



Foreword in Dunayevskaya „Philosophy and Revolution“

Erich Fromm
(1981b-e)

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Few thought systems have been as distorted and sometimes even turned into their opposite as that of Karl Marx. The great conservative political economist Joseph Schumpeter once expressed this distortion with a hypothetical analogy: if one had discovered Europe at the time of the Inquisition, and had surmised from that that the Inquisition reflected the spirit of the Gospels, then one would have behaved as those who see the ideas of Marx expressed in Soviet Communism.

If this distortion were only to be found among opponents of Marxism, that would scarcely be surprising. The amazing thing is that it emanates from his "proponents," who convince the rest of the world that their ideology expresses the ideas of Marx. Thus it has finally come to the point that in North America and Europe, so effective has Soviet propaganda become, that one not only believes that one sees the realization of socialism in the Soviet system, but also that one is dealing with a revolutionary state which aims at world revolution, instead of with a bureaucratic reactionary form of state-capitalism.

Marx's ideas can only be understood if one knows at least the fundamentals of Hegelian philosophy. But only a very few people know them even approximately, and in the best situation take only a couple of slogans as substitutes for genuine knowledge. And what is the situation with the followers of Marx who speak in his name and who make a more serious claim than Stalin: Lenin, Trotsky, Mao, or even the "outsider" Sartre? There is little that will aid an objective understanding of this question; most of what can be read about it is biased according to the political views of the author.

All of this results in the fact that individuals who want to get an idea of the theories which influence a great part of the world today have great difficulties forming a correct image.

Raya Dunayevskaya is unusually qualified to fill this gap in our knowledge. Not only because of her great knowledge and competence in this area -- these qualities alone are rare, but not unique -- and not only because of her incorruptible objectivity which is the characteristic of every scholar, or should be. What, however, is far rarer is the fact that within herself she combines this objectivity with a passionate political attitude--a passion which, at the same time, is not irrational and not fanatical. But the important factor is, perhaps, that the author is permeated by the conviction that socialism and freedom are



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indivisibly united, and can only exist together. She is a radical Humanist who deeply believes that the betterment of the welfare of all humanity can be achieved without the loss of individual freedom, through a new Humanism.

This book is much enriched by discussion of the African revolutions, the East European revolts, the youth movement, and the Women's Liberation Movement.

For everyone who is seriously interested in the forces which form -- and deform -- the present and the future, this book is to be most warmly recommended.