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As Reagan and Gorbachev maneuver

Ongoing world revolts & economic crises challenge Superpower grip

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More than anything else, what the current big game in Washington-Moscow shows—whether you refer to the Daniloff-Zakharov case as an exchange of spies or of “citizens”—is how quickly history is forgotten and rewritten. I’m referring to what happened to the 1960 Camp David spirit of “peaceful co-existence” between Khrushchev and Eisenhower.

In a flash, everything fell through, from the skies to the earth, when Eisenhower disregarded all the peaceful co-existence rhetoric and let the U-2 spy-plane continue its flight over Russia—and on May 1, at that! Eisenhower thereby helped Khrushchev achieve his greatest victory: Mao was forced to delay his international challenge to Khrushchev and line up in pretended international solidarity along with the other 80 Communist Parties at the International Congress in Moscow.

Now, 25 years later, we see a repetition of the same polar confrontation, with the names changed, Reagan for Eisenhower and Gorbachev for Khrushchev. And it’s

a much more dangerous world today—a changed world. Reagan’s retrogressionism has so deadened bourgeois thought itself that there is no whisper of dissent either from academia or the media, much less Congress; technology has become a living monster that forces us to face the threat to the very survival of civilization.

The changed world that Reagan retrogression brought to a new barbarism with his foray into the Gulf of Sidra, followed by the bombing of Tripoli and the living quarters of Kadafi, had even his NATO allies questioning him when his outreach declared SALT II “null and void”, as he continued with his empty rhetoric about the “evil empire” whenever it came to any talks with Russia about disarmament.

If the Chernobyl nuclear power disaster led him to think he could sweep every imperialist act under the rug—all the allies sang in chorus against Russia over the horror—the illusion did not last long.

What is deeply inherent in Reagan’s retrogressionism is his effort to turn world capitalism away from what was attempted by it when the Depression threatened its very rule—i.e. the New Deal. Not only is that characteristic of Reagan’s two terms in office,

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but he is determined to incorporate it in unbreakable laws so that it will not matter who wins office in 1988; this is the ground on which they (Democrats or Republicans) will have to operate.

Now that Reagan has got Congress to approve aid to the Contras, his rhetoric has given forth his true aim—the U.S. is to repeat the Vietnam War by invading Nicaragua, beginning, as with Vietnam, by sending U.S. military advisers to train the Contras.

This is the same Ronald Reagan who thinks he can make himself sound like the great democrat by welcoming Corazon Aquino to the White House, at the same time he provided safe haven for Ferdinand Marcos who is working 24 hours a day to destabilize the new government in the Philippines. It is clear that the only reason Reagan makes such a show of his welcome to President Aquino is because he is concerned with keeping his bases in her land and thinks he can win her into his camp.

THE CHANGED WORLD ECONOMY

As Ronald Reagan's changed world is preparing for the unleashing of the holocaust while talking of the alleged prosperity of the U.S. and the stability of the Western world, the truth is quite different. The world economy is in deep crisis, and this remains the key to the present world situation.

What the present economists consider the changed world economy—high technology, uniminated, robotized production—is what bourgeois economists have called "the post-industrial world" ever since the end of WWII. It doesn't really matter whether these economists were referring to monopoly, oligopoly, multinationals, or what they now refer to as the computerized world; all are characteristic of the periods of both the post-WWI and post-WWII worlds. They are characteristic of what Marx originally had singled out as the most fundamental law of capitalist production of his day as it pursued Accumulation, Accumulation, Accumulation.

What all the bourgeois economists choose to disregard about this high stage of robotized production is that unpaid, surplus labor—i.e. profit—comes, and can only come, from the living, sweated laborer. The economy's dependence on alienated, sweated, exploited labor does not stop short even of death and mutilation, as can be seen in "A Tragedy in South Georgia"—which took place some 15 years ago but is only now reaching final court settlement—in which 20 died and more than 50 were injured in a disastrous industrial accident tied to munitions production of flares for the Vietnam War.

Nothing, however, more proves the daily horrors of capitalism globally than what is being called South Africa's worst recorded gold-mining accident—the fire which sent toxic gas billowing into the mine shafts of the Kinross mine, killing 177 miners, with five more still unaccounted for at this writing. So blatant is the lack of mine safety and so barbaric the disregard for Black lives that already no less than 8,209 had been killed and 230,000 injured in mining accidents in South Africa between 1973 and 1983. That there is no separation between the open class struggles or the issues of workers' safety and the mass freedom struggles that have been ongoing in South Africa can be seen in the crucial role of the half-million strong COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) of which the National Union of Mineworkers is the backbone. (See Frantz Fanon, *Soweto and American Black Thought*, News & Letters, 1986).

*See the article by Albert Scardino in the New York Times, July 20, 1986.

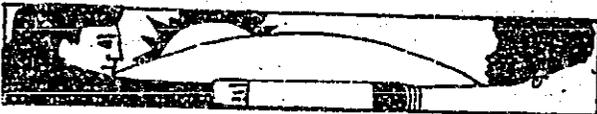
As our Marxist-Humanist Perspectives 1986-87 expressed it:

The masses of South Africa are moving on their own despite the undeclared civil war by the savage, barbaric, apartheid, white rulers and their daily slaughter of Blacks. (See article page 8.) It is high time to turn to the creative, revolutionary, courageous, genuine, freedom fighters in their ongoing revolutions in South Africa, in Haiti, in the Philippines and in Latin America, without forgetting the endless "little" strikes in the U.S., the intense anti-nuke demonstrations after Chernobyl, especially in West Europe, that were directed not only against Russia but against the U.S. as well.

THE ONGOING WORLD REVOLTS

All of the great ongoing revolts in South Africa, in the Philippines, in Haiti, in South Korea, demand more than just being hailed. The dialectic of their development discloses new forms and new forces as well as the need for tracing the development, knowing from history that in the first stage of revolt, one is still not fully aware of the full might of the counter-revolution—aware, that is, that those who had the power yesterday have ways to hit back. The new revolutionaries are really fighting under the whip of the counter-revolution at all times...

When, at the beginning of the 1980s, we entitled the



Marxist-Humanist Perspectives Thesis "Tomorrow is Now," we were pointing to the new structural economic crisis, the U.S.'s counter-revolutionary war in Vietnam, the urgency of Marxist-Humanism to delve into the whole body of ideas of Marx's Marxism as a totality. That was the trail to our age, and it became imperative, at one and the same time, to ask the question "what happens after" and also to trace the development of new forms of revolution and its relation to philosophy or the lack of philosophy, of relations of worker and intellectual, of spontaneity and organization: in a word, to single out new forces of revolt in a specific period.

We want, for example, to turn to what we seem to take too much for granted—the Youth in the ongoing present revolutions. Turn to Haiti and see what was new as distinct from trying to overthrow the Duvalier dictatorship from its strongest center, Port-au-Prince. The Haitian youth tell us now that in actuality, in the Gonaives region, students had organized for some time into small groups before the downfall of Duvalier to work against the regime. The youth do not stop either with critique or with being outside of the center; they are now in Port-au-Prince and throughout the country, and are reaching out internationally and to us.

Indeed, the youth are of the essence and are a very conscious form not only in Haiti. Take what is happening in South Korea. Even the bourgeois journalists (see NYT June 17, 1986) have featured the fact are a new kind of radical, who simultaneously delves into serious study of Marx and outright revolutionary activity not only against that regime, but against U.S. imperialism itself. That is exactly what reveals even more the whip of counter-revolution—which began way back in the 1950's South Korean movement, when tens of thousands of U.S. troops were stationed along the 38th parallel.

The youth in South Africa—indeed, many are young children—are not only the most heroic, but are involved in every facet of the revolt and well aware of tenden-

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cies. So much so, that one group expressed it in a very specific way when they told us that they understood why we call ourselves not just Marxist, but Marxist-Humanist.

The greatest upsurge, of course, was in the Philippines. That "people's revolution" was especially dramatic when the nuns put flowers in the army's guns aimed against the people's uprising. The youth there reached to us as we reached to them...

The labor upsurges all through Central America have touched every nation there in the last year, from El Salvador to Guatemala, and including Honduras, where Reagan is now sending GIs to train the Contras. And yet, the unfinished nature of all these struggles under the whip of U.S. imperialism has never been more evident—especially in Nicaragua, where the ongoing war with the Contras is putting a severe strain on that revolution's development.

The revolts are significant even when they do not border on revolution as in the demonstrations against Duarte in El Salvador, and tremendous new actions in Chile and even in Guatemala and Paraguay. East Europe, too, has not at all been quiet, as witness the fact that, despite the "destruction" of Solidarnosc, it seems alive and kicking.

What seems of less significance are the actions right here inside the U.S.—whether that be the Hormel strike or "just" the May Day Haymarket celebrations in Chicago. The truth is, however, that what we've been correctly saying ever since the 1980 Perspectives Thesis is that "Tomorrow is Now."

PHILOSOPHIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL TASKS

That this permeates the whole decade of the 1980s is shown not only in the fact that we reached out to revolutionaries overseas, but that they reached out to us, from major revolutions-in-the-making like Haiti, the Philippines, and South Africa. At the same time, we established new relations with striking workers here in the U.S., especially those at Hormel in Austin, Minn. and Ottumwa, Iowa. It wasn't only our participation in their actions that brought us these new relations, but the fact of their participation in events other than their own immediate strike struggles. They solidarized with other strikers internationally.

Indeed, that international solidarity is true not only of labor, but reaches out to all forces of revolution, as was seen this year in the continuing exchange of views between Japanese anti-nuclear activists and American youth. The Marxist-Humanist contribution to that two-way road of dialogue within

the anti-nuclear movement spans more than two decades, going all the way back to our relations with the Left wing of Zengakuren, who helped to translate *Marxism and Freedom* in the early 1960s and arranged a national tour for us, which included a speech at Hiroshima on Dec. 7 (8), 1965. Those new relations, national and international, are what Reagan's counter-revolution seeks to suppress, whether it be in Nicaragua or apartheid South Africa.

...The need to organizationally concretize philosophy anew each year naturally is given new urgency now that Ronald Reagan's "Changed World" has made counter-revolution so tower over the seething discontent of the masses in the world that the very thought of revolution seems impossible. All the more reason to begin now, at one and the same time, preparations for a biweekly N&L and concentrated work on a new work to be called *Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy: "The Party" and Forms of Organization Born out of Spontaneity*.

All of our activities in mass movements, be they in labor struggles or in the Black or Women's Liberation Movement, or Youth, or anti-nuke, or in our international relations, be they in Latin America, or Haiti, in South Africa or the Philippines, in East or West Europe, become inseparable from our major theoretical works. Indeed, that was characteristic of us from the first, as both the Hungarian Revolution and the Black Revolution became inseparable from Marxism and Freedom.

The same was true in the further development of philosophy and the new passions and new forces of the 1960s that became Philosophy and Revolution. In the 1980s we decided that a balance sheet was needed of all the great revolutionaries like Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky—which not only became Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution but saw a new category created of "post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels."

It is both our body of ideas and our concrete perspective for a biweekly this year which is called upon by the objective situation to meet the challenge of this changed world that Reagan is retrogressively driving for, with his latest repeated threats to Libya and the ever-growing poverty in the U.S., where one-third of the nation is what Roosevelt said it was in 1933—"ill-clad, ill-fed, and ill-housed"—and now homeless.

Tomorrow is today.*

*For the full 1986-87 Marxist-Humanist Perspectives see ad page 8.

Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1986-87

by Raya Dunayevskaya

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