
Nikiforova, S. A., and Ye. A. Mikheyeva. 2023. "She-Marxist Raya Dunayevskaya : Forgotten Comrade of Left-Wing Intellectuals" [in English]. *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki [Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics]* 7 (4), 84–104.

SOFYA NIKIFOROVA, YEKATERINA MIKHEYEVA*

SHE-MARXIST RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA**

FORGOTTEN COMRADE OF LEFT-WING INTELLECTUALS

Submitted: June 04, 2023. Reviewed: Nov. 22, 2023. Accepted: Nov. 30, 2023.

Abstract: The article presents an attempt to answer the following question: why was Raya Dunayevskaya, a prominent Marxist humanist philosopher, forgotten in terms of the general academic landscape of the analysis of Marxism in relation to the USSR? Dunayevskaya corresponded and worked with influential left-wing intellectuals, such as Leo Trotsky and Erich Fromm, she wrote an extensive number of articles and books regarding Marxist humanism and was an activist herself; however, she was not remembered as either philosopher or activist in the same way her colleagues were. In the article, it will be shown that Dunayevskaya's background as an Eastern European woman who criticized the USSR, as well as the peculiarity of the topic she chose to write about — Marxist humanism — prevented her from becoming a well-known left-wing philosopher, despite deserving this status. This is going to be demonstrated via outlining her path, accounting for her intellectual interactions with left-wing activists and philosophers; analyzing her philosophical ideas regarding Marxist humanism; and tracing her influence on contemporary post-colonial and feminist research. In doing so, Dunayevskaya's legacy as a Marxist humanist philosopher might be restored and reexamined, highlighting women's influence over the academic landscape of the twentieth century.

Keywords: Marxism, Humanism, Dunayevskaya, Capitalism, Feminism, Althusser, Trotsky, Lenin.

DOI: 10.17323/2587-8719-2023-4-84-104.

In 1928 she began to question the Communist Party's policies and actions after the expulsion of Trotsky. When she suggested that her comrades hear Trotsky's response to his expulsion, she was literally thrown down a flight of stairs and kicked out of the Young Workers League (Dunayevskaya, Dmitryev, 2017: 2).

INTRODUCTION

What is known about the pioneer of Marxist Humanism in the United States and Althusser's passionate opponent? Raya Dunayevskaya (née

*Sofya Nikiforova, PhD Student at the University of Lincoln (Lincoln, UK), sofinik1998@yandex.ru, ORCID: 0000-0001-5348-5425; Yekaterina Mikheyeva, MA in Philosophy, emikheeva@icrc.org.

**© Sofya Nikiforova, Yekaterina Mikheyeva. © Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics.

Spiegel), a Lithuanian-Jewish descendant, was born in 1910 in the Russian Empire, but spent most of her life in the USA. Dunayevskaya's path as an academic and a revolutionary is full of turns and disappointments, but this is exactly what brings to light her tireless enthusiasm and remarkable dedication to figuring out the nature of the authentic Marxist approach and the characteristics of the genuine Marxist follower. The researchers of Dunayevskaya's legacy distinguish 5 waves of her oeuvre and activism in their work *Raya Dunayevskaya's Intersectional Marxism: Race, Class, Gender, and the Dialectics of Liberation*. The first wave is tied to her involvement with Trotskyism and the establishment of the Johnson-Forest tendency, the second wave is connected to the publication of the monograph *Marxism and Freedom*, which led to an intellectual recognition of Dunayevskaya, the third wave, tied to the publication of *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*, put her in the range of the leading Marxist thinkers, however the timing was not perfect.

Her second monograph was published at the same time as Theodor Adorno and Gyorgy Lukacz were translated to English, and this resulted in her being overshadowed by these contributions (Anderson, Durkin & Brown, eds., 2021: 127). Success and wide recognition did not reach her even after the fourth wave, when she published the work *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, (1982) which was a highly original work as it was "the first widely disseminated analysis of gender in Marx's late Ethnological Notebooks, and a hard-hitting discussion of feminism, race, and revolution...". She was again extremely unlucky, as the shift from Marxism to post structuralism had already begun and this, expectedly, affected the amount of attention she received. The last wave is a recent one — starting in 2010 — which is tied to the fact that the problems of gender, race and class, which were certainly central for Dunayevskaya, have gained popularity, and her contribution to the field makes her a valuable and relevant thinker nowadays.

On a deeper level, Dunayevskaya's ideas have never garnered wide recognition for several reasons. Firstly, her and her comrades' ideas were heavily criticized both within and outside the Marxist movement. To illustrate this, one can refer to the fact that many were even calling the Marxist humanist movement "para-Marxism" (Jay, 1972). From one point, it is exactly her background as an *Eastern European* woman that helped her to produce such detailed accounts of Lenin and Marx and to develop her theory of state capitalism based on the example of Russia. She indeed had a unique perspective owing to the fact that she spoke Russian, was able to work

closely with Trotsky and exchange ideas with the Russian-speaking Marxist community. In the end, there were two dominant Marxist movements—“orthodox” Marxism, which was dominant in USSR, and Western Marxism.

However, to be accepted within orthodox Marxism one has to believe that alienated labor has to end, and that, in one form or another, will lead to communism. Within nearly all of Dunayevskaya’s works this seems to be the red line: she does not believe in the sustainability of this scenario. And it is not only the fact she knew what USSR was like (like many orthodox Marxists), but also the fact that she could compare it to the actual situation and conditions of a capitalist state—the United States.

At first, she joined the American Communist youth organization, but she left shortly after joining due to her passionate disagreement with Trotsky’s exile from USSR. She went to Mexico in order to become his Russian language secretary in 1937, and worked closely with him until 1938. However, she writes that her real development began after she left the Trotskyists: she did not agree with Trotsky’s recognition of the USSR as a workers’ state after the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. It would hugely influence her views, and later, in her work *The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a Capitalist Society* (1941), she would also attack Stalin’s approach, which was defended by Trotsky. For her, Stalin had nothing to do with the ideals of Marxism:

The Red Army march on Poland, the bloody conquest of part of Finland and the peaceful conquest of the Baltic states proved that the Stalinized Red Army had no more connection with the spirit, purpose and content of October than the Stalinist state did, whose armed might it is. What an abhorrent relapse from the conquests of October are the Stalinist conquests!

As this is the main reason orthodox Marxists would not be the audience for Dunayevskaya’s popularity, but what about Western Marxists?

It is not rare for Western Marxists to be placed within the Marxist humanism cohort (Jay, 1972: 290). In the end, they usually rejected the economic aspect of Marx’s thought. However, there is a strong disagreement—as Marcuse skeptically wrote in 1965, the solution is not to make socialism more humanistic by adding humanistic values to it (Marcuse, 1965: 2). A very important role for the final disruption of Western Marxism and Marxist humanism was played by their relation to psychoanalysis. Fromm was the one to draw a very distinctive line between the two movements in *The Application of Humanist Psychoanalysis to Marx’s Theory*. On the one hand, he fully agreed with Dunayevskaya that the Marxism of totalitarian states is state capitalism and that it was not beneficial for Marxism as

a whole to be associated with this particular movement, as it always led to comparisons with the USSR or China. However, the Marxist humanism followers were worrying him in another way. He felt there was big potential in making Marxism about the “psychological nature of a man,” but what happened was that Marxism became filled with “empty phrases stating that ‘good is that which serves the revolution’” (the worker’s state, historical evolution, etc.) (Marcuse, 1965: 2).

Whilst Marxist humanism tried to focus on the such questions as life purpose and man’s nature, it had a big flaw: trying to answer these questions through a paradigm in which (in Fromm’s opinion) the main goal was to liberate man from economic concerns, in order to bring him to his natural state. Marxist humanism either unconvincingly stirred up the principles of basic morals with economic criticism of Marxist theory, or became a model which tried to replace the psychoanalytical frame —

the societal character is dictated by the ideology, that tends to be reinforced, but what a Marxist humanist does not see is that there is a more nuanced situation, as the social character is the intermediary between the socioeconomic structure and the ideas and ideals prevalent in a society (ibid.: 5).

To summarize, it felt like Dunayevskaya did not have the chance to actually be *seen*. She was foreign to any context because of her background, which, in return, gave her a unique perspective — as a Russian speaker and as a woman. Moreover, she was either too late with some of her works, overshadowed by the western Marxists’ wave of popularity, or too early, when talking about her stances on gender, feminism and race. It seems only fair to pay tribute to Dunayevskaya’s work with the luxury of the retrospective analysis, and to consider the factors that caused her to be remembered and popular at least within undeservedly small Marxist circles.

RAYA AS A. F. FOREST, THE FOUNDER OF JOHNSON-FOREST TENDENCY

Stalin’s critique brought Dumayevskaya into contact with C. L. R. James, a West Indian-born cultural historian and passionate leftist activist, whom Edward Said would define as an “anti-Stalinist dialectician”. They worked under pseudonyms J. R. Johnson and Freddie Forest respectively, criticizing and arguing several aspects of Marxism, and were later joined by Grace Lee Boggs’s. Their ideas evolving around the Trotskyists, however they have tried to come up with their own vision of the way the USSR should have been functioning. All of them played an important role in spreading Marxist ideas and making them a question of public debate: it was possible as Raya

Dunayevskaya was focused on translating the necessary texts from Lenin, Trotsky and other Russian-speaking thinkers, Grace Lee Boggs was focused on the German texts and C.L.R James had the “world-view and literary skills” (James et al., 1969: 8).

Dunayevskaya and C. L. R James had a lot in common, among their main shared experience was obviously the fact that they both saw USSR in a special condition, when it was neither a workers’ state (Trotsky’s position), nor bureaucratic-collectivist (the way it was perceived from Third Camp’s perspective): USSR was seen as “state capitalist.” Raya’s contemporaries tried to analyze Marxism from the economic point of view, but what they dismissed was the fact that the USSR’s economy was corrupted by the capitalist approach. Even though Raya herself did not seem to think that emphasizing the role of economics was crucial for a Marxist, she addressed the blind spots of other researchers. She wrote in *An Analysis of Russian Economy*:

But so extravagant has been the publicity which the proponents of the Soviet have given these data that the view is widely held that the allegedly phenomenal rate of industrial growth in Russia is the criterion of a unique form of economy.

She reminded others that this phenomenal rate was orchestrated by many factors, such as the perseverance of the ruble’s rate in the closed economy and, most importantly, she pointed out that the Soviet government was obviously interested in proving that their economic system was performing better than others which, expectedly, led to playing with numbers and statistics.

Two main concepts of C.L.R James’ ideas have derived from this close collaboration with Raya Dunayevskaya: first, from the perspective of the Johnson-Forest tendency and second, from the point of view of Marxist humanism which was developed by her. C. L. R James has unfortunately (and expectedly) shared Raya’s fate within the Marxist movement as his position on the inevitability of socialism was perceived at least unpopular or — how some researchers viewed it — as “weakness, aberration or even embarrassment” (Nissim-Sabat, 2001: 74). James also attacked those who got lost in trying to figure out the precise course of the future society, alluding to Marx’s position, who warned that one should not try to hold on to the dogmatic way of how that society would look like, but should learn from the mistakes and experience of the past (ibid.: 75). This is the misuse of Marx’s legacy: reshaping his ideas into a theoretical platform for sociology and economics leads to dialectical mistakes. Even though Dunayevskaya and James did agree on many aspects, there was still a slight distinction between

the two thinkers, as James had developed a different approach to Hegel. James believed that the “first negation would be the negation of negation” (Nissim-Sabat, 2001: 90): when it happens, this is the end of history.

The inevitability of socialism was undoubted by Dunayevskaya, yet in her understanding of Hegel the negation would make no sense if it did not lead to a new beginning. When we overthrow capitalism, we should stay focused on creating something that would not just substitute the previous societal state, we need to think what we will replace it with and what is the most important for us—both in terms of Marxism and human relations in general. Future is something that we should take into consideration—and freedom is what should be at the very heart of our project.

The thorough analyses she carried out of revolutions from all over the world led to the observation that the first negation should not be aimed at negating capitalism, as it creates a trap: state-capitalism (ibid.: 91).

RAYA AND THE CRITIQUE OF USSR:
SOVIET COMMUNISM AS STATE CAPITALISM

Leaders are not classless creatures floating between heaven and earth. They are very much earth men. When they lose close connection with the working class, they begin to represent the only other fundamental class in society—the capitalist class.

R. Dunayevskaya
“The Trade Union Debate and Lenin’s Will”

For Dunayevskaya, Lenin’s words about leadership were “prophetic,” as he believed that in a case when a leader of the state shows class differences, the situation is headed in one only direction; state capitalism is unavoidable. It all ended with Lenin too; she gives him credit that he was the last leader whose intention was to make sure that the masses were encouraged to solve production problems, rather than having them solved for them with the help of the state. She attacks Trotsky, who was one of the closest colleagues of Lenin at the time, who writes that “the role of factory committees remains important, of course, but in the sphere of the management of industry it has no longer a leading but an auxiliary position.” State capitalism, Trotsky contended, did not exist in Russia since the ownership of the means of production by the state occurred in history by the proletariat with the method of social revolution and not by the capitalist with the method of state trustification.

Dunayevskaya highlights that it was a well-weighted and intentional thought, Trotsky betraying Lenin's ideas just like anyone else because they are "a rhetorical addition to the great economic theories." She had no choice not to be critical about it, as she was an adept of Marxist humanism. What would be left of Marxism if humanism was left out? The reduction of Marxist ideas to an economic theory is what a true Marxist cannot afford. In Trotsky's eyes, Lenin's dedication to the theoretical grounds was just a great way to produce propaganda which did not address the "real problems." It was important for Raya to show that state capitalism corrupted not only the Russian Communist Party, but also the Third International. So, was the aim of the Revolution achieved at all? Dunayevskaya thinks that it was a failure.

Thinking about socio-economic forces operating in Stalinist and post-Stalinist USSR, Dunayevskaya revealed the state capitalism of the regime in the country. Her ideas in relation to capitalism and communism were closely tied with her Marxist humanist lens: she saw communism's aim in ameliorating the lives of the people, and considered Marx's writings to be so-called guidance to follow in fulfilling this goal. According to her, the USSR did not pursue this aim, and therefore it transformed into state capitalism. In what ways does the USSR mimic capitalist relationships? The analysis that is conveyed by her is not very complex, but the simplicity of her arguments seems to be a beneficial way to show how the fact of all the deeply rooted capitalist practices implemented in the worker-state relationship are blindly ignored. First of all, Dunayevskaya attacks one of the most important parts of a Soviet worker's life—socialist working norms. If the state's strategy of taking care of the workers is true, what does Stakhanovism have to do with it, if its main purpose is to make people work more for the same amount of money? Second, Dunayevskaya highlights the huge wage gap between a simple worker's state salary and the director of the plant: it is as disproportionate as it would be in any capitalist state. Third, she asks whether one becomes more liberated by the ability to gain free education and to obtain a guaranteed job if he gets captured in this structure? Consequently, later Raya considered uprisings and upheavals in GDR and Hungary as attempts to come back to the value foundations and ideas of Marx's humanism.

Dunayevskaya stopped her activist and academic partnership with Trotsky due to the fact that he continued to insist on the USSR being a workers' state even after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Raya, in turn, claimed that Soviet communism took the shape of state capitalism, and therefore Soviet workers did not have any responsibility for defending the USSR in the war,

especially after the alleged alliance with the Nazi forces. State capitalism, importantly, is an economic system in which means of production are nationalized as state enterprises, and capitalism merges with state control. The government, therefore, becomes a large oppressive corporation, which is not aimed at benefiting the workers. Stalin-era USSR is the result of the unsuccessful negation: when there is no proper substitute for capitalism, the overthrowing of the latter becomes aimless.

Her earlier works provide an answer to how the USSR situation became possible and contain some points that other thinkers were unable to notice. For Dunayevskaya, Marx did something that Hegel was too theoretical to achieve: the latter's thought was not brave enough to address the actual social existence the way it was done by Marx.

Marx's precise analysis of the actual labor process under capitalism is more concrete, alive, shattering — and, of course, revolutionary — than any stage of alienation in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* (Dunayevskaya, 1965: 65).

At the same time, Lenin is a figure who takes Hegel's legacy to an extreme when announcing that everything begins with putting theory into practice (Dunayevskaya, 1967). Even C. L. R. James seems lost somewhere in between, thinking that revolution might be the answer to capitalism-related problems, but not taking the extra step in conceptualizing what will take its place. The Soviet ideology helped to hide the exploitation of workers, and when the other thinkers were trying to work on the problems of private and nationalized capital ownership, Raya was there to recall the most important question: that of freedom. Communism was yet another form of "opium of the people," that provided another possibility to hide the fact of exploitation. And one of the profound proofs of it are "Marxists" who claim that the Marxist terms (referring to exploitation) have to be applicable only in the case of describing capitalist relations. This is where Raya gets her inspiration for the development of Marxist humanism ideas. The main focus of a true Marxist is, as mentioned before, freedom. The oversimplified idea of giving the freedom to individuals by property abolition is a distraction.

RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA INTERPRETING MARX: ALTHUSSER'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL BREAK OR THEORETICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL TOTALITY?

A plethora of Marxist philosophers considered Marx's thought as having multiple ideological and conceptual frameworks, meaning that his writings differed significantly in terms of inner purpose and outlined ideas. Generally, numerous scholars interpreted Marx's works as having two periods, one with

a clear and coherent idealistic element, another concentrated more on materialism rather than on the moral side of economic theory. For instance, Louis Althusser's central claim in relation to Marxism was the following: rather than attempting to understand Marx's writings as a coherent and homogeneous body of works which contain cognate ideas, it is more appropriate to consider his thought as divided into two periods by an epistemological break.

This idea of epistemological break was taken by Althusser from the works of Bachelard (Balibar, 1978: 208). For him,

this leap involves a radical break with the whole pattern and frame of reference of the prescientific (ideological) notions, and the construction of a new pattern (problematic) (Althusser et al., Brewster & Fernbach, 1996: 403).

Bachelard's theorizing was rooted in the idea of epistemological nonlinearity, with multiple epistemological acts occurring within any philosophical endeavor. This idea is closely related to Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions, with one scientific paradigm substituting the other. This abrupt, nonlinear epistemological movement was a source of genuine progress as opposed to "myths of empiricism about the progressive continuity of knowledge" (Balibar, 1978: 208).

Althusser developed these epistemological ideas of Bachelard and Kuhn, applying them to the study of Marx in an attempt to recover Marxist thinking and to challenge different modes of interpretation — historicist, economist, or idealist. His main point was in Marx's alleged rejection of Hegel and Feuerbach (Althusser et al., Brewster & Fernbach, 1996: 403). He suggested that in *The German Ideology* (1845) Marx radically transformed his theoretical framework and adopted an alternative problematic: while Marx's early works were more ideological and rooted in the philosophical anthropology of Hegel and in humanist philosophy, his later writings were more scientific and concerned with the establishment of historical and dialectical materialism as coherent theories. This distinction between two periods seemed essential to Althusser; he considered the epistemological break to be a pillar of Marx's philosophy. According to Althusser, only after the elimination of humanist ideology was Marx able to produce a theory of social change, which was revolutionary literally and metaphorically.

Despite the fact that Hegelian philosophy was to a large extent rooted in history, Althusser was convinced that Marx managed to fully grasp the powers of history in constructing a science of philosophy and a new epistemology only after the break, when he abandoned humanist and historicist thinking closely related to Hegelianism. The theory of structure and superstructure,

upon which Marx's political economy was built, was an expression of Marx's historical materialism. This materialism was scientific, and had a coherent epistemology and an unprecedented explanatory power.

There was always a debate regarding the struggle between the idealism and materialism of Marx's works, and Althusser resolves this issue by claiming that Marx's writings were indeed divided by an epistemological break which occurred when he eliminated the humanist element of his theorizing. Therefore, there was no contradiction in Marxist thought; the philosopher simply changed the epistemological paradigm over time. The break between Marx's works is embodied by the concept of "modes of production" which separated all his works from philosophy of history and set his earlier works apart from later ones. This concept

is absolutely incompatible with the principles of idealism, whether dogmatic or empiricist, and it progressively revolutionises the whole problematic of society and history (Althusser et al., Brewster & Fernbach, 1996: 267).

Consequently, the element of ethics and moral underpinnings of political ideology and/or theory is absent from late Marx works, and this is the viewpoint which was refuted by Raya Dunayevskaya.

Dunayevskaya was writing during approximately the same period as Althusser. As a Marxist who believed in Marx's continuous humanist appeal, she produced a number of works which stood in opposition to Althusser and other Marxists who followed the idea of epistemological break. She defended Marx's earlier works and traced the continuity of his thought which, according to her, was evident in the profound humanism of all his writings. Lilia D. Monzó stated:

Marxist-Humanism, as developed by Raya Dunayevskaya, considers the totality of Marx's works, recognizing that his early work in the "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" was profoundly humanist and led to and embeds his later works, including "Capital" (Monzó, 2019).

Therefore, Dunayevskaya thought that the element of ideology and ethics never left Marxist works, continuing to be his primary concern whilst he developed historical and dialectical materialism. This opinion of hers, along with her other ideas, laid the foundation of Marxist Humanism.

Dunayevskaya's Marxist Humanism was built upon a belief that Marx's works cannot and should not be considered an ideology-free attempt to criticize capitalism from an economic standpoint. Instead, she was convinced that Marx aimed at creating New Humanism, the agenda of which was the

following: to create a philosophy of revolution which would lead to a non-alienated society, a morally incorrupt and thriving one. Therefore, it is simply impossible to separate Marx's works from humanism. Such a society could be created under the conditions of elimination of the distinction between the "thinkers" and the "doers;" (Dunayevskaya, 1964: 275). For this, a new labor is necessary, which would not separate thinking from doing. The new worker represented "the unity of theory and practice;" as Dunayevskaya puts it, "Marx was right when he said the workers were ... inheritors of Hegelian philosophy" (ibid.: 276). A crucial element of her thinking was automation of labor, which could contribute to the establishment of a new kind of labor—one that did not alienate the worker, but instead developed his or her "natural and acquired talents" (ibid.).

According to Dunayevskaya's interpretation of Marx, he was, from the beginning and to the end of his writing, concerned with the liberation and freedom of humanity, and this humanistic element was always present in his works. She calls him a profound *revolutionary* many times throughout her writings, highlighting that in both his earlier works and in "Capital" Marx was preoccupied with the necessity to find a solution for real life problems of oppressed people. He found this solution in the principle of "the negation of the negation," meaning "the revolutionary overcoming of real contradictions, that is to say, opposing class forces" (ibid.: 57). The abolition of private property was a prerequisite for Marx's free society, and the construction of such a society was the main expression of his humanism, according to Dunayevskaya.

The proponents of the viewpoint that Marx's earlier and later works were divided by an epistemological break claimed that Marx's writings were profoundly idealistic in the beginning, while later he gave up idealist thinking in favor of materialism, and the humanist element of his thought was lost along the same lines. However, Dunayevskaya plausibly demonstrated that this was not the case. In her interpretation, Marx simply was never an idealist. He did apply Hegelian language when he was elaborating on the topic of human's natural and acquired talents as well as when he criticized the division between "thought and being" (ibid.: 58); however, he disagreed with Hegel regarding the realization of theoretical deliberations.

Marx was not convinced that real problems could be resolved via philosophical thinking. Although Hegel did develop the idea of practice as being important, it was not enough for Marx; he was a proponent of a much more reactionary and proactive treatment of real life problems that humanity faced. According to Dunayevskaya, he considered revolutionary activity

a requirement of both liberation of society and resolution of philosophical problems. Marx could not be an idealist since he did not believe that philosophical ideas could solve the issues of reality, which makes him not only a materialist, but also a revolutionary humanist, since he was concerned with the emancipation of people and the creation of a communist humanist society.

Alongside her disagreement with Althusser, Dunayevskaya also debated with Herbert Marcuse: in the letters the two exchanged, the former argued in favor of practice being an important element of theory both for Hegel and Marx. She defended the idea of Marx being a revolutionary and reactionary philosopher, while Marcuse followed Heideggerian logic in thinking about 'concrete philosophy' of Marxism instead of analyzing the practical aspect of it (Marcuse, 2005: 49). A German, Marcuse studied in Berlin and Freiburg, later becoming a prominent member of the Frankfurt School; Althusser was born in France and spent his life studying and working at the *École normale supérieure*. Raya Dunayevskaya, instead, was a female political emigrant who had to participate in different niche left-wing activist movements to become noticed in the academia. Obviously, she could not enjoy the same academic success both Marcuse or Althusser experienced, being neither immigrants, nor women. By disagreeing with such prominent philosophical figures as Marcuse and Althusser who influenced the academia of the mid-twentieth century, Dunayevskaya alienated herself from popular spotlight, being a niche critical theorist rather than a well-known philosopher. She did not follow the scientific and discursive paradigms of the time she was writing in, being instead constantly critical and questioning the existing philosophical narratives regarding both Marxism and Hegelianism. Her background thus impacted her legacy and her popularity; however, she still managed to lay the foundation of American Marxist Humanism by writing about Marx's theoretical totality and by challenging such philosophers as Marcuse and Althusser.

THE NOVELTY OF DUNAYEVSKAYA'S APPROACH
TO READING LENIN'S HEGEL NOTEBOOKS

Not only did Dunayevskaya defend Marx (as being consistent in terms of his humanism) and lay the foundation of the Marxist Humanist theoretical branch; she was also extremely influential in terms of relaunching the discussion of Lenin's Hegel Notebooks. She was among those Marxists of 1950-60s (Althusser, Lefebvre, Garaudy, Colletti, Merleau-Ponty) who

rediscovered the interest in Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* and tried to trace the influence of Aristotle, Feuerbach, Hegel, Marx and Deborin on Lenin.

Merleau-Ponty famously criticized Lenin and his account of Hegel in *Adventures of the Dialectic* (1955) and was himself subject to severe criticism by the members of the Communist Party, namely Lefebvre and Garaudy. They claimed that Lenin's works were "real Marxism" and the "last word on dialectical materialism" (Anderson, 1995: 211). Garaudy wrote an article containing a discussion of Lenin's Hegel Notebooks, in which he placed Hegel and Lenin in an alleged strict philosophical opposition, claiming that Hegel's reliance on theory and Lenin's preoccupation with practice made them entirely incompatible (Garaudy, 1956: 131). However, he obviously did not mention that "the concept of practice appears directly in Hegel's text" (Anderson, 1995: 212). He was eager to highlight the importance of such revolutionary proactive people as Lenin, Mao or Stalin, and he ignored the fact that although Hegel was indeed an idealist, he still acknowledged the importance of certain real-life action.

Lefebvre, in turn, eventually admitted that Hegel's idealism somehow came to resemble materialism, and therefore was essential for understanding both Marx and Lenin (Lefebvre, 1939). According to Anderson,

Lefebvre ends his discussion of Lenin and Hegel by coming very close to describing the Marxist dialectic as the unity of idealism and materialism (Anderson, 1995: 215).

This is a highly important statement in relation to the question of the (dis)continuity of Marx's ideas. The advocates of epistemological break as outlined by Althusser looked for different inconsistencies in Marx's works in order to divide them into two periods, reflected in a certain paradigm shift of his theorizing. However, Lefebvre was in this regard more closely related to Raya Dunayevskaya who, in contrast, defended the continuity and coherence of Marx's thought. The unity of idealism and materialism was also something she drew attention to: writing that Marx applied idealistic Hegelian language whilst dealing with the problems of the liberation of humanity; however, he placed more emphasis on practice. Here, a close and interdependent relationship between idealism and materialism is evident: according to Dunayevskaya, Marxism comprised both, and therefore was a humanist theory in its essence.

While highlighting continuity in Marx, Lefebvre simultaneously pointed to epistemological break in Lenin and his relationship to Hegelian dialectics: there was

a great difference in tone and content between the *Cahiers sur la dialectique* and *Materialisme et Empirio Criticisme*. Lenin's thought becomes supple, alive [...] in a word, dialectical. Lenin did not truly understand the dialectic until 1914, after the collapse of the International (Lefebvre, 1939: 85).

By writing this, Lefebvre highlighted the profound importance that Hegelian dialectics had on Lenin; this was an important contribution to the general discussion. However, the true groundbreaker was none other than Raya Dunayevskaya.

Dunayevskaya was the first scholar to discuss Lenin's Hegel Notebooks extensively and in detail; moreover, she published the first translation of this work into English. The preface to "Marxism and Freedom" was written by Marcuse who praised Dunayevskaya for rediscovering "unity of Marxian theory at its very foundation: in the humanistic philosophy" (Dunayevskaya, 1964: 8). However, Marcuse disagreed with Dunayevskaya's reading of Lenin, which is of importance for this particular part of the article. Dunayevskaya's opinion on Lenin and his reliance on Hegel coincided with Lefebvre's: she also noticed an epistemological break in Lenin's thought, caused by his turn to Hegelian dialectics. However, she engaged in this discussion in a far deeper and more detailed way than Lefebvre, making Dunayevskaya a pioneer in tracing Hegel's idealism in Lenin in a philosophical elaboration. However, her tremendous impact was once again forgotten for some time, before being rediscovered by other New Left intellectuals.

According to Dunayevskaya, Lenin initially was critical of Hegelian idealism, and his single interpretation of it was materialist. However, after he rediscovered and reread Hegel, Lenin started to endorse the idea of "intelligent idealism" (*ibid.*: 169). Anderson writes:

For Dunayevskaya, Lenin's concepts of monopoly, imperialism, and the aristocracy of labour form a dialectical whole, a whole that Lenin conceptualised in strict relationship to his study of Hegel's *Science of Logic* (Anderson, 1995: 219).

Therefore, even Lenin's materialist understandings of political economy were considerably affected by Hegelian idealism, and Dunayevskaya was the first to highlight it in detail. Although in the United States Dunayevskaya's book did not receive significant attention due to a considerable lack of interest of fellow Marxists in Lenin at the time, in the United Kingdom it opened an important discussion of the degree of Hegel's influence on Lenin.

Dunayevskaya traced the influence of Hegel's idealism in both Marx and Lenin, laying the foundation for Marxist Humanism. However, such

a viewpoint was difficult to sustain, because despite the fact that the discussion of Hegel's influence on Lenin was widespread, a plethora of scholars were critical of Dunayevskaya's opinions. For example, Althusser asserted that like it was necessary to separate Marx and idealism, it was similarly necessary to treat Lenin separately from Hegelian dialectics. According to Althusser, for Lenin philosophy was a contiguous struggle between idealism and materialism, therefore, there was no place for Hegelian dialectics in Lenin's revolutionary theory and practice (Althusser, Brewster, 2001). However, despite this viewpoint being quite popular, Dunayevskaya retained her position and continued to examine Lenin's writings and his attitude towards Hegel. Here, once again it is evident that Dunayevskaya was constantly in opposition to the dominant Marxist narratives and philosophers, which contributed to her being relatively *forgotten*.

In her next book, *Philosophy and Revolution*, Dunayevskaya continued to highlight Hegelian influence on Lenin, writing that Lenin experienced "the shock of recognition that the Hegelian dialectic was revolutionary" (Dunayevskaya, 2003: 97) and ever since appropriated idealistic discourse for his revolutionary endeavors. She criticized Lenin for never making Hegel's Notebook public, which, according to her, was a sign of "philosophic ambivalence" (Anderson, 1995: 241). However, she still managed to defend idealism and dialectics against materialist criticisms and to emphasize the idea of the unity of idealism and materialism, which was taken by Lenin from Hegel. Nevertheless, this philosophic ambivalence bothered her, and in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* she continued to attack Lenin for keeping *Philosophical Notebooks* "to himself". According to her, this failure to make Hegel's Notebooks public was the reason why generations of Marxists after Marx himself had fallen into "the depth of economist mire," making materialism and economics overshadow idealism and philosophy.

Her criticism of Lenin was based on the assumption that his public reliance on practice rather than theory confused and perplexed other Marxists, making revolutionary activity not humanist and not idealist. Therefore, she continued to endorse the viewpoint that Lenin was profoundly influenced by Hegel, simultaneously regretting that this influence was not made public for others to see the importance of dialectics and idealism. Furthermore, Dunayevskaya later accused Lenin of relying too much on the idea of the unity of idealism and materialism, at the same time privileging practice over philosophy, which was a mistake.

Dunayevskaya's extensive writing of forty years on Lenin and Hegel "constitutes the most serious body of work to date on these notebooks" (Anderson, 1995: 248). She was an indispensable participant of the debates regarding the influence of Hegel on Lenin, with Lefebvre and Fetscher occupying her side, while Althusser and Colletti rejecting Hegelian impact over Lenin. She was the only one who used Lenin's Hegel Notebooks as her main source for discussion of Lenin's theory and revolutionary practice, and she was the first person to translate this work into English. Therefore, despite being relatively overshadowed by fellow Marxists during her lifetime, Dunayevskaya began to gain a deserved reputation of a specialist in Lenin's and Marx's thought due to reappreciation coming from the New Left scholars.

DUNAYEVSKAYA'S RELEVANCE

FOR CONTEMPORARY ACTIVIST AND PHILOSOPHIC AGENDAS: INTERSECTIONALITY, DECOLONIZATION, RACE, AND FEMINISM

The Marxist Humanism of Dunayevskaya was rooted in her interpretation of Marx as being aimed at building a non-alienated society, classless and anti-imperialist. According to Dunayevskaya, such a society could only be possible if class, gender and race discrimination were eliminated. Strong belief in idealistic agendas, namely in the idea of constructing a free and equal society based on solidarity and social responsibility made Dunayevskaya exceptionally relevant for contemporary activism and left-wing philosophy. Marxist Humanism is currently generally associated with decolonial approaches to studying and eliminating discrimination; both branches of thought value the socialist agenda of Marxism.

To start with, class consciousness or any other group consciousness is necessary for the liberation of people who identify themselves as belonging to this class, race, gender, or sex. Obviously, discrimination and exploitation of particular social groups prevent them from developing group consciousness. However, any movement of self-determination, even an unsuccessful or small one, not to mention widespread and winning ones, is worthy of attention, and Marx also thought the same way (Anderson, 2020). To take a case in point, he condemned American slavery, accusing Confederates of collecting capital and profiting from it via exploiting black people. According to Marx, slavery and racism were used by people with power and resources to exploit and divide the working class and to prevent it from uniting and resisting oppression. Obviously, from a Marxist *and* decolonial standpoint, it is necessary to assist oppressed groups in developing their shared identity (consciousness) and in opposing their colonizers.

Lilia D. Monzó applied Dunayevskaya's Marxist Humanist framework to the discussion of the role of women of color in revolutionary activity and their potential for liberation. Monzó argued that Dunayevskaya's Marxist Humanism is a philosophy "for and of the oppressed and thus also for and of Women of Color" (Monzó, 2019). Importantly, Marx himself was concerned with women's liberation; for him, a patriarchal family embodied the capitalist world system. In families, there were the oppressors—men, and the oppressed—women. Accordingly, for Marx it was possible to measure the societal humanist progress of the world's population by examining the extent to which the relationship between men and women had started to resemble the relationship between human and human rather than oppressor and oppressed. Marx wrote:

The direct, natural, necessary relationship of human being [Mensch] to human being is the *relationship of man [Mann] to woman [Weib]*. [...] Therefore, on the basis of this relationship, we can judge the whole stage of development of the human being (Marx, Plaut & Anderson, 1999: 6).

By bringing together Marx's interest in women's emancipation and Dunayevskaya's "assertion of the important role to be played by the black masses in contemporary social movements," Monzó highlighted the importance of women of color and indigenous women in revolutionary dynamics (Monzó, 2019). Dunayevskaya indeed placed an emphasis on the potential of the Black liberation movement. She considered that it could become a driving force behind world revolution and a total change of paradigm of historical development. She also considered women the "force and reason" of the class struggle (Anderson, Durkin & Brown, eds., 2021: 104). Therefore, her Marxist Humanist theory was highly relevant for decolonial and Black feminist studies.

For Dunayevskaya, the achievements of the Second Wave Feminist movement were not nearly enough:

today we must face those degrading TV commercials that try to sell us the idea that the hard-fought battle for equality has been met by our right to wear mini-skirts (at least until fashion dictators tell us otherwise) and having "our own" brand of cigarettes! (Dunayevskaya, 1996: 22).

Such changes in women's lives were seen by Dunayevskaya as expressions of "commodified forms of femininity" which were aimed at strengthening the value of the commodity itself, but not of the individuals who consumed it—women (Anderson, Durkin & Brown, eds., 2021: 107). Dunayevskaya saw

the real emancipation and liberation of women not in capitalist and fetishist embodiments of womanhood, but in a revolutionary struggle. She believed that women were capable of developing such a strong joint consciousness that they could become a driving force behind world revolution.

Dunayevskaya's analysis comprised the topics of race, sex, class, ethnicity, colonialism and gender, making her a truly intersectional philosopher. Precisely because her Marxist Humanism was built upon widespread equality, Dunayevskaya's thinking could be considered as part of the tradition of intersectionality — she was concerned with the elimination of *all* kinds of oppression and placed an emphasis on the most oppressed groups as being in need of help. However, her preoccupation with Marxism and not with cultural theory alienated Dunayevskaya from the public discourse of feminism and post-colonialism, once again resulting in her being a niche left-wing intellectual rather than a popular philosopher. Moreover, her background as a Russian emigrant and her discussions of the USSR and Lenin also made her distant from the developing feminist thought, which was centered around the experiences of either Western European women or women of color. Dunayevskaya did not fit into either of these categories, being always a part of some kind of a *third* movement, group, or mode of thinking.

CONCLUSION: WHY DID RAYA NOT GET ACKNOWLEDGEMENT?

Undoubtedly, Raya Dunayevskaya wore more than one hat. She has many accomplishments in all the fields of her broad activity: she was the leader of the American branch of thought of Marxist Humanism, the first to translate Lenin's Hegel Notebooks, a key writer who developed the state capitalism theory. In the end, *Marxism and Freedom* was the first work to present humanism as the central question of Marx's thought (Anderson, 1986: 23). What influenced the way she was remembered (or, it might be said, forgotten) within the framework of the Marxist movement? There are several aspects to why Raya Dunayevskaya was an outsider.

Dunayevskaya's oeuvre, however, has managed to attract attention of a few most valuable Marxist philosophers of the 20th century, such as Louis Althusser, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. Nonetheless, this does not (and should not) state that they shared her point of view, rather, her vision and approach were worthy of such attention.

One of her enemies was time. *The rise of Marxist Humanism did not last long*. In the end it was never popular enough to take leading positions within any significant Marxist movement.

Despite being largely neglected by the masses, Dunayevskaya accomplished a number of scholarly tasks which should have made her a famous thinker — she made translations, challenged existing arguments, and proposed new and unprecedented opinions. However, she did not achieve the popularity rates of Merleau-Ponty or Althusser. Different versions have been put forward. For instance, her sex might have been the reason — back in the 1960s it was much more difficult for a woman to build an academic career and to establish herself as a prominent and influential scholar. Women in academia of the 1960s — Natalie Zemon Davis, Louise Tilly, Joan Scott are much more well-known compared to Dunayevskaya. They were developing a field of women's studies back then, and their gender and feminist theory coincided with Second Wave Feminism. Activist endeavors popularized their academic work. However, for women like Raya Dunayevskaya everything was different. She tried to establish herself as a thinker outside the domain of feminist thought; she was writing about Marxism, Hegelianism and Leninism, and these subjects were mostly male dominated in academia. So, it was harder for her to achieve recognition and fame.

Raya was also an immigrant, a woman coming from communist Eastern Europe. Being from this part of the world allowed her to genuinely feel and trace the development of Marxist ideas in communist states. Moreover, her being a woman helped her discover the humanist element of Marxist works. While male intellectuals mostly saw Marxism as an economic critique of capitalism, Raya saw what her colleagues could not. She revealed Marx's humanism, placed an emphasis on his ideas regarding the construction of a free and non-alienated society and launched the discussion of Marxist Humanism, while simultaneously keeping in mind his excellent economic critiques, which were important for state capitalism theory. As a woman, Dunayevskaya could feel the need to eliminate oppression and discrimination based on sex, gender and race. That is how her background helped her to create such a diverse and interesting body of work which continues to be relevant today, as can be seen in the rising popularity of her ideas within decolonial and feminist branches of thought.

REFERENCES

- Althusser, L. 2001. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* [in French]. Trans. from the English by B. Brewster. New York: New York University Press.
- Althusser, L., E. Balibar, and R. Establet. 1996. *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition*. Trans. by B. Brewster and D. Fernbach. New York: Verso Books.

- Anderson, K. 1986. "Sources of Marxist Humanism: Fanon, Kosik, Dunayevskaya." *Quarterly Journal of Ideology* 10 (4): 15–29.
- . 1995. *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism: A Critical Study*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- . 2020. *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-western Societies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Anderson, K. B., K. Durkin, and H. A. Brown, eds. 2021. *Raya Dunayevskaya's Intersectional Marxism*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Balibar, E. 1978. "From Bachelard to Althusser: The Concept of 'Epistemological Break'." *Economy and Society* 7 (3): 207–237.
- Dunayevskaya, R. 1964. *Marxism and Freedom*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- . 1965. "Marx's Humanism Today." In *Socialist Humanism: An International Symposium*, ed. by E. Fromm, 63–76. Garden City (NY): Doubleday.
- . 1967. *State-Capitalism and Marx's Humanism or Philosophy and Revolution*. Detroit: News & Letters.
- . 1996. *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- . 2003. *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- . 2017. *Russia: From Proletarian Revolution to State-Capitalist Counter-Revolution: Selected Writings*. Ed. by E. Gogol. Trans. from the Russian by F. Dmitryev. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Garaudy, R. 1956. "Les 'Cahiers philosophiques' de Lénine" [in French]. *Cahiers du communisme*, no. 1, 131–155.
- James, C. L. R., R. Dunayevskaya, and G. L. Boggs. 1969. *From Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao*. Detroit: Facing Reality.
- Jay, M. 1972. "The Frankfurt School's Critique of Marxist Humanism." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 39:285–305.
- Lefebvre, G. 1939. "La pensée de Lénine" [in French]. *Annales d'histoire sociale* 1 (1): 117–118.
- Marcuse, H. 1965. "Repressive Tolerance." In *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, 81–118. Boston: Beacon Press.
- . 2005. *Heideggerian Marxism*. Ed. by R. Wolin and J. Abromeit. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Marx, K. 1999. *Marx on Suicide*. Trans. from the German by E. A. Plaut and K. Anderson. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Monzó, L. D. 2019. *A Revolutionary Subject: Pedagogy of Women of Color and Indigeneity*. New York: Peter Lang.

Nissim-Sabat, M. 2001. "C. L. R. James and the Inevitability of Socialism." *The CLR James Journal* 8 (2): 73–98.

Nikiforova S. A., Mikheyeva Ye. A. [Никифорова С. А., Михеева Е. А.] She-Marxist Raya Dunayevskaya [Марксистка Рая Дунаевская] : Forgotten Comrade of Left-Wing Intellectuals [забытый товарищ левых интеллектуалов] // Философия. Журнал Высшей школы экономики. — 2023. — Т. 7, № 4. — Р. 84–104.

НИКИФОРОВА СОФЬЯ АЛЕКСЕВНА

АСПИРАНТКА

УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ЛИНКОЛЬНА (ЛИНКОЛЬН, ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИЯ); ORCID: 0000-0001-5348-5425

МИХЕЕВА ЕКАТЕРИНА АЛЕКСАНДРОВНА

МА (ФИЛОСОФИЯ)

МАРКСИСТКА РАЯ ДУНАЕВСКАЯ

ЗАБЫТЫЙ ТОВАРИЩ ЛЕВЫХ ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛОВ

Получено: 04.06.2023. Рецензировано: 22.11.2023. Принято: 30.11.2023.

Аннотация: В статье представлена попытка ответить на следующий вопрос: почему Рая Дунаевская, видный философ — марксист-гуманист, была забыта в общенаучном ландшафте анализа марксизма применительно к СССР? Дунаевская переписывалась и работала с влиятельными левыми интеллектуалами, такими как Лев Троцкий и Эрих Фромм, она написала большое количество статей и книг о марксистском гуманизме и сама была активисткой, однако ее не запомнили ни как философа, ни как активистку в отличие от ее коллег по цеху. В статье будет показано, что бэкграунд Дунаевской, как восточноевропейской женщины, критиковавшей СССР, а также особенность избранной ей темы марксистского гуманизма, помешали ей стать известным левым философом, хотя она определено заслужила этот статус. Авторы доказывают это, рассматривая ее интеллектуальное взаимодействие с левыми активистами и философами, анализируя ее философские идеи относительно марксистского гуманизма и выявляя ее влияние на современные постколониальные и феминистские исследования. Посредством такого анализа можно восстановить наследие Дунаевской как философа — марксиста-гуманиста и переосмыслить его, подчеркивая влияние женщин на академический ландшафт XX века.

Ключевые слова: марксизм, гуманизм, Дунаевская, капитализм, феминизм, Альтюссер, Троцкий, Ленин.

DOI: 10.17323/2587-8719-2023-4-84-104.