

'CULTURE,' SCIENCE AND STATE-CAPITALISM

by Raya Dunayevskaya

1971 is the eleventh year since the Sino-Soviet conflict first broke into the open. By the time, in August, 1966, that Mao launched the so-called Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, not only had Mao succeeded in designating Russia as capitalist, state-capitalist, but all his opponents within China (all, that is, except the actual capitalists who continue to collect their five per cent interest on capital that they manage for the state) as "capitalist roaders."

There are young revolutionaries who are so enthusiastic about Mao's expose of "Khrushchev's phony Communism" (now called "Khrushchevism without Khrushchev") as capitalistic that they help cover up the greater truths, that (1) long before Khrushchev's "phony Communism" (deStalinized goulash), it was Stalin who lorded it over Russia and initiated the transformation of the first workers' state into its opposite, a state-capitalist society; (2) it was Mao himself who, in 1956, helped Khrushchev to crush the Hungarian Revolution with its Workers' Councils and struggles for a truly new social order; and (3), furthermore, Stalin is but the Russian name for a world phenomenon. Its appearance has nothing whatever to do with the Sino-Soviet conflict (which it antedated by three long decades), and everything to do with the Great Depression, and fear of proletarian revolution. Therein lies its crucial importance for our day.

THE STAKES

The real question is: What, in this period of recessions that have come to take the place of the Great Depression nevertheless, makes the global crisis so total that even Mao's China is beginning to stretch out a hand toward a little "peaceful co-existence" with the U.S.? What is being outstretched is not the hand of a ping pong player (China's own brand of phony "people to people relations"), but that of Chou En-lai at the very top of the "new" Mao leadership.

Why is it that just as the recently concluded 24th Congress of the Russian Communist Party had all its pie-in-the-sky promises rest on "greater labor productivity," so Mao's Communism, purified of "capitalist roaders," continues to lash out against "the black*wind of economism"? It is this, just this, which makes both "socialist lands" bear such striking resemblance to that super-imperialist titan, the U.S.A.

State-capitalism, not as a mere swear word spewed out against dissidents, but as serious theory, does indeed reflect reality torn in twain by the decisive relations of men at the point of production, those exploitative relations of capital/labor which determine all else in society, especially its thought. Which is why the proletariat, too, in its struggles, fights under totally new philosophic banners of liberation, as the 1968 Hunan Manifesto within China itself proved once again:

"The form of political power is superficially changed . . . However, old bureaucrats continue to play the leading role in the 'new political power' . . . Chou En-lai (is) at present the general representative of China's Red Capitalist class . . . as the masses have said, 'everything remains the same after so much ado'.

"Victory of the Chinese proletariat and the broad masses of revolutionary people and the extinction of the new bureaucratic bourgeoisie are likewise inevitable . . . the 'People's Commune of China' will surely survive." (1)

In this, the 30th year of the elaboration of the theory of state-capitalism, and the 15th year of the rebirth of the Humanism of Marxism produced by the mass movements in East Europe in the 1950's, growing throughout the world in the 1960's, we must go back to theoretic origins not only to set the historical record straight, but also to test the dialectic method of the state-capitalist theory against the dialectics of liberation today.

*Evidently no one has told Mao that Black is beautiful. All the broadsheets that China directs to the Blacks in the U.S. notwithstanding, the word, black, has always (after the "Cultural Revolution" as before) been used in Mao's China as synonym for everything evil!

(1) During the "Cultural Revolution" a new revolutionary youth organization sprung up in Hunan and called itself the "Hunan Provincial Proletarian Revolutionary Great Alliance Committee" (Sheng-wu-lien). Its Manifesto, quoted above, along with two other documents by it as well as all the official Maoist attacks on it have been reproduced in Klaus Mehnert's Peking and the New Left: At Home and Abroad (China Research Monograph #4, UC, Berkeley).

THE THEORY OF STATE-CAPITALISM

Born under the impact of the shock of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the outbreak of World War II, and Trotsky's calling for the defense of Russia, "a workers' state, though degenerate," the "state-capitalist tendency" decided to make its own study of the class nature of the Russian economy in strict relationship both to Marxism and the specific form of workers' resistance to the Five Year Plans. I happened to have been the first to make a study of the Plans from original Russian sources, but it was not embarked upon solely as a Russian study. It was done as a restatement of Marxism for our age: It was by no accident, therefore, that, in the process of analyzing the operation of the law of value, that main-spring of capitalism, I rediscovered, in the early 1940's, Marx's now celebrated 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscript. It was its concept of free labor as the shaper of history vs. alienated labor which is the mark of capitalism that governed the study, "The Nature of the Russian Economy. (2).

Because the law of value dominates not only on the home front of class exploitation, but also in the world market where big capital of the most technologically advanced land rules, the theory of state-capitalism was not confined to the "Russian Question," as was the case when the nomenclature was used by others. Quite the contrary. The new in the theory of state-capitalism, its dialectics, its conclusions, demonstrated, first, that the State Plan, the State Party, the monolithic State, differed in no fundamental degree from the capitalism Marx analyzed, in *Capital*, where he showed that it was not the anarchy in the market, but the "despotic plan of capital" which labor confronted daily in the factory. Equally fundamental was the second point my study made, that the 1930's made it possible to prove, in the concrete, what Marx could only state in theory about

(2) A minority political tendency is always limited in the space accorded to it in the public press. Thus, the section of the study of the Russian economy that was based on the early essays of Marx and was entitled *Labor and Society* was not published either when Part I, *Analysis of the Russian Economy* appeared (*New International*, Dec., 1942, Jan., 1943, Feb., 1943), or when Part II, *Nature of the Russian Economy* (*New International*, Dec., 1947 and Jan., 1947), was finally published. *Labor and Society* finally appeared in mimeographed form in the Johnson-Forest interim period Bulletin No: 5 (1947). These documents form part of the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection (*Marxist-Humanism, Its Origin and Development in America, 1941-1969*) that is now available in xeroxed form and on film from Labor History Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit.)

the ultimate development of the concentration and centralization of capital "in the hands of a single capitalist or a single capitalist corporation." (3)

State intervention in the economy, whether totally or "in part," characterized both Hitler's Germany and Roosevelt's U.S. "New Deal," Japan's "Co-Prosperty Sphere" as well as the "Labor Government" in Great Britain. What the 1930's established is that under no conditions could The Plan be considered either "socialist" or only a "war measure" as it was during World War I. The State Plan had become part of the very organism of capitalism undermined by the Great Depression, fearful of proletarian revolution, determined to survive at all costs, be it state control or world war, or a nuclear holocaust—that is to say, destruction of civilization itself.

On the other hand, the proletariat has no intention whatever to let that happen. Its struggles against that are ceaseless, although the forms of resistance, of necessity, manifest themselves in new forms. Thus low labor productivity, far from being a sign of the "backwardness" of the Russian proletariat, is the measure of his resistance to the State Plan, the State Party, the Leader.

The masses have proven they cannot be brain-washed. All the means of communication may be in the hands of the state, but the heads belong to the same bodies that are being exploited, and they think their own thoughts.

By the time they openly revolt, their spontaneous outburst hews out new roads to freedom, to totally new human relations as well as to working out a new relationship between theory and practice. Such a new epoch opened in the 1950's when, at one and the same time, a second Industrial Revolution had begun with Automation, and the wildcats against it, in the U.S., and, in East Europe, revolts within totalitarian lands broke out.

(3) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 689: See also what I wrote in *Marxism and Freedom*: "The single capitalist, call him 'Collective Leadership under Khrushchev, Inc.', if you will, will have at a certain stage a magnificent plant, completely automatized, or a jet bomber, but he cannot stop to raise the standard of living of the masses of the workers. He may be able to avoid the more extreme forms of ordinary commercial crises, but even within the community itself he cannot escape the internal crisis of production . . . That is why Marx, throughout *Capital*, insists that either you have the self-activity of the workers, the plan of freely associated labor, or you have the hierarchic structure of relations in the factory and the despotic Plan. There is no in-between." (p. 136).

THE MOVEMENT FROM PRACTICE TO THEORY AND TO FREEDOM

Like the removal of an incubus from the brain, the 'death of Stalin, in March, 1953, released fantastic, elemental creativity on the part of the proletariat. Within three short months, the first uprising ever against Communist totalitarianism erupted in East Germany. This initiated a totally new epoch of freedom struggles in East Europe. The "Polish October" had not actually developed into a full revolution, but the ideological struggles, especially among the youth, were open-ended, many-sided, passionate and brought Humanism of Marxism onto the historic stage.

The revolts culminated in a full-scale revolution in Hungary in 1956. With the establishment of a new form of workers' rule—Workers' Councils—the workers had created also the decentralized form of relationships for all other sectors of the population so that we had Councils of Revolutionary Youth, Councils of Intellectuals as well as a proliferation of parties, newspapers, free minds.

No matter what one's point of concentration was in those three-years between the East German uprising and the Hungarian Revolution—before the Russian tanks moved in to crush the revolution, when the Russians feared the possibility of revolution, they had launched a deliberately abstract discussion of the dialectic, "the negation of the negation" (4)—there was no doubt whatever that the masses in revolt were a new breed. Even so simple a slogan as "Bread and Freedom" pointed to new ways of uniting economics and philosophy.

The historic, the unique, the new initiated in East Germany in 1953, climaxed in Hungary in 1956, reborn

(4) See "Marx's Working Out of the Materialist Dialectics in the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of the Year 1844" by V. A. Karpushin. This article (*Voprosy Filosofii* #3/1955) has never been translated into English. Although many other attacks appeared, none were as "strictly" philosophic. Nor is it possible, now that Khrushchev has become an unperson and the 21st Congress of the Party has been played down, to see, how from open attacks on the Humanism of Marxism, the bureaucracy suddenly tried to usurp it for its own use by having the reigning philosopher, Mitin, then declare Khrushchev's report to contain "the magnificent and noble conception of Marxist-Leninist socialist humanism" (!). I have traced through the changes of line on the subject of Humanism for the years, 1955-59 in *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist Humanism and the African-Asia Revolutions*, pp. 22-29. (Left Group, Cambridge University Labour Club, England, 1961.)

in the 1960's throughout East Europe and culminating in Czechoslovakia in 1968 (5), and, as the Polish strikes at the end of 1970 showed, the resistance has not yet ended. All these epochal developments have yet to be grasped by intellectuals for what they were, are: a movement from practice both to freedom and to theory, a still developing new dialectics of liberation.

Paradoxically, the state-capitalist tendency which had looked towards just such spontaneous outbursts, had enthusiastically hailed the East German uprising, failed to meet the challenge to theory from practice. While I had begun to pose, the moment Stalin died, the question of the relationship between philosophy and revolution, the working out of a new relationship between theory and practice that would be rooted both in actuality and in dialectics, (6), the co-founder of the Tendency was moving away from open Marxism. Whether that was due to the fact that McCarthyism was in full bloom in the U.S., or was due to his changed attitude to nationalism, the indisputable fact is that he glorified, first West Indian nationalism, then Cuba, and then raised Nkrumah to the level of Lenin, if not a notch above.

[When I first read Johnson's statement, "In one of the remarkable episodes in revolutionary history, he (Nkrumah) single handedly outlined a programme based on the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Gandhi . . .", I wrote: "I admit that combining Marx, Lenin and Gandhi is quite a feat. But for a pamphleteer like J. R. Johnson who thundered so for the Soviet United States of Europe, Soviet United States of Asia, world revolution, the struggle against bureaucracy 'as such,' the self-mobilization of the masses and for new passions and new forces to reconstruct society on totally new beginnings—to end with Nkrumah as representative of the new, the new, is rather pathetic. There is nothing to add but to say with Hamlet, 'Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him'." (*Afro-Asia Revolutions*, supra, p. 9ftn.)] (7)

(5) See *Czechoslovakia: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*. (News & Letters Pamphlet, 1968.)

(6) "An Exchange of Letters on Hegel's Absolute Idea" (May 12, May 20, May 22, 1953) which appeared as Appendix in the mimeographed edition of *Extracts of Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks* (News & Letters, November, 1955).

(7) Perhaps this is the place to comment not only on what J. R. Johnson had written on Nkrumah, but also on his sudden rewriting of the history of the state-capitalist tendency.

Johnson's pamphlet from which I quoted p. 77, was called *Facing Reality* and carried, as Appendix, a fantastic rewrite of the history of the state-capitalist

Naturally this not only did not stop the Tendency's full development into Marxism-Humanism, but also, and, above all, the objectivity of the specific form of Marx's philosophy of liberation was embraced by great masses of people having nothing whatever to do with ideological battles that appear in factional form, and everything to do with their spontaneous struggles for freedom under a concrete banner of liberation. The socialism "with a human face" was embraced first by the East Europeans who were fighting for freedom from Communism, then by the African Revolutions gaining freedom from Western imperialism, and even, at first, by Castro defeating both internal reaction and U.S. imperialism. (8)

tendency upon which I did not bother to comment. The deafness to reality calling itself Facing Reality has since then, however, not only rewritten the history of, but published the Tendency document itself, *State-Capitalism and World Revolution*, as if it were a product of C. L. R. James alone. If we are to believe Martin Glaberman, who writes the preface to this new publication, "the author was C. L. R. James. Perhaps this will help to place James, who wrote for a number of years under the pseudonym of J. R. Johnson, in a truer light as a major inheritor and continuator of the Marxist tradition."

One thing can be said for Martin Glaberman. As against the sudden long list of names appended as prefactors to the republication of the document in England in 1956, all of whom had nothing to do with the writing of the document, and some of whom were adherents, not of the state-capitalist tendency, but of bureaucratic-collectivism, Martin Glaberman is an exponent of the state-capitalist theory. Too bad that since his grandiose pronouncement, above, he too has separated himself from James, who had not only split the state-capitalist tendency, but also split from the co-author of *Facing Reality*. It was left to Paul Buhle and *Radical America* (Vol. IV, No. 4, May, 1970) to present "with the encouragement of C. L. R. James" a new collection, without any compunction what ever to cite which are Tendency documents, and which are individual writings, on any subject whatever. It is a mishmash worthy of not-so-radical American eclecticism.

(8) *The New Left Review*, Jan.-Feb., 1961, reproduced Fidel Castro's 1959 declaration: "Standing between the two political and economic ideologies or positions being debated in the world, we are holding our own positions. We have named it humanism, because its methods are humanistic, because we want to rid man of all fears, directives and dogmatisms. We are revolutionising society without binding or terrorising it. The tremendous problem faced by the world is that it has been placed in a position where it must choose be-

The whole new, Third World that was born sans any "leadership" from the Communist world led to the historic split in that orbit, not because either the Russian or Chinese Communist Parties were moving together with these new "storm centers of world revolution," but because both state powers were fighting for direction of and control over, (especially the latter), a world movement which emerged elementally, independent of all existing state powers—East and West, private capitalist, or state-capitalists calling themselves Communist.

It is true that, at first, Mao's Communism appeared as the greater force of attraction—in theory, with its dictum that "power comes out of the barrel of a gun"; in practice, with the "Great Leap Forward" which promised to skip both capitalism and socialism, and go "directly" to Communism. When, however, it had become clear that the "Great Leap Forward" had ended in great disaster, and when U.S. imperialism chose to throw the gauntlet, (filled with devastating, barbaric bombs), not to mighty China, but to little North Vietnam, the Third World kept away from both ends of the Sino-Soviet conflict, solidarizing, instead, with North Vietnam.

1965 ended disastrously for all of China's "foreign policies," be they for Asia or Africa or Latin America, not to mention as contender for leadership of the whole Communist world. Yet the launching of a preventive "civil war," called the Cultural Revolution, soon after the collapse of the hoped-for Peking-Djakarta axis to counteract both the U.S.-NATO Axis and the Moscow-Warsaw Pact Nations, was not so much the result of "foreign policies" as the product of a retrogressionist philosophy which originated in the failure of the Great Leap Forward, and now held that, in place of "one day equals 20 years," it would take no less than "a century"—"or more" (!) to establish socialism. What preceded the "Cultural Revolution" of 1966, and may, indeed, be called its first form—the Socialist Education Campaign (1962-3)—rested on an attack on Marx's Humanist Essays. (9) Though, in the 1960's, it was directed

tween capitalism, which starves people, and communism; which resolves economic problems but suppresses the liberties so greatly cherished by man . . . That is why we have said that we are one step ahead of the right and the left, and that this is a humanistic revolution, because it does not deprive man of his essence, but holds him as its basic aim . . . Such is the reason for my saying that this revolution is not red, but olive-green, for olive-green is precisely our color, the color of the revolution brought by the rebel army from the heart of the Sierra Maestra."

(9) See Chou Yang, "The Fighting Task Confronts Workers in Philosophy and the Social Speeches," speech

mainly against "Russian revisionism,"⁽¹⁰⁾ the truth is that both Russia and China decided jointly to call the East European Freedom Fighters "revisionists." The Russian theoreticians maintained their leadership of the Communist world and grounded the struggle with alleged revisionism in a "critique" of Marx's *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts* because that had become the banner of the revolutionary proletarian opposition to existing Communism.

The only contribution the Chinese Communists made to this struggle with revisionism was to constantly accuse their dissidents of wishing to establish "Petofi circles" in China. Then, when the Sino-Soviet conflict erupted, the Chinese added the adjective, Russian, before the noun, "revisionism," without, however, erasing either the adjective, Hungarian or Humanist. Clearly, a spectre is, indeed haunting Communism, haunting it from below, from practice—the spectre of Marx's Humanism.

Both giant Communist state powers were alike also in substituting science for the self-activity of the masses as the "proof" of the "superiority" of their social order, thereby, proving instead, the correctness of Marx's Humanist attack on science: "To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie."

THE LIE OF SCIENCE

This is where state-capitalism calling itself Communism shows its affinity to private capitalism. Since, however, science's "equalizer" (the H-bomb) notwithstanding, Russia (much less China) has not yet "caught up" with U.S. industrial might, both Communist powers are looking for trade. And, since there is no way for U.S.'s industrial might to escape economic crises and strikes and opposition movements from youth to anti-war to Black revolutions, it too wants trade. The present mild flirtation with China has, of course, other "balancing" features in mind as it competes with Russia

delivered at the 4th Enlarged Session of the Committee of the Department of Philosophy and Social Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Oct. 26, 1963: "The modern revisionists and some bourgeois scholars try to describe Marxism as humanism . . . In particular, they make use of certain views on 'alienation' expressed by Marx in his early *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*, 1844 . . . in the early stage of development of their thought, Marx and Engels were indeed somewhat influenced by humanist ideas . . . But when they formulated the materialist conception of history and discovered the class struggle is the motive force of social development, they immediately got rid of this influence."

⁽¹⁰⁾ See especially Mao, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*.

for world mastery. But nothing changes basics: the non-viability of state-capitalism, as of private capitalism, due to the exploitation of labor, reveals the more clearly science's impotence.

In a word, the lie of science shows itself nowhere more glaringly than in the attitude to labor. Thus, Khrushchev, at the height of his power, proclaimed: "It is only logical that the country of victorious socialism would have . . . blazed a trail into outer space." When, however, the paeans of praise to science came down to earth, they turned out to be pure capitalistic admonitions for workers to work hard and harder. (11) Thus, while Mao canonized the superiority of science into the Constitution itself, the dictum for labor remained what it had been through "Great Leaps Forward," all on the backs of that labor, most concretely spelled out: "Each person must work ten hours and engage in ideological studies for two hours a day. They are entitled to one day of rest every ten days."

By no accident whatever, glorification of science is the mark not only of the ruling classes in the age of "scientific and technological revolutions," but also of theoreticians busy revising Marxism. Not the deliberate statist misnaming of revolutionary proletarian opposition as "revisionist," but the genuine historic revisions have always used "science" in the fight against "the Hegelian dialectic" which turned out to be the fight against the proletarian revolution, for the "defense of the fatherland." Eduard Bernstein was the first, back at the end of the 19th century; Louis Althusser is the latest but he is sure not to be the last since, of necessity, these proponents of "science" and opponents of "philosophy" are sure to keep reappearing so long as capitalism is not torn up, root and branch, the world over.

What concerned us here was, on the one hand, the achievements of the state-capitalist theory which kept revolutionaries from tail-ending Stalinism into imperialist war, and, by relating the new stage of world capitalist

(11) The just-concluded 24th Congress of the Russian Communist Party reiterated that it was most based on the 22nd Congress. Though none of the promises have been realized which were made at the Congress a full decade ago, the full concentration on labor productivity remains. And the 1961 Program was most explicit:

" . . . it is necessary to raise the productivity of labor in industry by more than 100 per cent within ten years . . . To increase labor productivity and reduce production costs . . . implies a higher rate of increase in labor productivity as compared with remuneration . . . (and in) the second decade every family, including newlyweds, will have a comfortable flat conforming to the requirements of hygiene and cultured living."

development to the specific forms of workers revolt against it, aligning with the latter. On the other hand, the inadequacy of the state-capitalist theory which, without development into Marxist-Humanism, could not cope with the actual movement from practice that refused to be only the muscle of revolution and let the intellectuals do the theorizing.

The masses—all the new forces of revolution—have shown how different proletarian "subjectivity" is from petty-bourgeois subjectivity. They refuse any longer to be only the force of revolution, for they are also its Reason, active participants in working out the philosophy of liberation for our age. Now that they have done so, isn't it time for intellectuals to begin, with them, to fill the theoretic void left in the Marxist movement since Lenin's death? At no time has this been more imperative than now when a new generation of revolutionaries has been born, but is so disgusted with "the old" as to turn away from both theory and history as if actions, without those unifying forces of historic and theoretic continuity, can devise shortcuts to revolution. Jean-Paul Sartre's advice to youth to reject history notwithstanding, a "newness" that treats history as if it weren't there dooms itself to impotence. A Hitler with his *Mein Kampf* could break with history; a revolutionary youth movement cannot. Nor can one continue to delude oneself that theory can be gotten "en route." To turn one's back on philosophy is as big a lie as is the lie of science separated from life.

Marx foresaw the impasse of modern science not because he was a prophet, but because he had made the human being the subject of all development and saw that there was no other answer to: can mankind be free in an age when the machine is master of man, not man of machine. There is still no other answer. It is from this ground that we today face what Hegel called "the birth-time of history" and Marx called the unity of theory and practice, of philosophy and revolution, of mental and manual labor, the new human dimension, "thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism."

—Raya Dunayevskaya
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