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The national tour on the Marx centenary

THEORY / PRACTICE

by Raya Dunayevskaya

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I have just returned from a three-month long national tour on the Marx centenary and the publication of my new work, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. The most exciting aspect of the discussions around both the centenary and my book revolved around my focus on the last decade of Marx's life as he discovered "New Moments" in human development of what today we call the Third World. Where so-called "orthodox" Marxists spoke of the last decade of Marx's life as a "slow death," the "New Moments" Marx uncovered in the last decade became the centerpiece in the final Part of my work, which I have entitled "Karl Marx — from Critic of Hegel to Author of Capital and Theorist of 'Revolution in Permanence'."

Naturally, the "New Moments" in Marx's revolutionary philosophic-historic concepts were both an extension of and a return to Marx's very first break (1843-44) with both capitalism and what he called "vulgar communism." Then, too, Marx's Promethean vision of truly human relations which suffered no division between mental and manual labor had him integrate, into his new proletarian focus on class struggle, the Man/Woman relationship as a most revealing relationship of Alienation in this exploitative, sexist, racist, capitalistic society. In his final writings — after completing his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, and as he turned to what was then a "new science," anthropology — he kept working at and concretizing his multilinear view of human development and its continuing struggles for freedom.

Whether that meant introducing fundamental changes in *Capital* itself, as he prepared its 1872-75 French edition, both on concentration and centralization of capital and in making the final section on "So-called Primitive Accumulation of Capital" integral to Part VII; or whether it was his commentary on Morgan's *Ancient Society* and the Iroquois women that we find in Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* of 1880-82; or whether it was a new view of the primitive agricultural commune in an industrialized world as he expressed it in letters to Vera Zasulich and in commentary on Mikhailovsky's critique of his "Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" — Marx's point, as he projected the startling possibility of a revolution coming first in backward lands like Russia ahead of the technologically advanced West, was that there was more than one path to revolution.

It was this, just this, that proved to have the most intense interest for today's audiences.



Raya Dunayevskaya on tour at the University of Michigan where she spoke on "New Moments in Marx's Last Decade" and on "Marx and the Black World."

AFRO-AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD AUDIENCES

Take, for example, those talks that were sponsored by Afro-American Studies programs. The interest of these audiences in "Marx and the Black World" was not limited to Marx's 1867 expression in *Capital* that "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded," but extended to my quotation from the 1881 *Ethnological Notebooks*, where Marx calls the Australian aborigine "the intelligent black." What some in the audience responded was: "Yes, but how, in today's world, where the Black World is truly global — and none have done more to reshape it than the African revolutions — can we escape being drawn back to capitalism, keep the revolutions from souring, and show that we, the Blacks in the U.S., are not narrowly nationalistic after all?"

Furthermore, both the Black intellectuals and the Black activists wanted to discuss also the origins of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. I first broke with Trotsky over the Hitler-Stalin Pact, when Trotsky continued to call for the defense of Russia as a "workers' state, though degenerate," and, under the name of Freddie Forest, began my development of the theory of state-capitalism. This led, in 1941, to my association with C.L.R. James, author of *Black Jacobins*, who, under the name of J.R. Johnson, had arrived at the same position. The state-capitalist tendency thus became known as the Johnson-Forest Tendency. But where, to me, the theory of state-capitalism was but a step to the development of the philosophy of Marx-