

Announcing a New Formation: The International Marxist-Humanist Organization

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The U.S. Marxist-Humanists, the London Corresponding Committee and representatives from Africa, Canada, India, and The Netherlands announce the formation of the International Marxist-Humanist Organization. This new group has come together to issue political-philosophic statements and perspectives as well as engaging in common activities. Its first action is issuing following statement of principles.

International Marxist-Humanist Organization Statement of Principles

The International Marxist-Humanist Organization seeks to work out a unity of theory and practice, worker and intellectual, and philosophy and organization. We aim to develop and project a viable vision of a truly new, human society that can give direction to today's many freedom struggles. We ground our ideas in the totality of Marx's Marxism and Raya Dunayevskaya's body of ideas and upon the unique philosophic contributions that have guided Marxist-Humanism since its founding in the 1950s.

As Marxist-Humanists, we base ourselves on the totality of Marx's Marxism, 1841-1883. In particular, we stand on the philosophical new beginnings articulated in Marx's 1844 Humanist Essays, especially the "dialectic of negativity as a moving and creating principle." We base ourselves on the whole of Marx's critique of political economy and of the value form of production, from the Communist Manifesto (1848), to the Grundrisse (1857-1858), to Capital (1867-1872). In addition, we ground ourselves in the multidimensional writings of the late Marx on gender and non-European societies, especially the Ethnological Notebooks (1879-1882). Moreover we see Marx's vision of a new society in the Critique of the Gotha Program (1875), as well as Capital and The Civil War in France. (1871), as philosophical foundations for the liberated society of the future, and as indications of how to get there. Finally we view Marx's organizational practice and principles, especially in the Critique of the Gotha Program, as important ground for organization today.

An alternative to capitalism means ending production for value, breaking with the law of value, starting a new mode of production, and building new human relations between people. We must theorize such an alternative now. Marshalling our intellectual resources toward articulating an alternative to capitalism has become harder yet more urgent after

the fall of Communism and the prevailing notion, including among the Left, that an alternative to capitalism is not possible. Giving shape to what is possible after capitalism in a new, human society remains the historical task of Marxism.

Marxist-Humanists stand for the abolition of capitalism in our own countries and globally, as well as when it has appeared as state-capitalism in regimes calling themselves Communist. Thus we supported the Montgomery Bus Boycott (in Alabama, USA) of 1955-1956 at the same time as we celebrated the Hungarian Workers Councils of 1956. We have opposed the U.S.'s wars and its imperial outreach to every corner of the globe, from the Vietnam War to the Contra War against the Nicaraguan Revolution, and we have supported the liberation struggles of nations and peoples from past and current Communist states.

Economic crises expose barriers to the self-expansion of value which we recognize is the heart of capitalism. We reject the belief, which became widespread after the collapse of the state-capitalist regimes that called themselves Communist in 1989, that capitalism is permanent and that a positive, humanist revolution is impossible. We also oppose reactionary forms of anti-imperialism whether based in religious fundamentalism, narrow nationalism, or military-populism. We opposed the first Iraq War of 1991 while at the same time supported the freedom movement of the Kurdish people. During the 1990s, we supported Bosnia-Herzegovina's struggle for a multiethnic society in the face of Serbian genocide, the struggle of Chiapas in the face of globalised capitalism, and the independence movements of Kosova and Aceh. Since the September 11, 2001 attacks we have opposed the U.S. doctrine of permanent war while supporting both the antiwar movement and the freedom struggles of Iraqi, Iranian and Afghan women. We have supported the Palestinian national liberation movement while also supporting Israel's right to exist within the pre-June 1967 borders, and at the same time opposing and exposing all forms of religious fundamentalism and narrow nationalism.

Alternatives such as post-modernist thought and pragmatism cannot fundamentally challenge the realities of globalised capitalism. But an adequate response to these alternatives cannot be based on forms of post-Marx Marxism that allow particularity and difference to be skipped over or ignored. New human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism, can be achieved when we restate, develop, and concretize Marx's Marxism for our time as a dialectical, critical concept of "revolution in permanence." That creative dialectic needs to spell out what we are for, and our positive humanist vision, rather than the mere rejection of the present capitalist order, a rejection that lacks such a dialectical "positive in the negative."

We participate in all freedom movements and the mass forms of organization they create. We reject the elitist vanguard party form of organization for revolutionary struggle or

constructing a new society. We also recognize that our committee form of organization is not a model for all movements, but rather it is a vital historical form of organization that movements discovered along with Marxist humanism after World War II. New forms of organization continue to emerge out of struggle. Our unique contributions spring from being grounded in Marx's humanism.

The philosopher and activist Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987) founded Marxist-Humanism and led the U.S. Marxist-Humanist organization News and Letters Committees, which preceded the International Marxist-Humanists. Charles Denby (1907-1983), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, was editor of its paper, *News & Letters*, from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road of revolutionary ideas between the U.S. and Africa. Dunayevskaya's 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" and her notes for an unfinished book on "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" (1986-87) offer crucial direction for organization today. In looking at the history of revolutions and revolutionary movements, Dunayevskaya critiqued the limitations of both the vanguard party and the spontaneous forms emerging from below. She also pointed to the inadequacy of a committee form of organization, which has not been able to transcend the limitations of the vanguard party as long as it has remained separated from dialectical philosophy.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. This has meant a critique of important revolutionary thinkers like Lenin, Luxemburg, and Trotsky while also appropriating critically some of the ideas for today. Dunayevskaya's work from the 1940s to the 1980s — with its core concept of "Absolute Negativity As New Beginning" — is rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism, his dialectical thought rooted in Hegel's philosophy, his critique of capitalist value production, and in the vision of a new society. This body of ideas is recorded in the documents in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection — Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her own creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating these ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, members of the International Marxist-Humanist Organization have kept her books in print since her death in 1987 and published *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and*

Marx by Raya Dunayevskaya. Members of the International Marxist-Humanist Organization have also added a supplementary volume to The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection. The International Marxist-Humanist Organization aims to further develop and concretize this body of ideas for our time. To do so, we found this organization, reprint and promote discussion on Dunayevskaya's writings, maintain web sites, meet periodically, and promote organizational growth locally and internationally.

In the twenty-first century it has become newly urgent to continue Marxist-Humanism as a living body of ideas, instead of reducing it to a set of organizational rules divorced from philosophy, or, as the remnant of News and Letters Committees has done, to an unchanging legacy or sterile dogma. In the interests of advancing and taking responsibility organizationally for Marxist-Humanism, the US Marxist-Humanists, the London Corresponding Committee and individuals in other countries have come together to form this new International Marxist-Humanist Organization. We oppose this capitalist, racist, sexist, heterosexist, and class-based society. We strive to foster the firmest unity among the forces of revolution and opposition to the established order: rank-and-file workers; oppressed nationalities and ethnic groups; women; Lesbian-Bisexual-Gay-Transgender people; students and youth; all of those people who are deeply disaffected and alienated from the established order who realize that a revolutionary transformation of society is necessary to create a truly human world.

Replacing this society demands creating a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism to which we dedicate this organisation. Anyone who agrees with these principles and our conditions of membership* is invited to apply for membership in the IMHO.

*Available upon request.