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Rough Draft PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION by Raya Dunayevskaya

Part III. Outline* of Chapter 2 - - New Passions and New Forces

...New forces and new passions
spring up in the bosom of
society...

-- Marx, Capital, p. 787

Black became the new color-determinant in world politics. Just when "the educated ones" were finally to acknowledge the fact that the African Revolutions had introduced a new force on the historic stage in the underdeveloped countries, the Negro Revolution in the U.S. changed its locale from Black Africa to White America, thereby exposing, at one and the same time, that racism has been the very warp and woof of American "Civilization," and that the Black Americans had always been in the forefront of the struggles for freedom, not only for themselves but for moving humanity forward. In a word, the Negro had always been the touchstone of American civilization, both in exposing the hollowness of its democracy and being the catalyst for human development; whether that was the Civil War and Populism in the 19th century and of the 20th century, the creation of the C.I.O. and the current very different upheavals on and off the campuses which has produced a new generation of young revolutionaries, black and white.

What was new in the stage reached in the 1960's by the Black Revolts in Harlem, Watts, Newark, Detroit and very nearly throughout all of the urban areas, north, south, east and west was the complete spontaneity of these outbursts, unexpected, not only by the whites, but by the new young Black Revolutionary leaders who had almost as little knowledge of the new form of revolt until after they had actually burst on the scene. Spontaneity is, of course, the hallmark of all mass outbursts, and it was so in 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama when the bus boycott was barely noticed nationally, and in 1960 with the youth sit-downs, beginning with Greensboro, North Carolina, when everybody did become aware of the new stage of Negro revolt. However, in 1955 and 1963, the leaders who emerged could at least "catch up" with the spontaneous actions of the masses.

The main leadership which resided in Reverend King, on the one hand, and SNCC, on the other hand, reached a high point of development in the famous confrontation with the brutal force of the police in Birmingham, not only in the courage of the Negro Youth that withstood the hoses, unleashed dogs, the cattle prods, but also theoretically in Reverend King's famous Letter from a Birmingham Jail.

There he raised the struggle against segregation to a new philosophical level. Although he did not, as did the East European freedom fighters, relate the freedom struggle to the humanism of Marxism, he did illuminate the struggle anew by quoting Martin Buber's famous analysis of human relationships as a question of "I-Thou" in place of "I-It." The paramount philosophic relationship of subject-object had

* PLEASE note that the word, "outline," -- or perhaps I should have even said "bare outline" -- is used here in order to stress the fact that this chapter will no doubt be completely rewritten. First, much in it cannot be developed before the tour is completed because of the many discussions I will be having nationally, both on Philosophy and in the Black/Red Conferences. Secondly, now that the rough draft of the book has been completed, many new aspects first will evolve when I, myself, read this as a totality.

suddenly assumed an urgency which, by being concrete, did away with the separate oppositeness of subject-object that had vitiated all of modern thinking. That is to say what appeared as an almost minor problem, a legal question, and a local one at that -- a question of segregation -- became an international question with the most profound philosophic ramifications that touched on the most vital human relationships, the relationship of "I" to "Other."

There was no "even" development further up the ladder once the Negro revolution reached that high point in 1963. As the struggle developed north and there met with both more ferocious and more subtle opposition, while the movement from below was simultaneously expressing itself in new forms of revolt, first in Harlem and the following year in Watts and Newark, reaching a climax in Detroit, the leadership on top manifested the same division between leaders and ranks that had characterized all movements involving intellectuals and workers. The new black militant leadership was equally unready to listen, much less act, along the direction of the voices from below. At best, electrifying slogans, like "Black power", failed to spell out either what was to be done or on what theoretical foundations were the various actions to be built. Instead, they argued the question of violence versus non-violence, as if the espousal of non-violence, rather than the counter-revolution against it, had brought the movement to the crossroads.

When the ghetto rose up against the conditions in the north, its unemployment, its tenements, its discrimination, the leaders were still in the south -- or abroad. When the ghetto uprisings reached the point of involving some white labor, even conducting interracial "looting" in Detroit, the leaders berated all "hunkies." When the black youth became involved in the anti-Vietnam war movement, both Reverend King and Stokely Carmichael were with them, but no lessons were drawn from these united actions of black and white. On the contrary, because of the underlying differences in whatever guidance the leaders were accepting, even the best of the slogans, such as, "hell no, I won't go" assumed an ambivalent application.

Whether they now speak of the pressing need of ideology or deny it, none will speak openly of what does guide them, (Liberation, 1969) each speaks in a shorthand language not even known to their own followers. Each one relies on being "against" in the most concrete terms and on being "for" in the vaguest terms. The only thing that is clear is that there has been a split and it wasn't anywhere as "bloodless" as it was assumed to have been. The most vile terms are used to describe an individual who left either the Panthers or the SNCC, not in order to go to a class enemy, but to go to the other organization. Thus, Stokely is referred to as a "demagogue" windbag and a general ne'er do well, but Huey Newton, who is the head of the Panthers, is described in the most laudatory terms, not merely because he is in jail, but because he advised his followers "to read Chairman Mao's Thoughts" (Progressive Labor, February, 1969). At the same time the Black Panther's paper will use the same type of language against some in SNCC, again without abusing the whole organization, but rather by singling out an individual who is "working in the same territory."

One thing, however, all the leadership of all the black organizations refused to do and that is to unfold a comprehensive philosophy and do battle in the field of ideas, which doesn't mean that as leaders they weren't engaged in battle in that field. The closed doors on those discussions, supposedly, were directed against whitey. In fact, they were directed against the black rank and file and while that rank and file were separating themselves all along the line from whity, the leaders accepted ideas neither from their rank and file nor from the revolutions in Black Africa, but from the Sino-Cuba theories of guerrilla warfare. This, seemingly ever so concrete a

question, was in the circumstances at hand, the emptiest of abstractions.

Although every leader was acting as if the inevitability of the ghetto uprisings had always been so clear to them that they were prepared and had a "program" all worked out, they, in fact, knew not where to go, what to do next or how to relate this to the "philosophy" that was guiding them. The upshot was that, just when the spontaneous mass outbursts were at their height and crying out for a new philosophy of liberation, all these vanguard groups reached an impasse, split, and moved further away from the proletarian base in the ghettos. Thus, the most militant and newest of the black revolutionary organizations and one of those whose activities are in the ghettos is, nevertheless, more active with students than among workers. Thus, SECC, of whom very little is heard these days, seems to have attached itself more to the Maoist than the Cuban version of urban guerrillas. This does not mean that either is working out new theoretic foundations. Each is most American in its stubborn clinging to "practice," gripped in that most terrible of all logics, the logic of capriciousness whose undisciplined verbiage and unfounded generalizations can lead, not to new roads of revolution, but only to total frustration. Luckily, however, the masses are not following their leaders down that path.

First, among those who do not follow, are the black workers who are more concerned with conditions of labor in the factories, the do-nothingness of union leaders on the question of discrimination, and with the very concept of what kind of labor a man should do. This question first arose in the struggles against automation when labor, both black and white, wildcatted against their union leadership. It is true that by the 1960's, in the fight for upgrading, black labor fought alone. Yet this latest struggle cannot be seen fully outside of the labor struggles which began with automation.

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Here follows Workers Battle Automation, pp. 21-24

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Mankind has evidently reached the end of something when the richest and most powerful military might on earth shouts to the heavens, not about the wonders of its production, affluence, nuclear gigantism, but about its "malaise." This isn't all due to "spirit." It has very deep economic roots. All one has to do to see this is to read the Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers. The 1964 report shows that no less than 34.10 million are defined as poor. With the escalation of the Vietnam War and the growing affluence, 30 million are still classified as poor. There are still 3 million unemployed, which is a meaningless figure when it comes to the black community, where, it turns out, unemployment runs as high as 15% and even 25% in the "inner city." This is during a period of so-great expansion of the economy, so immense a sweep of wealth that it is estimated that by the year's end (1968), we will be just 150 billion shy of the trillion dollar level! No wonder that this "unparalleled" prosperity is accompanied by the revolt of the poor, and by what is called a "strange spirit of malaise throughout the land." The soul of bankruptcy of bourgeois civilization is the bankruptcy of its thought which has abdicated all responsibility, giving up even its pretense to any participation in any struggle for the minds of men.

The color, black, cannot be made the scapegoat for the establishment's failure to communicate with its youth. On the contrary, the only lines of communication still open to the black communities lies with white youth and precisely because their color is not so much white as red. That is to say, we are back to the color of freedom, the philosophy of revolution, the possible bridge to the pivotal forces of labor in the basic industries. Where in the U.S. the color there too is black, the closest we have come to actual revolution emanating from the unity of student and worker was in France. Here too, there was no full appreciation of theoretical needs, although definitely the French youth, in particular, and the European youth, in general, are by no means the pragmatists the Americans are, nor as Herbert Marcuse would have it in his latest, An Essay on Liberation:

More than the "socialist humanism" of the early Marx, this violent solidarity in defense, this elemental socialism in action, has given form and substance to the radicalism of the New Left; in this ideological respect too, the external revolution has become an essential part of the opposition within the capitalist metropolises... the fact remains that, for a whole generation, 'freedom,' 'socialism,' and 'liberation' are inseparable from Fidel and Che and the guerrillas... (pp.81-2, 86)

Here Follows: (1) Eugene's French Report
(2) FSM and the Negro Revolution, pp. 38-42
(3) Section from Convention Report on "Culture."

It is there, too, that the theoretic questions were raised more seriously even when there was a denial of the need for theory. The youth kept its distance from the older generation, including its philosophers, both of the old radicals, whose theory was considered "obsolete," and also that stalwart independent who had dominated a whole generation of the immediate post-war period, Jean-Paul Sartre. Nevertheless, whether Anarchists or Trotskyists, the recognition that unless the youth could work out a relationship to the workers, be with them, all would be lost, i.e., the revolution would never be born, but be aborted, clearly implied the need for a unifying theory. To the extent that the Maoists got anywhere, it was due only to their separation from official communism which was doing its best to stifle the revolution. Yet this doesn't mean that Maoism didn't gain converts. Precisely because they did have a theory, did espouse that "politics commands the gun" and did talk in global terms meant, of necessity, that they had a following, though young, that following denied its parentage.

The whole point is that the objectivity of dialectical development is so overwhelming that it acts as a magnet for the unconscious, semi-conscious or conscious only of the faults of a false ideology. This being so, it becomes all the more necessary to recognize the main philosophic enemies of historic dialectics. They are subjectivism and intuition. Subjectivism can be called the political reformist counter-part to the Kantian "Ought," for which the goal is never in the present but constantly put off for "the future." In the spring revolt in France (1968), reformist trade unionism and Communist class collaborationism kept the lid on the young workers who wanted to align with the student youth. Since this was obvious to all the New

Left, there would be no point to develop further the concept of subjectivism if it were not that the most revolutionary of revolutionary verbiage -- Maoism that, paradoxically, does influence the same Left -- were not itself, the same of subjectivism. "The invincible Thought of Mao Tse Tung" remains the substitute for objective reality. Maoism is interpreted in one way for the underdeveloped countries -- "20 years = 1 day; and another way for the advanced countries -- "world revolution" -- no matter how dressed up in Marxist language, it's nothing but subjectivism in the age of state capitalism -- state power to command others to obey the dictates of The Leader.

The second philosophic enemy of the dialectic -- the intuitionists -- act as if negative, i.e. revolutionary development stops the moment they are dominant. What then remains is only the "organization" of what has been achieved by their victory. Whether called the Party, the Cultural Revolution, the Guerrilla, the attitude to objectivity is the disregarding of it. Voluntarism has its natural complement in Organization, Organization, Organization. This is why the "spontaneity" of guerrilla warfare, whether in the Maoist form of "politics commands the gun," or in the Cuban variation that no "prior" theory is necessary because the "foco" is itself the party, is sham and The Leader remains the distinguishing mark of this latest form of substitution for social revolution. That nevertheless, this acts as a point of attraction for militant black intellectuals, who espouse "urban guerrillas," compels a second look at the theory of guerrilla warfare as it has been abbreviated for quick dissemination (a sort of "instant revolution") by Regis Debray.

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Here follows N&L review of Debray's book

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The self-development of the masses, who themselves would master the principles of dialectic is, if not the farthest thing from the minds of the youth, surely from the minds of "The Leader." Any questions of new beginnings must stem from the leader, not from the masses, who are there only to execute the "policies" already worked out. That the need to unify theory and practice is the only way to transform reality is, again, the farthest from The Leader's mind.

The second negation in proletarian revolutions is possible only because of the proletariat's self movement to first negation. To hold fast the contradiction and yet not be dominated by it is the core of Marxian Hegelianism. Philosophic cognition cannot create new categories upon the dictates from above. Only when there is finally a new way of making the plunge to freedom does a new category arise. The urgency then for a new unity of theory and practice flows from the compulsion of the new society still held in the grip of the old. This is what Lenin grasped fully, only when, both in thought and reality, established Marxism failed to move to "second negation," that is to say, proletarian revolution. He first expressed this thought abstractly as he read Hegel and noted: "Cognition not only reflects the world but creates it." It sounds like absolute idealism, but it was, in fact, the new objectivity gained by Lenin from the need to separate himself from the Second International, and therewith the new appreciation of Philosophy. Politically, this got spelled out, both in State and Revolution and in the first years of the actual creation of the Soviet state as "to a man" -- the population to a man would run production and the state and begin the arduous work of abolishing the division between mental and manual labor -- or, there would be no new society. And, finally, in the last years of his life, as he battled with his Bolshevik co-leaders, he kept reiterating this concept of new subject, new theory, new unifying philosophy, in the most personal terms: Stalin must be removed

altogether from his post of General Secretary because he was "too rude and disloyal." Trotsky is "the most talented person" but too attracted to the "administrative" side of questions that cannot be settled administratively. Bukharin, the greatest theoretician, never "fully understood the dialectic."

The tragic irony of this warning is that Stalin alone understood what Lenin meant -- and he opposed it. The historic result of this has since become known as Stalinism or state capitalism or totalitarianism. It is this historic, objective, perversion of Marxism that is the fountainhead of Maoism.

Bukharin and Trotsky failed signally to sense either the objectively or the subjectively changed world situation and, therefore, felt no need to return to Hegel as a way of creating a philosophic foundation for meeting the challenge of the new times. New ways of creating new roads to revolution that sprung up from the non-ideological shape of the new economic conditions did much to shake up the status quo, but nothing to tear it out, root and branch. Now that Communist state capitalism challenges corporate capitalism for domination of the world, the theoretic void in the Marxist movement helps make the world crisis absolute.

125 years ago, Marx saw this, not because he was a prophet but because of his profound discernment, both of "the law of motion of capitalism" and the inadequacy of the vision of "vulgar communism" in the creation of a new society that was to be built on human, instead of property foundations. The more the young Marx matured, and the more he concentrated his studies on the economic laws of capitalism, the more insistent he was in stressing the absolute in man's development "of his creative dispositions, without any pre-conditions other than antecedent historical evolution of all human powers as such, unmeasured by any previously established yardstick - an end in itself, ... the absolute movement of becoming." And, it is this which the Marx of Capital described as "human power which is its own end..."

It is this truth of the Marxian Philosophy of Liberation which must be re-captured in the daily life and struggles of the rank-and-file workers, the youth, the new black passions and forces. It is impossible, however, to grasp this truth when one deliberately puts on "non-ideological" blinders that would close the path to total emancipation freed from existing state powers. What is needed is not a new "vanguardism," be it party or guerrilla army. What is needed is the release of all the inherent and acquired talents of man. The quest for universality is crying out to be released.