

“What was she thinking: Returning to Dunayevskaya’s critique of the Russian Revolution”

- Sandra Rein

One can sometimes forget that there were significant critiques of the Russian Revolution, from the Left, from the moment of its triumph. This paper returns to Dunayevskaya’s critique of the “Russian Question” and the implementation of “state capitalism” not merely for the sake of preserving a historical legacy of critique (notable here is Luxemburg and Goldman) but to take seriously the “errors” and mis-steps that characterized the Russian Revolution so that theory and practice today can be informed by this analysis. Ultimately, the paper argues that repeating the state capitalist approach will lead to the same devastating outcomes as 1917. Moreover, Dunayevskaya’s analysis points to the necessary unity of theory and practice in building a meaningful philosophy of revolution.