impossible without bringing in Lenin and his philosophic reorganization, Marx on masses as Reason, and Rosa Luxemburg's break with Jogiches as the measure of how a woman breaks free.

If a critique of EG could be so inseparable from these ideas, then one can imagine how deeply different Marxist-Humanists with different experiences and

revolutionary interests can project the three books in their writings.

What makes Marxist-Humanism so total is that it doesn't separate itself from the many forces of revolution in our age, and yet how can this philosophy be concretized if we don't find those revolutionary forces speaking for themselves and expressing the affinity that they feel with the ideas of Marxist-Humanism in their own language? It is only by having more youth find new points of departure in this philosophy which relates to their experiences and ideas about a new society that the totality of Marxist-Humanism can be expressed for our age in newer and more concrete ways.

There is no other philosophy which is so attuned to the words and actions of the masses and characterizes them as Reason of revolution. Thus, the kind of eliciting which we do has to be very different in order to represent the totality of our conception of the masses. Why can't we elicit pieces from youth which show their hunger for a philosophy of freedom, like the one that I read at the beginning of my presentation from an East German youth? Surely we can find many youth who have such ideas right here in this country.

I would like to suggest that next year when each of us writes an article for the youth page (which I hope many here would do), we have one theme in mind: What does freedom and a new society mean to youth?

In order for us to project the category of youth as thinker we need to elicit that "Self-Thinking Idea" from ourselves and from youth around us. Grappling with a philosophy of freedom means that you interpret and recreate that philosophy in newer ways by seeing its relevance for your age and you can only do that when you take yourself as thinker and theoretician seriously.

The youth can certainly be most pivotal in forging a new unity between ideas and action because they have a creative and open mind which is free of the limitations and prejudices that this capitalist society has imposed on adults. The youthful mind is creative, and as Raya says in the new book: "Mind is free, and when tightly related to the creativity of the masses in motion, shows itself to be self-determined and ready for fusion in freedom."

Sub-Report to Organization Session,
1982 News & Letters Convention

Iranian Revolutionary Journalism

by Payman, LA

The Iranian Marxist-Humanists are glad to have E&A number six with us here today, because the continued publication of this revolutionary newspaper in today's counter-revolutionary situation shows a persistence in projecting freedom ideas as much in a situation of counter-revolution as of revolution itself. For E&A is being published at a time when Khomeiny's counter-revolution is trying to destroy any form of mass movement in embryo. Today, more than 27,000 Iranian youth have been killed in the Iran/Iraq war in the past two months alone; new battle zones are being formed by the Kurdish freedom fighters in Northern Kurdistan; thousands of revolutionaries have been executed under various pretexts even for distributing leaflets. The prisons of the regime are filled with thousands of revolutionaries and the government is speaking of building even more prisons. At a time like this, the publication of E&A is an opening which doesn't allow the other side of the objective situation--the mass revolutionary struggles for freedom--to be lost to our Farsi readers. The very hard work that went into putting out issue #6 of E&A testifies to the todayness of Hegel's statement about "the patience, labor, seriousness and suffering of the negative."

What stands out in this newest issue of E&A is the uniqueness of Marxist-Humanism in being able to confront ongoing realities of revolution and counter-revolution in Iran, as well as worldwide. The printing of the Draft Perspectives for the very first time in an Iranian newspaper allows the Iranian reader to look at the totality of the present world situation and current stage of mass revolutionary movements through the viewpoint of Marxist-Humanist philosophy. It also allows the reader to witness the maturity and objectivity of a philosophy that has had a 30 year history of development.

The analysis of the world economic crisis and its impact both on the daily lives of working people and its relation to the world situation, which appears in the Draft Perspectives, as well as exposing the counter-revolutionary actions of Khomeiny-Begin in the Middle East, the discussion on how Marxist-Humanism relates to the movement from practice of masses in motion, the analysis of how the post-Marx Marxists have narrowed Marx's Marxism, and finally the discussion on the Critique of the Gotha Program as ground for Marx's concept of organization are all concepts which have concretized Marxist-Humanism and opened up new pathways

for developing revolutionary ideas in the year ahead. The printing of these Draft Perspectives in E&A presents the newspaper with a new task, for we must not just open and maintain new dialogue with readers on the basis of Perspectives, but as well replace generalizations and abstractions with concreteness.

The other pages of this issue of E&A, especially the review of Saadawi's book The Hidden Face of Eve shows we have taken the first steps in concretely presenting Marxist-Humanism. In this article, instead of repeating principles like "the need to unite Marxism and Feminism" we rather practice that unity by taking the measure of this women's ideas in relation to the unity of Marxism and Feminism--Marxist-Humanism. Such concreteness needs to be practiced by all of those who put out E&A in order to obtain the fullest potential of the newspaper as an organ relating to new Iranian readers.

II

One of the accomplishments of E&A over the last year has been the production of four issues of the paper on a fairly consistent basis. Breaking the time gap between one issue and the next has always had a special significance for us, but because of our small numbers this is not always easy. E&A is not made in one day--it arises from a careful and extended discussion between the comrades and friends on the articles to be printed in the coming issue. The question of time is an important one because typing articles, technical work, production, and sending it in finished form to the printer must all be done by a small core of people. The great amount of labor and time that goes into producing an issue determines the paper's form and content.

Since the last Plenum, E&A has been transformed from an 8 page to a 12 page paper. Adding four pages with an additional 7500 words has allowed us to have both more voices from below and more space to present what we represent. The question of the form of the newspaper has always had a special significance for E&A because from the very start we knew that a revolutionary paper has to be such that the masses can easily speak within it, so that, as Lenin said, "the number of its writers can exceed even 5000". We discovered this form of a revolutionary paper for the first time in News & Letters and we have tried to develop it for ourselves. Raya's letter to the British Marxist-Humanists and her dialogue with them on form had a great impact on our group because she showed how important form is for opening up dialogue with new forces of revolt. We have concretized this by having different forces represented in E&A, with women, youth, and national minorities each editing their own pages. The women's page

whether as seen in Neda's article "Middle Eastern Women: Liberation and Social Revolution" or the article on women in the Paris Commune or the one on the revolutionary struggle of women in Poland as well as the many reports of women's struggles worldwide has definitely created a new way of engaging women to such an extent that the Iranian Marxist-Humanist Committee for the Liberation of Women is today one of the most-often referred to groups within the Iranian Left. There is no doubt that the writings and activities of this committee has been one of the greatest steps in the history of the Iranian revolution.

The relationship that the Iranian Marxist-Humanists have created with the Kurdish movement in the national minorities page has led many Kurds to appreciate the historic contribution of our ideas for the present situation. It is true that the current counter-revolutionary situation in Iran has made it difficult to maintain our connections with the forces of revolt inside Iran, especially the workers and peasants, and yet, our effort at forging new connections with these two revolutionary forces has continued. Having an article on the struggles of auto workers at Iran National and a report on the condition of peasants in the rural areas which included what they thought of the Khomeiny regime has helped maintain our relations with these forces of revolution.

There is no doubt that the projection of Marxist-Humanism is not restricted to these forces of revolution. Discussion articles such as "State Capitalism and Marxist-Humanism" are attempts at presenting the theory of state-capitalism to Farsi readers, just as another on "From Revolution to Revolution to Revolution" which analyzed the situation of the Polish and Iranian revolutions under the whip of counter-revolution have developed Marxist-Humanism in the face of new objective developments. Writing such articles on the basis of the work of the American Marxist-Humanists as well as direct translations of articles by Raya and others (such as Kevin Barry's Lead on Sadat's assassination) have enabled us to create a two-way international dialogue with Marxist-Humanists.

What is also unique about E&A is its column "From the Pen of Karl Marx". So far we have translated for the first time into Farsi such writings as his 1842 Letter to Ruge, 1843 King of Prussia and Social Reform, 1867 writings on "The Working Day" from Capital, 1881 Letter to Vera Zasulitch and 1882 preface to the Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto.

But the exact and constant projection of Marxist-Humanism is not easy. Marxist-Humanism has 30 years of revolutionary experience and ideas to contribute to Iran, ideas which are needed for the permanency of our revolution, but they are ideas that do not easily find their way to Iranian revolutionaries in a way

that would have a direct impact on the course of the actual revolution. Just saying we need a philosophy of revolution or expressing the principle that there is a movement from practice which is itself a form of theory is not enough. We as Iranian revolutionaries who have taken organizational responsibility for the ideas of Marxist-Humanism must present these ideas in ever-more concrete ways in our discussions with new readers. The maturity of the revolutionary mass movement, whether in Iran or worldwide, is such that generalizations cannot by themselves respond to the need of the movement, since the questions which revolutionary masses pose today are very concrete. The projection of our ideas must be no less concrete. Raya's Perspectives presentation yesterday and her letter to the youth show how deeply Marxist-Humanism is posing concreteness as the cornerstone of all perspectives, thereby enabling Marxist-Humanism to truly respond to all particulars of the objective situation.

As Raya wrote in her letter to the Youth,

The Year 1982/3 is crucial. These facts must find further articulation so that "three books, not one" is not just rhetoric but spells out that total uprooting that requires "three books, not one" as its ground. The concretization of this, just this, will not be just sales of books, ever-wider dissemination of Marxist-Humanism throughout the world, but such growth of membership that Marx's philosophy of revolution, not the party-to-lead, will signal the coming of the revolution itself.

III.

At this point we have M&F and P&R in hand and the new book is on its way. By just giving space in our paper for advertising these new books we will not be able to create new readers for them. The question is not just that of finding readers for the books, but catching the uniqueness and novelty of the categories within them as ground for membership growth. The working out of categories like post-Marx Marxism, Marx's philosophy of revolution-in-permanence, and Rosa Luxemburg as feminist are important for Iran, and understanding their significance for our revolution will certainly be a part of the development of our paper. Work on four historic moments in the revolutionary movements of Iran--1905-07, 1920-27, 1950-55, and 1979-today--has already started in E&A and we will draw from these historical highpoints lessons for today. We expect that the theoretical/organizational work on these historical highpoints and the categories mentioned from the new book will make the projection of our philosophy so concrete that it will lead to a much more comprehensive dialogue within the Iranian Left, a dialogue which over the past year we have not been much involved in.

During the past year our participation in the various events of the left, such as conferences, seminars, and the Washington Conference on "Class Struggle and the Iranian Revolution" has been a basis for us to take the floor in order to forge new contacts with people and to find new readers. In less than two years ESA has found over 250 subscribers and distributed 1000 copies of the paper per issue. ESA has a very difficult road ahead during the next year, and without new people to join us and take organizational responsibility for the ideas of Marxist-Humanism this cannot be done. Thus, attracting ever more revolutionaries in the year ahead is of the greatest significance for the fullest unfolding of our unique form of revolutionary journalism.

Report to News and Letters Convention

September, 1982

THE BLACK DIMENSION IN THE SOUTH TODAY

by Charles Denby, Editor of News & Letters

I want to give you a picture of what is happening in the South today as Mike and I saw it on our trip there two weeks ago. There are urgent problems in Lowndes County, Alabama, and all across the South. And the problems are not only about racism and unemployment or about the loss of Black-owned land. They are also about the loss of a direction for the movement.

Before we had even gotten to my sister's house in Lowndes County, we stopped at the home of a recent subscriber to News & Letters, Gardenia White. You have read her articles this year. She began telling us about the situation in the fight to get rid of the white Probate Judge--Judge Hammonds. This man came to Lowndes County some 30 years ago, driving an old beat-up pick-up truck and got a job hauling gravel. After 5 or 6 years he became Probate Judge, and started building up his own land holdings. And he was clever: he tried to act liberal and he went to John Hulett's inauguration, the only white in Lowndes County to attend. So quite a few Blacks thought they had a liberal on their side. But what was so surprising to me was to see how today the Blacks in Lowndes County are divided into two factions, and fighting with each other over this Judge. I felt that both sides had totally forgotten the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, and how they had gotten where they are.

If you look at the South today, there is much that has changed for the better. You don't hear of the KKK terror as you did back then. There are no segregated accommodations. Voting rights are accepted as if they had existed from the beginning of time. And most important--there is really a new Black consciousness, especially among the Youth.

But with all this there are also many problems, some worse than they were in the 1960s. The white newspaper, The Montgomery Advertiser, is as racist today as it was the day back in 1955 when they printed the leaflet the students from Alabama State wrote to protest Mrs. Rosa Parks' arrest, that more than anything else is what started the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This year they actually wrote an Editorial saying that slavery was "an idea ahead of its time", because it showed "genetic screening" of workers, since Blacks could stand work in the hot sun in the fields better than whites! And the day after we arrived, they wrote an article about the trial of a Black man in Selma arrested for calling a cop there a member of the KKK. The judge sentenced the Black man to a week in jail and gave him a fine, and the Advertiser blasted the judge for giving him such a light sentence.

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We met with one of the elementary school teachers in Lowndes County. She was telling us about an argument she and a white woman teacher had, because the white teacher wanted the Black teacher to use "Mrs." when talking to her, but she wanted to call the Black teacher "Florence". The Black teacher felt that it would take a revolution to change some of these attitudes.

The one thing that you couldn't help but notice was the unemployment. It is 15 percent in Montgomery, and in Lowndes County they say that 39% are out of work. Maybe it is higher than that. You see many Black youth hanging around without a job, and they say now drugs are being used. All my life you could leave Lowndes County and the rest of the rural South and move North to Detroit or Chicago, or at least to some industrial city in the South. But today there are no jobs in the North, and the few jobs in Montgomery or Selma are as domestics, or just above it, and pay \$3.00 or \$4.00 an hour.

The biggest issue that everyone is talking about is the loss of Black-owned land. This is one of the main reasons for the unemployment. The small farms cannot survive, and they are bought up or foreclosed, and then the next generation can't possibly farm. You see the way land is owned by a few white landowners now, or bought up by the Container Division of Continental Can Co. for planting pine trees. We learned that one man--Judge Hammonds--owns 35,000 to 40,000 acres of the county, and has more land with unregistered deeds. I would like to know how this is so different from El Salvador, when five or six white families own over 50 percent of the land in the county? When I was a young man I was convinced that the majority of the land was Black-owned. Now it is owned by whites who plant soybeans up to the front door of Blacks who used to farm, but now only can rent the house they live in.

There is a movement all across the South now to stop the loss of Black-owned land, and to find ways to provide jobs for Black youth. In both Lowndes County and Macon County, Alabama, they are trying to throw out white probate judges who have stolen Black land. There is a group called the Emergency Land Fund, which is trying to help individuals in trouble, but I cannot see anything helping them short of a revolutionary change.

We attended a meeting in Tuskegee, in Macon County, where they have a Black civil rights fighter named George Paris running for Probate Judge against a white crook named Preston Hornsby. They say that the way this judge gets Black-owned land is that when people buy a car from his used car lot, they put up their land for collateral. Then if they can't pay he takes the land. I was shocked to learn that it is a Black lawyer from Montgomery, Fred Gray,

who was a lawyer for civil rights workers during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, who is now representing Hornsby in these land cases.

What I began to feel was that the split in the Black movement today is the most serious problem we have faced. Just a few years ago there was great hope, but now there is so much confusion. Young Black politicians are saying throw out the old Black leaders, saying that they give secret support to whites like Judge Hammonds. But what I see is that the new leaders are not much better. They are just hoping to put themselves in, without really attacking the system. They have forgotten that what made the '60s so exciting was "freedom now!" Instead, what Mike and I kept hearing from the rank-and-file people we visited was that they are disgusted with both factions.

I had a firm discussion with the young Black leaders, the ones from White Hall. I pointed out how SNCC came into Lowndes County, and no one there had ever heard of SNCC. Cosby and others asked me who they should work with, SNCC or SCLC, and I supported SNCC as a grass-roots organization. I supported Stokely because he raised the consciousness of the people in so short a time. But I explained why I split from Stokely too. He was yelling that if the Black Panther Party lost the election, he, Stokely, would be the Prosecutor, the Judge, the Executioner. I knew too well what this meant. I was a Marxist-Humanist, and I am one today; I was for revolution then and now. But I know that the preparation for it has to be carefully worked out, in thought and in action. It has to come from the masses of people and not out of your head. I told Stokely that Gov. Wallace was just waiting to issue an order to his state troopers to go into Lowndes County and annihilate these Blacks. Lowndes County was not Stokely's home, he would be gone.

This was the beginning of the division between leaders and ranks in the freedom movement in the county. I told them that I had known and believed all my life that if a people is sitting waiting for a Moses to lead them out of the wilderness, then that same Moses can lead them back into the wilderness again. But if they keep struggling and thinking and find the way out themselves, no one can lead them back in again. This is what I wrote about Stokely in Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal, and it is what Raya has been speaking about for years on the need for a philosophy of revolution. Several of these young leaders bought subscriptions to N&L, but I don't know if they are ready to change their direction the way they need to change it.

It is urgent that a new direction be found, and not just for Lowndes County. Wallace is running for Governor again, and trying to get Black support.

He is trying so hard, that some are saying he will lose because racist whites think he is too close to Blacks. He went to the SCLC convention, hoping for support there, and one of the members of SCLC asked him to sign a petition for the release of Mrs. Bozeman and Mrs. Wilder from prison. These are the women jailed for voter registration work in Pickens County. Wallace signed the petition, but as soon as it hit the papers that he signed, he tried to say he thought it was just an autograph.

There are so many Black politicians falling for Wallace, that I was never so glad that when I read what Rev. Lowery answered against him:

"I can forgive him and say 'yes' to Wallace the human being, but I must say 'no' to Wallace the candidate. As he began to speak, I began to feel anger as I remembered him standing in the schoolhouse door trying to block black children from attending public schools. If he says he made a mistake and asks forgiveness, I forgive him as a human being...we love the sinners, though we hate the sin. But as a candidate, he represents Wallaceism; he conjures up all the negative images of the past.

I can't support a candidate who represents the shadows of the past, not the light of day. Then, when he began to confess his mistakes and ask, almost beg, for votes, both the sadness and the anger left, and the situation began to seem humorous in the ironic sense. Here we were black people being solicited for our votes by Wallace."

This is the situation of politics in Alabama today. It makes you determined to help bring a philosophy of revolution there, to see that all three of Raya's books and Indignant Heart are spread across the state. We spoke about this to our best intellectual friend there, a professor at Alabama State who spent two days with us and went to Tuskegee. Yet she says she can't discuss Marxism with people in Alabama. She has a library in her study full of Marx and Lenin and Mao, yet she says that Marxism will never be accepted here, that she wants to be "independent" of Marxism.

To answer her we simply told her what we had been doing for the last week in Lowndes County, out in the "country" that is considered "backward" compared to Montgomery. We told her how we had met lots of new people who had never seen our newspaper before, and how excited they were. People did not ask who Marx was; they know that. They did ask who Rubel was, or Hobsbawm. They were interested in the whole paper and in Marxist-Humanism.

The best discussions we had were the ones about N&L. Many of them were with people who were disgusted with the old politics and looking for something new. It is important to many people that we could show them the articles we have in N&L all year about the South. We got reports on both of the Voting Rights Marches and on the land question, on the Tchula 7 and on women in the South. But what was the most exciting thing was to see people who were thinking about whether they should buy a subscription, read the whole

paper, not just the articles on the South. The people who had already read Indignant Heart and knew me as the author of that book, now saw me also as the editor of a Marxist-Humanist newspaper. Others who had never read Indignant Heart began to study it when they saw our paper. One young Black man from Marion Junction began to read it, then they left and went to a disco, but he stood outside reading the book for nearly an hour under the street lights because it was too dark and noisy to read inside. He wants to write about his own life. His friend is a hospital worker at Selma Medical Center. She immediately read the Women's Liberation page--both the article on the Silverado maids and the one on Margaret Fuller. The next day she said that she met with her friends at the hospital, talking about the low pay and the disorganization there. They want to get together to write an article for N&L.

If you think women's liberation is only in the North or the cities, you should have seen the women at the meeting in Macon County, speaking openly about feminism and affirmative action. I saw a woman running for sheriff there. She is the only one with any sense, running against three men. One of the men said that he should be elected because he was a Green Beret in Vietnam and knew who to kill. But the audience was applauding the woman and another woman who said she was proud to be a feminist.

Let me tell you about some of our other subscribers:

We also talked with a worker from Dan River Mills, the only textile plant in Lowndes County. He was speaking about the conditions in the shop and the token way they put Blacks in supervision. He had tried to organize a union there and was fired, but now is back to work.

At Alabama State University, the Black school in Montgomery, we met one young student, Ralph, who wants to start a Black issues discussion group outside the official speakers. He bought the Black Thought pamphlet and said he would like to bring Lou Turner or myself to speak there. I hope that Raya could go there on her tour. We asked him what he wanted, and he said he wanted "revolutionary ideas."

In all we sold \$65 in literature, including 15 subscriptions. Many of them--nearly all of them are learning about Marxist-Humanism for the first time, and they want to study it all. One woman was reading the paper and she began to read outloud the poem on the war in Lebanon by a Jewish revolutionary. So I feel that the relationships can begin on a new level, a total level. I know that the hardest part for us, especially from far away, is follow-up. But I hope that this year we will have articles in N&L every issue from friends in the South, about the struggles, and about their ideas on Marxist-Humanism. That is the one way I know and understand the meaning of 30 years of Marxist-Humanism for our work in the South.

INDEX TO

NEWS & LETTERS

'The Root of Mankind Is Man'

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June 24, 1955 - June-July, 1962

The following index to the first, blue-bound volume of News & Letters, covering the years 1955-1962, reflects the myriad new points of departure in Marxist-Humanism, practiced on an ongoing basis in the paper -- the world historic events erupting in mass movements and revolutions, and totally new beginnings in thought.

The index is not meant to be comprehensive, but to indicate those articles in News & Letters -- particularly the leads, editorials, "Worker's Journal" and "Two Worlds" columns, and feature articles -- which best represent a category.

The references after each index entry represent the volume number, the issue number, and the page number on which the article appears. (A guide relating month/year to volume/issue is printed immediately before the index.) The references to Raya Dunayevskaya's columns and articles are underlined.

M. Holmes

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ESSAY ARTICLE

by Eugene Walker

Marx and "non-capitalist lands": 1873-1883

Today's world economic crisis is most often spoken and written of in terms of the industrialized West with its stagnation in production and growing unemployment. When the nations of the Third World are mentioned, the context is usually that of the huge and growing indebtedness of these lands to the technologically advanced West, currently to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars. The framework thus remains that of the capitalist lands.

The Afro-Asian-Latin American Revolutions which have encircled the globe over the past two and a half decades attempted to blaze an independent, non-capitalist path-way both economically and ideologically. But viewed from the 1960s, country after country within this Third World has been swept into the economic vortex of capitalism, either in its private or state-capitalist form.

And at the same time, there has been a capitulation to the ideological vortex of nationalized property equaling socialism, or of narrow nationalism, or the outright bankruptcy of private enterprise. It is this twin vortex of economics and narrow class-based ideology, which has kept the Afro-Asian-Latin American world spinning outside both any genuine economic development and the theoretical-philosophic vision of freedom that had been the promise of its revolutionary beginnings.

Is there still the possibility of cracking the framework of capitalist non-development for the Third World? Is the only choice between a private capitalist West with its traditional bourgeoisie or a state-capitalist East with its single economic plan? Neither has been able to provide either a solution to the world economic crisis or a freedom vision as against the prevailing bankruptcy of thought.

OVER ONE HUNDRED years ago, from the mid-1870s to his death in 1883, Marx began a most intense study of "non-capitalist lands" and of pre-capitalist societies. It was not his first study of these areas, (see especially "Pre-capitalist economic formations" in the *Grundrisse*) but it was a most unexpected development. After all, he had finished *Capital* in 1867 and had made significant additions to the French edition of 1872-75. He had spent some two decades on its writing describing the growth and development of capitalism, both within a nation and as a world phenomenon.

Capital contained the magnificent, seemingly definitive statement of capital accumulation — what we know as Part VIII (though Marx considered it a chapter within Part VII on Accumulation of Capital), "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation."

Its concluding crescendo was the penultimate chapter, "Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation." The path of capitalist development — beginning with the expropriation of the agricultural population from the land as industrial capitalism took its first step to Marx's projection of its uprooting as "... the expropriation of a few usurpers by the masses of the people" — characterized capitalism not only as a preliminary "primitive stage," but as a continuing characteristic at every stage.

Then, in the last decade of his life, as he worked on Volumes II and III of *Capital* Marx undertook a series of new studies which encompassed both Russian agriculture and the newly emerging science of anthropology, including Lewis H. Morgan's writings on the Iroquois in America.

As soon as Volume I of *Capital* was published debates arose not alone on its analysis of capitalist lands, but of non-capitalist lands as well. On the one hand, were those who wished to treat Marx's writing on the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation as an immediate world system, a universal encompassing every society; so that all countries, all societies, no matter at what economic stage, inevitably came under the rule of this constantly expanding system. On the other hand, were those who argued that Marx's analysis applied only to Western Europe, and argued not only against the inevitability of going through capitalism, but proclaimed that the skipping of capitalism was a rather simple matter since no proletariat and no bourgeoisie were present. These countries, they claimed, could simply skip capitalism and move directly to socialism.

The debate was not an abstract one. The ground was most concrete — Russia. In what direction would it go? Would it follow Western Europe's development, or could Russia "skip" capitalism and go directly to socialism based on the Russian agricultural commune, the *mir*?

1. For a discussion of both the economic vortex of capitalism in underdeveloped lands and of the ideologies in dispute see Raya Dunayevskaya's *Nationalism, Communalism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions*.
2. For a comprehensive view of Marx's last decade "as a trail for the 1960s," from the French edition of *Capital* and the *Critique of the Gotha Program* to his writings on Russia and *Ethnological Notebooks*, see Raya Dunayevskaya's newly published *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.

While the question in Russia unfolded in the succeeding decades in terms of capitalist development, socialist revolution, and state-capitalist counter-revolution,³ it remains a viable, indeed a burning question in today's Third World, especially on the African and Latin American continents where the world system of capitalism has certainly spread, but where the drive to crack the framework of capitalism remains ever alive.

It is for this reason that we again turn to Marx as he faced this question at the end of his life. It is not that Marx had direct "answers" for the Third World, but that the method by which he chose to grapple with the question can cast an illumination for today.

THREE TEXTS OF MARX concern us here: Marx's letter to the Editorial Board of the *Otechestvennyye Zapiski*, November, 1877; his draft letters to the Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich, late February and early March, 1881; and Marx's and Engels' Preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, Jan. 21, 1882. These writings have long been available to all post-Marx-Marxists. What has been published only since the 1970s — and strongly reinforces the ideas presented in these texts is Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks*,⁴ written in 1880-1882, which reveal how seriously and at length Marx studied the "primitive" societies from the new anthropological studies of his day. Together, this body of Marx's writings offer us what Raya Dunayevskaya has called "a trail to the 1980s." Let us examine them in more detail.

In his letter to the editorial board of the *Otechestvennyye Zapiski*, Marx was responding to an article titled "Karl Marx Before the Tribunal of Mr. Zhukovsky," written by N. K. Mikhailovsky, a theoretician of Narodism. Mikhailovsky had argued that Marx's view was that Russia's most urgent task was to destroy the peasant communal property, the mir, and plunge into capitalism. Instead of merely denying this fantastic accusation Marx restated his true views in so new a way that Russia's development actually shed a new illumination on what we now call the Third World:

In order that I might be specially qualified to estimate the economic development in Russia, I learnt Russian and then for many years studied the official publications and others bearing on this subject. I have arrived at this conclusion: If Russia continues to pursue the path she has followed since 1861, she will lose the finest chance ever offered by history to a people and undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist regime. (my emphasis)

The finest chance? Marx had, just prior to the above quote, paraphrased how the "great Russian scholar and critic" Chernyshevsky has posed the question:

... whether, as her liberal economists maintain, Russia must begin by destroying the village commune in order to pass to the capitalist regime, or whether, on the contrary, she can without experiencing the tortures of this regime, appropriate all its fruits by developing the historical conditions specifically her own.

Marx then moved to show that it was not Russia alone which could develop along its own specific path:

... the chapter on primitive accumulation (in Capital) does not claim to do more than trace the path by which, in Western Europe, the capitalist economic system emerged from the womb of the feudal economic system. It therefore describes the historical process which by divorcing the producers from their means of production ... But the basis of this whole development is the expropriation of peasants ...

And thus:

If Russia wants to become a capitalist nation ... she will not succeed without first transforming a good part of her peasants into proletarians.

But Marx then answered Mikhailovsky as follows:

He insists on transforming my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into an historico-philosophic theory of the general path of development prescribed by fate to all nations, whatever the historical circumstances in which they find themselves ... But I beg his pardon ... one will never arrive there by using as one's master key a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being supra-historical.

Marx refused to recognize any theory, any sweeping generalization, even when it was as magnificent as his own historical tendency of capitalist accumulation when it was placed outside of the historical process from which it was created. Marx recognized only one science: "history and its process."

MARX FOLLOWED THROUGH on the question of particular historical process with regard to Russia. In February, 1881, Vera Zasulich wrote to Marx on the disputes of Russian socialists concerning Marx's *Capital* and the future of capitalism in Russia. In particular she asked Marx to state his views on the Russian commune as the basis of socialism. The four drafts Marx wrote revealed his concrete working out of a theoretical position in the circumstances of the Russian reality. In them he makes a direct reference to his latest studies, especially Morgan's *Ancient Society*.

First, he dug into why the commune still existed in Russia while it had disappeared throughout Western Europe. He wrote of "a unique combination of circumstances," and then leaped to the following: *It exists at the same time as capitalist production which enables it to take advantage of all the positive achievements of the latter without passing through all its dreadful vicissitudes.*

He searched to find what happened to the archaic commune, but noted the history of the decline of "primitive" communities still remained to be written. And he warned: *One should be on one's guard when reading the histories of primitive communities written by bourgeois historians.*

Then followed the key sentence: "Everything depends upon the historical background in which it finds itself ..." stressing first that the historical environment cannot be separated from "the simultaneous existence of Western production ... the world market." He continued with other factors that need to be taken into account from the inherent "dualism" of communal property and private appropriation, to the actual physical configuration of the land.

At this point, Marx pinpointed the human forces for revolutionary change: *All that needs to be done is to replace the volost, a government institution, by an assembly of peasants elected by the communes themselves*

Marx also pointed to all the pressures put on the commune: "Weakened by the state's fiscal extortion, the commune had become an easy target for exploitation by traders, landowners and money-lenders." Marx concluded that, "destructive influences will lead inevitably to destruction of the village commune, unless it is crushed by a powerful counteraction."

3. See especially Lenin's *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (Vol. 3, *Collected Works*) and Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* (Chaps. 8 and 13).

4. See Lawrence Krader's transcription and fine introduction to *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*.

What was that powerful counteraction? It is here that Marx introduces his last word. When all these factors are taken into account, the key to the future rests on revolution.

In order to save the Russian commune there must be a Russian Revolution. If the revolution takes place at the right time, if it concentrates all its forces to ensure the free development of the village commune, the latter will soon emerge as the regenerative forces in Russian society and as something superior to those countries which are still enslaved by the capitalist regime.

All of the above was from Marx's rich first draft of his letter to Zasulich. The second and third drafts inform Marx's discussion still further.

LET US TRACE MARX'S development on the relation of developed and underdeveloped lands. In his reply to Mikhailovsky he had sharply taken issue with any interpretation of his historical tendency of capitalist accumulation which would situate itself outside the historical circumstances of its creation. Furthermore, he had opened the possibility of Russia taking a different path of development, although he warned that the path it had already taken was leading in the direction Western Europe had taken.

In his drafts to Vera Zasulich he investigated the Russian land commune at the time of the simultaneous existence of Western production and against the background of the earlier archaic commune. Marx had pointed to the dualism in the primitive communities and warned that dualism was the ground upon which the Russian commune was being attacked. At the same time he pointed to the need for a powerful counteraction, concluding, "to save the Russian commune there must be a Russian Revolution."

In the third work on the subject — the Preface to the Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto, January 21, 1882 — Marx proceeded to tie the "peasant East" to the "proletarian West" in an unprecedented revolutionary linking. The question he had been grappling with for the better part of a decade was posed once more:

Can the Russian obshchina, though greatly undermined, yet a form of the primeval common ownership of land, pass directly to the higher form of Communist common ownership? Or on the contrary, must it first pass through the same process of dissolution such as constitutes the historical evolution of the West?

And the answer that comes forth is not only revolution, but permanent revolution; not only revolution in the peasant East, but that revolution as a spark for revolution in the proletarian West, which can in turn re-enforce the East's revolution.

The only answer to that possible to-day is this: if the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for a communist development.

The vicissitudes of Russia since then are, of course, well known. What is not well known, and in fact, has been studiously ignored, is precisely the way Marx worked through the question of underdeveloped and developed lands.

The particulars of the Russian peasant commune have been obliterated both by capitalism's encroachment into Russia prior to 1917, and Stalin's forced collectivization of the 1930s. But Marx's methodology is still alive. And so is the dialectical method which enabled him to see such phenomenal new pathways to social revolution, not in isolation from the realities of capitalism, but by finding the revolutionary forces within capitalism's developed lands.

In returning to today the question is not so much to search for where there is a particular social organization on the land in one part of the world or another which is still surviving capitalism's encroachments. Where such forms exist, it is likely that capitalism has not yet found a way to fully exploit those regions. Instead, what remains as alive in our day as in Marx's — indeed, what compelled Marx to study any particular social organization of his day — are the human forces which challenge capitalism's drive for accumulation, whether primitive or "advanced."

Whether the indigenous social forms still existing in such dispersed places as Namibia's communal relations and Guatemala's Indian peasant communities can form the basis for new human beginnings in each land is an open question. But what makes both places so alive for us today is that in Namibia, in Guatemala, there are peasant masses who are fighting to be rid of capitalism's direct encroachments — its brutal slaughter of men, women and children; its destruction of the land. But their fight cannot be in isolation. Can it not be a signal for the rest of us to make the revolution continuous, to make real what Marx had called "revolution in permanence?" Only such simultaneous working out of complementary new pathways for social revolution can crack the capitalist framework both in thought, as Marx had done, hand in hand with doing it in reality, which is the task for this generation to accomplish.