

National Chairwoman's Perspectives Report  
to Convention of News and Letters Committees  
September 2, 1978

# Perspectives 1978 - 1979

## THE DIALECTIC OF TODAY'S CRISES AND TODAY'S REVOLTS

by Raya Dunayevskaya

"Logical concepts are subjective so long as they remain abstract ... Human concepts are subjective in their abstractness, separateness, but objective as a whole, in the process, in the sum-total, in the tendency, in the source."

"... every science is applied logic."

-- Lenin

"Cognition is reconstructed and united with the Practical Idea; the actuality which is found as given is at the same time determined as the absolute end -- not however (as in inquiring cognition) merely as objective world without the Subjectivity of the Notion, but as objective world whose inner ground and actual persistence is the Notion. This is the Absolute Idea."

-- Hegel

Introduction: Whether the "China card" is in the U.S.'s Hands, or China's Own, it is a False Alternative

- I. The Decrepit U.S. Economy and the Mass Struggles at Home--  
Labor, Black and Latino, Women and Youth
- II. Revolution and Counter-Revolution: Latin America (Nicaragua especially), Portugal, and Whither Angola and Namibia
- III. The Middle-East -- at Camp David? Or as the Crossroads of the World?
- IV. The Praxis of Philosophy

Post-Convention Bulletin No. 1

September 1978

NEWS & LETTERS

1900 E. JEFFERSON

DETROIT, MI. 48207

Price: 50¢

5791

PERSPECTIVES 1978-1979  
National Chairwoman's Report to News and Letters Committees Convention

THE DIALECTIC OF TODAY'S CRISES AND TODAY'S REVOLTS

Introduction: Whether the "China card" is in the U.S.'s Hands, or  
China's Own, It is a False Alternative

Because the subjective situation -- that is to say, what we are, what we do, and what we think -- is so integral to the objective world situation, especially when that is so ridden with myriad crises as today's world is, I will begin by reading the Lenin-Hegel quotations on the frontispiece. They may sound abstract. But they illuminate the most concrete political and economic crises.

So urgently do we need to uproot this exploitative, racist, sexist world, that philosophy becomes indispensable. The quotations are from (1) Lenin's Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic -- the section on the Doctrine of the Notion, and (2) Hegel's Doctrine of the Notion, as Hegel reaches the Absolute Idea; and, I might add, this is the section where a century later Lenin decided that not only had no Marxists understood Marx's Capital, but his own essay on Karl Marx, only a month back, hadn't fully worked out the dialectic. \*

<p>"Logical concepts are subjective so long as they remain abstract ... Human concepts are subjective in their abstractness, separateness, but objective as a whole, in the process, in the sum-total, in the tendency, in the source."</p>	: :	<p>"Cognition is reconstructed and united with the Practical Idea; the actuality which is found as given is at the same time determined as the absolute end -- not however (as in inquiring cognition) merely as objective world without the Subjectivity of the Notion, but as objective world whose inner ground and actual persistence is the Notion. This is the Absolute Idea."</p>
<p>" ... every science is applied logic." -- Lenin</p>	: : : :	<p>-- Hegel</p>

No doubt only dimly, but something by now nevertheless is stirring in our heads which points to the fact that the Absolute Idea, far from residing in heaven, is a way of relating the subjective to the objective, of uniting theory with practice in a new relationship.

\* See Marxism and Freedom, p. 169, where I quote Lenin's letter of 1/4/1915 to the Encyclopedia Granat to whom he had submitted his essay on Marx, and now wanted to "add something ... (on) the question of dialectics."

So let us now look at the reality we must face, some of the antagonistic contradictions that abound in the world.

First and foremost among the new contradictions that burst forth (during these couple of months between the June 17 Draft Perspectives and the final working out of Perspectives we need to achieve today) was the August 12 signing of the Sino-Japanese Treaty. The Foreign Minister of Japan, Sunao Sonoda, followed this up by informing the world that China had informed him that it (China) would formally abrogate the 1950 friendship pact with Russia.

~~As if anyone could possibly doubt that the Treaty was not just between~~  
China and Japan, Hua Kuo-feng repaired at once to Russia's imperial sphere of influence, East Europe, specifically Roumania and Yugoslavia, and then to Russia's antagonistic neighbor, Iran.

What far outweighs this gesture of nose-thumbing was the global dimension of Big Power politicking with the U.S. The latter was, at one and the same time, encouraging Japan to conclude that deal with China, and using China as its card in trying to get from Russia the kind of SALT treaty the U.S. wants.

While the population Goliath, China, on the one hand, and the industrial giant, Japan, on the other, are by no means just U.S. surrogates, (similar to Cuba or East Germany executing Russia's interests in Ethiopia), it is still very clear that Russia is not the only one seeking "hegemony". The state-capitalist age is bi-polar — Russia and the United States — and is titanically nuclear, with each fighting for single world mastery. Which doesn't mean that we are already on the precipice, and that others won't try to position themselves in a way to make geopolitics sound "ideological".

Until the actual missiles start flying, "detente" as well as confrontation, along with innumerable double-crosses, will be on all the burners, back and front. Thus, on the very date, June 7, when Carter was sabre-rattling at Annapolis, he could also announce that the SALT talks were "progressing". Clearly, neither <sup>nuclear</sup> Goliath allowed "confrontation" on so-called "human rights" to stand in the way. \*

\* For once, Andrew Young's speech on how many "hundreds, even thousands" of political prisoners are in America, precisely because it was "wrongly timed", drew not only applause, but is also being used as ground for Black mass

-3-

Although SALT may fall through, it is also not at all out of the question that when the UN opens its Assembly in September, Gromyko will not only merely be in attendance there, but at the White House, arranging for a meeting between Carter and Brezhnev, and that before the year is out.

In a word, the shocker is not just that state-capitalism calling itself "Communist" indulges in capitalist-imperialist geopoliticking with our lives, exactly as "private" capitalism does. The shocker is not even that "Communist" Russia and "Communist" China consider each other "Enemy No. 1", since that shocker happened as far back as 1960 when the Sino-Soviet conflict came into the open. The new shocker is that not only is "ideology" used to cover up the jockeying for strategic geopolitical positions with the murderer of Lumumba -- Mobutu -- and the most barbaric of Latin American counter-revolutionaries -- Pinochet of Chile -- but that Hua Kuo-feng chose to meet the Shah at the very moment when a veritable civil war is in progress in Iran.

Ever since the China-Japan trade pact was signed just a couple of weeks back, no less than about twelve trade agreements have been negotiated. First was China's export of oil and coal in return for Japanese machinery, from mining equipment to petro-chemicals. The price-tag will be a whopping \$20 billion. Included are oil research technology and equipment from France, an open-pit mining complex from West Germany, and negotiations with a Japanese consortium for the sale of a 20,000-ton ethanol synthesizing plant to be built near the famous Taching oil field. Many of the Japanese deals are likely to be covered under the \$20 billion long-term trade agreement.

The Western capitalists are dreaming that China would have to buy, in the next ten years, no less than between \$20-\$30 billion of plant capital. Since Peking has said that it only has \$3 billion in foreign currency reserves, it would have to go in for heavy borrowing. For them, "ideology" has nothing to do with it; they are looking forward to the massive interest,

opposition to Carter's holier-than-thou attitude, as if Russia alone was violating human rights.

As far as that is concerned, European bourgeois editors like Andre Fontaine (in Le Monde section of Manchester Guardian, 7/30/78) likewise wrote that there was quite an element of truth in Young's statement, adding: "Carter's sermonizing doesn't prevent multinationals from carving up a good part of the world among themselves with the connivance of regimes that don't give a damn for democracy."

5794

i.e., profits galore. China, on the other hand, is interested in industrialization, hot-house style, with no great concern for the conditions of labor of its workers — exactly as Stalin when he launched the First Five Year Plan, and further intensified it to the breaking point for both workers and peasants with his demand that the Five Year Plan be finished in four years.

As we put it in the Draft Perspectives: "The greatest tragedy of all in this era is that Mao had, in fact, accepted state-capitalism as the next world economic order! Shocking as that sounds when expressed straightforwardly, Mao had it in the back of his mind as early as 1957." In a word, once a revolutionary does not ground himself/herself on new revolutionary beginnings from below, such as the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, and make that new beginning the determinant for a new end, with the goal being FREEDOM — retrogression is inescapable.

Presently, the relationship of subjective to objective is not theory but practice. It is not something in the distant future and at a faraway place. It is the imperative need right here and now. And because this is so, philosophy itself can become a force of revolution if we practice it, not just on Sundays, so to speak, but daily.

Let's begin with the never-changing, greatest determinant of all, the class struggle, and let's begin at home — where the main enemy always is — with the U.S. capitalist class.

\* \* \*

I. The Decrepit U.S. Economy and the Mass Struggles at Home —  
Labor, Black and Latino, Women and Youth

Dualities which aren't just intra-capitalist geopolitics, but are the type of opposites which are totally irreconcilable, are, of course, labor and capital. Joblessness, far from diminishing (with or without the Humphrey-Hawkins so-called "full employment" Bill) is deepening, that is to say, there is a generation that may never see a job; there are plenty of Black teenagers who can testify to that. And even when the U.S. Commerce Dept. decided that production had grown higher than they anticipated for the April-June period — 8% instead of 7.4% — they had to acknowledge, at the same time, that inflation, instead of being the 7.2% they had reported, rose to 10.7%. In a word, we are nearly back to the Nixon-type double-digit inflation, to which must be added: the sharp fall of the dollar.

-5-

Because crises are multiplying daily, capitalist ideologues don't even pretend to come up with any solution. Instead they busy themselves with creating a new vocabulary to hide just how organic is the sickness of the economy. One new phrase the capitalists have come up with, (as Peter Mallory showed in the latest issue of N&L), is "reduced productivity of capital in relationship to labor."

It isn't that these ideologues don't know that labor and only labor is the source of all <sup>value</sup> / and surplus value. But so bad is the job situation and so total their impotence, that all these ideologues can do is play with words -- and that in the face of rebellious working masses, men, women, and youth, white as well as Black, who are always ready to wildcat! Witness the fact that such ultra-conservative labor bureaucrats like George Meany, as well as the more liberal Vernon Jordan of the Urban League, have been forced to conduct a continuous criticism of Carter. Doug Fraser of the UAW in fact felt compelled to resign from the President's Labor-Management Group.

Add to what the labor leaders had to criticize, the truth of women's conditions. Ruth J. Hinerfeld, president of the League of Women Voters, had to entitle her article for Women's Equality Day this August 26 (Christian Science Monitor 8/23/78), "Women's (In)equality Day." And she shows that far more serious than the question of the ERA are the conditions of unemployment and welfare.

No less than 26 million people -- of whom 11 million are children -- live below the poverty level in this richest land in the world. Three-fourths of the 3.4 million families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children are headed by women. Indeed, the whole trend has been an increase in female-headed families with children -- in the last decade the number of such families has grown ten-fold. Those who talk glibly of sending those women to work should know that this would hardly meet the need, since women's wages are, even now, 60% of the median income of men. And the truth of course is that many can't get jobs -- and they are looking for jobs not only to get out of the kitchen, but out of necessity.

Contrast that to the White House deluding itself, as if it is a matter of singing the song "accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative." Here is the way the Council of Economic Advisers does it. Its advice is that, instead of emphasizing the joblessness, one should "accentuate the positive" --

5796

the ratio of those who are working. Instead of stressing the 9% unemployment for 1978, why not show that 60% of the adult population is working? The trouble with that, is that then we would see an even greater percentage of people not working — and those who cannot get a job aren't the rich at leisure. Well, the new supermen-economist-politicians had an answer to that, too. They speak now — and that's the "negative" — of "the capricious nature of movement in and out of the labor force." That "capricious nature" refers to women and teenagers.

What to do now? Well, what is implied in regard to women is the old myth: send them back to the kitchen. But as for youth, no one, not even those guilders of the truth, can claim it is "only" a minority that is involved in unemployment; when it comes to Black teenagers, it is the overwhelming majority. Nevertheless, nothing fazes ideological prize-fighters for capitalism; their ready answer is: instead of giving out figures about "general" unemployment, let's play up the specific job programs catering to Black teenagers. In that way, they show that in the last six months "alone", Black teenage employment "jumped" — 5%.

And while they are in the business of "accentuating the positive and eliminating the negative", why not also claim that the unemployed aren't all "that bad off"? After all, they get unemployment benefits, don't they? And when that stops ... ? Ah, well, don't dwell on the "negative". Believe it or not, Newsweek (8/21/78) headlines all that gobbledygook "Jobs: The Sunny Side."

That the masses not only know the truth, but revolt against it, is seen in the strikes, formal and wildcat. There is hardly a day free of them.

But the capitalists, along with the pettyfogging gimmicks regarding labor and women and youth, have decided to scare themselves, and therefore issued a "warning" to the government about nothing short of "a new force in the world economy: stateless money."

It is of course no small matter that a few dozen banks control no less than \$400 billion and, as Business Week (8/21/78) puts it, this is "10 times bigger than it was a decade ago, 4 times bigger than it was as recently as 1972." Moreover, although OPEC's quadrupled price increase has "redistributed" the world's liquidity, or as Business Week put it, "pulled money by the ton away from the West and spread it into the Mideast, Asia, and Latin

America ...", that simply has not, cannot solve the problem.

Indeed, though these intellectual "prizefighters for capitalism" keep far away from Marxist references to the Third World being sucked into the world market, one of them, Paul Lewis \*, details how complicated this whole question of the falling dollar and OPEC really is. It may actually boomerang, because: if OPEC raises oil prices, then it courts recession in the industrial world where it has considerable investments; if they switch completely away from the dollar, that can disrupt the currency markets of all industrial nations and <sup>we</sup>would really enter a prolonged world recession that might bring the whole system down; and if OPEC replaces the dollar with a more "stable basket of currencies", there is no way of knowing that that Euro-basket plus Japanese yen wouldn't likewise collapse, because when all is said and done, production is the determinant and, in that sphere of production, the U.S. is still the top of the heap.

If it weren't for Rosa Luxemburg quoting Mehring that Hilferding's Finance Capital was written "by an educated bank clerk", I would get excited about this new, really fantastic "integrated global money and capital system, almost totally outside of all government regulations, that can send billions of Eurodollars, Euromarks and other 'stateless' currencies hurtling around the world 24 hours a day." But as it is, the gambling of the super-rich with the money not belonging to them holds no surprises. Some muckrakers will expose, the government will shout, and still a newer name will be devised for government and capital fleecing the poor, until it all collapses, like in the Decade of Depression. The oligopolies will still come out on top, and we're still at the bottom, until we finally uproot this whole exploitative system.

As for the U.S. government, nothing so worries them as international banking, only in this case, it's what these international banks do in this country. Thus the Joint Congressional Committee pointed to the fact that the assets of these foreign banks have leaped from \$7 billion in 1975 to nothing short of \$100 billion today. What they don't see is that what underlines the sharp duality in our world beset by myriad crises is not foreign banks but class struggles at home.

\* This finance specialist from the New York Times, during the strike of that paper, sees that his words of wisdom are not strikebound. This was published in the Detroit Free Press, 8/20/78.



Thus Senator Stevenson, who is most interested in trying to spur controlling legislation, attempted to spell out where all these 256 branch offices are, and stressed the fact that Houston alone is served by no less than 29 foreign banks. Okay, let's take Houston alone. Isn't that where all the women met and showed that even when organized by the government, they know how to escape the muzzle and make their opposition voices heard? \* Isn't that where the Latinos have often, and on, and on, a lot to say about the oppressive force of the American state and local police? And isn't that where President Carter, through his Attorney General, a Georgia racist, came to the aid of the racist cops who murdered Jose Campos Torres in their custody? You don't have to go to South Africa to find out what happens to a minority who gets into the clutches of the cops, only to be whitewashed by no less than the U.S. Attorney General.

Houston is going to experience a lot more serious confrontation than with its 29 international banks. If Houston hasn't learned from Soweto, it will learn from the Latinos.

Long, long ago -- over a century ago -- Marx showed how labor and only labor in production -- there and nowhere else -- produces all value and surplus value, with its very own absolute contradiction: profits in ever greater mass, as well as the decline in the rate of profit. None, not even what someone called "born-again multinational Democrats", including one member of the Trilateral Commission who became President, can possibly reverse Marx's analysis of the law of value because that is the simple truth, the hard reality! The class struggle continues until one day it bursts into revolution.

Consider the greatest class struggle this year -- the Miners' General Strike. It was not only against management but against their own labor leaders who, twice, were sent back to the negotiation table. And it was not only against management and their own labor leaders, but against the government as well as the courts. Moreover, this American strike inspired the whole world. (You will hear more about it in both International Reports -- Europe and Latin America. In fact, the N&L articles on the miners' strike will be included in the forthcoming Spanish pamphlet.)

\* See "ITV: Where To Now?" in N&L, Dec. 1977

There is no way, of course, to predict which of the economic struggles, or which of the many political as well as economic crises that will emerge will become the catalyst for revolution, but let's go from economics to politics, and follow the dialectic of revolution and counter-revolution.

\* \* \*

II. Revolution and Counter-Revolution: Latin America (Nicaragua especially), Portugal, and Whither Angola and Namibia?

The Political-Philosophic Letter on "The Latin American Unfinished Revolutions", which is part of the Perspectives this year, discussed what happened to the New Divide in Latin America which began with the Cuban Revolution.

That was the greatest ever national revolution in Latin America, having both overthrown the Batista regime and stopped cold that Behemoth 90 miles off its shore, U.S. imperialism. It had indigenous roots and won power totally independent of the Communists.

And yet once it was in power, it started tailending Russian Communism ideologically, even before it was totally indebted to it. And, acting as all rulers do to its own masses, it has by now reached the stage where it is very nearly just a surrogate for Russia in Ethiopia. Thus Cuba finds itself face-to-face with the Eritrean Liberation Front as if that were the "enemy". The fact that it evidently did balk at that role by no means changes either the unfinished nature of its own revolution, or ends its ambivalent role in Africa.

There is no doubt that all over Latin America now -- from Mexico to Argentina, and from Nicaragua to Peru, and from Bolivia to Chile -- the masses are in revolt both against U.S. imperialism and their own exploiters, military and otherwise.

There is also no doubt, as Eugene Walker showed in his N&L lead article in May, that three words sum up the U.S.'s only interest in Latin America: (1) oil, like Venezuela and Mexico have; (2) strategic importance, like Panama occupies; and (3) super-profits from investments everywhere, especially Brazil and Chile -- wherever American capital chooses <sup>to</sup> exploit -- and it chooses the whole continent as its preserve.

Peter Mallory (N&L, Aug.-Sept. 1978) pointed out that the export of U.S. capital has doubled in just the past five years. Indeed, since 1973, the inflow of capital to the Brazilian dictatorship went up 160%, and to Mexico, 320%.

and when that stretches also to South Korea and South Africa -- well, that is its "internationalism".

Nevertheless, imperialism is not the only reason for the unfinished state of revolution. Of no less crucial import for the unfinished nature of the Latin American revolutions is the theoretic void in the revolutionary movement since the death of Lenin, as Trotskyism's tailending Communism -- whether it be Russian or Cuban or Chinese -- proves. Indeed, the Trotskyists called the Cuban Revolution, long after it already was tailending Russia, nothing short of "rampart of the world revolution."

As against this, we focused on the totality of Marx's theory of social revolution, deeply rooted in Marx's Humanist philosophy. There were ~~some elements~~ of this -- and thus new beginnings for Latin American revolutions -- in Frondizi's attempt both philosophically and politically to give a different direction to these ceaseless revolts, before he was murdered by the Argentinian fascists. This legacy too, though, was ambivalent, as Frondizi also couldn't resist the pull of that New Divide that began with the Cuban Revolution, though he was at the moment busy translating Marxism and Freedom, and agreeing with my analysis of state-capitalism.

The response the Political-Philosophic Letter brought from some Latin American revolutionaries (see News & Letters Pre-Convention Discussion Bulletin #2, August 1978) was quite encouraging. There was agreement both as <sup>to</sup> the importance of Marxist-Humanism, and against the vanguardist concept of the party-to-lead.

But, it appeared to me, there were also elements of burdening the proletariat with the entire task that should exact as well responsibility from theoreticians -- philosophy. -- as if only out of praxis does a philosophy of revolution occur. Here is what the comrade wrote: "A new and powerful awakening of the working masses could revive a praxis of liberation, recreation of a philosophy of revolution."

Of course, a new stage of cognition arises when there is a new leap to freedom, but it isn't true that theoretic preparation for revolution is not needed now. Of course, the proletariat's activity is not only muscle but Reason, but to fully work out a philosophy of revolution demands labor, hard prolonged labor theoretically, as well as mass activity -- both are inseparable from each other, on the part of the proletariat and on the part of the theoreticians.

Let us look at the latest two dramatic events in Latin American revolts and see what happens when all that laborious prolonged battle with capitalism-imperialism is fought without a philosophy.

Because it had a terrorist look, the latest Latin American national liberation front attack in Nicaragua did capture all the headlines this August 22. Terrorism, which we oppose, in this case did have a most original form:

First, it was not against a single person who was terrorized or murdered, but the seizure was of the Nicaraguan National Palace; secondly, it was clearly a group that, far from acting without any regard for the masses, was, in fact, not only cheered by them, but above all, the masses identified with the cause by going on general strike — indeed, they have been engaged in such mass activity in Nicaragua since the murder of the opposition editor, Chamorro, in January; thirdly, they asked not only for the release of political prisoners and safe passage out of the country, but demanded that their political manifesto be read over the mass media.

Now, whether or not the sympathetic press coverage was due to the fact that so corrupt is the Somoza government that a substantial part of the capitalist class favors the overthrow of that military regime, the point is that because the seat of government itself was attacked, because the self-activity of the masses brought in the question, therefore, of conditions of labor as well as politics, and because their political manifesto (which is not exactly a philosophy of revolution but is good politics) was made public, this type of guerrilla action cannot just be dismissed as terrorism. But it also was not a social revolution.

And what will now develop, both spontaneously and "led" — plenty of vanguardism permeates the Sandinistas, — will be decisive for both Nicaragua and the whole of the Latin American continent; and Latin America remains without a philosophy of liberation, unless it is some Guevarism. \*

Now, as against guerrilla action, no matter of what variety, the question of social revolution is certainly something that the Trotskyists believe in,

\* See The Che Guevara Collection No. 2, which published the May 4, 1977 General Political-Military Platform of Struggle of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional — FSLN)

and in Peru they not only were calling for a workers' government, but they had an authentic revolutionary peasant leader, Hugo Blanco, as their voice. Few events were as exciting recently as the fact that after the military regime held Blanco in prison, and then expelled him from the land, the workers turned out en masse and elected him; the militarist government was forced to bring him back.

At the mass rally on July 16, the day he returned to Peru, Blanco stated openly and correctly: "We started educating the masses, but it was the masses who completed our education." The very fact that he had the highest vote in the electoral bloc, FOCEP, in which he ran, he said, shows that the workers, far from being backward and "fearing" socialism, voted precisely for him because he is a revolutionary Trotskyist.

Blanco further shows that "there are only a few hundred organized members of the FOCEP, and a half a million voted for the slate." Unfortunately his worker-completed education does not demand that he begin anew releasing praxis and philosophy, to merge. Instead, he asks that the workers be "organized", first in FOCEP; and then he also appeals to the companeros of the CP: "We also appeal to the companeros of the Communist Party to unite with us because we aren't sectarians."

Evidently the Trotskyists, as they did in Bolivia in 1952, will all over again go in for some kind of popular frontism. Meanwhile the military is moving<sup>50</sup> fast with its counter-revolution — they once more have declared a state of emergency because 50,000 copper miners have been on strike for over three weeks — that again, we face defeat not only because of the brutality and might of the counter-revolution, but because we are caught in mid-air without a philosophy that is concrete and total.

Just as there is no shortcut to revolution through guerrilla warfare or focc-ism, or even Third Worldism that disregards <sup>the</sup> proletariat of the technologically advanced countries, so there is no substitute for a theory, indeed a whole philosophy, of revolution. No revolution can succeed without it.

It will be a very long and protracted and bitter struggle. We must not only show solidarity, but also, in collaboration with the Latin American comrades, work from both these new beginnings, and from the philosophy we have worked out in Philosophy and Revolution on the basis of 200 years of experience and thought which Marx founded and Lenin practiced. In these our age must get rooted.

And we must make our contribution -- our own revolution. We must under no circumstances tailend existing state-powers. All we have to do to see that retrogression then becomes inevitable is to look at Portugal.

The Big Powers are acting as if they are "out of" the latest counter-revolutionary act in Portugal. In truth, however, they are the very ones who created it, once the mass self-activity that overthrew fascism developed into social revolution.

Thus, before the Nov. 25, 1975 coup against the ongoing revolution, all of these powers, from NATO to West Germany to Mao's China (with Russia manufacturing as many imperialist intrigues) were coalescing to make the coup succeed. At this moment, what is happening that rates small coverage in the daily press -- and only in the inside pages -- is President Eanes' firing of <sup>the</sup> Socialist Prime Minister, Mario Soares, though it is his party that gained the majority of votes.

Just how hypocritical is the "respect" of decrepit capitalisms of all varieties for "democracy", including democratic "pluralism" (as supposedly against the totalitarian single State Party) can be seen from President Eanes' disregard of the election returns. He simply devised a new-fangled phrase -- "a government of presidential mediation." This latest euphemism for authoritarianism he bestowed on Alfredo Nobre da Costa whom he named the new Prime Minister. The very first thing Eanes ordered this steel and petrochemical magnate (who had found living comfortable under fascism) to do, was to put down the strike of the dockworkers.

Soares, however, though now he shouts loudly against Eanes' unconstitutional acts, hasn't exactly got clean hands, since that creature, Nobre da Costa, served as Industry Minister under him. Moreover, Soares is continuing with his own brand of rightist activity in what was Portuguese Africa, and has just convinced President Neto of Angola to attend the conference of the Second International that has suddenly, by no accident whatever since Western imperialism is certainly losing out all over Africa, discovered the existence of the "Third World".

As a starter, Neto met with Mobutu and promised not to allow the Katangese to attack Zaire from Angolan territory, while Mobutu promised not to allow UNITA and FNLA to attack Angola. Whatever that is worth -- nothing -- Neto then convinced SWAPO to accept the UN plan which may fall through over Walvis Bay,

because South Africa has no intention of giving up the only deep-water port on the 1,000 mile Namibian coast, on the excuse that a SWAPO-dominated government would allow Russia to set up a naval base. SWAPO, on the other hand, couldn't possibly give up Walvis Bay, since 90% of Namibia's international trade passes through there.

All of this points to the many new ways the state-capitalist age is devising to stop the developing revolts the world over from Soweto to Namibia, from Latin America to the "soft underbelly of Europe", Portugal.

Let's not forget that it was the Social Democrat Helmut Schmidt who was the very one who "taught" both NATO and the U.S. that helping "Socialists" to win power would keep it out of "Communist" hands, by which was meant not just a "foreign power", but rather actual social revolution. The Social Democrats have been expert in squashing revolutions ever since World War I when they first betrayed the proletariat, and, in 1919, murdered Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, beheading the German Revolution.

But while not forgetting the Second International's old and future betrayals, we must not think that the alternative is China, Maoist or post-Mao. Thus, the very time when it, too, was on the side of NATO in Portugal was when China had come up with the theory of the "Second World", i.e., christening capitalism as a world the Third World could collaborate with, be that capitalism West Europe, or NATO itself. And not only were just the two Superpowers to be called antagonistic capitalist-imperialists, but of those, since Russia is the "worst", there are times when you are with the U.S.

So in Portugal all forms of capitalism, from private to state-capitalism calling itself Communism, found "common cause". And just watch post-Mao China's trips to every place from Zaire to North Korea, from Roumania to Iran, not to mention that both the U.S. and Egypt let Hua know he'd be most welcome there, too.

Will Hua land in Egypt just when Sadat <sup>will</sup> have returned from Camp David?  
\* \* \*

III. The Middle East -- at Camp David? Or as the Crossroads of the World?

We needn't wait breathlessly for September 6 to sense the impotence of the Camp David sub-summit of two antagonists -- Egypt and Israel -- meeting the super-power, U.S. imperialism. That exercise in futility is being practiced

for only one reason — to make an interlude for war appear like its absolute opposite: peace.

The charade is needed because U.S. imperialism has no intention of letting either of the others set the timing for war, and no one at this moment knows who will be on whose side. Sadat and Begin agreed to meet with Carter because at this moment neither are ready to plunge into yet one other inconclusive Arab-Israeli war.

It is true that ever since Sadat's spectacular trip to Israel, it has been clear that both the Arab and Israeli masses wish peace. However, Sadat's running into that immovable object — the old Irgun terrorist leader who opposed not only Arabs but fought also any Jews, including Zionists headed by Ben Gurion, who wanted to settle for a more modest homeland than his "Judea and Samaria" — was not all due to Begin's "intransigence". Begin could be the "intransigent one" because he felt he has an objective mass base who know of Sadat's past and present anti-Semitism, not to mention the 1973 so-called victory Nasser hadn't achieved.

But of one thing neither was in any doubt: without U.S. imperialism's "backing", neither can get out of the impasse they have reached.

After all, Sadat has been demanding something he knows he cannot possibly get (and perhaps doesn't even wish) — total Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and a Palestinian "homeland". And Begin takes all he can get away with, presently building up Israeli settlements in all lands occupied since the 1967 war, not only on the West Bank, but also in the Gaza.

Naturally each hopes that Carter will "pressure" the other, with Begin, who has the greater military might, confident he can bluff his way out, while Sadat wants a Palestinian presence to be recognized, at least "in principle". To rulers, "in principle" has always meant one needn't do anything in any foreseeable future. Yet each — and this also includes President Carter — also knows that so volatile is the objective situation that this meeting cannot be allowed to be a total failure. Which is why Begin and Sadat so readily consented to the "magic" of Carter's "handwritten note", and why the White House, for once, managed not to leak it to the press before it ever got to the addressees.

And what, exactly, are the blandishments Carter can offer? He has already armed Israel to the teeth, and given plenty of hardware also to Egypt and Saudi



-16-

Arabia. What can possibly pass as muster for "a new momentum for peace"? "Negotiations", and at a lower level at that? If they are to attempt that truly magic bluff, some new ground must be created that can pass muster as "momentum".

But even if that is accepted by the conferees at Camp David, who will "discipline" the many-factioned PLO? It is true that Arafat, who has just suffered the greatest reverses — outright murders of his co-leaders at the hands of Palestinian terrorists from Iraq — is nevertheless going to Iraq to work out still another deal. For that matter, one need not conjure up the Rejection Front; the so-called moderates, especially Saudi Arabia, can also convoke an Arab summit they have left on the back burner while Camp David comes up with "something".

Above all, Russia certainly isn't going to hew to any path they carve out. And Carter did once sign a statement with his co-convenor of a Geneva conference — Russia — that only there can the Middle East conflicts be resolved!

It is impossible to go into all possible and actual double-crosses dreamed up and actually blueprinted as "contingency plans". (Do reread the lead-editorial article, "Shifting Alliances in the Middle East" in the Jan.-Feb. 1978 issue of N&L.) The point is that if one forgets the class and national liberation struggles, which are decisive, imperialist machinations are endless and boundless.

Just take a look as to what happened in the few months since the Jan. 9 lead article. Begin committed still another atrocity — invasion of southern Lebanon — which, on the whole, was tolerated by all the existing powers. When Israel finally did pull out, it left "security" in the hands of Begin's Christian neo-fascist collaborators, the Phalangists.

Shifting alliances, of course, are by no means limited to the Arab-Israeli conflict. What brings the cauldron of the Middle East to the explosion point is global power politics. Dominating all, so far as imperialisms are concerned, is Oil, and, with it, the sea lanes carrying that oil to the U.S., to Europe, to Japan, the world. Because the Middle East is the world's major source of oil, the Arab world considers the Red Sea "its".

Ethiopia, on the other hand, accusing the Arabs of wanting to turn the Red Sea into an "Arab lake", speaks of the presence of Africa on the Red Sea shores and says that it, the Horn of Africa, will see that the Red Sea remains "a world waterway". The Big Powers all agree it is a world waterway (not to mention also

5807

-17-

the passageway to the Indian Ocean), but each one reads world as its world.

For that matter, what no one talks much about within that cauldron — this time not as Arab-Israeli conflict, but Arab-Africa confrontation on the Red Sea — is Israel's role in always having been on the side of Ethiopia, and keeping the sea lanes to oil open. This is not because one out of four gallons of gas the U.S. uses comes from the Middle East. Rather, it is due to the fact that that is the gateway to the port of Elat, where Israel gets its oil — from Iran, which, though it is an ally of Saudi Arabia, is also its contender for domination over that sea. Iran has its own imperial designs that stretch from Russia to India and Afghanistan, but they start at the Red Sea.

As for Russia, which has changed sides from Somalia, where it had a naval base, to Ethiopia where it had nothing but which is, geopolitically, more crucial, Russia has always hungered for an outlet to warm waters. The point there is that though the Middle East is the most volatile place now, it is by no means the only place for Russian confrontation with the U.S. — and China.

Do you remember the Sino-Indian war? Do you remember that it hadn't been quite clear why Russia was not siding with China? There was no open sharp Sino-Soviet conflict yet.

Do you remember Nixon-Kissinger tilting to Pakistan in order to please China when it prepared that new opening? Well, on June 19, 1978, the Chinese Vice Premier Keng Piao headed a delegation and heralded that newly-built Karakoram Highway as an "additional monument to Sino-Pakistan friendship."

The Karakoram Highway is a 500-mile, all-weather road over the roof of the world, which links Sinkiang Province with Havelian, which is only 60 miles north of the Pakistan capital of Islamabad. Indeed, the frontiers of no less than five states — Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, India and Russia — converge there. And China can now ship its goods to African markets from Karachi rather than far-away Eastern Shanghai.

(It is characteristic of the bourgeois press that unless there is an immediate conflict to report, such really historic achievements don't get mentioned at all — until, of course, a war breaks out over it. Even the Christian Science Monitor first reported the June 19 opening of the Karakoram Highway on August 22. The London Times did mention that it cost 400 lives.)

India is saying nothing formally; it has too many other crises to contend

-18-

with than a fait accompli by so mighty a power as China, one to whom it has already lost the first Sino-Indian war over this very question. So, though it considers this highway "illegal", it can hardly expect to win the "hearts and minds of men" when the territory it considers violated — Kashmir — belongs not to it, but to Pakistan.

Just as World War II ended with all sorts of markers as to where to start World War III — two Germanies, two Vietnams, two Koreas — so the Sino-Indian and Arab-Israeli conflicts are piling up confrontation points that would lead to still one other war, only in a nuclear world we risk it being the very last for all of humanity.

And to go for false alternatives, be it China's or born-again Second International, is to disorient the new generation of revolutionaries.

The two heads of state from the Middle East who are with Carter at Camp David are not only not "solving" the Arab-Israeli conflict, but they are glossing over many, many sharply conflicting interests other than Arab-Israel within the Middle East. For the truth is that the defeat of the Civil War in Lebanon, which emboldened the capitalist-imperialist hawk Begin in his latest atrocity as well as stonewalling it also with Carter, is the very defeat that also satisfied the oil kingdom of Saudi Arabia. King Khaled of Saudi Arabia knows most how to fear genuine social revolutions and therefore continues to gold-float the PLO and Syria as well as Egypt, while being "moderate" enough to assure Carter he will also whitewash the empty conclave here.

And that is the key point for revolutionaries to know: if genuine revolutionaries allow themselves, as they did in Lebanon, \* to get sucked into intra-capitalist state jockeying so that a civil war is lost, retrogression is incapable. In a word, the historic, class penalty for "taking sides" between existing state powers is as great when these are the smaller powers, as when it is between the two superpowers, whether one of these is joined by what had been a revolutionary regime, like China, or not.

\* See the August 1976 Political-Philosophic Letter #6, "Lebanon: The Test Not Only of the P.L.O. but the Whole Left", in The Political-Philosophic Letters of Raya Dmayevskaya, News and Letters, 1977.

-19-

Just as Stalin's Russia knew, in World War II, how to expand capitalistically and imperialistically by concluding the infamous Hitler-Stalin Pact, but when attacked by Germany called upon all to "fight German fascism", so Brezhnev's Russia knows how, at one and the same time, to help revolutionaries in Angola, but abandon Somalia and Eritrea for a foothold in Ethiopia.

And while Cuba seems to be balking at direct combat against the Eritrean Resistance, its presence is not altogether absent, and Russia has other surrogates, like East Germany, to do its work. Cuba in the meantime was playing host to a World Youth Festival, and had Fidel castigate Peking for "perfidious base arguments", "insane political conduct", "repugnant betrayal of the cause of internationalism."

And now what? Well, just watch all Western Big Powers following the crippled Russian nuclear ship to its port in Russia! And China is even hotter on the trail of Russia than Russia is of China.

No, we must separate ourselves from all existing state powers, and strike out on new beginnings for freedom from below, or there will not be a new world on truly Humanist foundations.

\* \* \*

#### IV. The Praxis of Philosophy

A new alternative to state-capitalism calling itself Communism -- whether in Russian, Chinese, or East European form -- has appeared in the very place where the whole movement from practice was born back on June 17, 1953: East Berlin. It is called The Alternative -- A Contribution to the Critique of Socialism as it Actually Exists, by Rudolph Bahro. \* He has just landed in jail for having dared to write a serious study which concludes: "We have the kind of state machine Marx and Engels sought to smash by proletarian revolution, and which was not to be allowed to re-emerge in any form on any pretext."

Nor does Bahro stop there. He also proclaims that not only should the political hierarchy be abolished, but so must "the despotism of the factory .... Work norms and piece wages should be abolished."

\* See New Left Review #106, Nov.-Dec. 1977, for translation of an essay Bahro intended as lecture-introduction to his book.

Bahro will have nothing to do with those who think that the Communist bureaucracy's exploitative nature is one only of "degeneration", or a question of "a problem of poor realization." Trotskyites, take note: Bahro writes, "I strongly believe that it is high time for revolutionary Marxists to abandon all theories of 'deformation' .... We do not want to re-establish old norms, but to create new ones. We are no longer forced to rely on inner-party constellations."

The new beginnings Bahro is talking about, indeed proving, is to show that the revolutionary alternative didn't just arise today or with him, but "continues to exist unswervingly in Czechoslovakia." \* Now, it is that for no doubt very cogent reasons -- he has already lost his freedom, has been jailed -- Bahro seems to prefer to start with Czechoslovakia, 1968, rather than with his own homeland, 1953, which began the entire movement from practice.

But, in the end, Bahro cannot resist going further back than a decade for those new beginnings. He points out that opposition to existing Communism "has existed for the past fifteen years in Hungary." The placement of new beginnings against "inner party constellation" further extends from Czechoslovakia, 1968, to Poland, 1970, to today.

This displays a profundity of ideas as well as of courage.

Now, it is true that Bahro seems to relate to Eurocommunism, but it is not at all because of what the Eurocommunists are in fact -- class collaborationists -- but because of Eurocommunism's impact: "The Soviet Union would lose its Western periphery."

Nor could China's previous West European forays, or Hua's latest trips into East Europe, transform Ceausescu of Roumania or Tito of Yugoslavia (not to mention the Shah of Iran) into revolutionaries who can display what Bahro rightly calls for: "Promethean solidarity."

That needed solidarity can come only from what Marx called "new passions and new forces" for the reconstruction of society on totally new, truly human

\* On this, the tenth anniversary of Prague Spring which the Russian counter-revolution crushed with its military might, it is necessary to note that Prague did not "die", as the bourgeoisie now writes. You cannot kill an Idea, and that liberating idea, which was driven underground, is still inspiring the world, as Bahro's work testifies. In Czechoslovakia, too, it keeps re-emerging, whether it be as Charter 77, the latest literary review -- Spektrum -- or the many forms of resistance of the workers.

beginnings. Which is precisely where we have started every year since our break from Communism, Trotskyism, and, yes, Johnsonism.

Where our Draft Perspectives viewed the objective and subjective developments over a whole decade, here I limited myself to this year — mainly, indeed, just to the two intervening months. Nevertheless, the intensity of the crises, on the one hand, and the interpenetration of the objective and the subjective, on the other, are so taut, that its dialectic discloses no way out of this alienated and alienating state-capitalist age other than to start anew, and let these new beginnings determine the end, the release of freedom from exploitation and racism, sexism and nuclear madness.

The point of departure of this report — Mao's false alternative — shows itself to be no small matter limited to the "politics" of this year, but one that had emerged in 1957, precisely in the period when a new revolution from the Left in revolt against existing <sup>had taken shape</sup> Communism, the 1956 Hungarian Revolution — and Mao's China, instead, accepted state-capitalism as if that were the new world economic order.

The very fact that this year a revolutionary alternative, as against Mao's false alternative, emerged from East Germany where the movement from practice signalled the birth of a new revolutionary age as well as our very being as an independent tendency that rooted the concept of philosophy and revolution in that movement from practice that was itself a form of theory, needs to make us come face-to-face with our unique and historical contribution which we have tended to underestimate.

When we look at our activities this year, whether we take the very special classes we had on the pamphlet Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis (that brought a new type of member in our modest growth), or our other activity directly related to mass activities — be they in Soweto (or rather, support of Soweto), or the successful anti-Nazi activities right here in Detroit, be they the Latino and youth activities in Hostos in New York or the anti-nuclear activities throughout the country, be they those directly related to the Women's Liberation Movement, including sharp class struggles as at Essex, or the climax of this year's class struggles in the Miners' General Strike — not to mention our own pamphlet relating all these movements in the thought of Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought, the point is that that too demands a look at dialectics, and our unique contribution.

May I ask you to look at Chapter 1 of Philosophy and Revolution? In that chapter, entitled "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning: The Ceaseless Movement of Ideas and of History", read the statement which says that history has its own way of illuminating a serious work in philosophy, including that of the most profound of dialecticians whose works, history shows, have never been matched -- GWF Hegel. What was new that we braved was to disclose how Marx's discovery of a whole continent of thought -- Historical Materialism, and what he called "a new Humanism" which united the ideal and the real -- didn't just "take off from", but remained rooted in, Hegel.

Just as  
the fact that Hegel wasn't "conscious" that he laid any such ground for a very different, totally revolutionary generation didn't stop Marx's development, so we stressed the truth that has come out in our age by adding three little words to Hegel's Absolute Negativity: "as new beginning".

In a word, for our age, the question is not one of a break from Hegel (which Marx had already done for all of us). The question is: why, after the break, after the discovery of nothing short of a whole new continent of thought, Marx returned to Hegel in the form he chose to present his greatest theoretical work, Capital, which had taken all his adult life to write.

The question that remains after that is: why did Lenin, who has no peers as the greatest practicing revolutionary Marxist, feel compelled to return to Hegel at the very moment of the collapse of the existing Marxist International -- the Second -- and as preparation, as world revolutionary, for an actual revolution, the Russian?

The answer is simple: if one does not do what Marx and Lenin did -- and Mao and Trotsky didn't -- he/she finds that, not having caught the new stage of cognition, no new road to a total revolution has been opened.

The generation of the 1960s, especially Frantz Fanon, as well as our organization, can be said to be the authors of Chapter 9 of Philosophy and Revolution -- those, after all, were the "New Passions and New Forces." There is no doubt, either, that, in great part, the East Europeans did in fact write Chapter 8, even as Chapter 5 could not have been written without the Sheng Wu-lien. \*

\* "Whither China", the document of the Sheng Wu-lien (Hunan Provincial Proletarian Revolutionary Great Alliance Committee) is reproduced both in Ch. 5 of P&R, and in The Revolution is Dead, Long Live the Revolution, published by The 70's, Hong Kong, 1976

But no one, absolutely no one else, wrote Chapter 1. And by "no one" I do not mean just that I had no living collaborators, be it in Europe, East or West, or China, be it in Africa or Japan, though it was in Japan that the snake dances started which kept Eisenhower from visiting, and that is where the Zengakuren not only broke with Communism but did come to Marx's Humanist Essays. What I mean is that no past generation could have done it -- nor could the present generation who had not worked out the Absolute "as new beginning" for this age.

As Lenin expressed it, "Logical concepts are subjective so long as they remain abstract .... but (are) objective as a whole, in the process ... in the source." And he proceeded further to focus on the indispensability of philosophy by insisting, as he was reading Hegel's Doctrine of the Notion (which has certainly nothing to do with what the modern age considers science):  
" ... every science is applied logic."

In a word, each generation must solve the problem of its age; no previous generation can do more than leave an indication. The present one has to do its own development, and it is in this sense that I mean "no one, absolutely no one." That is our original and unique contribution to Marxism.

With Marxism and Freedom we asked those who considered themselves Marxists to meet the challenge from practice, the movement that opened new beginnings in the post-World War II world. Indeed, we cast the whole 200-year history from the Industrial and French Revolutions to our day in the form of the movement From Practice to Theory. Once a still newer generation of revolutionaries had come on the historic stage in the 1960s, globally, with the birth of a new, Third World, I began the trips to Africa, to Hong Kong (as near as we could get to China), and to Japan. (Europe and Latin America had been covered at the start of the post-War world.) The point was, at one and the same time, to listen to the voices from below, and to find those who would write "their own pages" of philosophy and revolution. I am not here referring to a book, (one that hadn't been written), but to the actual facts and birth of new thought.

And it was precisely that last year of travel, 1966, however, that Mao's so-called Cultural Revolution, that false alternative, had begun, and exercised so powerful a pull on the Left that it became clear that a statist



power talking revolution but practicing counter-revolutionary acts against its own proletariat, especially the youth who had taken at face value that "it is right to rebel", would disorient a new generation of revolutionaries, even as Existentialism had disoriented the previous generation.

1968 became both the climax and the end of those near-revolutions, as they aborted — not the least reason being that they were so preoccupied with activity and more activity and yet more, that they were relegating theory to be caught "en route".

But creating theory, a philosophy of revolution, is as hard labor as anything manual. The writing of Philosophy and Revolution, as book, then began, and as we saw, it was far from being something just cut of our heads, but manifested the subjective as inseparable from the objective. And, I might add, if we are to execute this next year's task — the book on Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution — we better understand Chapter 1 of P&R, not merely as a chapter in a book, but as the historic link with Marx and Lenin, that "makes" the totally new — objectively as well as subjectively — concrete.

Or perhaps I better go a bit further into the process, the dialectic that "governed" the state-capitalist tendency as far back as 1941-42, i.e. the very start of the objective study of the nature of the Russian economy. That study was not only a "theoretical" and "Russian Question". It was that confrontation with that transformation into opposite which led to our singling out the four forces of the American revolution. It is that which not only became our distinguishing mark as American Marxist-Humanists, 1955, but found, at one and the same time, the global connection, as well as the direct link to Marx's Humanist Essays. (Reread the 1941 section on the "Russian Question" the Trotskyites did not publish — but which is included in the Archives — Labor and Society.)

The year following that study, 1943, saw both American labor active, with the first miners' general strike in the midst of war, and the Detroit Black uprising which led to the other new force of revolution: Black masses as vanguard. With the end of World War II came both the Youth and the Women who had been "transformed" by the war — that is to say, the personification of Reason as Women and Youth.

The 1940s reached its highest point of development after the war, when all Marxists still thought West European revolution was on the current agenda; and

that the pre-revolutionary situation, too, was global. In 1947 I met a Camerounian in France who revealed, through his recounting of his experiences, the as yet unknown new spontaneous African liberation movements, which would become the Third World — first in 1958 as the Gold Coast became Ghana, and then in the 1960s as all of Africa became independent, West, East, North.

Now that you know just what a two-fold and prolonged labor was involved before we could (1) single out those four forces of revolution — Labor, Black, Youth, Women — and (2) begin working out the new stage of cognition that was "dying" to be born \*, we will stop talking glibly, that is, "taking for granted" our Constitution, and realize that we can actually call philosophy itself a force of revolution.

It is this which <sup>will</sup> allow us to see that for the next period the work on Rosa Luxemburg is neither just the work on Rosa, nor a critique of today's Women's Liberation Movement, though it surely is both, but presents an imperative necessity to work out Marx's philosophy of revolution for our age. It isn't just our work. It is the need of the age.

Presently we have that unique Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought pamphlet, and soon, before the end of the year is out, we will also have Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal. That book does indeed bring us back to our beginnings, in a magnificent Black voice that helped found us and bring us forward to this day. In one respect it may not sound as comprehensive, that is to say, encompassing others, as Frantz Fanon, Soweto, and 200 years of American Black Thought, (though I am sure Andy, in his report, will challenge that.) But in any case, in a very crucial sense, it is deeper, both because it is personalized so that every worker can identify, and so universalized as to make Marxist-Humanism itself as intimate as an individual friend.

The same universality holds true for the Spanish pamphlet \*\*, our first, which will demonstrate the Latino struggle for freedom as not just, to use Eugene's phrase, "south of us, if it ever was."

\* See America's First Unfinished Revolution, News and Letters, 1976, as well as American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard, News and Letters, 3rd. expanded edition 1970

\*\* La Lucha Latina une a los luchadores de la libertad en America del Norte y America del Sur (The Latino struggle unites freedom fighters in North and South America), due for publication November 1978

-26-

The Organization, News & Letters and Indignant Heart, International, Youth and Finance Reports will spell the Perspectives out so concretely that we will know that, without the latter, N&L itself cannot be assured existence.

But now it is time to conclude with the last paragraph of our Draft Perspectives:

There is no way to theoretically prepare for revolution without concretizing Absolute Idea as new beginning in relationship to the forces as Reason of revolution for our era. At no time has this been more urgent than for this year when the U.S. has decided upon the use, along with the N-Bomb threat, of the China card -- not only in relation to Russia, but in support of reactionary regimes in Africa, be it Zaire or even that most benighted land, South Africa.

September 2, 1978

Raya Dunayevskaya  
Detroit, Michigan

\*

\*

\*

RAYA'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED DURING PERSPECTIVES  
DISCUSSION

I come from Russia 1917, and the ghettos of Chicago, where I first saw a Black person. The reason that I'm starting that way -- it happens to be true -- but the reason that I'm starting that way is that I was illiterate. You know, you're born in a border town -- there's a revolution, there's a counter-revolution, there's anti-Semitism -- you know nothing, but experience a lot. Especially if you happen to be born a revolutionary, right? That is, you don't know that you're a revolutionary, but you're opposed to everything.

Okay. What it means is this: Sandra, you're absolutely right, we have no outreach, and you had not heard about us. Believe me, if the capitalists were only exploiting us, they wouldn't last a minute! It's because they have all the mass media, as well as the exploitation, all the education, everything with which to brainwash us and make us think that their ideas are our ideas -- if I only think about myself and my family I will get somewhere is that type of idea -- they are able to perpetuate this exploitative system for 200 years, or 400 years, no matter where you come from.

Now how does it happen that an illiterate person, who certainly didn't know Lenin and Trotsky, who as a child had never seen a Black, had begun to develop all the revolutionary ideas to be called Marxist-Humanism in the 1950s? It isn't personal whatsoever! If you live when an idea is born, and a great revolution in the world is born -- it doesn't make any difference where you are; that becomes the next stage of development of humanity. You know it in your bones in something as simple as when you say, No, to your Mama, who wants to put you in pink or something and the boy child in blue.

And it's that which makes it possible for you to find an affinity with our ideas even though we do not have an outreach. Yes, we're very, very small with no outreach -- but you didn't know us, and didn't we find you? And Lilian, you're right; we can't help your immediate problems and that of your family. You didn't know us, but didn't we find you? And I wish we could find many more. Now, you in turn must not underestimate your great power just because capitalism tries to tell deep layers like you that you are nothing.

Take Rosa Parks. Do you think she thought she was starting a revolution? No -- she was tired as all get-out! She had just worked a full day. She was tired and she just wasn't going to get up again to move to the back of the bus to give her seat to a white man who hadn't labored as hard as she had. So then she says, No, I am not moving, I am tired; and the police say, Well, you will get arrested. And the Black youths who were sitting there seeing this middle-aged woman who's tired like hell being dragged off to the police station, said, Gee, Let's not let Rosa Parks be all alone there.

What did Rosa Parks do by that one action? She started the entire Black revolution in the South! She's the one that made Rev. King "leader"; King didn't make her a heroine. She already was a heroine, but King would never have been leader if a movement for freedom hadn't started from below, spontaneously.

So what is important is not so much that we don't seem to take care of your business -- we certainly can't -- but the fact that we think you're so important, that you are so natural an opponent of this system, that you will bring on the revolution; that's what's important. Your one action of opposition to the system makes you part of that revolutionary movement, and you did it, not because you were "unconscious" -- that's what they think you were -- you did it because you were born a revolutionary and don't like the goddamn system under which you live!

Okay. The reason it is important not only to be a revolutionary and not to like the capitalist system and want to start a revolution -- is that we have had too many aborted revolutions, too many unfinished ones! And we have to contend with the fact: What is it, why is it so?

I'm glad there were some revolutions brought up. Chomere, yes of course we need arms; they are not going to give up their power to us because we have a philosophy of liberation. It's going to be a very long and difficult struggle. But the point is: you can't merely counterpose the fact that you will need violence to defend yourself against their violence, you will need revolution as against theirs -- because that is not the opposition! What are the genuine class oppositions? You have to be concrete, and that includes philosophy. The Universal is concrete; Absolute Idea is concrete; freedom is concrete -- it is they who are trying to make you think philosophy of freedom is an abstraction.

You see, what happened in this particular case -- that you chose, not I -- Allende's Chile. He had a philosophy of revolution? Like hell he did! He did not! Don't get confused by the fact that he's a big intellectual and can throw a lot of words around! Yes, he was a socialist, he certainly didn't want this capitalist system -- but at the same time he had so damn many illusions about that stinking military regime! He said, Chile has this great big democratic background and all that, and they will follow me, a Socialist, because I was elected. What kind of a nonsense is it if you don't know where the military -- built under capitalism, its arm of execution -- is from? They will follow him, an elected Socialist? So now we have one more martyr, Allende. Is that going to get us anywhere? Look at that rabid counter-revolutionary, Pinochet, who is now the ruler.

And it wasn't only Allende, who was at least a Social Democrat, and you, so to speak, don't expect any more from him, supposedly he doesn't know you need a social, a total revolution. The Communists surely told him, You better be armed; Fidel even brought him a machine gun or something. Or take the Trotskyists, who surely mean and believe in revolution; they date themselves back to someone who certainly made one of the greatest ones, Leon Trotsky, right? But Trotsky cannot be blamed for his epigones who are so busy with popular frontism and not knowing what a philosophy of revolution is -- and Trotsky, too, was too concerned with leadership to leave them a total philosophy, beginning with his own philosophic reorganization as Lenin had done -- that they have reduced philosophy to immediate demands, some totally wrong, like "All working class parties should unite." And we now have Hugo Blanco saying all over again that the Communist Party is "Left" -- though they are part of state rulers! -- he still says that after all the betrayals they perpetrated!

-29-

You see, it is important -- it's not because being armed with philosophy means not being armed with arms. Yes, we will need arms. But without the philosophy the arms won't do you a damn bit of good, whether you're a martyr, or you actually win power and retrogress, as did Mao's China.

You take any one of the revolutions that have happened. What was it that was great about Russia? They had a successful revolution -- I won't go into all the parts why they had it -- They had a Lenin! Was Trotsky the same as Lenin? It sounds like he was the same, doesn't it? He was not only on the right side of the barricades; he led that great proletarian revolution, he built up the Red Army, and he was next to Lenin in political stature. Was he really as great as Lenin? Did he undergo the same reorganization of himself, never mind anyone else?! When World War I happened and there was the Second International's betrayal, did he think that, though he didn't betray, that nevertheless he too had to reorganize his thinking because the historic responsibility for such betrayal of existing Marxism needed more of an answer than just: I didn't betray -- ?

Yes, Lenin and Trotsky found themselves on the same side of the barricades, and that's what the Trotskyists always paraded out -- and I as a Trotskyist for years and years helped Trotsky parade out that fact. Yes, we were on the revolutionary side of the barricades, but how did it follow from that, that there was no difference between Trotsky and Lenin? It's not true! Trotsky was on the same side of the barricades as Lenin, but Lenin had undergone a transformation on philosophy as well! He was leaving us a heritage, the steps by which to recapture the philosophic, historic link of continuity with Marxian-Hegelian dialectic.

Put differently, Lenin said: Look. We Russians are backward. We have done the revolution in a country that is not supposed to have had it. Without the revolution in Germany, we'll certainly die! Absolutely! But the other revolutions will know not only from something we did and were successful, but also from where we pointed to in a world context, in a new relationship. He was saying: Look, we have found out that we whites are so conceited, because we have run this world for so long, that we are thinking that if it didn't happen in Germany -- that greatest country, with the tradition of Hegel and the tradition of Marx, and technologically advanced -- if it didn't happen there, what are we going to do? Fold up and die? No! We have to point to new beginnings. And the new beginnings in 1920, at the Second Congress, are: that, despite our conceit, the majority of the people in the world are Black and Red and Yellow and all kinds of colors -- If the counter-revolution can be stopped, and on a world scale, not from Berlin but from Peking or wherever, then we should be willing to sacrifice for that world revolution. And, you editors of our new theoretical journal, Under the Banner of Marxism, do publish also Hegel, naturally from a materialist point of view, but the dialectic is the pivot. Call yourselves "Materialist Friends of the Hegelian Dialectic."

So he left us beginnings, both global and philosophic. What did Trotsky do? Trotsky said, I was on the right side of the barricades, we lost the revolution, I still want the revolution -- and therefore because I'm a revolutionary, the difference between us is reformism. But that wasn't the only

difference. A new philosophic ground to leave he did not have, a new Subject of revolution he did not have. No, he kept repeating: the peasantry is reactionary, as I showed in my theory of Permanent Revolution. They did play a revolutionary role in the Russian Revolution, but that is their last time.

The only thing he added when he lost to Stalin was not new beginnings, but: if only I can build up a new cadre, that will do it.

Look what happened. We get World War II, and we're waiting for a revolution equivalent to the Russian, right? We get at most, the Chinese, in other words a great national revolution. So you have to reconsider what is happening; you had always thought the revolution would come out of the war. Had you noticed any new forces that now have emerged? Had you built out of those new forces? And those revolutionary peasants in China? Is that only a mirage? Is that only Stalinism in Chinese dress?

And of the forces that did emerge after Trotsky's death at the hands of a G.P.U. agent -- consider Africa. Why did I find the Zulu rebellion? Do you think anyone knew the Zulu rebellion, 1905? Do you think the Zulus knew they were leading a "revolution"? They knew they didn't like British imperialism trying to take their country over. We learned of that because: (1) we had a world revolutionary perspective; (2) we knew that 1905 couldn't have been only in Russia; something was "in the air" globally; and (3) now, post-World War II, <sup>we said</sup> there must certainly also <sup>have been</sup> something in Africa. In any case, we said: Well, if that idea of revolution came to France, or to Japan -- where else is it?

One more word on the Russian Revolution, 1905. Rosa Luxemburg learned from it and tried to teach the Germans to "speak Russian" i.e. revolution. And, oh yes, the theory of relativity -- that all happened that year! Do you think that that's an accident? No! The greatness about philosophy is that it tells you: The sum total of all accidents -- you know what it is? -- It is the true course of history.

So if you repeat that you think we don't speak plainly or use too many big words -- and it is true that we can't help you materially -- you are helping the bourgeoisie to pretend that you are only interested in yourself and your family. No, you're not only interested in yourself! You wouldn't be here if you weren't looking for other things, and because you know you cannot answer the problems of yourself and your family unless you do learn a great deal more, unless you prepare, participate, in an actual revolution.

Or take the question of male chauvinism. You never made a category either of that or of women. But, suddenly, just a "personal", "family" affair makes you rebel. It isn't that you made a category called "a movement from practice to theory; a movement from theory to practice." It isn't in any book you read. The book is the one that may have made a generalization about it, but it was in life, in your life, and because it was also in many other lives, and they too rebelled, it became a movement, and a "book", and an organization.

One other incident that hasn't do with women, but has to do with Black. I was in Paris in 1947, trying to convince the Trotskyists they should believe that Russia isn't merely a "degenerated workers' state", it's a state-capitalist society. I happen to like Blacks, so I get lonesome when I don't see any Blacks for a while. So I suddenly see a Black, and I run over, I scream my head off; and the guy looks at me and says, Pardon me, I don't know what you're talking about, I don't speak English. So I say to myself, Oh what a dumb person I am to think that all Blacks are Americans, and that there aren't French Africans and all the other imperialisms who carved up Africa. I then met a Camerounian who was just magnificent, I won't go into that story now — you can read about it in my Archives — but it started us talking about the whole subject of the African Revolutions.

But besides this, when I go to Lyon, France, where I addressed the Socialist youth — somebody is sitting in that audience. I didn't know. But now I read all the histories and biographies of Frantz Fanon — and not only was he there, in Lyon at the same time, interested in Trotskyism, but though he was also finding an affinity with Existentialism, the Black nature leads him away from all, to an independent path he will later call "new Humanism". These happenings aren't "accidents". When there are great stirrings in life, in revolutions-to-be, something gets "in the air" and crosses national boundaries.

The point is: it doesn't make any difference whether there was an in-person relationship. If you know the exact relationship between objective and subjective, between philosophy and revolution, and don't consider any one of that as abstract, you then realize it is abstract only if you haven't made the connection of objective and subjective, and seen how the actual subjective genuine human new beginnings which then unite with the movement from theory can make up into this Absolute Idea as new beginning. That is why in my presentation of Perspectives I began with both Hegel and Lenin on the threshold of the Absolute movement for freedom. Read the quotations again. Study them.

Yes, I'm sorry that there are certain words that you don't understand — there's an awful lot of words that I don't understand — but I'm sure you will yet, you have two more days to go in the Convention, and your new life has just started.

I want to say one more word on Rosa Luxemburg. Now Rosa Luxemburg was another woman who wasn't going to pay attention to those male chauvinists — she wasn't even going to mention any word of discrimination against women in the Movement. That didn't stop the male "comrades" from that extra dig when the opponent was a woman. Did you ever hear any debate between two male comrades who are opposed to each other, who says the other one is a son of a bitch? But you hear them whisper, bitch, if it is a woman. There are political decisions to be made, there are philosophic problems to be discussed, there are economic analyses — Why does it suddenly happen that when it's a woman that's doing the discussing, that, my God, you get all that blubber.

Now Rosa Luxemburg refused to bring up the "Woman Question" in that context in the Movement. In a certain sense I think she was wrong. She knew what they were saying about her, behind her back. Perhaps if she had paid



attention to that, we would have seen some of the elements before our era. But it didn't keep her from towering above all others, including Lenin in some respects. The crucial years are 1910-1914. She knew Karl Kautsky's character which Lenin first realized after Kautsky betrayed. Lenin was defending Kautsky as the greatest Marxist theoretician, or something like that, when Rosa already knew Kautsky was good for nothing, that he was never going to make any revolution. There are plenty of shortcomings in her theory, and I'm not going to stop from criticizing those shortcomings. But that has to be in relationship to philosophy and revolution, and not on the basis of stupid Trotskyism opposing autonomy of women's organizations once you are "Marxist".

A theory is good for the answer of what you're going to do this year or next year, but you need an entire philosophy for a vision of your age's "breaking the barrier", that is to say not only overthrowing the old, but creating the new.

The greatest thing, in relation to Marx's philosophy of revolution, is this: Even before he worked out all of historical materialism, he is saying, If we are going to be serious about a new type of person, a new type of society, we really have to begin with the beginning, Man/Woman relationship. Isn't that tremendous?! In other words, he wants to uproot not only the exploitation, or the racism, or the sexism even -- it doesn't mean only that -- he means it has to be so totally different that you have to begin, so to speak, with your moment of birth, or the moment after you're born.

Ever since Marx, every Marxist tendency is trying to make it narrower and narrower. We cannot get into it further here; I'm simply indicating what the goal is of the new book -- Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution.

\* \* \*