

ist-Humanism, C.L.R. James failed to move from seeing what we were against, the transformation of Russia as a workers' state into a state-capitalist society, to concretizing what we are for: Marx's Humanism.

Thus, when I was interviewed on video-tape for one Afro-American Studies class in California about the Johnson-Forest Tendency's activities and pioneering studies on the Black dimension through the 1940s, it led to a discussion about the 1953-55 period when there was a split between the founders of the Tendency, and about the development of the unique Marxist-Humanist view of Black masses as vanguard. It was this which I had the opportunity to discuss further that same evening at the taped public lecture on "Marx and the Black World" — which moved the question to today, and included not only the Black dimension in the U.S., but the Black revolutions in Africa and the West Indies, as well as the revolutions in Latin America.

As for the Third World Women's Conference held in Urbana, Ill. — It was truly international, including both "First" and Third Worlds, both Latin America fighting U.S. imperialism and wanting independence also from Russian totalitarianism, both Iranians fighting Khomeini and Iraqis fighting Hussein. The question was how do we, in showing that there are two worlds within each country, build relations that reach across national boundaries? The hunger here for a philosophy of freedom was so pervasive that one very nearly forgot the participants were all activists engaged in ongoing freedom struggles. The way in which there is no separation between the activism they reported on and the philosophy of freedom they wished to work out made it clear that, despite the nuclear-armed imperialist titans and oppressive rulers they faced, none thought that a description of this period as a "birth-time of history" was utopian. Instead, the revolutionaries of each country truly felt themselves to be "a land of boundless possibilities," as Rosa Luxemburg had put it.

CRITIQUE OF POST-MARX MARXISM

It was this feeling that kept us all on the concrete level — and "all" does not mean only at the Third World Women's Conference (though they had the highest attendance, over 500) — but the audiences in all 46 talk nationwide, be it in Michigan or West Virginia; in Washington, D.C. or the state of Washington; in New York or Iowa; in Wisconsin or Utah; or, for that matter, in Canada where I was present on International Women's Day. Though these audiences were smaller (ranging from 50 to 200), there was no difference in their concern with both their activism and their absorption in philosophy. Despite the movement to the Right on the part of the rulers, there was serious interest in Marx among audiences everywhere I went — and an awareness that this is where the absolute opposition to the status quo lies. It was because of this that all seemed eager to dig into the challenge to all post-Marx Marxists on which I focused.

This totally new attitude could also be seen in the several appearances I made on mass media outlets — especially where (as on educational radio channels) there was a full hour to develop the category of the last three decades of our age as a movement from practice to theory that is itself a form of theory which challenges the theoretician to rise to the point of philosophy by being rooted as deeply in the movement from practice as in the movement from theory. Bertell Ollman's program on WBAI, " Praxis: Interview with Marxists," gave me that opportunity in prime time.* The subject was Rosa Luxemburg

— as revolutionary as well as in her heretofore unknown feminist dimension; as Marxist taking issue with Marx's theory of accumulation and with Lenin on the question of the relationship of spontaneity to Party organization; as theorist as well as leader in both the 1905 Polish Revolution and the 1919 Spartacist Uprising in Germany. Nevertheless, in that crowded hour, the challenge to post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism was also raised.

It was in New York that I also had the opportunity to develop anew the key historic happening in labor for our age — the 1950 Miners' General Strike. It had been just before coming to New York that I had a most exciting experience in West Virginia, where I had talked of that strike in my lecture and found in the audience participants who had known me through my own activity there during that strike, and who, on their own, had been following my writings since then. At my very final lecture of the tour — the sum-up meeting in California — we had present still others who had participated in that strike and had been led by the event to become Marxist-Humanists and who now poured forth their reminiscences.

What became so clear — 30 years after that historic labor happening — was the way in which it had laid the ground for the 1953 breakthrough on the Absolute Idea as a unity of the movement from theory and from practice. The type of questions the miners had begun asking in 1949-50 about Automation — which was leading to ever more sharp divisions between mental and manual labor, as they rejected John L. Lewis's order to return to work — had led me to introduce changes in the form of the book on state-capitalism I was then writing. The two new vantage points I saw for that work were: one, the American labor struggles; and two, dialectical philosophy, specifically Lenin's Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic.

It was immediately after this return to Marxist-Humanism's roots in West Virginia, that I got to New York and found that Tamiment Library at New York University (which has on microfilm the entire Archives I have deposited at Wayne State University)** wished to interview me for the Oral History of the Left precisely on that missing link in the relationship between the stage of cognition and the stage of labor revolt. Indeed, News and Letters Committees are now thinking of producing a pamphlet on the 1950 Miners' General Strike with the eyes of today, by the participants themselves.

Thus it is that the national tour in this Marx centenary year has related both the world historic birth of Marx's "new Humanism" to today's struggles, and the beginnings of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. in the 1960s to our challenge to all post-Marx Marxists in the 1980s.

* This interview can be heard on June 7 at 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. over radio station WBAI, New York.

** Both the studies on the "Negro Question" in the 1940s and the letters and articles around the 1949-50 Miners' General Strike are included in a new and expanded edition of the "Rosa Luxemburg Collection: Marxist Humanism from 1911 to Today," available on microfilm from the WSU Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Detroit, Mich. 48222.