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SUMMATION BY RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OF PERSPECTIVES

I. Philosophic Confrontation with Post-Marx Marxists on Ground of the Mid-1950s Movement from Practice

Since I started the Perspectives "upside down," I'm going to end this Summation upside down -- by which I mean that, although what we have been talking about all day and will continue to talk about until the end of this Plenum is "organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism," I will discard that expression. The reason is this: unless you understand the historic link of continuity, there is no point to saying "take organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism." So I want to challenge what you understand as Marx's Humanism and its relationship to Marxist Humanism.

I want you to know that in the beginning, when I said I was opposed to all post-Marx Marxists beginning with Engels, I didn't mean only the gap between Marx's Ethnological Notebooks and Engel's reductionism in Origin of the Family. I am challenging Engels also on nearly all of his interpretations of the dialectic, not because he betrayed; he didn't. He did the best he possibly could. That's the trouble. The best he could wasn't good enough.

You have to begin seeing what it means to be a great genius, a "thought-diver" like Marx. And if you don't grasp the uniqueness of that, loving Marx won't help. All you would then do, as Engels did, would be to popularize him. Anyone who thinks he understands when it is made bite-size doesn't understand what it means to appreciate and work out and recreate the dialectic at every single stage. Sure, six people will get up who will understand you and not understand Marx -- and praise you as the "projector." That doesn't mean Engels had any right to think he was really projecting Marx's whole continent of thought -- Marx's Historical Materialism, Marx's Humanism, Marx's "economics," much less his philosophy.

How many people here think there is nothing greater than Mehring's biography of Marx? It stinks. And not only because he was a Lassallean, which was bad enough, but because, as an intellectual, he thought he could do better in projecting what Marx "really meant".

Do you realize that the German Social-Democracy didn't even ask Engels -- he was still alive, and much superior to them, including Mehring who was the one writing the History -- for his views of the history of socialist ideas and organizations, a history he had lived through with Marx and with all tendencies who truly made history. Ryazanov, who was known as the greatest Marx scholar, an archivist and analyst of Marxism, had discovered a great store of writings by Marx which had never been published. He introduced them in a scholarly and historic fashion, and that's how we came to know the young Marx. That didn't hold true for the last writings of Marx, which, though he hadn't deciphered nor had a chance to read, he had the gall to characterize as "inexcusable pedantry". This characterization was directed mainly to what we now know as the Ethnological Notebooks. As all the rest of the post-Marx Marxists, he was happy enough with Engels' Origin of the Family, which was supposed to have summarized Marx's 98 pages of notes on Morgan's Ancient Society.

This attitude to Marx's archives, even among the best of the "Marx scholars", who rush to publish their own views instead of publishing Marx's unpublished works, is one of the major reasons it has taken us 100 years to find out all that Marx had worked out. Worse yet, we have been left with the impression that Marx was so ill that he did nothing in the last years of his life. The trip to Algiers at the end of his life was described as if it were only a matter of his health, whereas in fact he studied Africa there and "fell in love" with the Arabs. He had written to his daughters, as we have seen, that, nevertheless, they would all go to the Devil if they didn't have a revolution.

Catching the historic link to Marx is not only a matter of finally seeing all his writings, but of grasping at one and the same time that something had to happen both in the movement from practice and in the movement from theory. I want to depart for a moment from Marx's day to our age, specifically the years 1950 to 1953. It was after the General Strike of the miners in 1949-50 that I felt we had reached a new stage both in Marxism and in proletarian consciousness. I therefor insisted that a worker be present when I gave my next report on what we then called "Marxism and State-Capitalism" and what

became Marxism and Freedom. (Until then, the discussion had been limited to myself, CLR James and Grace Lee.) Clearly, something was stirring in the world; I felt it very strongly after the death of Stalin, which had lifted a heavy incubus from my brain. Before the actual outbreak of the June 17, 1953 revolt in East Germany -- the first ever from under totalitarianism -- I turned to the study of the Absolute Idea, splitting that category into two, i.e. saying that there was not only a unity of theory and practice, but that there was a movement from practice, and not only one from theory.

I no sooner said this than I went to check what Marx had written on Hegel's Philosophy of Mind. I found that where I began with paragraph #385, Marx had left off precisely at paragraph #384 -- saying he would return. But he never got to finish.

What makes somebody, a century after the event, without knowing where Marx had left off, start focusing on the very next paragraph? I don't know. I do know that there are certain creative moments in history when the objective movement and the subjective movement so coincide that the self-determination of ideas and the self-determination of masses readying for revolt explode. Something is in the air, and you catch it. That is, you catch it if you have a clear head, and if you have good ears to hear what is upsurging from below. All this happened May 12 and May 20, six weeks before the actual revolution on June 17 in East Berlin.

That is something very different from just being the first one to translate Marx's Humanist Essays and Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks, and publish them as the basis for what we as Marxist-Humanists were doing on the American roots of Marxism, beginning with the Abolitionists and climaxing in the 1949-50 General Strike of the miners. That is to say, you translate because you have already been on the road to working out all these relations in your own country and your own time. Under those circumstances you cannot possibly look at masses in motion and not feel stirred to the marrow of your bones. That is what happened on June 17, 1953, as the German workers destroyed the statue of Stalin and raised the slogan: "Bread and Freedom!" That is what led to the transformation of "Marxism and State-Capitalism", which became Marxism and Freedom by 1957. By then we had become not just a State-Capitalist Tendency, but a Marxist-Humanist group, News and Letters Committees.

II. From Absolute Idea as Movement <u>from Practice</u> as well as from Theory, to the Absolute Idea as New Beginning (1968-1973)

It was different by 1973 and <u>Philosophy and Revolution</u>. Why was it different? Because this time it did not come only from the fact that East Europe had arisen against Russian totalitarianism (and there had been a revolt from within the slave labor camps of Vorkuta, as well). This time it came from the revolts against Western imperialism as well. This time it was the youth the world over, as well as the Black revolution. Unfortunately, all the youth thought was needed was more and more activities, dismissing theoretical debates as "factional struggles" and considering that theory was so easy it could be picked up "en route." These were not just "factional struggles" but <u>historic-philosophic</u> tendencies in a very new form, that at one and the same time caught the historic link to Marx and had an original contribution to record. That theory was needed, that there could be no revolution without a philosophy of revolution, was shown by the fact that De Gaulle, without firing a single shot, succeeded in aborting the great 1968 revolt in France. Something had to be done. The youth in revolt had not betrayed; they thought they were very original in rejecting "factional struggles" and insisting, instead, on more and more activity. But they didn't achieve what they were after. So this time we had to find the link <u>from theory</u>, and not only from practice.

Before (1957), we stressed the movement from practice; the split in the Absolute Idea. Now (1973) we were saying Absolute Idea <u>as new beginning</u>, as a totality which is just a beginning for a movement forward. <u>Philosophy and Revolution</u>, then, with its first chapter, "Why Hegel? Why Now?", dug into Hegel <u>as Hegel, as well as into Marx who recreated that dialectic, and as Lenin rediscovered it in 1914, at the outbreak of World War I</u>. All this was measured against the rise of both a whole new Third World and a whole new generation of revolutionaries.

III. 1981: Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

The point this time is that in the work on Rosa Luxemburg, which is also on Women's Liberation, which is also on Marx's work as a totality, which is also on Lenin, and which is also on Trotsky -- I not only take up revolutionaries, but great revolutionaries who were also theoreticians. Nobody was greater than Lenin in Russia in 1917, or greater than Luxemburg both in 1905 and 1919; how could they possibly be inadequate for our day? The point nevertheless is that before we spoke about the theoretic void left by Lenin's death, which had never been filled; now we are speaking about the fact that even Lenin, who had made the great philosophic breakthrough had remained ambivalent. He had philosophically reorganized himself in relationship to Materialism and Idealism, on the nature of the revolution that would not stop at the democratic stage but go all the way to the proletarian and elemental and international revolution. He also was for self-determination of nations as the actual bacillus for proletarian revolution. But, but, but.... he did stop short of reorganizing himself on the Party, though he had introduced many modifications through 1905 and 1917. He was especially great when he threatened to resign from the leadership and "go to the sailors", if the Party did not put the question of the conquest of power on the agenda. And he didn't stop criticizing the new bureaucracy. But when it came to breaking with the Party then, far from "going to the sailors," he was thinking that the Bolshevik layer was so thin that it was them he must trust fully. We certainly could not accept that. We, who have suffered 30 years of Stalinism, the transformation of the workers' state into its total opposite, a state-capitalist society, and have witnessed new revolts from below, will not accept any vanguardism-to-lead; they have done nothing but mislead. In a word, if Lenin had accomplished as great a reorganization of himself on the Party Question as he had done on the Self-Determination of Nations, we might have had some ground for today, but we don't. And when it comes to the Woman Question, I don't believe he ever thought of reorganizing himself. There we have to start totally anew.

As for Trotsky, it is not only that question of vanguard party to lead on which he accepts Lenin's 1903 position; it is also that his theory of permanent revolution, which sounds as though it is Marx's, is not -- is not. Let's stop here a minute. First of all, we must remember that Trotsky did not name his analysis of 1905 as a theory of permanent revolution. It was a Menshevik who so named it; and Trotsky was glad to accept the name, without any reference to Marx's theory whatsoever. He was great, and way ahead of his time, in pointing out that the revolution would not stop at its democratic-bourgeois stage; that once unleashed the proletariat would go all the way. On the other hand, he did not recognize the peasantry as a revolutionary force, nor pay attention to the fact that they were the overwhelming majority in Russia. On that one Lenin was right and Trotsky was wrong -- that is to say, Lenin was right that you cannot consider that a revolution can be successful when it disregards 90 percent of its population. Lenin agreed that the proletariat must be a "leader" but insisted it had to be a"revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." Otherwise, Lenin maintained, it meant "skipping" stages of revolution, playing down its forces. Marx, it is true, spoke of "rural idiocy", but he never forgot that "a second edition of the Peasants' War" was needed to have the proletarian revolution succeed.

Allow me to divert back to Marx's time. Marx first used the expression "permanent revolution" back in 1843 in an Essay on the Jewish Question, that is, on the civil rights of a minority, insisting that civil rights was insufficient and that there had to be totally new human relations. The next time he spoke of it was during an actual revolution, 1848. Once that was defeated, Marx, instead of bowing to the defeat, insisted on the need for a "revolution in permanence." His point was that, first, one must remember the highest point achieved by the revolution: it was proletarian independence: "Never again must we go with the bourgeoisie." Secondly, the revolution, to be successful, must have the peasantry with it. Thirdly, indeed above all, Marx was always looking for ever-new live forces to create a new dialectic, not just philosophicly, but a new dialectic of revolution. In a word, when he used

the expression, "revolution in permanence"; in the Address to the Communist League in 1850, he was talking about continuous revolution in transition to a class-less society.

Two decades later, Marx continued to work out his theory of revolution in permanence, this time in the form of actually predicting the revolution coming first in a backward country, rather than a technologically advanced country. In that letter to Zasulitch, praising primitive communism in Morgan's Ancient Society, he neither failed to mention that Morgan's report was government-sponsored, nor stopped at the primitive stage. It is true that the Iroquois women had more power than women under capitalism, and collective property of the tribes could lead to a higher stage. But Marx wasn't recording just facts; he was interested in what the facts signified. Marx had lived through the Paris Commune and a decade later there was nothing on the horizon of that nature, and he was questioning whether a new dialectic of revolution could start within Russia and the Peasant Communes that still existed there. So non-determinist was he, and so open to all new beginnings, that he now held that his "Historical Tendency of the Accumulation of Capital" was not to be made into a universal; that it was a generalization of what had happened in Western Europe but that Russia had the best chance in the world to avoid the monstrosity of Western capitalism.

He was not predicting as a prophet. He was analyzing dialectically the law of motion of capitalist society to its collapse, the live forces of revolution who were recreating the dialectic of revolution in new circumstances. And precisely because his vision was of a new form of society, a class-less society, he didn't stop at any historic stage as the ultimate.

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I began by saying that unless Marxist-Humanists fully grasped the historic continuity to Marx's Humanism and worked out the trail to the 1980s on the basis of those new moments in Marx's last decade, the expression, "taking organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism", would have no meaning. In a word, my "rejection" of that expression meant that the prerequisite for it was, at one and the same time, catching the historic continuity as well as working it out for our age. What I was stressing in Chapter XII of the book was the new openings in what Melville had called "abrupt intermerging" and what we called the "new moments" in Marx's last decade, be it in the Ethnological Notebooks, both as they concerned Asiatic mode of production and the role of women among the Iroquois and the Irish, and for that matter, what Marx had written of the Paris Commune; or the projection of a revolution in Russia ahead of one in the West. Those new openings are "door openers" to organizational growth, both because the book is a creation whose time has come, and because it illuminates the myriad crises of today. It is here that we get the wherewithal for taking responsibility for Marxist-Humanism, that is to say, it sets the ground for our historic right to be.

The imperative need to fill the philosophic void in post-Marx Marxism is most clearly seen in Leon Trotsky's reducing the ground for the Fourth International to a matter of leadership, or, as he put it: "The crisis of the world is the crisis of leadership," as if substitution of good leaders, like Trotsky, instead of bad leaders, like Stalin, would change the course of the world. Instead, as we know, the Fourth International became the still-birth it is. Had he considered, instead, that it was his historic responsibility to fill the philosophic void, he might have found the trail to lead us back to Marx and forward to the transformation of society.

The philosophic concept of leadership became correctly, with us, the projection of Marx's Humanism. That is to say, philosophy of revolution rather than the vanguardist party. It becomes all the more imperative that we project all the new moments in Marx that we did discover; and that is not limited to the new in organizational form -- committee-form against the "party-to-lead" -- that didn't separate theory from practice.

We have all too often stopped at the committee-form of organization rather than the inseparability of that from philosophy. And it is the philosophy that is new, unique, our special historic contribution that enabled us to find historic continuity, the link to Marx's Humanism. It is this which is totally new, not the committee-form of organization, as crucial as that is.

As I put it at the end of the new book: "What is needed is a new unifying principle, on Marx's ground of humanism, that truly alters both human thought and human experience. Marx's Ethnological Notebooks are a historic happening that proves in this jubilee year that Marx's legacy is no mere heirloom, but a live body of ideas and perspectives that is in need of concretization. Every moment of Marx's development as well as the totality of his works spell out the need for 'revolution in permanence.' This is the absolute challenge to our age."

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