

# Dunayevskaya

Continued from page 3

day's women, especially black and working women. Those voices were demanding that the U.S. government and the male Left never again put women's freedom on the back burner.

Many Wayne State students will recognize Dunayevskaya's name from her lecture here in March, 1985 which was sponsored by the WSU Library of Labor and Urban Affairs. Her archives are housed here under the new title of *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of its World Development*. This latest book is her fourth major work and reprints numerous writings from the WSU collection.

In order to meet the challenge for a new relationship between theory and practice, Dunayevskaya gathered together writings which examine women's liberation in the context of the social movements and theory of our age. Upon opening the book to the introduction, one is immediately struck by this author's view of history.

"What distinguishes the newness and uniqueness of women's liberation in our age," she writes, "is the very

nature of our epoch, which signified, at one and the same time, a new stage of production-automation and a new stage of cognition."

Whether it was the U.S. coal miners battling the introduction of automation in 1949-50, the East German workers calling for "Bread and Freedom" in 1953, or the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-56, all signified to Dunayevskaya what she called new "movements from practice which were themselves a form of theory."

Grasping the importance of all these movements helped Dunayevskaya recognize that the women's liberation movement emerging in the 1960s and 1970s was demanding not only equal rights but new human relationships--inside the movement and out.

Yet Dunayevskaya also says of her talk to a Third World Women's Conference in 1983: "What seemed to me to be crucial was the missing link of philosophy in relation to revolution both in theory and in fact. That is what is meant by the dialectics of revolution." Her analysis of the movements of the '50s, '60s and '70s was accompanied by a rigorous digging into the humanism of Marx in order to recreate his philosophy for today.

Thus in Part IV of this book, *The Trail to the 1980s*, you see her examining Marx's ethnological notebooks in light of both the women's liberation movement and Third World revolutions. Marx's writing on anthropology in his last decade analyzed pre-capitalist societies like the Iroquois, Australian aborigines and Irish. He sought out pathways to socialism that could avoid capitalist development. Dunayevskaya shows us something no other Marxist has: in his last decade Marx further developed his very early concept that the man/woman relation in society tests just how human and free society really is.

We find her issuing what she calls a challenge to all post-Marx Marxists because they have "treated Marx's Marxism either as a dogma or as a mere description of his age with no ramifications for ours."

But perhaps the overriding feature of *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* is Dunayevskaya's concern with how today's youth can work out the dialectics of revolution for themselves. The collection includes lectures, journalistic articles and letters which reveal her Marxist-Humanist method of analysis.

We read her correspondence with Peruvian feminists who have just reprinted her writings on women as revolutionary force and reason, and her dialogue with Argentinian Marxist Silvio Frondizi before his murder by Argentinian fascists. We see her excited by the march of Iranian women in 1979, and her warning against the Left blindly following Khomeini because he sounded like the most "anti-imperialist." And she lets us read the letters she wrote in the process of working out her last book, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* the book which concluded with the challenge to post-Marx Marxists.

Dunayevskaya doesn't pose any snap answers to the questions which many women at the march last month were asking. She certainly differs from the self-styled leaders of the 1970s who separated the abortion rights movement from the demands of black and working women. Instead she insists that we can only meet the challenge of today's nuclear age and the ongoing revolts from women, blacks, workers and youth by working out the humanism and method of Marx for our age.

Vol. 8 No. 5

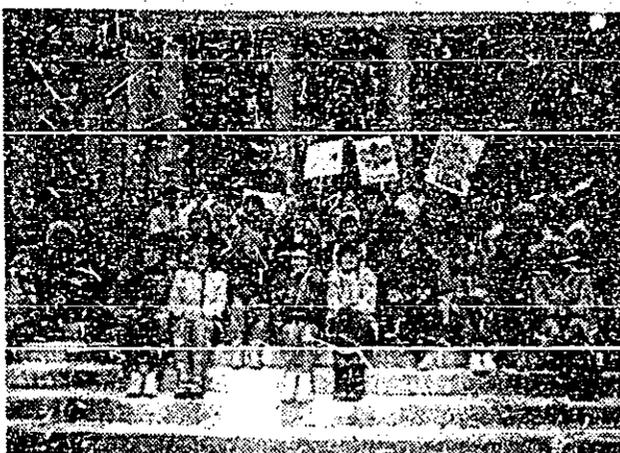
# Women's Studies News

Newsletter of the Michigan State University  
Women's Studies Program



MAR 23 1987

## NOW Rallies For Choice



Lansing NOW members  
march for reproduct-  
tive rights in Washing-  
ton, D.C., March 8.  
Over 150,000 attended  
rally across the country.

by Paula Yensen

Approximately 40 Lansing and Jackson area members of the National Organization for Women (NOW) traveled by bus to Washington, D.C., March 8, to take part in a massive demonstration for a woman's right to choose control over her own body.

More than 150,000 women, men, and

children from across the United States gathered in the nation's capital to serve notice that they will not let the lives of millions of women be threatened by efforts to outlaw abortion and birth control. Dozens of nationally recognized speakers addressed the throngs gathered on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol,

11337

## Raya Dunayevskaya

Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution (1982) and Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future (1985).

by Susan Van Gelder

Both women's liberation and Karl Marx's revolutionary philosophy--and their inseparability--are subjects of the two most recent books by Raya Dunayevskaya. Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's

Both of Dunayevskaya's most recent works present the unique Marxist-Humanist concept of "Woman as Revolutionary Force and Reason."

Philosophy of Revolution (1982) begins with a study of Rosa Luxemburg from the vantage point of the 1980s and of today's women's liberation movement. A critical discussion of the movement is situated against Luxemburg's contributions, and both are measured in terms of a new exposition of the full 40 years of Marx's revolutionary philosophy.

The second book, Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future, published fall of 1985, is "a 35-year collection of essays--historic, philosophic, global"--on women's liberation (and beginning long before there was a movement). Both books were published by Humanities Press International, Atlantic Highlands, NJ, which also issued 1982 editions of Dunayevskaya's 1958 Marxism and Freedom and her 1973 Philosophy and Revolution. All, plus the microfilms of the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection and several pamphlets, are in the MSU Library.

Both of Dunayevskaya's most recent works present the unique Marxist-Humanist

concept of "Woman as Revolutionary Force and Reason." Dunayevskaya is the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the United States, a philosophy of liberation which recreates Marx's Marxism for today. Michigan is the home of its archives, entitled "The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection," on deposit at Wayne State University.

Secretary to Leon Trotsky in the late 1930s during his exile in Mexico, by 1941 Dunayevskaya had developed her differences with him into the theory that once-revolutionary Russia had become a "state-capitalist society." This state capitalist theory later became the groundwork for the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, on which News & Letters Committees and News & Letters newspaper were founded in 1955 in Detroit.

The 28 essays of Women's Liberation

There is a historic panorama of women as thinkers and as revolutionaries from 1647 to today and a dialog with Latina, Chinese, and American feminists and revolutionaries.

and the Dialectics of Revolution are but a tiny portion of the archives collection. Yet they most concretely display the inseparability the author finds between women's liberation and the "dialectics of revolution." Their scope includes women textile workers of the Russia of 1917, whose celebration of International Women's Day initiated the Russian Revolution. It includes Black women in Africa and Ameri-

11338

ca demanding "Freedom Now!" There is a historic panorama of "women as thinkers and as revolutionaries" from 1647 to today and a dialogue with Latina, Chinese, and American feminists and revolutionaries. Furthermore, Marx and Engels are contrasted in terms of the relationship of philosophy and revolution to women's liberation.

In her introduction to Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, Dunayevskaya explains:

"The total disregard of the feminist dimension of Rosa Luxemburg calls for the record to be straightened... Today's Women's Liberation Movement has introduced new and unique aspects... But the very fact that the task remains unfinished points to the need to study further Luxemburg's works both as a feminist and as revolutionary. And that means grappling with Marx's works, not just as "writings" but as a philosophy of revolution. To do anything short of that impedes the development of the Women's Liberation Movement to its full potential..." (p. ix)

In Part I--"Rosa Luxemburg as Theoretician, As Activist, As Internationalist"--Dunayevskaya describes Luxemburg's

"The total disregard of the feminist dimension of Rosa Luxemburg calls for the record to be straightened."

multi-dimensional life and work, climaxing in the Russian 1905 revolution and the German 1919 revolution. Her greatest theoretical work, Accumulation of Capital (1913), however, is shown to deviate substantially from Marx's own philosophy.

Part II--"The Women's Liberation Movement as Revolutionary Force and Reason"--sums up the achievements of the Movement, especially the unrecognized Black dimen-

sion, re-views Luxemburg as a feminist, and concludes with the "unique and unfinished contributions" of today. This leads to Part III--"Karl Marx: from Critic of Hegel to Author of Capital and Theorist of 'Revolution in Permanence'."

Here, Dunayevskaya contends that

"Marx envisioned a totally new man, a totally new woman, a totally new life form (and by no means only for marriage)--in a word, a totally new society."

"Marx envisioned a totally new man, a totally new woman, a totally new life form (and by no means only for marriage)--in a word, a totally new society. That is why it is so relevant to today's Women's Liberation Movement and why we still have so much to learn from Marx's concept of Man/Woman, not only in the abstract 1844 articulation, but in the empiric 1880 formulation when it was integrated with the need for total uprooting of capitalism and creation of a class-less society." (p. 186) She contrasts her view with that of "post-Marx-Marxists" who narrow Marx's work into "a single discipline, whether economics, politics, or philosophy."

Scholars, students, and activists will find much for debate, dialogue, and self-development in Dunayevskaya's books.

Susan Van Gelder, is a member of News & Letters Committees in Detroit and does research in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection at Wayne State University.

oooooo

11339