
Critical-Essays of Raya Dunayevskaya in the Battle of Ideas

A guide to 40 Two Worlds columns from the 1960s
and 1970s, which have appeared in the Marxist-
Humanist newspaper, NEWS & LETTERS, and are
available both on microfilm from the Walter
Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit;
and in the Bound Volumes of NEWS & LETTERS, from
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40 CRITICAL-ESSAYS
BY RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA
IN THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

Introductory Note

The past two decades have witnessed a battle of ideas that reveals the national-international, objective-subjective crises that test all revolutionaries. To show, concretely, how this battle of ideas with all tendencies has been met by Marxist-Humanism throughout the critical 1960s and 1970s, we present here a selected group of articles by Raya Dunayevskaya, National Chairwoman of News and Letters Committees. All the articles have appeared in her regular column, "Two Worlds", in News & Letters, the journal of this Marxist-Humanist organization. (1)

They range from critiques of rulers like Mao, whose "How to Handle Contradictions Among the People" shook the world, to non-rulers like the Trotskyist Mandel, who play with ideas; from serious theoreticians like Theodor Adorno to dilettantes playing at revolution, like Régis Debray; from such great contributors to thought as Karel Kosik to such vulgar propagandists as George Novack or Tony Cliff; and from serious Marxist philosophers like Antonio Gramsci to the "outsider looking in", Jean-Paul Sartre.

The columns in this collection reveal the ideological struggles raging from East Europe to Cuba, from Africa to Japan, and within every movement from Black to anti-war to Women's Liberation. They include original articles, essays that were later developed into full pamphlets, and articles that may have appeared earlier elsewhere, whether in a student magazine like the Activist of Oberlin College, a philosophic journal like Telos, or at an academic conference like the Hegel Society of America.

Although these columns have been chosen from the '60s and '70s, because history constantly reverts to patch the continuity of the past to the present and to the future, three earlier dates (1944, 1957, and 1959) and three different places (the U.S., China, and Africa) will disclose both the internationalism of genuine Marxism for our day, and the depth of the roots of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., especially in its Black dimension:

Q "Negro Intellectuals in Dilemma" (NSL, Feb. 1961), a critical review of Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma, reveals that as early as 1944 we projected the revolutionary vanguard nature of Black masses vs. the narrowness of Black intellectuals who swerve as easily as the man on the flying trapeze from instant Marxism to kowtowing to the white Establishment, and from Black nationalism back to instant Communist-statism.

Q Although Marxism and Freedom (2) was already on galleys when Mao gave his speech on "Handling Contradictions" in 1957 -- the author considered it so much the opposite of the new stage of freedom opened by the Hungarian Revolution, and so critical to the political-philosophic battles soon to be raging, that a new footnote (#17) was added to Marxism and Freedom to pinpoint that "...outside of the exploitative class relations themselves; nothing so clearly exposes the new Chinese ruling class as their threadbare philosophy."

Q The birth of the Third World that marked the 1960s was scarcely announced before the genuine philosophic battle of ideas which had appeared in Africa was caught, in 1959, in Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions. At the same time, the underdeveloped American intellectual's "End of Ideology" thesis of Daniel Bell was contrasted to the vision of "African Socialism" (News & Letters, May 1960).

It was the 1970s that saw a veritable hunger for philosophy -- a philosophy of liberation that could give direction to the new world-wide generation of revolutionaries the activist 1960s had produced, and a first recognition that theory could not be picked up "en route". In Philosophy and Revolution⁽³⁾, published in 1973, Raya Dunayevskaya has presented essential studies of the three fundamental "Alternatives" to Marxist-Humanism -- two Marxist revolutionaries, Leon Trotsky and Mao Tse-tung, and the Existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as a full study of the philosophic ambivalence of Lenin.⁽⁴⁾ These chapters are indispensable for any serious revolutionary to study fully.

Finally, the four special classes on Philosophy and Revolution that Raya Dunayevskaya gave on the Wayne State University campus, Detroit, in the Spring of 1979, which were taped and heard nationally (the Syllabus for these classes is appended to this collection), bring us to the threshold of the 1980s, which will see the publication of her latest work: Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution.

-- NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES
August, 1979

Footnotes :

(1) The entire collection of "Two Worlds" columns, as well as the related writings cited, can be read in the RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA COLLECTION, on deposit at the Walter Reuther Library of Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich. 48202.

(2) MARXISM AND FREEDOM, which re-established both the American and the Humanist roots of Marxism, has seen eight editions since it first appeared in 1958, published by Bookman Associates, New York. It is available in Italian, Japanese, French, Spanish. The British edition is by Pluto Press, 1975, London.

(3) PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION was published by Dell, New York in 1973. It is available in a Spanish edition (Siglo Veintiuno) and an Italian edition (Feltrinelli).

(4) This chapter was published both by Telos in this country and by Praxis in Yugoslavia and Aut Aut in Italy.

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Subscriptions to News & Letters, in which Two Worlds appears every issue, are available from NEWS & LETTERS, 2832 East Grand Blvd., Detroit, Mich. 48211, for only \$1 a year. Bound volumes of all the issues cited, and copies of most of the other writings referred to, are also available from News & Letters. For information on the microfilms of THE RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA COLLECTION, write to: Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich. 48202.

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See also "Instant Marxism and the Black Intellectual" (July, 1975).
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- on CLARK KERR and LEWIS FEUER: "The FSM and the Community of Scholars" (Jan., 1965)
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- on STOKELY CARMICHAEL: "'Black Power', Race and Class" (Jan., 1967) -- excerpts from a Convention Report to News and Letters Committees, Sept. 1966.
- on FRANZ SCHURMANN: "Schurmann on Mao's China: A Fantasy" (March 1967) -- a letter sent to the NYRB as critique of their special supplement on China.
- on DONALD CLARK HODGES: "Instant Vulgar Materialism vs. Marxist-Humanism" (Oct., 1967)
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- on LOUIS ALTHUSSER: "Critique of Althusser's Anti-Hegelianism" (Oct., 1969)
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- on DANIEL MASON and JESSICA SMITH: "History Rewrite Degrades Lenin and Black Masses" (Dec., 1970) -- a critical review, written for Telos, of Lenin's Impact on the U.S.
- on JEAN MICHEL PALMIER: "Slandorous Review Nailed by Author's Reply" (Oct., 1971) -- an answer to a review of Marxism and Freedom in Le Monde.

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- on GEORG LUKACS: "Lukacs' Philosophic Dimension" (Feb./March, 1973)
- on MARTIN NICOLAUS: "New Introduction Distorts Marx's 'Grundrisse'" (Nov., 1973)
- on THEODOR ADORNO: "Dialectics of Liberation: Hegel and Adorno" (Dec., 1974)
These are excerpts from a paper delivered to the Hegel Society of America on "Hegel's 'Absolute Idea as New Beginning'", which has been reproduced in full in the N&L pamphlet New Essays. See also "A Second Look at Adorno and Kosik and the Movement from Practice" (March, 1978).
- on AMIRI BARAKA, OJUSU SADAUKI and JOHN OLIVER KILLENS: "Instant Marxism and the Black Intellectual" (July, 1975)
- on TODAY'S WOMEN'S LIBERATION THEORISTS: "Women as Thinkers and as Revolutionaries" (June, 1976) For a more complete essay, see also the Appendix to Working Women For Freedom (N&L 1976).
- on WILLIAM HARRELL: "Workers' Self-Emancipation Crucial to Marx" (Nov., 1976)
This critique of Harrell's essay on "Marx and Critical Thought" appeared together with that article in Paunch, a scholarly journal concerned with the relationship of literature to radical thought. It has also been published in full in New Essays.
- on JOAN ROBINSON and FRED HALLIDAY: "Roots, Errors and Dialectics" (March, 1977)
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- on ROXANNE WITKE: "Chiang Ch'ing, Hua Kuo-feng in Post-Mao China" (July, 1977) -- a critical review of Witke's biography of Comrade Chiang Ch'ing, later reproduced together with an interview with a Chinese refugee in Sexism, Politics and Revolution in Mao's China (N&L '77)
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on ROSA LUXEMBURG: "A Review of 'The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg'" (Aug.-
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As part of becoming participants in the process of working out serious theory,
News & Letters presented (Jan.-Feb., 1979) a draft chapter from Raya Dunayev-
skaya's new work-in-progress -- Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation
Movement, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution -- which includes a fundamental
critique not only of HAL DRAPER, but above all, of FREDERICK ENGELS.

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