

For a Marxist-Humanist presence online

by William Smith

The task for Marxist-Humanism and humanity is not an easy one with a failing capitalist economy, world-ending climate crisis, and the rising counter-revolution all around the world. But it is one that we can and will face.

One of the major sources of new developments in class struggle is the youth. They are able to hear and develop the revolutionary philosophy of Marxist Humanism (which has seen a revival quite recently with youth) in our moment of crises¹. Unfortunately the rise of youth radicalism has also brought a rise in other “philosophical” or “Marxist tendencies” which promote anti-humanism, posthumanism, post-Marx-Marxism, etc. I have touched on this in my short review of *Marxism and Freedom*² in which I argue that all struggles for freedom need a philosophy of revolution in order to make sense of what is going on by laying hold of Dunayevskaya’s first book *Marxism and Freedom*.

I do not think that simply positing a need for philosophy is enough to continue the revival or flourishing of Marxist Humanism. We must defend not only Marx’s Marxism, but see it as a foundation to debate the “intellectuals.” These intellectuals typically range from postmodernist to “Marxist careerist”.

The effect these post-Marx-Marxists have on the youth is massive, especially online. The content that youth consume range from Marxist Leninist to reformist Anarchists (imagine my shock!). It only gets worse when you realize what these “intellectuals” are saying about Marx. For instance, in a recent debate with a liberal academic Slavoj Žižek admitted without flinching that Marx’s calculations in *Capital* were wrong, but his philosophy tends in the right direction.³ This is absurd. Not only does Žižek not even attempt to show how Marx’s empirical work in *Capital* is wrong, he disregards the dialectical structure of Marx’s thought by neglecting his critique of value. Marx is presented to us as someone you can pick and choose from to fill out your dissertation. Ironically Hegel is being treated the same way, too. Eclecticism fills the air with the same white noise we’ve been hearing in class rooms and boring lectures. Should this be tolerated?

I could go on about the distortions that these people make for pages, but I want to end on ways we could solve this problem. Post-Marx-Marxism is prevalent whether in academia, publishing, or organizations. It seems to have a monopoly on the “marketplace of ideas” for lack of a better word. Many of the post-Marx-

¹ See "The Young Marxist Humanist" published in 1963

² <https://newsandletters.org/youth-marx-speaks-to-youth-alienation/>

³ Communist Philosopher Debates Capitalism - Slavoj Žižek

Marxists have gained reputation on the internet, such as guesting on podcasts, uploading videos, publishing books constantly (which become instantly forgettable), or making a name for themselves by “correcting or improving Marx”.

These are only examples. I'm sure that we all know of other examples of how these post-Marx-Marxists retain or gain their status in online or academic circles. Any talk of humanism is laughed at as liberal or even fascist ideology. It might be compared to thinkers such as Bernardo dei Machiavelli or Ludwig Feuerbach without any investigation of what Marx's humanism really is!

Humanists and anti/posthumanists talk past each other, particularly in French radical circles. There are many ways to tackle this issue. I would suggest a few to start the conversation.

- Make Dunayevskaya's video/audio lectures available to watch online. Due to the fast nature of today's gig economy I believe this will give them a chance to be listened to or viewed as the history and philosophy of Marxist-Humanism.
- Start a podcast on youtube or various other podcast websites about the todayness of Marxist-Humanism with various topics and subjects per episode such as reviews or even discussions on Marxist-Humanist literature and how it relates to our historic moment.
- Respond to the so-called theoretical contributions made by other tendencies. I recommend, for example, Ron Kelch's "Absolute Negativity, Occupy and Situationists".⁴
- Promote more live reading groups of Dunayevskaya's works.

These are only a few things I can recommend from my own experience as active online. I hope this will spark a discussion to take these ideas seriously.

For humanity,

⁴ <https://newsandletters.org/absolute-negativity-occupy-and-situationists/> or <https://dmitryev.wordpress.com/2012/02/02/absolute-negativity-occupy-and-situationists/>