

May 10, 1983

Dear Raha:

First I wish to congratulate you on your proposed Introduction to the A-A pamphlet which I do hope will go to press very soon; it is of the essence it be off the press at the very time we have discussions of Perspective for N&L Constitutional Convention.

At the same time, please permit me to ~~xxx~~ criticize you for the timing not only because you took altogether too long a period before meeting the deadline we had agreed on last year, but also because ~~xxxx~~, by the time you did it, I was on the most extensive and exhaustive 2 1/2 mo. tour on nothing less important than the 100th anniversary of Marx's death as "new birth-time of history" for our age. In a word, TIMING is not only of the essence for past and present but future. So, please do follow STRICT ADHERENCE TO TIMING now so that both the ~~xxx~~ Iranian perspectives and ours merge in a way that internationalism and revolutionary nationalism merge in the manner in which they did in Luxemburg in the way she was both Polish and German and world revolutionary in her activities in the concrete.

Now then, all I think that your Introduction needs is a matter of a few changes in style so that, at once, you get the new, the relevant in both what you are saying for Iran and for why you reprint at this time. Perhaps you can even include, at end, even if only in a footnote, a reference to CIRA conf. without, however, an approval, just that it happened and I did speak there and Marxist-Humanism was present. Thus, note that on p. 1, 1st par. I suggested the 1st lines be show concretely 3rd world:

We are presently, --the 4th year since the 1979 Iranian revolution--in the year of the Marx centenary. Because this is no mere coincidence; rather it is the year when, finally, ~~xxxxxxx~~ Marx's Marxism can be seen as a totality for it is only now that the works of his last decade ~~xxx~~ turned to what we now call The Third World in his Ethnological Notebooks. It is 1st now that we can see that Marx ~~xxxx~~ kept working out his whole life as a revolutionary.....ask ourselves: why is it that we let Khomeini usurp that spontaneous revolt as if he, Khomeini, was that expression of elemental revolt of the masses for freedom?

For the 2nd par. of p. 1, outside of underlining the word, process, and adding the word that liberals are the ones who very nearly automatically translates technological backwardness as "backwardness of the masses", I propose only the extension of the last sentence after you mention A-A pamphlet to say:

which was written at the start of the 3rd world revolutions and is even more relevant today than in the 1980s. Then it was a warning where these revolutions might end without a philosophy of revolution. Now that warning is both tragic fact and indication of how we can begin anew.

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For your p.2., I again only extended last sentence of par.1. after you mention RL, WL, KM. ~~thus~~ thus:

Makes it what she calls a "Trilogy of Revolution" for our age which began as a movement from practice to theory which was itself a form of theory with its new revolts in production (Automation), in cognition (in East Europe especially, but also in Latin America and Africa and Asia as well as in the Black revolts in the US itself) and is now challenging both post-Marx Marxists and all theoreticians to rise to the point of philosophy.

And in par.2 I simply changed the word, "discovery" to "working out" the ramifications of the 1905 Russian-Polish revolutions ub the East, esp. Iran which was then called Persia.

On p.3 I simply tried to shown itm both by cutting out 1st sentence on 1959 publ, so that the par. at once begins with What ED saw in 3rd World, and while extending in 2nd. par. on Marx's Marxism the phrase:

that makes clear that post-Marx Marxists had rooted themselves in a truncated Marxism since they did not have the works of his last decade, I cut out entirely the last par. which was mentioned in a brief phrase so that the relevance for today and for Iran that you do well on p.4 stand out more prominently not only in p.5 as you wrote it but perhaps there you can mention what I referred to at the start as a ref. to CIRA & my appearance In a word, it is not the past, but its relevance for today that all keep in mind and work out for themselves.

O.k.?

Yours,



O, yes, I'm sending a copy to LA for Azadcar and Peter, the last obviously because he is organizer & the ~~last~~ because he is being invited to center for the summer mos. to participate in preparations for Const.Conv. & opening of Perspectives discussions which is when I hope yors plus translation of A-A pamphlet would be ready also. And for you I enclose your Introd. so you can see what I scribbled on but is actually in this letter more legible.

Raha's Draft Introduction to the Farsi Afro-Asian Pamphlet

5.22.75

We are now at the <sup>4th</sup> anniversary of the 1979 (Iranian) Revolution which ~~also~~ coincides with Marx's centenary. We turn here to look at a new concept of revolution itself, because <sup>rather than</sup> what brings those two together is not just coincidence but rather the question that Marx kept working out his whole life as a philosopher of revolution as well as one of its participants--how do we begin anew? We have gone through an actual revolution--a revolution so massive, and so persistent in the long preparatory strikes that became a General Mass Political Strike which drove the Shah along with his backers, U.S. imperialism, from power. Yet we are now under the whip of counter-revolution, one that emerged right from within the revolution which it turned so brutally to destroy. We must, therefore, seriously ask ourselves why is it that we <sup>let</sup> mistook Khomeini as <sup>was a spontaneous result of</sup> any expression of elemental revolt of the masses for freedom?

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What is even worse now is to take defeat as our ground and to act today as if there was no way for the movement to go any further because of Iran's technological backwardness, which <sup>is</sup> automatically translated as "backwardness of the masses." This kind of economic determinism which identifies the whole of revolution with Khomeini, <sup>with</sup> with defeat, surely doesn't leave us anywhere to go. What is needed is a closer look at revolution that doesn't begin with <sup>what</sup> appears to be the end result, but looks to the revolutionary process to answer the question what happens after the overthrow? This is what compelled the translation and publication of Raya Dunayevskaya's "Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions,"

which was written at the start of the ~~Iranian~~ 3rd World Revolution and is <sup>now</sup> more relevant today than in 1960. Then it was a warning when these revolutions might end in a philosophy of revolution. Now that warning is both tragic fact and indication how we can begin anew.

The author of this pamphlet, Raya Dunayevskaya, is the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. In a life time of involvement in diverse revolutionary movements, she has completed three comprehensive theoretical-philosophic works on Marx's philosophy of revolution as well as its development for our age as dialectics of liberation. These works are: Marxism and Freedom: from 1776 to Today (1958); Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao (1973)-- both republished this year for the Marx centenary, <sup>So that the</sup> and newest work, just off the press, Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, <sup>which she calls a "Tribute to Revolution"</sup> <sup>which began as a movement from Paris to Moscow</sup> She was at work on her latest book when the Iranian Revolution began in 1978. This led to her discovery of the ramifications of the 1905 Russian-Polish revolution in the East, especially the 1906-11 revolution in Iran, where a deeper development of the Russian Revolution itself was found when it came to the formation of the first women's anjumen (Soviet) in history. The work on this latest book led her to greet the great demonstration of Iranian women liberationists on International Women's Day 1979 and spell out its significance as an opening to the second chapter of the revolution as well as its international dimension. Along with that was an analysis of the emergent retrogression in her March 27, 1979 Political-Philosophic Letter "Iran: Unfoldment, and contradictions within the Revolution." This letter and her other Political-Philosophic Letters which trace the course of revolution and counterrevolution are all published in a separate pamphlet: "Iran: Revolution and Counterrevolution." Because

the introduction she wrote to the Farsi publication of her letters ("Struggle Continues, What Kind of Revolution is Needed in the Battle against the Khomeini-IRP Counterrevolution?") is both a summation of the current revolutionary period of Iran as well as a perspective for the future, we felt it necessary to republish it as an appendix to this pamphlet.

The pamphlet you have in hand was originally written in 1959 (with a new British edition in 1961) when a whole new Third World was emerging out of the Afro-Asian Revolutions against western imperialism. What Dunayevskaya saw in the Third World was, not geography, but new human dimensions, new forces and new passions for the reconstruction of society, whose maturity is the exact opposite of technological backwardness. Now that the first workers' state, Russia, too, had been transformed into its opposite (state-capitalism), she articulated a new concept of revolution, concretized as a new relationship between the revolution of the technologically advanced and technologically backward countries.

Dunayevskaya's pointing to the great passion of our age that does not want to be determined by technology and finding in that refusal a new point of departure for world revolution, began with her return to the Hegelian roots of Marxism which in turned revealed Marx's Marxism. She had rediscovered a total philosophy of revolution in which the determinant is, not technology (object), but self-developing human subjects who are not just force but Reason of revolution.

This new age that had begun objectively with a new stage in production--AUTOMATION-- was followed with the emergence of a whole new spontaneous movement in the 1950s. Both the American workers battling automation who asked for a qualitatively different kind of labor, as well as the Eastern European revolutions from under Communist totalitarianism that began with the East German uprising in 1953 raising

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the slogan "bread and freedom", unfurled a banner of Humanism; so universal a banner Humanism that it became the characteristic of all freedom struggles.

The newness and profundity of the philosophic questions these movements raised made Dunayevskaya develop further her original idea that the "movement from practice is itself a form of theory". The key is that the movement from practice does not <sup>release</sup> ~~relieve~~ Marxist revolutionaries of their responsibilities. Quite the contrary, it was the beginning of a new stage of cognition about a human relationship to technology that now challenged theory itself to meet its demands, to establish a new relationship of theory to practice.

Instead if we fail to work out a new unity between theory and practice, the outcome, if not outright betrayal, surely initiates a retrogression in thought that rather than releasing the creative energies of the new mass rebellions, <sup>it</sup> stifles the revolution.

Herein lies the tragedy of <sup>the</sup> African revolutions that began so soon after the revolution. The beginnings of the African revolutions were also a proclaiming, even in their leaders, of Marxism as humanism. Yet so weighted down were the national leaders with the consciousness of technological backwardness, the need to industrialize, that they turned to one of the two poles of world capital--U.S. or Russia. Without the masses, i.e., without their reason as a basis of revolution and humanism, there remained no way to escape the objective vortex of the world market.

Each revolution, however, discloses something new, unique and challenging. The new in the Iranian Revolution reveals both great strength and great weakness. Four years ago, Iran was the birth place of the greatest, most massive revolution that burst forth and brought ever broader and deeper layers of society to the actual scene of



revolution, and so miraculously put an end to the despotic regime of the Shah, armed to the teeth with the most sophisticated technological weapons. What was even more outstanding than the overthrow of the Shah was the flowering of creative energies of millions in the ongoing revolution who felt themselves to be not just muscle but the Reason of revolution. The shoras that emerged at the workplaces were instruments of workers' self-emancipation, of workers control over their lives. It took two full years of constant state repression both with outright force of arms and certainly always the imposition of Islamic ideology to transform them. That meant suppressing any initiative outside of opposition to the Great Satan. The same is true for the unemployed and student youth who fought the regime on the barricades. It took nothing short of closing the universities, even high schools, to make those hotbeds of revolutionary activity--and activity in this period meant also an ~~intensive~~ <sup>new</sup> search for/revolutionary ideas-- quiescent. The Kurdish fight for self-determination which is the most democratic the extensive in worker takeovers and peasant land seizures, is ongoing to this day. The 500,000 women mobilizing for five full days against Khomeini were the first to make explicit the goal of the revolution by declaring "at the dawn of freedom, we have no freedom." The overriding truth is that these revolutionary forces were also the ones who attempted to deepen the revolution from mere overthrow of the Shah to actual freedom and new human relations. But what is equally true is the deep and wide gulf that separated the thought and activity of Marxist revolutionaries from the masses in motion: a separation that became absolute at the high point of the revolution.

Rather than feeling compelled to reorganize to catch up with the revolution, the Left instead chose to so narrow the very concept of revolution as to identify its expression with Khomeini. Thus tailending his "anti-imperialism" meant tailending also his aim

for the revolution. Those of us today, who have become oppressively aware of Khomeini's counterrevolution certainly can't reduce once again the whole preparation for revolution to strategy and tactics and plunge ourselves into the indulgence of pure sloganeering--this time "Down with Khomeini" in place of "Down with the Shah"-- as unifying force. No! The whole experience of revolution demands that we not express ourselves only in terms of what we're against. What is needed is a new unifying force on the ground of the highpoint of the revolution.

It is true that the revolution that was is no longer ongoing, however, the great experience of the masses in creating the revolution and taking the first breath of freedom is not going to disappear so easily. The elemental creativity of diverse forces of revolution--workers, youth, women, minorities (Kurd especially)--meant also a new consciousness of what is possible which will not sink into the void being created by Khomeini's counterrevolution. At this moment, when the objective crises are deeper than ever and the hardship of the masses more than before, that consciousness can become the regenerating force for a revival of mass activities. That's when a new beginning in the very concept of revolution becomes crucial: one that can open a perspective of total uprooting and become ground for actual revolution by spelling out what we are for. It is therefore imperative to begin anew by preparing ourselves theoretically for the next stage of the Iranian revolution. The contribution of this pamphlet is what I hope can become a taking off point in that direction.