

The International Marxist-Humanist

Journal of the International Marxist-Humanist Organization

Summary: This statement on the current situation was drafted on March 27 in preparation for our international gathering this summer. Because it covers a wide range of issues pertinent to the global revolutionary movement, we have decided to make it public now - Editors

Theoretical and Practical Perspectives for Overcoming Capitalism

Steering Committee of the International Marxist-Humanist Organization

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*“Far from using the Hegelian ‘laws’ of dialectic merely as ‘descriptive,’ the Marxian dialectic is a recreation, and therefore a transcendence. This transcendence of the Hegelian dialectic was achieved by Marx not merely by standing Hegel ‘right side up,’ giving his methodology a materialist base, vulgar or ‘sophisticated,’ but by making materialism as well as naturalism, scientism as well as historicity, **human**”— Raya Dunayevskaya*

I.

The startling ability of Donald Trump to dominate the Republican presidential primaries, along with the inability of the European Union (EU) to deal with the massive numbers of refugees fleeing there in response to war, famine, and ethnic cleansing in the Middle East and Africa, makes this an imperative moment to come to grips with what is afflicting American—and indeed *world* “civilization”—to explain how all this could possibly be happening.

Trump’s candidacy may have seemed a “joke” a few months ago, but it is no laughing matter now, after months of spouting racist screeds against Latinos, Muslims, Blacks, and immigrants and issuing misogynist diatribes against

women—all while promising to “carpet bomb” Syria to eradicate ISIS as well as *permanently* occupy Iraq to “get its oil.” The more bombastic he gets, the more support he attracts—and pulls much of the political discourse further to the Right. That he has gained so much support *because* he is “blunt” and “not afraid to say what he really thinks” is the scariest of all, since it means that a significant section of white America is fully willing to turn the clock back with their eyes wide open. They know what they want and are flocking to Trump—at least for now—to get it.

As one Trump supporter put it, “Nationalism is the new thing, man...I just kind of want to watch the establishment burn. What’s the point of being conservative anymore? It’s a failing ideology.”¹ That Trump is not a “true” conservative is hardly reassuring—after all, Mussolini wasn’t either. Trump has clearly become the lightning rod for a section of the U.S. electorate that is willing to go to any lengths to “restore” America to what they have long wanted it to be. That poses a threat that will remain with us whether or not Trump ever holds public office.

For Marxist-Humanists, any new phenomenon, no matter how regressive or progressive, must be grasped by returning to, and remaining firmly rooted in, the *body* of ideas of Marxist-Humanism. This body of ideas is neither mere “background” nor merely of historical interest. It is instead *the determinant* for developing our political, philosophical, and organizational perspectives *for today*.

An especially key moment for today is 1964—when Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., wrote a series of political analyses of Barry Goldwater’s success in the Republican Party primaries. It was easy to dismiss him at the time, since it was the height of the Civil Rights Movement, the rise of the New Left, and an era defined by progressive liberalism internationally. Goldwater seemed to many people a mere throwback to a bygone politics that was dying out—something that seemed confirmed later that year when he lost in a landslide to Lyndon Johnson. For Dunayevskaya, however, Goldwater represented a serious threat that the freedom movements were underestimating at their peril. She wrote, “It will not do to console ourselves with the statement that Goldwater ‘can’t win.’ That may very well be true, but the phenomenon will not thereby disappear.”² That was proven correct 16 years later, when Ronald Reagan won the presidency on the basis of Goldwater’s agenda. It ushered in several decades of the severest political and economic retrogression.

¹ Quoted by Matt Flegenheimer in “Cruz Invokes Alamo, Facing His Own Last Stand in Texas,” *New York Times*, February 26, 2016, p. 17.

² See Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Turning Point* (Draft Perspectives Thesis of July 1964), in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, p. 3778.

This doesn't mean that history is doomed to repeat itself. New voices for liberation have arisen since we held our last Convention two years ago that have the potential of moving history in a very different direction. A significant one is certainly the emergence of a new generation of young anti-racist activists in the U.S. and elsewhere challenging police abuse, the criminal justice system, and social inequality. These new expressions of Black pride and militancy—from Black Lives Matters to Black Youth Project 100 and from Assata's Daughters to We Charge Genocide—are challenging racism by avoiding any exclusive attachment to the identity politics of old by insisting on dealing with today's realities through a “black-feminist-queer” lens. In doing so they have freed debates over intersectionality from academia and made it a living perspective of a mass movement that has support among some of the most oppressed members of the Black community.

At the same time, although nowhere as revolutionary, the idealism of youth is on display in the outpouring of support for Bernie Sanders' in the U.S. Democratic Party primaries. Despite Sanders' rather tepid politics, it is no small matter that hundreds of thousands enthusiastically support him for being a “socialist”—something that has not happened in the U.S. in decades. There, the idea of socialism is beginning to emerge from its long eclipse.

The idea of socialism is also being revived in Britain, in the enthusiasm that has greeted Jeremy Corbyn's rise to leadership of the Labor Party—who has gone further than Sanders in calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons and extending solidarity to the Palestinians.

Promising as are such developments, neither Sanders nor Corbyn can claim to have broken ground in redefining the meaning of “socialism” for our time. The same is true of many of their followers. Socialized health care, more government spending, and Keynesian measures to ameliorate today's vast inequality are all well and good, but they hardly break from the traditional understanding of “socialism” as an “equitable” distribution of value. Yet that definition had long ago ceased to be valid—first, because any redistribution of value that stops short of the abolition of value production can and will be easily reversed in due course, and second, because the era of progressive liberalism long ago came to an end. Despite the rather fantastic claim of some of Sanders' advisors that his proposals would cause U.S. GDP to grow at 5.3% a year, no such eventuality is even remotely in the cards.

Today's social movements must not repeat the old illusion that the entirety of the social product resolves itself into personal income that need only be “redistributed” in a “fairer” way. We are living in a *capitalist* society, which by definition is dominated by *capital*—not by personal consumption. The bulk of capital, or self-expanding value, is consumed not by living individuals, rich or poor, but by capital

itself—dead labor. The system is driven to consume an ever-greater share of surplus value by capital itself. *This* is the reason for today’s social inequality and economic crises—not simply the political machinations of greedy bureaucrats or CEOs. Relations of production are the key, because they are responsible for the production of value, surplus value and the process of capitalist accumulation—the very heart of the system. Marx had to focus on this value dimension in order to work out the critique of political economy and provide an adequate conception of its alternative.

The crisis now facing the leftwing governments in Latin America that came to power over the past decade speaks powerfully to these contradictions. These governments in Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia largely arose from popular movements that were disgusted with neo-liberalism, and made important gains in addressing poverty and economic inequality. Despite much socialist rhetoric, however, their redistributive approach depended on an extractivist model centered on gas and oil exports and greater state control of the economy. The plunge in commodity prices, on the one hand, and the growth of bureaucracy and corruption on the other, has thrown them into crisis—as most recently seen in the vote to deny Evo Morales of Bolivia’s Movement for Socialism permission to run for another term in 2019. As a young Aymara activist told us in El Alto last summer, someone who had once supported Morales for his advocacy of *sumaq kawsay* (“living well” by fostering community, reciprocity, and respect for the environment), “Right now the government is mainly interested in extracting resources from the environment in order to fund social development. But in doing so they are getting away from the idea of ‘living well.’ We are facing the threat of a new *caudillismo* in Bolivia. Too much is based on one individual, Morales, and increasing productive output seems to be his major concern. Everything is sacrificed for the sake of making more money, even as much of the economy comes under state control. We have a government interested in the economic aspect but all the other sides of ‘living well’ are ignored.”

The lesson here, as well as elsewhere, is that if value production and the need to abolish it are placed to the side or ignored, it becomes impossible to articulate a viable alternative to capitalism. And if such an alternative is not articulated, the freedom movements will easily get lost in reformist and pseudo-revolutionary approaches. That will make it all the easier for the reactionary currents that are increasingly making themselves known in the U.S. and the world over to step in and offer themselves as the answer to a society in stagnation, crisis, and decay. History is not destined to repeat itself, but neither can we ignore the very real threat that an even more regressive outcome can engulf humanity than Reaganism if a viable alternative to capitalism is not articulated for our time.

As Dunayevskaya argued, “History, as past *or present*, has not discharged theory from its responsibility to transcend the status quo, to disclose the pull of the future,

to seek out world parallels and connections. The self-imprisonment in empiricism is only the counterpart to the complacency that ‘fascism can’t happen here.’”³

In challenging the Achilles heel of U.S. society—its racism—the struggles of Black youth have opened a vital door to overcoming today’s retrogression. Black masses have been, and remain, the vanguard of the American Revolution. We must see to it that the promising openings we have recently witnessed come to determine our future instead of the terrifying closures embodied in a Trump.

II.

Developing an alternative to capitalism cannot be achieved without formulating a critical perspective on the specific nature of the economic crisis currently facing this global system. In lieu of such an understanding, all sorts of superficial “alternatives” to the existing system will remain unchallenged.

We are today confronting a profound *global* economic morass. The paltry “recovery” of the U.S. and Western economies since the 2008 downturn only helps to further confirm this. Growth rates are anemic around the world, and are coming down sharply in those few areas that showed significant growth in recent years—such as China, parts of Latin America (Colombia, Peru, Bolivia) and sub-Saharan Africa. Capitalism is facing nothing short of a global contraction that seems to have no end in sight.

As of a few years ago, 79 percent, or 541 million, of the world’s industrial workers lived in “less developed regions”—up from 34 percent in 1950 and 53 percent in 1980. This compares to 145 million industrial workers, or 21 percent of the total, that live in the Western developed countries. The “emerging nations” now account for 84% of the global workforce, of which 1.6 billion people perform wage labor and one billion are small farmers and workers in the “informal economy.” Yet while the global proletariat has never been larger in numbers and in its share of the total workforce, the *share of wages in domestic income* has fallen. This holds both for the countries in the North and in the South. According to the International Labor Organization, since the early 1990’s the “share of domestic income that goes to labor...declined in nearly three quarters of the 69 countries with available information” and the decline is “more pronounced in emerging and developing countries than in advanced ones.”⁴ Even Asia witnessed a 20% decline of the labor share in domestic income over the period 1994-2010.

³ Ibid., p. 3781

⁴ Cited in “Imperialism and Super-Exploitation,” by Michael Roberts

The decline of the share of labor in domestic income is also pronounced in developed lands. It is bound to decline further with the introduction of new labor saving technologies and more “flexible” (re: contingent) workforces. This explains the massive increase of inequality that is behind today’s high rates of poverty. In the U.S., the world’s strongest economic power, the official poverty rate is 14.8 percent. Over 46 million people in the U.S. live in poverty.⁵ In Germany, the strongest economic power in Europe, 15.5 percent of its people—more than 12 million—live in conditions of poverty, according to the OECD.⁶

The drive for continued economic austerity is central to this ongoing effort to redistribute income from labor to capital—and it is producing a response, especially in Europe. Since the start of 2015, the electorates of Greece, Portugal, Spain and Ireland—all of those Eurozone countries subjected to austerity programs in return for bailout rescues—have voted to throw out the governments that implemented them. In Portugal, the new Socialist-led government, which is dependent on support from Communist, Green and Left Bloc parties, has pledged to reverse unpopular austerity measures, even though the European Union bureaucracy now has as “enforcer” the newly elected president, Marcelo de Sousa. In the Spanish elections of December 2015, the rightwing, corruption-riddled government of Mariano Rajoy’s Popular Party lost a third of its seats in the Congress of Deputies and failed to gain a majority. In the most recent election upset, in Ireland, the Fine Gael/Labor coalition lost its majority, and the anti-austerity parties—Sinn Fein and various Trotskyists—made significant gains. As the current situation is essentially a stalemate, as in Spain, another election may have to be called within months.

To fully grasp the meaning of such realities and the response to them calls for being rooted in Marx’s Marxism—especially his theory of the tendency of the rate of profit to decline. As Michael Roberts recently argued, the super-exploitation that is so evident in today’s global South “is also a response to the changes (fall) in the profitability of capital in the Northern imperialist economies, particularly from the mid-1970s onwards. Neoliberal policies on wages, public services, trade unions in the North went with ‘globalization’ of the South as capital in the major imperialist powers experienced a sharp fall in profitability.” He adds, “Although the level of rates of profit are higher in the South, they too have fallen despite rising and higher [relation of] s/v , whether caused by absolute surplus value, relative surplus value or super exploitation.” He concludes, “Marx’s law of profitability has not and will not

[<https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2016/03/07/imperialism-and-super-exploitation/>].

⁵ See the *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, and *2015 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC)*.

⁶ See *Die Junge Welt* of June 6, 2015.

be counteracted indefinitely even with super-exploitation. The law of profitability and the struggle of the global proletariat are imperialism's Achilles heels."⁷

This leaves us with a global capitalism facing persistent stagnation—and contraction. The effects are already evident to tens of millions around the world, who see themselves as falling further behind as the owners of capital secure greater remuneration at their expense. It is especially felt by youth in the U.S., whose future seems to promise little more than part time and temporary employment at low wages—and many of them are flocking to the Sanders campaign in response. But it is also felt by many white workers who see themselves being ignored and cast aside—many (but not all) of whom blame their predicament on immigrants and the social gains made by women and minorities in recent decades and are therefore flocking to Trump. A similar situation is playing out in Europe, where anti-immigrant and rightist rhetoric has reached shocking levels.

More than a million refugees from the war zones of the Middle East and North Africa have crossed into Europe since 2014, and there are hundreds of thousands more yet to come. As the Balkan states have begun closing their borders to stem the flow north towards Germany, the number of asylum-seekers stranded in Greece is currently 70,000, with more than 20,000 already stuck on the Greek side of the Macedonian border.⁸ The influx of refugees into Greece is likely to spill into Italy, with thousands now under pressure to take that perilous journey by boat. Hungary's extreme-right government led by Viktor Orban, having built a razor-wire fence last year along its border with Serbia and Croatia to stop migrants from entering the country is, along with Poland and other eastern European EU members, refusing to participate in any EU plan to resettle migrants across the continent. As in Poland, there have been protests organized by the Left, but so far to no great effect.⁹ Orban and Poland's Beata Szydło, along with the likes of Marine Le Pen, who has presidential ambitions in France, are the leading representatives of a regressive European "vision" quite at odds with the liberal EU consensus: a federation of national "fatherlands" dedicated to promoting "Christian values," reversing multiculturalism, and expelling Muslim migrants from the continent. Significantly, all of these demagogues—just like Trump—have a favorable view of Vladimir Putin and Russia's imperialist intervention in Syria.

⁷ "Imperialism and Super-Exploitation," by Michael Roberts.

⁸ "EU Refugee Crisis in Greece," by Less McHugh [<http://www.ibtimes.com/eu-refugee-crisis-greece-border-closures-schengen-area-may-cause-70000-asylum-seekers-2326590>].

⁹ "Hungarian Prime Minister Ramps Up Criticism of Migrant Resettlement," by Margit Feher [www.wsj.com/articles/hungarian-prime-minister-ramps-up-criticism-of-migrant-resettlement-plans-1456694438].

This demagoguery is not limited to the U.S. or Europe, but can also be found in places like India, China, and Burma, where political forces are trying offset anxiety over the economic problems by attacking immigrants and minorities.

At the same time, we are witnessing an era of conservative backlash on gender rights globally. Nearly across the board, women make less than men, make up a majority of those in poverty (70% of those in extreme poverty), and face the real prospect of becoming a victim of sexual violence (one out of three internationally). While much variation exists, women in the developing and the developed world face severe challenges. For example, in the U.S., Republicans have attempted to put reproductive rights on the chopping block through restrictive abortion legislation in a number of Southern states and efforts to defund Planned Parenthood. Moreover, the LGBT movement faces challenges as it fights efforts of conservatives to mitigate the recent Supreme Court decision legalizing same sex marriage by offering legal protection to those businesses unwilling to serve gay couples. On the Democratic side, the potential election of the liberal feminist Hillary Clinton to the presidency offers only limited optimism, as she would likely face an obstinate conservative coalition that would attempt to block any and all initiatives coming from the White House and increased and visible misogyny in the same vein as the racism President Obama has faced in his term. At best, this could lead to a reassertion of the feminist movement in the U.S. as it in certain ways it has for the Black Lives Matter Movement. Yet this seems unlikely without a flashpoint like Ferguson to reignite the scattered movement.

Given today's situation, it is worth recalling how Marx posed the relationship between the economic law of motion of capitalism and realities that are not reducible purely to economics. He wrote in *Capital*, Vol. 3: "The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labor is pumped out of the direct producers determines the relationship of domination and servitude, as this grows immediately out of production itself and reacts back on it in turn as a determining element. On this is based the entire configuration of the economic community arising from the actual relations of production itself, and hence also its specific political form... This does not prevent the same economic basis from displaying endless variations and gradations in its appearance, as the result of innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural conditions, racial relations, historical influences acting from the outside, etc., and these can only be understood by careful analyzing these empirically given conditions."¹⁰

Marx here provides a methodological starting point for approaching the inter-relationship of class, race, and gender. In reading these words of Marx carefully, we see that his notion of determination, which is actually a *notion of dialectics* in

¹⁰ *Capital*, Volume 3, trans. David Fernbach (New York: Vintage, 1981), p. 927.

capitalist society, leaves space for other social categories, such as race and gender, which also affect social development and which we have to ascertain by careful analysis. It is not only class relations that impact social motion in capitalist society, although they everywhere constitute its principal conditions. In being conditioned by class relations, race and gender relations also affect societal development, and act upon class relations and bring about changes in them.

III.

When we last met in Convention two years ago, we are able to point to a series of recent mass upsurges that sought to challenge existing society—the Occupy movement, the protests in Kiev and Sarajevo, and most of all, the Arab uprisings. Where does the latter stand now?

The bitter consequences of the Arab revolutions of five years ago continue to reverberate throughout the Middle East/North Africa (MENA), Europe, and beyond. The carnage in Syria—emanating from both the Assad regime and jihadist groups like ISIS—has dashed the hopes unleashed by the 2011 uprising in that country. It has also sparked the most massive refugee influx into Europe since the Second World War, thus destabilizing another key area of the global capitalist system.

In analyzing these events, it is important to recognize that the depth of the current repression and imperialist intervention is due to the depth of the threat the 2011 revolutions posed to the regional and global system. The current violence is certainly not due to the alleged “backwardness” of the region or its culture, any more than the savagery of Pinochet or Hitler was due to the unique features of Chilean or German culture. In fact, the exiles from this region may bring with them some revolutionary ferment.

In the MENA region, the immediate outlook is bleak. Egypt remains under lockdown by the militarized Sisi regime, Libya has experienced low-level factional war amid warlordism, and the hopes unleashed by Yemen’s democratic uprising have given way to a vicious war between Iran-backed forces and Saudi-backed ones, with the Saudis devastating the country with their US-made planes, missiles, and bombs. Even the three remaining bright spots of a year ago, Tunisia, the leftist-Kurdish coalition in Turkey, and the Kurdish Rojava enclaves in Syria, have experienced setbacks. To be sure, Tunisia achieved a democratic republic after the small Marxist left helped to hold off the Islamists, resulting in a constitution with strong provisions for women’s rights. But even there, the limits of bourgeois democracy can be read in the mass unemployment that is strangling the youth, and in the moves toward a return to strongman rule over the last several months.

In Turkey, the openings created in spring 2015 from the alliance of youthful leftists and feminists inspired by the Gezi Park uprising of 2013 and Kurdish groups have for now been crushed under waves of attacks from the Erdogan regime. Its unrelenting repression has led some of the Kurdish groups to give up on mass mobilization across Turkey in favor of a resumption of an armed struggle by Kurds that only plays into Erdogan's hands. At the same time his regime has a narrower base of support than ever and is as a result brittle despite its outward appearance of strength.

In Syria, the Kurdish forces that achieved worldwide support when they held off the reactionary ISIS in Kobane in 2014-15 have persisted in their struggle for grassroots democracy and women's equality, wresting more territory from ISIS and cutting off much of its supply route from Turkey. At the same time, however, the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), the very ones who also rescued the Yazidis from ISIS in 2014 when no one else would do so, have recently engaged in a dangerous flirtation with Russian imperialism, even as the latter has been bombing the opponents of the Assad regime.¹¹ This has driven a further wedge between Syrian Kurds and the Arab majority, and cannot be justified even by reference to the history of neglect of the Kurds by Syrian Arab nationalists and leftists.

These kinds of self-inflicted wounds by the revolutionary forces have not been limited to Syria. Such self-inflicted wounds also took place in Egypt in 2013 when some sectors of the nationalist and youthful left initially backed the Sisi regime after it had overthrown the Islamists of the Muslim Brotherhood. Most of all, the Syrian uprising has tarnished itself by allowing supposedly moderate Islamists to dominate the armed resistance, some of whom are not all that different from ISIS. To be sure, these jihadists have received lavish funding and other support from Saudis and other wealthy Islamists that has been allowed to pass through Erdogan's Turkey into Syria. It is also true that Assad and Russia have left ISIS and similar forces unharmed while his bombs have decimated the areas controlled by more progressive rebel forces. But that alone does not explain why an uprising that began in 2011 on a broad democratic basis has been taken over by warlordism and Islamism in so many areas. That does not, of course, negate the fact that during the recent cessation of hostilities imposed by the U.S. and Russia, thousands of civilians came out onto the streets in support of the original aims of the 2011 uprising.

The outcome of the Arab Spring—like the many other popular upsurges that it directly or indirectly inspired, from sub-Saharan Africa to the Occupy Movement and from the Hong Kong democracy movement to the *indignados* of Spain—testifies, above all, to what can happen when spontaneous freedom movements are left bereft

¹¹ Bill Weinberg, "Are the Rojava Kurds Siding with Assad?," WW4 Report, Feb. 27, 2016.

of a comprehensive vision of what must be done to replace capitalism. Ideas by themselves cannot change the world, any more than can spontaneous development that is lacking in ideas. The task that we face today—that of working out a new relation of theory to practice based on the *specific* realities of *our* time—is certainly not “new” to Marxist-Humanism but pervades each stage of its development. It is only by keeping this at the forefront of our minds that we can work out the specific tasks and perspectives of our organization for the next two years.

IV.

As we consider the practical and theoretical tasks facing us, it is important that our theorizing connect to the real revolutionary forces on the ground. In an era when many even on the Left—whether anarchists or postmodernists—continue to dismiss Marxism as Eurocentric and class reductionist, it is important not only to theorize the intersectionality of class, race, and gender in contemporary capitalism, but also to internalize and project those parts of the Marxian tradition, often ignored by the dominant forms of Marxism, that show a real grasp of the multiplicity of both the domination by and the resistance to capital.

At the same time, the events of the past two years have made abundantly clear the need to think beyond the limits of capitalism to protect the planet and its ecosystems. Internationally, the agreement reached in Paris at COP21 seemed to some to signal a win for the ecology movement, as there was large-scale agreement that global climate change was happening and that swift action was necessary to prevent an environmental catastrophe. It was agreed that measures needed to be taken to prevent climate change from reaching above 2 degrees Celsius relative to preindustrial levels and calls for zero growth in human-based greenhouse gas emissions by the second half of the century. Despite its rhetoric, there are few enforcement mechanisms and countries by and large set their own standards for reducing emissions. Therefore, it is likely that this agreement will do little to solve the problem.

In light of these realities, we propose that the theme of this year’s convention be: “How to Transcend Capitalism? Rethinking the Relationship of Race, Class and Gender in an Era of Economic Crisis and Environmental Destruction.” Every report, as well as the discussion from the floor, will be devoted to focusing on how our organization can make a contribution to developing an understanding of how to transcend capitalism.

As Dunayevskaya repeatedly argued—especially in “Not by Practice Alone”¹²—the task facing each generation is to re-create dialectical methodology in continuity with and as expression of Marx’s philosophy of revolution. Marxist-Humanism grows and renews itself by constantly returning to Marx’s Marxism and working out what it means for today. We chart a path to the future by discovering how much of Marx’s insights have yet to be fully mastered and absorbed. Since our founding in 2010, our organization has produced important writings in this regard, in issuing works on Marx’s writings on women, the non-Western world, and on the alternative to capitalist value production. We need to continue such developments by now making it a collective organizational endeavor. And for this reason, we have committed ourselves to issuing a new publication that includes the text of Marx’s *Critique of the Gotha Program* along with a new introduction by ourselves.

No work of Marx has more to say about how to transcend capitalism—and what constitutes that transcendence—than the 1875 *Critique*, which contains his fullest discussion of a post-capitalist society. Producing and holding discussions on this publication is one way we can develop our theoretical work in an organizational context. This is not to suggest, of course, that Marx’s *Critique* by itself holds the “answer” to what faces us today. That has to be worked out through an engagement and development of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism as a whole. Towards that end, one of the issues we may wish to explore at the Convention is holding coordinated discussions and activities around alternatives to capitalism over the next two years, that would take our recent publications (which includes the material found in our web-based publication) as their ground.

Our aim as an organization is to achieve continuity with Marxist-Humanism by becoming practitioners of the Hegelian dialectic of negativity—and that is a far cry from simply living off the truths of the past. Dunayevskaya remarked in 1964, “As Hegel had long ago seen, the generation that has not participated in the elaboration of theory, and has thereafter not returned to the *process* of its becoming, but satisfied itself with beginning and ending with the *results* previously achieved—whether that be Kantianism or Hegelianism (or, we may add, pragmatism or Marxist-Humanism)—only succeeds in turning past achievements into nothing more than ‘a pillow for intellectual sloth.’”¹³ Unfortunately, these proved to be prophetic words. In the years after her death in 1987, the organization she founded and led for many years, News and Letters Committees, succumbed to precisely the defect she pinpointed in these comments. Mere physical “continuity” became considered by many of its leading members as more important than the philosophic re-creation of Marxist-Humanism. It was for this reason that we had to separate

¹² “Not by Practice Alone—The Movement from Theory” [1984], in *The Power of Negativity, Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, pp. 273-88.

¹³ *The Turning Point*, in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, p. 3781.

from N&LC and form the International Marxist-Humanist Organization, today the largest and most active Marxist-Humanist Organization.

We must also recognize that just as maintaining a given form of organization is insufficient for re-creating Marxist-Humanism, it is no less the case that theoretical work that lacks a corporeal organizational expression will also fail to achieve its re-creation. Marxist-Humanism cannot be revived as a philosophy if it does not survive as an organization. It needs a physical, material embodiment, in an organization—an organization that brings together workers and intellectuals, that develops theory by being engaged with movement activities and events, and that develops ideas and perspectives through the counsel of many.

—The Steering Committee of the IMHO