

4/23 CSLA  
4/21  
4/10  
Urbana

1st panel  
N. G. Nellie Wong, poet  
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Sal Amos  
María Helena Moreira Alves  
Gayatri Spivak, Intra  
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CSLA  
Women  
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enthusiasm of its historic initiative  
Gerda Lerner's "The Place of Women in History"  
wrenches women's history

Rosa Parks  
James for Hamers  
Gloria Richardson

Ms. Nela Azay  
Fatela M'Elabet  
Algerian work  
by W. J. ...

Fatima Mernissi  
Veiled Sisters

Alison Pienkowska  
+ Peasants Women  
in Rural Siberia

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Women's War

María Stevan  
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- 2. China Portugal
- 3. Abe Polansky
- 4. P. C. to (E. Europe)

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III M.H. Taly = Positive  
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Qpp 194-5

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Raya Dunayevskaya

THE TRAIL FROM MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION TO TODAY'S WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENTS -- delivered Sunday, April 10, 1983, at the Conference on "Common Differences: Third World Women and Feminist Perspectives" at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### I. MARX'S "NEW HUMANISM"

Let's go adventuring into Marx's discovery of a whole new continent of thought and of revolution that he named "a new Humanism" which, in this Marx centenary year, has left us a trail to the 1980s. It is precisely this that makes me very happy to talk to a conference of Third World women, because the very mention of "Third World" opens the door to both women and men, to all revolutionary forces as Reason.

In the last decade of Marx's life he was still discovering "New Moments" -- that is, stages of new human development which we call the Third World. It rounded out that new continent of thought and revolution which he discovered when he first broke with bourgeois society in 1843. In transforming Hegel's revolution in philosophy into a philosophy of revolution Marx stressed that he was breaking not only with capitalism as an exploitative social order, but also with what he called "vulgar communism" -- that is to say, people who thought that all you needed to do was to abolish private property in order to have a new social order. Marx's point was that a new society was not a matter of form of property, private or state, but of new human relations.

To stress how total was the uprooting needed, in his 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts Marx asked the reader to probe not only the class struggle but also a most fundamental relationship, Man/Woman: "The direct, natural, necessary relationship of man to man is the relationship of man to woman." And because that is so alienating an experience where the woman is always subordinate to the man, be it in the home or in the factory, Marx called all societies, including capitalism, the pre-history of humanity. In a word, it was not a truly'

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human relationship and pointed to the necessity of uprooting all the existing relations. Marx called for a "revolution in permanenee" which would abolish and transcend all exploitative relations and see, in place of either the profit motive of capitalism or the state-form of property in vulgar communism, the self-development of man, woman, and child -- with all of humanity in the process of "the absolute movement of becoming."

The dual rhythm of revólution -- the overthrow of the old and the creation of the new foundations -- is what Marx first encountered in the 1848 revolutions throughout Europe. In the U.S. that was the year of the first Woman's Rights Convention and it is in the dialectic of that movement that we witness the vanguard element of the Black dimension. We can see it most specifically in the very name Sojourner Truth chose for herself. Let me explain:

Today, when Women's Liberation is not just an Idea whose time has come but an actual movement, we naturally think that past history is but "backdrop," and yet if we look at even so simple a question as choosing a name and how we think we have achieved a great revolution by adopting our mother's maiden name instead of our father's name, we have to stop and compare that with what Sojourner Truth did. She said she went to God and told Him she should no longer be a slave, and would certainly not bear the name of her slave-master. She asked what she should call herself, then? His answer was supposed to have been: 'Sojourn the world over and tell the truth about American democracy. The Declaration of Independence says all men are free, but obviously they mean only white men, and women don't seem to count at all. Go tell the world the truth.' Since that was precisely the answer she was waiting to hear, she called herself from that moment on "Sojourner Truth." Which one of us, in 1983, has chosen a name that expresses our whole philosophy?

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It is this type of Reason that discloses that intelligence is related to one's experience and aspiration and is not merely a matter of literacy or illiteracy. It is the drive to freedom that determines one's philosophy and that makes one see what Marx meant by "history and its process." And because Marx saw men and women as shapers of history in a continuing process and did not separate past from present or future, in his very last decade he rediscovered the Man/Woman relationship in the very latest anthropological works then coming out where ancient was revealed as a possible ground for future.

Lewis

I'm referring to the fact that Henry Morgan's Ancient Society had just been published (1877) and Marx became so enamoured of the greater freedoms that the Iroquois women had than what exists under the so-called advanced capitalist democracy, that he began referring to the primitive communism of the American Indians as a more inspiring form of human development than capitalism.

It is only natural that we view history with eyes of today. In the panel on "Women in Revolutionary Movements," half an hour ago, I showed that it was no accident that two of the burning questions of today -- women's liberation and color -- were also the most exciting in history and in Marx's discovery of what he called "the Asiatic mode of production" and what we call "the Third World." I thereupon quoted women from such different parts of the world as South Africa, East Timor, Guatemala --and, for that matter, Poland.

In South Africa in 1978, Miriam Gafoor, a Capetown student, told a Supreme Court judge: "Apartheid has become an insult to our human dignity. Our whole being rebels against the whole South African experience... I am 16 years old and have been

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locked up, refused food and interrogated... We, the youth of South Africa, reject the subservient heritage that has been handed down to us."

In East Timor in 1975, Rosa Muki Bonapart organized the Popular Organization of Timorese Women as a group within Fretilin. She was the first one murdered when Indonesia invaded East Timor after they had already achieved freedom and ended 446 years of Portuguese rule. She had courageously expounded her philosophy: "The ideology of a system in which women are considered as 'inferior beings' has submitted Timorese women to a double exploitation: a general form which applies without distinction to both men and women, and which manifests itself by forced labor, starvation salaries, racism, etc... Another form of a specific character, directed to women in particular."

In 1982, Manuela Saquic, a 17 year old Ixil Indian from Guatemala said: "The rich have always treated us Indians as people who are crazy, who can't think. They think of Indians as animals, who don't have the capacity to learn and the capacity to become conscious... At first the army persecuted only men. They never paid any attention to the women; they thought we were invisible. But they discovered that the women were organized, too... The government is massacring us because we're organizing and rising up... We have great hope that we will arrive in power and create a new Guatemala."

When it comes to Poland, however, although it is a woman of today, Anna Walentynowicz, who began the tremendous, ongoing movement Solidarnosc, I prefer to return to history and to Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish, German, Russian, international revolutionary. That is not only because my latest work, Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, centers around her but because it was Luxemburg who had directly related all her thought and activity in the revolutions of 1905 and 1919 to Marx's whole philosophy of

revolution, which has laid the trail to the 1980s for us. Like all other Marxists, when the 1905 revolution broke out in Russia and Poland (then part of the Russian empire), she based herself on what Marx had done in the 1848 revolution. Where she differed from the others was that, where they considered 1905 as the last of the 19th century revolutions, she insisted that it was the first of the new 20th century revolutions. Even she did not fully grasp how right she was in the way it was extended to Persia. It was there, where the revolution continued to 1911, that women organized the very first women's soviet (anjumen) in the world.

## II. LUXEMBURG'S FLASH OF GENIUS ON IMPERIALISM

In Luxemburg's case, it was but the beginning of many original theoretical and practical activities in which she re-created Marxism for her own age -- on the question of the General Strike as the ground for revolution, and on the question of spontaneity as the very form of revolution which demands a new concept of the relationship of revolution to "the party." Not only was she the very first of the Marxists to see a new global development of capitalism -- imperialism, at the very start of the 20th century; but it was her persistent, consistent, anti-militarist work that landed her in jail even before the outbreak of World War I, and then led to her leadership of the Spartacist Uprising in 1919, when she was murdered.

It was her flash of genius on the question of imperialism that led to her break with Kautsky (who was considered the greatest orthodox Marxist in the world) because the German Social-Democracy in 1910 did nothing to oppose their rulers' sending the gunboat, Panther, first to Morocco and then to Southwest Africa (which we today know as Namibia). To this day, her eloquent, revolutionary defense of the Black women and children gunned down in the Kalahari desert by the German General von Trotha not only sends shivers down our backs but makes us feel how unfinished the task remains in overcoming imperialism.



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Let us follow her revolutionary legacy, both in the heretofore unknown feminist dimension and in her definition of humanism: "I'm telling you that as soon as I can stick my nose out again," she wrote from prison to Mathilde Wurm, castigating not only those who had capitulated to the war but those who devised theories for the capitulators, "I will hunt and harry your society of frogs with trumpet blasts, whip crackings, and bloodhounds -- like Penthesilea I wanted to say, but by God, you people are no Achilles. Have you had enough of a New Year's greeting now? Then see to it that you stay human ... Being human means joyfully throwing your whole life 'on the scales of destiny' when need be, but all the while rejoicing in every sunny day and every beautiful cloud. Ach, I know of no formula to write you for being human...."

Whatever the reason Luxemburg, in her fight with the Social-Democracy's betrayal in voting war credits to the Kaiser, called upon Penthesilea, the Queen of the Amazons, the point is that her unknown feminist dimension manifested itself even there. But the totality of Marx's dialectic of revolution, which never separated the philosophy of revolution from actual revolution, was nevertheless missing, even in Rosa Luxemburg.

### III. MARX'S 'NEW MOMENTS' AS THE TRAIL TO TODAY

What is needed now is a challenge to post Marx Marxists. And I mean revolutionary post-Marx Marxists. I'm not here concerned with the betrayal of the Second International, which had voted those war credits for the Kaiser and helped behead the German Revolution led by Luxemburg, Leibknecht and the Spartacists. Nor am I referring to Stalinism; we now have all of the East European revolutions to show even those who didn't before believe that Stalin had transformed the only successful proletarian revolution into its opposite, the state-capitalist, totalitarian society it now is. I'm referring only to those revolutionaries who lived up to the Marxist heritage but did not live up to Marx's philosophy of revolution which never got separated from actual revolution. In his last decade Marx was still discovering all those new moments, seeing them in an elementary form in primitive communal society and hurrying to integrate them into his total philosophy of liberation. The revolu-

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tionaries who did not match up to that begin with his closest collaborator, Frederick Engels -- who never betrayed; without whose meticulous, hard labor we would never have had Volumes' II and III of Marx's Capital; and who claimed that his very first work after Marx died, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, was a bequest of Marx which he was fulfilling by summarizing what he found in the posthumous notes of Marx.

Was he?

Let's take a look at the four or five paragraphs Engels included in his Origin of the Family and the actual Ethnological Notebooks of Marx. (Here Raya showed a copy of the 400 page work published in 1972 which contains Marx's Notebooks transcribed by Lawrence Krader, to which she said we had to add Marx's notes on Kovalevsky, also transcribed by Krader and published in 1975 under the title The Asiatic Mode of Production.)

When we compare four or five paragraphs with 900 pages, we can see that nothing could be further from the truth. Moreover, it was in the Origin of the Family that Engels writes of "the world historic defeat of the female sex" that supposedly came with the change from matrilineal to patrilineal society -- as if women have not been most active in all the revolutions, especially the Paris Commune, which Marx had singled out as the political form in which to work out the economic emancipation of the proletariat. Yet because, compared to the capitalist ideologues, Engels' demand for equality for women was so superior to the status quo, all socialists have accepted that work as if it were a joint work of Engels "and Marx."

Let's see what Engels worked out as a so-called bequest of Marx. It is true that Marx was so impressed with Morgan's Ancient Society that he asked Engels to get a copy to read at once. It is not true that Marx took everything Morgan had written as if it were a work of historical materialism. On

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the contrary, as the letter he wrote to Vera Zasulich shows, while he praises Morgan's work as bringing out something quite new on primitive communism, he calls attention at the same time to the fact that Morgan's work was authorized by the bourgeois U.S. government.

And what about Engels -- after not even trying to get the book until Marx died and he found his Notes? He accepted Morgan's work in a very unilinear way -- as if all that was needed was to super-impose some modern technological development onto primitive communism, and we would have a "communist society." When he referred to Marx's Notebooks, he left the impression that the few paragraphs he included were all Marx had written. We must repeat: nothing could be further from the truth.

Moreover, Marx was not only making notes from Morgan on ancient society but was summarizing and commenting upon all the new new anthropological studies, which included works by Phear, Maize and Lubbock. At the same time that he was stressing the greatness of primitive society he was also stressing that it was not a question of an outside force, but that right from within the primitive communal society there had already arisen elements of difference between the chief and the ranks, in which we could, indeed, see the class struggle and the disintegration of the old society. Which is why he not only let stand the most famous statement of the Communist Manifesto -- "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" -- but added, in the new 1882 Introduction to the Russian edition of the Manifesto, that it was not out of the question, since there is more than one path to social revolution, that revolution could come to backward Russia ahead of the technologically advanced West, and provided that it became the signal for revolution in the advanced countries it could be successful. "starting point for communist development."

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Although Engels had cosigned that new Introduction to the 1882 edition of the Manifesto, after Marx died and he was bringing out a British edition (in 1888), he starred that first historic sentence and in a footnote said that Marx meant all written history, because at the time that had been written we didn't know about primitive communism, and therefore the reader should read his Origin of the Family. The truth is that Marx had known a great deal, but far from being an evolutionist, or a biologist, or any other type of unilinear analyst, Marx had a multilinear, dialectical view of human development which had led him, from the 1857 Grundrisse on, to stop saying that all of human development consisted of three main stages -- slavery, feudalism, capitalism. He added a fourth, which he called "Asiatic mode of production" and which was not only a geographic designation but a manifestation of a historically new stage of human development. (Indeed, he even pointed to his own birthplace, Triers, Germany, as having some relation to that element.)

In that last decade of Marx's life, when he turned to all the new anthropological studies and saw so many new moments even on a trip for his health to Algiers where he came back "with his head full of Africa and the Arabs", he was led to reinterpret the penultimate chapter of his greatest theoretical work, Capital, the chapter on "Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation." First, he eliminated Part VIII ("The So-Called Primitive Accumulation") as a separate Part (and please note that Marx had called it "so-called"), and made it integral to Part VII ("The Accumulation of Capital."). Marx saw no impenetrable walls between the primitive accumulation and the accumulation of capital. On the contrary, he now stressed, in his letter on Mikhailovsky (1877), that the law of motion of capitalist society he had discerned, the constant increase of machinery at the expense of living workers, was not a universal but the development which characterized Western Europe; and that, furthermore, there was no automatic collapse of capitalism. It needed a good, hefty push from the masses. And

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those living masses were not limited to a single path of development. There were other paths. It was that other path which then got developed in the letter to Zasulitch and was finally articulated in the Introduction to the Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto itself, as a possible way for Russia to achieve the revolution ahead of the West.

Feminists of today are right when they separate themselves from Engels' Origin of the Family, and certainly are right when they refuse to follow the so-called "orthodox" who consider Marx and Engels as one, and who stigmatize the whole question by insisting that we must overthrow capitalism "first" and then, after the revolution, we will be free. Feminists have no right, however, to consider Origin of the Family to be a work of Marx. They are absolutely right to deny that male chauvinism is a characteristic only of capitalism. The uniqueness of today's Women's Liberation Movement, indeed, is precisely that it has illuminated the male chauvinism within the Left.

Here is how I expressed that uniqueness in Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution; when I recorded what the new voices are saying individually and collectively:

Don't tell us about discrimination everywhere else; and don't tell us it comes only from class oppression; look at yourselves.

Don't tell us that "full" freedom can come only the "day after" the revolution; our questions must be faced the day before. Furthermore, words are not sufficient; let's see you practice it.

None of your "theories" will do. You will have to learn to hear us. You will have to understand what you hear. It's like learning a new language. You will have to learn that you are not the font of all wisdom -- or of revolution. You will have to understand that our bodies belong to us and to no one else -- and that includes lovers, husbands, and yes, fathers.

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Our bodies have heads, and they, too, belong to us and us alone. And while we are reclaiming our bodies and our heads, we will also reclaim the night. No one except ourselves, as women, will get our freedom. And for that we need full autonomy...

You will have to read the rest for yourselves; you will find it beginning on p. 100 of my book. Here I want to turn to the way I have recorded Black feminists expressing themselves. When the National Black Feminist Organization was organized in 1973 one of their spokeswomen put it this way:

"We are often asked the ugly question, 'Where are your loyalties? To the Black movement or the feminist movement?' It would be nice if we were oppressed as women Monday through Thursday, then oppressed as Blacks the rest of the week. We could combat one or the other on those days -- but we have to fight both every day of the week."

Their Statement of Principles said: "We will encourage the Black community to stop falling into the trap of the white male Left, utilizing women only in terms of domestic or servile needs. We will remind the Black Liberation Movement that there can't be liberation for half a race."

As we can see, it isn't only that Engels' Origin of the Family is not a work of Marx, but that the trail Marx did leave for us is by no means as finished as the works he left for publication. What we have in his Notes is a mine of new moments that must first be worked out for our own age.

We are the ones who, through the last three decades, have seen a movement from practice that is itself a form of theory and that is challenging the theoretician to rise to the point of philosophy while we root ourselves in that movement

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from practice. It is there that all sorts of new forces of revolution as Reason have arisen -- from Women's liberation; i  
ists to the whole new generation of anti-war youth and Black revolutionaries. A whole new world, the Third World, has emerged. We have seen East European revolutionaries bring Marx's early Humanist Essays onto the current historic stage because they were fighting Communist totalitarianism, even as the Third World was fighting Western imperialism.

When Marx, in his Ethnological Notebooks, refers to the "lousy orientalists" he means the British imperialist ideologues who specialized in so-called "Oriental" work. He called them "blockheaded" British rulers. When he commented on Lubbock's criticism of the "backward" Australian aborigine, Marx turned it completely around and called the aborigine "that intelligent black."

Above all, we can see that Marx -- whether he is speaking of the Arabs in Algiers or the American Indians or the Irish women who had more rights before British imperialism took over or the youth fighting the educational system -- is ending with further development of what he began with: the revolution in permanence that is needed to uproot all the old and create totally new human relations.

Permit to conclude, then, with the last two paragraphs from my new work:

It isn't because we are any "smarter" that we can see so much more than other post-Marx Marxists. Rather, it is because of the maturity of our age. It is true that other post-Marx Marxists have rested on a truncated Marxism; it is equally true that no other generation could have seen the problematic of our age, much less solve our problems. Only live human beings can recreate the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice.

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It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of "revolution in permanence."

What is needed is a new unifying principle, on Marx's ground of humanism, that truly alters both human thought and human experience. Marx's Ethnological Notebooks are a historic happening that proves, one hundred years after he wrote them, that Marx's legacy is no mere heirloom, but a live body of ideas and perspectives that is in need of concretization. Every moment of Marx's development, as well as the totality of his works, spells out the need for "revolution in permanence." This is the absolute challenge to our age.

\* \* \*



May 23, 1983

Dear Ann and Chandra:

Here, finally, is the talk I gave at the Third World Women's Conference. I was most happy that you suggested editing the transcript, not only because I was way too tired from the three-month, exhaustive tour around the Marx centenary to finish it for the May 15 deadline, but because it gave me a chance to integrate the two talks I gave -- the one at the panel on "Women in Revolutionary Movements" and the one directly afterwards on "The Traila from Marx's Philosophy of Revolution to Today's Women's Liberation Movements." I really saw no difference between my participation in the two.

It was great to be at the Conference, and I hope I will have a chance to continue the dialogue with those I met there.

Do you have any idea when the publication wild get off the press? Will I get a copy? Thank you very much.

For freedom,

HUMANIST EVALUATION

"Common Differences: Third World Women and Feminist Perspectives

Sponsored by YWCA and  
funded by The Illinois Humanities Council

Date April 9 - 10

Event Conference

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please write on this form a brief response to the following:

1. Was the theme of the project valid, well focused, and clearly addressed?

Yes. The one difference I had was the fact that too many panels were held simultaneously so that it was impossible for those interested in more than one subject to be in two places at once. Indeed, in the case of my full hour presentation on the "Trail from Marx's philosophy of revolution to today's Women's Liberation Movements" on Sunday, April 10, 3:30 to 5PM, there were no less than 7 workshops/roundtables going on at the

~~same time. As contrasted to that, I consider that the panel I was on from 1:30 to 3PM on "Women in Revolutionary Movements" was the best-attended, because there was only one other at the same time.~~

2. Evaluate the humanities component of the project; i.e. Was a humanities perspective central to the program? Did the humanist address the issues effectively? Were you satisfied with your role as a professional humanist in this project?

On the whole, yes.

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3. From your own perspective, appraise the impact of the program on the audience.

I would say that the discussion was broad and comprehensive and well-received. I was especially pleased that the program was not "too revolutionary" because, clearly, that is not only inter-cultural but showed philosophy was no separate from activity.

4. Do you have any comments regarding the organization of the project, the co-sponsoring organizations, the program format, etc.?

Somehow, I feel that when a Conference lasts for so many days, ~~it limits participants, since working people are free only on weekends.~~ That is especially true for the concluding sessions, where international perspectives and the ground for further dialogue could not, therefore, be as comprehensive, as I would have liked.

5. Do you have any other observations or suggestions for improvement regarding this project or others similar to it?

Only what flows from my above comments.

Signature

*Raya Danajensan*

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