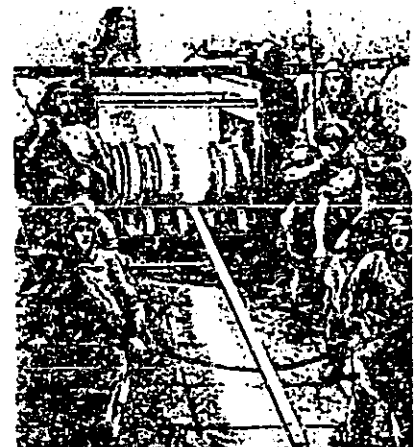
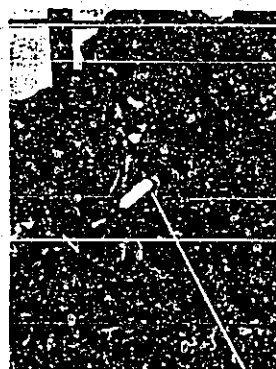


# INTERNATIONAL LABOR and WORKING CLASS HISTORY

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REVIEWS

<i>The World of Chinese Slaves: Race and Class in Colonial America</i> by Judith S. Stiehm	110
Reviewed by Eric Aronson	
<i>Black Labor in the South: Richmond, Virginia, 1862-1892</i> by Peter J. Kuchta	107
Reviewed by Steven Hahn	
<i>Black Intellectuals: The Making of an Intellectual Profession, 1853-1882</i> by Jon William Trotter, Jr.	111
Reviewed by Peter Chastell	
<i>Women and the Trades: Pittsburgh, 1800-1820</i> by Elizabeth Brashinsky Busler	115
Reviewed by Marguerite Kerner	
<i>Family Connections: A History of Italian and Jewish Immigrant Lives in Providence, Rhode Island, 1900-1940</i> by Judith E. Smith	118
Reviewed by Miriam Cohen	
<i>Servants and Masters in Eighteenth Century France: The Uses of Loyalty</i> by Sarah C. Maza	121
Reviewed by Jeffrey Kapiow	
<i>Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution and Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future</i> by Raya Dunayevskaya	124
Reviewed by Kevin Anderson	
<i>Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788-1890</i> by Steven J. Ross	130
Reviewed by Ronald Schultz	
<i>Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State</i> by Linda C. Majka and Theo J. Majka	132
Reviewed by Dana Frank	
<i>South Texas Coal Mining: A Community History</i> compiled and edited by Roberto R. Calderón	135
Reviewed by Zaragosa Vargas	
<i>Slavery in Russia, 1450-1725</i> by Richard Hellie	138
Reviewed by Paul Bushkovitch	
<i>The French Revolution in Miniature: Section Droits-de-l'Homme 1789-1795</i> by Morris Slavin	141
Reviewed by Jack R. Censer	

<i>Our Culture Democracy: The Industrial Christian Fellowship, 1919-1929</i> by Gerald Studdert Kennell Reviewed by Paula Kane	143
<i>Labour and Socialism: A History of the British Labour Movement, 1847-1974</i> by James Hinton and <i>Labour and Society in Britain, 1918-1979</i> by James E. Cronin Reviewed by Scandon Meacham	145
<i>The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany</i> by Vernon I. Lidtke Reviewed by Larry Peterson	147
<i>Visions of Emancipation: The Italian Workers' Movement since 1945</i> by Joanne Barkan Reviewed by Larry Garner	152
ARCHIVES AND ARTIFACTS	156
NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	157

Lackeys of the Old Regime type were anachronistic in the New. You cannot rule a country under the banner of liberty and equality as once it was under the principles of unfreedom and subordination. It is because servants in post-revolutionary society are no longer necessary to the maintenance of the class power of their employers (are, indeed, sometimes in contradiction to it) that they are reduced to the role of providers of creature comforts, and the way is open to the creation of an entirely new master-servant relationship.

Once again, I should like to say that whatever interpretive disagreements I may have with the author (in fact, our common ground is great), hers is an excellent book. Well written, full of anecdotes to provide the nice detail that makes a point, it is strongest precisely where it measures the political dimensions of social relationships. The question she has asked is not of the pots and pans or *vie quotidienne* variety; rather than concentrating on a static description of the servants' lives, she inquires into their function, which is vastly more important. To be sure, there is much here about where servants came from and how they were recruited into domestic service, career patterns, wages and patrimony, and various other aspects of their life cycle. A good deal of the information provided on these matters is both interesting and suggestive, albeit too narrowly based on the gapingly incomplete archives of a couple of provincial cities. The absence of sources concerning the *classes populaires* is the bane of all our existences, and no historian can be blamed for trying to make do with what she has, provided that she is conscious of the fragility of the evidence. My own research on Paris leads me to differ with Maza about such matters as the reasons for migration to the cities (I do not think that it was mainly a matter of tradition, but generally had more down to earth reasons), or the relationship of servants to the rest of the laboring poor (about which we still know very little). But that is not what is essential within the context of the book's ambition, to analyze master-servant relationships in eighteenth century France and thus to contribute to our understanding of that society as a whole. One might say that this is history written simultaneously from the bottom up and the top down; it is the only way to proceed.

Jeffrey Kaplow  
Paris

Raya Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1982. 234 pp. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1985. 302 pp.

Because of its often critical bite, its controversial political standpoint even within Marxism, the sheer scope of her endeavor, and her position outside aca-



demia, Raya Dunayevskaya's work has just begun to get the type of discussion which it deserves in radical intellectual circles. More and more people—this writer included—have found her concept of dialectic to be a vantage point from which to assess critically both "vulgar" deterministic Marxism and "Western Marxism." Some of those who were unwilling to accept either Marcusean one-dimensionality or Althusserian antihumanism and yet sought a philosophical foundation for Marxism, have found themselves increasingly drawn to the work of Dunayevskaya in the 1980s. Her work has also gained more attention recently from labor historians, as seen in the extensive exhibit on her life and writings at the Wayne State University labor archives in 1985, covering the period from 1941 on, much of it available on microfilm as *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. Her newest book under review here, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*, is a selection of some of her material on women from those Wayne State archives. This and her 1982 book on Rosa Luxemburg and Marx are such a culmination of a lifetime of work that it is necessary to look briefly at the development of her thought as a whole.

As illustrated by her thirty-year collaboration in Detroit with auto-worker Charles Denby, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, until his death in 1983, Raya Dunayevskaya has been a committed intellectual as a Hegelian Marxist, as a feminist, and as a lifelong activist in revolutionary groups. Born in Russia, she became active as a teenager in the 1920s in the Communist party in Chicago, especially in the black Marxist movement and its remarkable but little known weekly paper, *The Negro Champion*.

Her early break with Stalinism took Dunayevskaya into the Trotskyist movement, where she eventually became a secretary to Leon Trotsky in Mexico during the Moscow Trials in 1937-38, only to break with him as well in 1939 at the time of the Hitler-Stalin Pact and the outbreak of World War II, when Trotsky continued to consider Russia to be "a workers' state, though degenerate." In the 1940s she developed a theory of state capitalism, writing articles on this for *New Internationalist* and *American Economic Review*. She worked together with C.L.R. James as a tendency within Trotskyism, seeking to develop Marxism as dialectical philosophy, delving into Hegel, Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks*, and Marx's 1844 *Humanist Essays*. At one and the same time, this "Johnson-Forest Tendency" (Johnson was the pen name of James and Forest that of Dunayevskaya) came to see blacks as an independent revolutionary force, and made some penetrating critiques of the nascent labor bureaucracy growing inside the CIO. In the mid-1950s Dunayevskaya broke with James as well, to found the philosophy she was to term "Marxist-Humanism."

Dunayevskaya dates her formulation of this new concept of dialectics to two key events of the early 1950s: (1.) The massive 1949-50 coal miners' strike against automation and against the bureaucratic leadership of John L. Lewis in West Virginia in which she was a participant, as recently recorded for the

first time in her 1984 pamphlet (co-authored with former miner Andy Phillips), *The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.*; (2.) the East Berlin workers' uprising of 1953, coming almost immediately on the heels of Stalin's death, and signifying, in her view, nothing less than "the beginning of the end of Russian totalitarianism."

Since 1957, in her *Marxism and Freedom*, Raya Dunayevskaya has sought to reconstruct Marxism along humanist and Hegelian lines. She has not hesitated, as in her *Philosophy and Revolution* (1973), to critically appropriate the culmination of Hegel's "system," his absolutes, turning it into what she terms "absolute negativity as new beginning," and writing: "In Hegel's Absolutes there is embedded, though in abstract form, the fully developed 'social individual,' to use Marx's phrase, and what Hegel called individuality 'purified of all that interfered with its universalism, i.e. freedom itself.'"

As the 1950s and 1960s developed, the open and humanistic Marxism which Dunayevskaya had begun to create deepened her discussion of the new social movements, such as the black and youth movements of the period. But it was in *Philosophy and Revolution* that she discussed these events' impact on her concept of dialectics: "It was as if the 'Absolute Universal,' instead of being a beyond, an abstraction, was concrete and everywhere." The two more recent books under review here, while certainly developing her general concept of revolutionary dialectics, center concretely on the problems raised by the women's liberation movement.

*Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* is a wide-ranging book, the first part of which presents an important critique of Rosa Luxemburg, who is much praised but whose theories have been seldom discussed. Dunayevskaya not only presents a serious critique of Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital*, but also brings the whole theoretical discussion alive by connecting Luxemburg to women's liberation, to the Third World, and to Polish and German mass strikes.

While not all readers will be satisfied that Dunayevskaya has uncovered enough empirical evidence to give Rosa Luxemburg a "feminist dimension," to debate only at that level is not really the point, because for Dunayevskaya the whole purpose of bringing in the revolutionary woman theorist Luxemburg is what she considers "the need for today's Women's Liberation Movement to absorb Luxemburg's revolutionary dimension, not for history's sake but for their demands of the day, including autonomy" (ix). Dunayevskaya has certainly challenged previous work both by serious Luxemburg scholars (such as J. P. Nettl) and by those feminist theorists—including Marxist feminists—who continue to ignore Luxemburg. A brief chapter on "Luxemburg as Feminist; Break with Jogiches" takes up *The Mass Strike* (1906), Luxemburg's ground-breaking analysis of the 1905 Russian Revolution where she first developed her concept of spontaneity.

This was the first major work written without the collaboration of her lover and political mentor, Leo Jogiches, who was still in prison, Luxemburg

having managed to get released earlier. Dunayevskaya suggests that the 1905 Revolution itself, in which both were active participants in Warsaw, may have created divergences between them. A personal break soon followed, where Luxemburg wrote, "I am only I once more, since I am free of Leo" (93). Dunayevskaya writes that Luxemburg's "greatest intellectual accomplishments came after the break" (93).

In addition, she takes up Luxemburg's opposition to German imperialism, especially in Namibia, arguing that this was at the heart of her 1910 break with the leadership of the Second International, four years ahead of Lenin's break in 1914. It was this crisis which led Luxemburg to write *Accumulation of Capital* as "A Contribution to an Explanation of Imperialism" (Luxemburg's own subtitle). However, her concept of dialectics and economics in that work and her lifelong opposition to all nationalism, even revolutionary nationalism, are sharply criticized by Dunayevskaya. But Luxemburg's own 1918 critique of the Russian revolution is seen by Dunayevskaya as raising nothing less than the question of revolutionary democracy after the revolution, and from a vantage point which fully supported that revolution, seeking to extend it to Germany in 1918-19.

Part 2, "The Women's Liberation Movement as Revolutionary Force and Reason," ranges over the current women's movement internationally, as well as the earlier movement in the abolitionist period in America. She focuses especially on the creativity of black and third-world revolutionary women activists, as well as innovative white activists such as Margaret Fuller in the United States or Louise Michel in France. This section also criticizes Marcuse's lengthy and pioneering 1932 review of Marx's 1844 *Humanist Essays* for not mentioning women there, while taking issue with Engels' *Origin of the Family* for what he does write on women. All of these themes are developed in greater detail in *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* (1985).

For Dunayevskaya, it isn't really a question of Marx in 1844, but of the period since the 1930s, especially the contradictions labor would encounter in the post-World War II world, women's liberation arising from female factory labor during the war, and the birth of the Third World. All of these themes are developed in greater detail in *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* (1985), but in both books Dunayevskaya argues that the questions arising since the 1930s cannot be answered on the basis of women's liberation alone, even if connected to Rosa Luxemburg, but require theorists to delve into Marx's thought as a totality.

In the last section of *Rosa Luxemburg*, she issues a challenge to non-Marxists as well as all Marxists by arguing that only our period can fully understand the real Marx as a humanist who, not just in 1844, but in his 1881-82 *Ethnological Notebooks* laid a trail for our day. This included a conception of revolutions occurring first in technologically backward lands.

By connecting Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* to his writings on Russia in his last decade, Dunayevskaya argues that Engels's preoccupation with the "ori-



gin" of the family and of class society was not Marx's. She holds that Marx was looking at non-European society and its communal structure—whether in primitive tribal societies such as those described in Morgan's *Ancient Society*, or in a pre-capitalist class society such as India—to explore not origins of humanity but new pathways to social revolution, continuing and deepening the discussion begun in the *Grundrisse* on the Asiatic mode of production. Marx was also pointing to women as a revolutionary subject, not ten thousand years ago, but in his period. In short, these were multilinear paths of development toward social revolution involving women, peasants, and minorities.

*Women's Liberation* enriches the discussion begun by Rosa Luxemburg. This is a book of twenty-seven essays (three are by colleagues of Dunayevskaya, Olga Domanski and Urszula Wislanka) written since 1950 on women and revolutionary dialectics. The dialectician Dunayevskaya does not, however, present these essays in a standard chronological format. Rather, they begin with the birth of the modern women's liberation movement in 1969. In her view, the uniqueness of the new movement lay in its critique of the revolutionary New Left, including even black revolutionaries such as Stokely Carmichael, who met it with sharp opposition ("The position of women is prone," etc.). Dunayevskaya writes that: "for the male Left to see the women's demand for new organizational relations as only a question of small vs. larger organization and of decentralization vs. centralization . . . or for talking of 'personal' rather than political matters . . . discloses not only the male chauvinism inherent in the Left but their insensitivity to the key question of Marx's concept of dialectics itself" (6).

An exciting feature of part one of the book, "Women, Labor and the Black Dimension" is its combination of post-1969 with earlier writings, such as one on coal miners' wives in the 1949-50 strike who attacked a mine owner's son: "The women pickets stripped his shirt and jabbed hatpins into his shoulders. The 'roughing up' of the scion of wealth led to arrests but did not stop the women from continuing with their picketing" (29).

Another chapter, based on Dunayevskaya's 1962 trip to West Africa, is entitled "African Women Demand 'Freedom Now.'" A remarkably prescient 1953 piece on postwar women workers discusses the impact of new relations at work on the home: "They also didn't know that the women workers would 'have it in them' to come home and wish to establish new relations there, too. There the men stopped. The woman was still expected to do all the housework and take care of the children. . . . So where they could not work out the new relations they took to breaking up the homes" (32). This part ends on an international note with Dunayevskaya's speech to a 1983 Marx centenary conference on her *Rosa Luxemburg* book. The conference, held in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, was entitled "Common Differences: Third World Women and Feminist Perspectives."

In Part 2, "Revolutionaries All," Dunayevskaya hits out sharply at "Khomeini's acts of retrogression" in Iran, which she dubs "outright counter-

revolution." She concludes, "Let us extend our solidarity to the embattled revolutionaries—the new generation of revolutionary students as well as workers, Women's Liberationists as well as national minorities, Kurds especially, fighting for self-determination" (69). This chapter also brings out the very important (and forgotten) contribution of women to the 1906-11 revolution, including the establishment of women's soviets (*anjumen*).

Also of special interest is Dunayevskaya's tribute to her colleague Natalia Sedova Trotsky at the time of Trotsky's death in 1962, which makes a category of "those women" in the revolutionary movement (unlike Rosa Luxemburg) "who had not gained theoretical leadership and therefore were very nearly disregarded except as faithful wives and mothers" (71). This chapter also discusses the life and work of Vera Zasulich. Another important essay here is Olga Domanski's contribution, an original critique of the contemporary feminist writers Gerda Lerner, Simone de Beauvoir, and Sheila Rowbotham.

Part 3, "Sexism, Politics and Revolution—Japan, Portugal, Poland, China, Latin America—Is There an Organizational Answer?" contains a 1966 report on Dunayevskaya's trip of that year to Japan, including a first-hand account of worker resistance in Toyota City. She reported the special bitterness of those workers against Toyota's barracks-like discipline. The rest of the articles here are from the 1970s and 1980s, offering a critical world view of women and revolution.

Part 4 is strictly on dialectical philosophy, interweaving it with women's liberation. It begins with an interview "On the Family, Love Relationships and the New Society," but perhaps the most ground-breaking piece here is "Marx's and Engels' Studies Contrasted: The Relationship of Philosophy and Revolution to Women's Liberation." Dunayevskaya singles out the importance to her of this article in her introduction: "I found that Marx's heretofore unknown *Ethnological Notebooks* disclosed a deep gulf between Marx and his closest collaborator, Engels, whose unilinear view has nothing in common with Marx's multilinear view of human development. All too many of today's Women's Liberationists have rejected 'Marxism' as if Engels' *Origin of the Family* was Marx's view, without ever digging into Marx's Marxism" (12).

Raya Dunayevskaya's two recent books, plus her earlier work, call for nothing less than a total reorganization of Marxist dialectics for today. One can certainly disagree with her overall formulation of the problem or with her specific conclusions, but it is high time that her ideas—an important contribution to Marxist, radical, and feminist social theory and history—were given the serious hearing and discussion they deserve. Her voluminous writings open up many new points of departure for radical historians and social theorists in the 1980s.

Kevin Anderson  
Northern Illinois University

## NEWS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The Committee on Historical Studies of the Graduate Faculty, New School for Social Research sponsors a number of activities which will be of interest to *ILWCH* readers. It holds regular proseminars to which faculty and advanced graduate students from other institutions are welcome as fully participating members. Each proseminar involves a number of graduate students and faculty members, lasts several years, acquires its own research materials, and provides informal practical training and advice to its less-experienced members. The proseminars take up large but well-defined historical themes. Two proseminars have been meeting in 1986-87: one led by Richard Bensei and Charles Tilly is examining state formation and collective action; the other, an outgrowth of an earlier proseminar on class formation, focuses on inequality. More information about the graduate program and the proseminars may be obtained by writing to: Committee on Historical Studies, New School for Social Research, 65 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003.

In cooperation with the New School's Center for Studies of Social Change, Historical Studies also sponsors several workshops each semester and "Think, then Drink"—occasional seminars on work in progress held on Friday afternoons (4-5:30), followed by conversation and cash-bar refreshment (5:30-6:30). Since its inception in 1985, "Think, then Drink" has heard several presentations of interest to historians of the working class; future seminars should prove to be of equal interest. Those who wish to be added to the mailing list for this year's program or want to drop in on "Think, then Drink" should write to the Center for Studies of Social Change, New School for Social Research, 64 University Place, New York, NY 10003, or call (212) 741-5312.

The Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at the Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University has announced the extension of the Kaiser Travel Program, which provides financial support of up to \$700 to scholars who wish to travel to the library to pursue their research. The program aims particularly at aiding doctoral candidates and junior faculty members who might be deterred by the cost of travel from visiting the library. For information and application forms, contact Philip Mason, Director, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202, (313) 577-4024.

A major addition to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Walter P. Reuther Library is now available on microfilm. The two-reel addition updates the collection and contains several major

11369

items from the early career of this Marxist-feminist intellectual and labor activist. For more information and order forms, contact Philip Mason, Director, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.

The gubernatorial records of Connecticut Governor Ella Grasso, 1971-1982, are now open to researchers at the Connecticut State Library. In addition to official papers and correspondence, the records contain an enormous number of letters from constituents on a number of issues. These records should prove a valuable resource to scholars interested in Connecticut state politics and public opinion during the 1970s. For further information, contact the Archives, History, and Genealogy Unit, Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106, (203) 566-3692.

Three reference works on U.S. working-class history have been published recently. *Labor in America: A Historical Bibliography*, Clio Bibliography Series, no. 18 (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio Information Services, 1985) contains 2,865 abstracts of articles written between 1973 and 1983 about U.S. workers and their movements. These abstracts were drawn from ABC-Clio's enormous history database, which covers 2,000 journals published in 90 countries. The bibliography is divided into several chronological sections, which are subdivided by topic. The *Biographical Dictionary of American Labor*, edited by Gary M. Fink (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985) is a revised and expanded edition of the *Biographical Dictionary of American Labor Leaders*, originally published in 1984. It contains over seven hundred short biographies of U.S. labor leaders and appendixes which list leaders by their union, religious, and political affiliation, place of birth, formal education, and political office held. *Something in Common—An IWW Bibliography*, compiled by Dione Miles (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986) is a comprehensive listing of works by and about the Industrial Workers of the World. Its listings include published and unpublished scholarly works; government documents and publications; IWW newspapers and pamphlets; and dramatic, poetic, and fictional accounts of the One Big Union.

The *Autobiography of the Working Class*, vol. 1: 1790-1900, edited by John Burnett, David Vincent, and David Mayall (New York: New York University Press, 1984) is a useful resource for historians of the British working class. It lists over one thousand autobiographies, diaries, and reminiscences of British workers. Annotations include bibliographical information; data on the family life, occupations, and religious, recreational, and political activities of the author; and comments on the character and quality of the autobiography.

11370



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11371