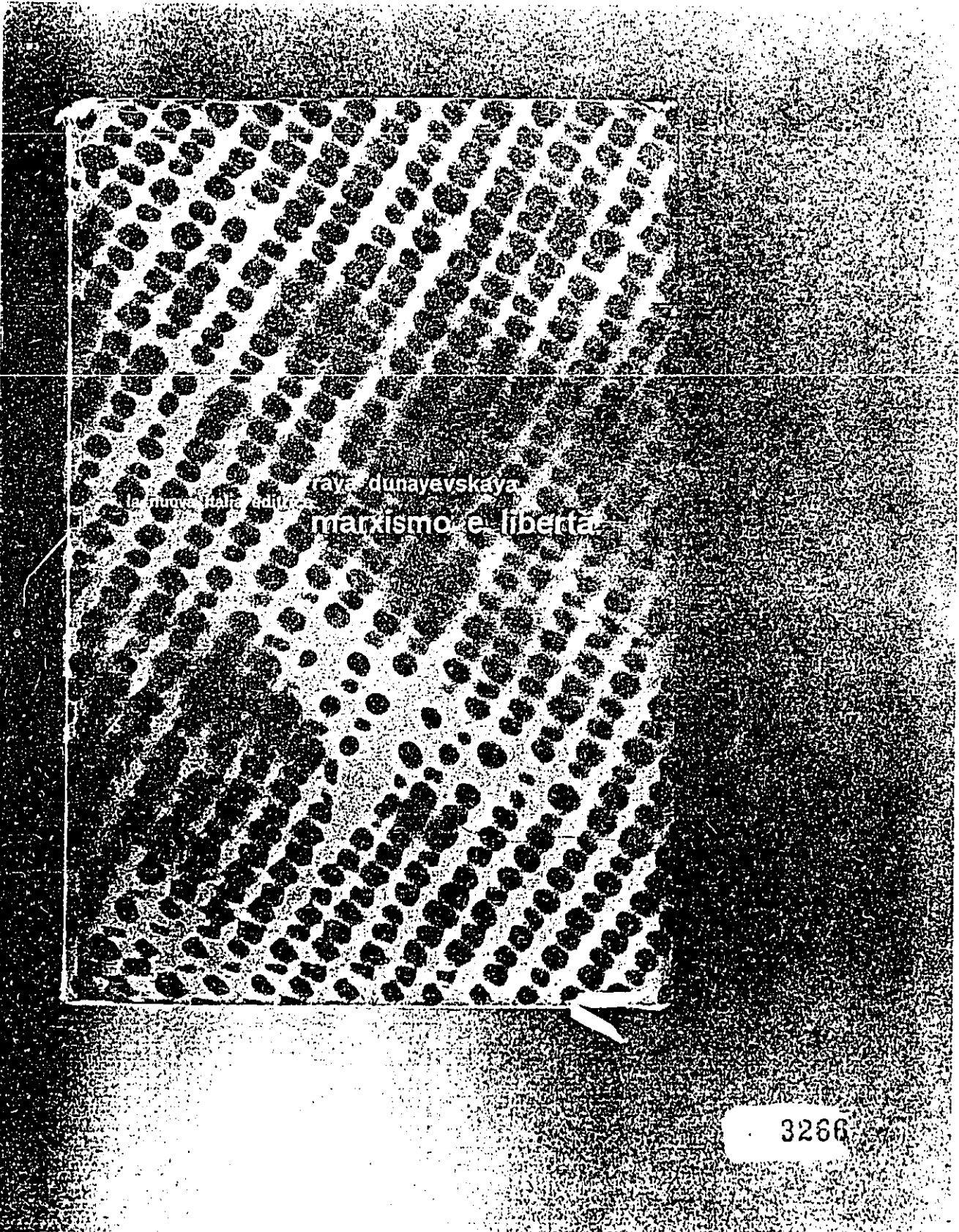


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marxismo e liberta

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RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

MARXISMO E LIBERTÀ



LA NUOVA ITALIA  
FIRENZE

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## Author's Special Introduction to the New Italian Edition

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We are naturally very proud to announce the new Italian edition of *Marxism and Freedom*. However, the publisher, La Nuova Italia in Florence, felt that a preface by Gaetano Arfe, co-editor of Rome's *Mondo Operaio* (Workers World), was preferable (see excerpt, P. 8). We feel the special introduction that had been written by the author, Raya Dunayevskaya, is of the greatest importance. I am therefore giving over my column space to print it in full.—Charles Denby)

Italian history is filled with instances in which it anticipated the future development of humanity. When other nations were still in the dark regions of the Middle Ages, Italian cities had already opened the epoch of the Renaissance. Frederick Engels, the lifelong collaborator of Karl Marx, found time in his address to the Italian Socialist Party to refer to Dante as "the first universal man of our modern era." Marx himself singled out the Florentine, Buonarrotti, as the one who extended the ideas of the French Revolution.

"The revolutionary movement which began in 1789 in Cercle Social, which, in the middle of its course, had as its chief representatives Leclerc and Roux, and which was temporarily deflected with Babeuf's Conspiracy (of the Equals) brought forth the communist idea which Babeuf's friend, Buonarrotti, reintroduced into France after the Revolution of 1830."

### REVOLT—AND FASCISM

At the beginning of the 20th century Italy, despite its lateness in achieving national unity, leaped forward to a mass socialist movement which outstripped all other countries, with the sole exception of Germany. This is the more impressive when one considers that Germany was technologically the most advanced country while the Italian economy was the most retarded in Western Europe. Italian Socialism was further distinguished by the fact that its members were not only factory workers and intellectuals, but peasants and agricultural workers. For one brief moment in world history, in 1920, the whole center of the European revolutions shifted to Milan and Turin.

But, in its death agony, Italian capitalism won a respite by exuding fascism. World War II, however, gave the lie to the malicious slander that the Italian people had been brainwashed by fascism. The truth is the exact opposite. The very generation that was reared under fascism comprised the backbone of the Partisans. Nor did the Italian people allow the monarchy to cover its complicity with fascism simply by changing sides in the midst of war. After 20 years of fascist rule the Italian workers went straightaway to take destiny into their own hands. In Milan and Turin the workers occupied the factories, saved them from Nazi vandalism, and, reinforced by the Partisan brigades, tried to reorganize society on entirely new foundations. But the Communist Party policy which followed the Kremlin line ordered the committees to hand over their power to a "Popular Front Government."

### ITALIANS KNOW COMMUNIST BETRAYAL

If the Italian workers mistake Communist totalitarianism for Marxist liberation, it is because the Communist Party is not in power in Italy and therefore the Italians do not know this party as the workers in Russia and the satellites know it—as their exploiter and oppressor. But the Italian people are not without experiences of their own, including the sight of the Communists voting with De Gasperi to incorporate in the republican constitution the Lateran pact made by Mussolini with the Vatican. The fully counter-revolutionary role of Russian Communism was first clearly seen in Western Europe when it brutally suppressed the Hungarian Revolution and its Workers' Councils. Thousands upon thousands of members of the Italian Communist Party tore up their membership cards.

No one is asked to put blinders on and fail to recognize that the Italian Communist Party, with a little less than two million members, is still the largest in Western Europe. Neither should one forget the fact that the social composition of the Italian CP has undergone a change, and that inevitably the deepest layers of the Italian workers will come into conflict with the Communist bureaucrats, topped by Togliatti and his cohorts. The polarizing forces which would attract the Italian workers away from the Communist stranglehold can be nothing short of a total philosophy, in the full tradition of Marxist Humanism.

### YOUTH, WORKERS POSE PHILOSOPHIC QUESTIONS

The totality of the world crisis compels the re-examination which guide man's practice. Two of the ways in which the maturity of our age helps this re-evaluation are the following: 1) the youth are searching intensely for a road out of a world they did not make; and 2) the working class is beginning to pose questions of great philosophic importance. In this respect the American workers, confronted with Automation in a way that Europe is not yet faced, have an important contribution to make. Automation, the ultimate in machine production which has dominated man has by now created mass unemployment as a permanent feature. Thereby it has raised the relationship of the employed to the unemployed to alienated labor. Specifically, the American workers are grappling with the following questions: What kind of labor should man perform? Why should science be allowed to do all our thinking for us when it cannot put a man to work, although it can send him up to the moon? Can't the division between mental and manual labor be abolished?

The intellectuals cannot forever remain insensitive to these impulses from below which go to make up a veritable movement from practice to theory.

### MARXISM SHEDS LIGHT ON CRISIS

We live in "a birth-time of history and a period of transition" such as characterized the age in which Marx lived. Only ours is of truly world-wide scope where not only Western Civilization but that of the Orient and the people of Africa are blazing forth a new trail to freedom. Our epoch has been correctly designated

as the age of the struggle for the minds of men. Intellectuals are there upon called to perform tasks far removed from any ivory tower. Marxists and non-Marxists alike have much to learn from Marx who, when asked why he had broken with bourgeois society, replied that to become a radical meant to grasp a thing at its root, and "The root of mankind is man."

Our life and times have opened up so many frontiers of scientific knowledge that we often forget that simple truth. Out of splitting of the atom came not the greatest source of energy for mankind, but the most destructive weapon. Since the Sputnik, statements from the rulers of Russia as well as America stress not so much the conquest of outer space as the fact that the forces which lift these man-made satellites—ICBMs—can lift H-bombs across all frontiers. Far from doing away with the barbarism of capitalism, private or state, science has brought humanity to the edge of the abyss. As the eminent bourgeois scientist, Dr. William Pickering, put it: No matter whose ICBM drops the first H-bomb, civilization itself is within "one half hour away from total annihilation."

The young Marx foresaw the impasse that science in a class society would reach. He wrote: "To have one basis for society, and another for science, is a priori a lie." For Marxist and non-Marxist alike, isn't it time to learn the methodology of one who foresaw so clearly the development of our crisis-ridden world?

#### MAN, NOT MACHINES, IS BASIS FOR FREEDOM

Surely when the destiny of civilization—not just in a rhetorical sense, but physically—is at stake, it is high time to end the illusion that machines, not men, will bring mankind its freedom.

The genuine Italian Marxist can learn much both from Marx who fought the vulgar Communists of his day, and from Lenin who fought what he called the new Communist "passion for bossing." This founder of the Soviet state was also its severest critic, inventing new words, such as "communistes" (Communist lies) with which to express his criticisms. Without avail he warned that "History proceeds in devious ways," and that the Communists must listen to the "simple class truth of the class enemy" when it writes that the Soviet Government "has taken the road that will lead it to the ordinary bourgeois state." (See Lenin's Political Report to the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party, March 27, 1922.)

Just as Marx had to fight the vulgar Communists who thought all ills of capitalism would be overcome with the abolition of private property, we must not fall into the trap of mistaking Communism's "anti-capitalism" for any other than what it is—the full logical development of capitalism itself into state capitalism. Marx's point was that so long as machine is master of man, not man of machine, you will have capitalism, no matter what name you call it. To get rid of the perverse relations under capitalism one must rid society of what is most degrading of all, and the cause of all other ills, the alienation of labor itself. At the root of alienation is the division between mental and manual labor which has characterized all class societies and reached its most monstrous form under capitalism. Where the laborer himself is transformed into an appendage to a machine; all our senses are dulled. Only an entirely new, truly human society, wrote Marx "creates the rich and profoundly sensitive men." Because Marx made the human being the subject of all development, he saw the emerging new society.

Each generation must meet the challenge of its own times. Lenin was adamant on one point: the masses, not only as action but as reason would create a new society on totally new foundations. Either that, that is to say, either the population to a man (Lenin's phrase) runs production and the state or you get a "return backwards to capitalism."

#### THEORY MUST MATCH GRANDEUR OF PRACTICE

In our age of absolutes, when revolution and counter-revolution, are so interlocked, it is not only the intellectual "in general" who must leave his ivory towers; so must the Marxist theoretician. The ceaseless repetition for the need of a vanguard party "to lead" has blinded him to the fact to which the mass of people are not blind—that everyone is ready to lead them; nobody to listen to them. Yet the movement from practice during the past three decades has been ceaseless while the move from theory has been at a near standstill. What is there, in present-day theory, which matches the grandeur of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution?

Each generation either meets the challenge of the times, or fades into oblivion. No one however, can have the illusion that our epoch marks the type of turning point in history where history fails to turn. On the contrary. This author feels that the Italian people, inheritors of its own rich traditions of cultural humanism and mass movements of liberation have a great contribution to make to the creation of a new Humanism which is founded on the Marxist theory of liberation that "the freedom of the individual is the basis of the freedom of all."

MARXISM AND FREEDOM is a theoretical contribution toward that end. It has a three-fold purpose: 1) to reestablish the Humanism of Marxism as it developed in the period of the class struggles during Marx's maturity, 1843-83; 2) to get to the roots of the philosophic foundations of that great divide in Marxism-Leninism, especially on the so-called vanguard party to the masses in the period of 1903-1923; and 3) to analyze the problems of our own age. While this part, of necessity, centers in Russia and America—the two poles of state capitalism contending for world domination—the two worlds of capitalists and workers in each country is such that it has an application also to Italy.

April, 1959

—Raya Dunayevskaya