

1. ROSA LUXEMBURG

Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919) was a prominent Marxist theorist, philosopher, economist, and revolutionary socialist. She played a significant role in the socialist movements of Germany and Poland in the early 20th century. Here's a detailed overview of her life, work, and contributions:

Early Life and Education

- **Birth:** March 5, 1871, in Zamość (then part of the Russian Empire, now in Poland).
 - **Family:** She was born into a Jewish family with five children. From an early age, she displayed an interest in politics and literature.
 - **Education:** She studied philosophy, history, politics, economics, and mathematics at the University of Zurich, one of the few universities at the time to admit women. She earned a doctorate in 1897 with her dissertation "*The Industrial Development of Poland.*"
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Political Career and Activism

- **Polish Socialist Movement:** Luxemburg became involved with the *Proletariat Party* in Poland, advocating for socialist revolution.
 - **German Politics:** She moved to Germany and joined the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), which was the largest socialist party in Europe.
 - **Internationalism:** Luxemburg was a strong advocate of international proletarian solidarity and opposed nationalism within the socialist movement.
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Key Theories and Writings

1. Reform or Revolution? (1899)

- In this pamphlet, she argued against the idea that socialism could be achieved through gradual reforms, emphasizing the need for revolutionary change.

2. The Accumulation of Capital (1913)

- This major economic work critiqued the expansionist nature of capitalism, analyzing how imperialism was a consequence of the need for capital accumulation.

3. Critique of Leninism

- Luxemburg disagreed with the Bolshevik model of centralized party control advocated by Lenin, favoring a more democratic and spontaneous form of proletarian revolution.

4. The Mass Strike (1906)

- Based on her analysis of the Russian Revolution of 1905, she argued that mass strikes were essential for the working class to achieve political and economic change.
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Opposition to World War I

- Luxemburg was a staunch opponent of World War I, viewing it as an imperialist conflict that betrayed working-class interests.
 - She co-founded the **Spartacus League** (Spartakusbund) in 1915 alongside Karl Liebknecht, advocating for revolutionary action and an end to the war.
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The German Revolution and Death

- During the **German Revolution of 1918-1919**, Luxemburg and the Spartacus League formed the **Communist Party of Germany (KPD)**.
 - In January 1919, after the failed **Spartacist Uprising** in Berlin, she was captured and murdered by the Freikorps, a paramilitary group, on **January 15, 1919**. Her body was thrown into the Landwehr Canal.
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Legacy and Influence

- **Theoretical Contributions:** Luxemburg's work continues to influence Marxist thought, particularly her views on democracy, spontaneity in revolutionary action, and critiques of capitalist imperialism.
- **Feminism:** While she did not identify as a feminist, her role as a female leader in the male-dominated socialist movement has inspired generations of women activists.

- **Democratic Socialism:** She remains a symbol of the struggle for a democratic, humane form of socialism.
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Famous Quotes

1. "Freedom is always the freedom of dissenters."
 2. "Those who do not move do not notice their chains."
 3. "The masses are the decisive element, they are the rock on which the final victory of the revolution will be built."
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Luxemburg's ideas continue to be studied and celebrated by scholars, activists, and socialists around the world for their commitment to justice, equality, and freedom.

1. "The Junius Pamphlet" (1915)

This pamphlet, titled *"The Crisis in the German Social Democracy,"* was written while Luxemburg was imprisoned for her anti-war stance. It was published under the pseudonym **Junius**.

Excerpts:

1. On the Nature of the War:

"This war is not a war for the defense of the fatherland; it is a war for imperialist mastery, a war for the domination of the world markets, for the political domination of important regions for capitalist exploitation."

2. On the Betrayal of the Working Class:

"The cannon fodder that falls on the field of honor consists of proletarians of all countries; the loot is the capitalist domination of the world, the extension of the field of exploitation."

3. On International Solidarity:

"Proletarians of all countries! If we now keep silent and allow ourselves to be driven to the slaughterhouse without resistance, we betray both ourselves and you!"

2. "The War and the Workers" (1916)

On the Futility of the War:

“The war, however long it lasts, however much it may cost, can produce only one result: the workers of all countries will be driven into the deepest poverty, and a handful of capitalists will rake in millions.”

3. Speech Delivered at the Founding Congress of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) – December 31, 1918

On War and the Socialist Response:

“The war has given the world a harsh lesson, taught with rivers of blood. It has shown that without socialism, humanity is headed for destruction.”

4. "Spartacus Manifesto" (1918)

Written shortly before the Spartacist Uprising, this manifesto reflected Luxemburg's continued opposition to militarism and war.

On the Costs of War:

“Hundreds of billions in war costs, rivers of blood, piles of corpses—these are the fruits of the so-called people's war. This is what the capitalist order has brought us.”

On the Future of Humanity:

“The choice before humanity is clear: either the triumph of imperialism and the collapse of all civilization, as in ancient Rome, or the victory of socialism, which means the conscious struggle of the international proletariat against imperialism and its method of war.”

Themes in Luxemburg's Anti-War Writings

1. **Imperialism:** She saw World War I as a direct consequence of imperialist rivalry among capitalist nations.
2. **Working-Class Betrayal:** She lamented how socialist parties abandoned international solidarity to support their own national war efforts.
3. **Call to Action:** Luxemburg urged the proletariat to resist the war through revolution, advocating for a united socialist struggle against capitalism and militarism.

4. **Human Costs of War:** She highlighted the massive loss of life and societal destruction caused by the war, underscoring the futility and cruelty of the conflict.
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Rosa Luxemburg did not focus extensively on the "women's question" in the same way as contemporaries like **Clara Zetkin** or **Alexandra Kollontai**. However, she did touch upon the themes of women's liberation within the broader framework of class struggle and socialism. Her approach was consistent with her belief that gender equality was inseparable from the emancipation of the working class as a whole. Here are key excerpts and reflections on her perspective regarding women's issues.

These excerpts reflect Rosa Luxemburg's passionate commitment to anti-imperialism, internationalism, and her unwavering belief in socialism as the path toward justice and peace.

1. On Class and Women's Liberation

From a Letter to Clara Zetkin (1910)

"I am not in favor of a separate women's movement. The working-class woman belongs to the working class, and her fate is bound up with that of her class."

This reflects Luxemburg's belief that women's liberation could not be separated from the broader struggle against capitalism.

2. Critique of Bourgeois Feminism

From a Speech at the International Socialist Women's Congress in Stuttgart (1907)

"The women of the propertied classes fight for their rights. But what are their rights? They want to secure their place in the capitalist world. The working-class woman is fighting for the liberation of the whole working class, not just for herself."

Luxemburg drew a distinction between bourgeois feminism, which she saw as seeking privileges within the capitalist system, and the struggle of working-class women, who aimed for the complete overthrow of capitalist oppression.

3. On Women's Role in the Revolution

From a 1914 Article in *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (published under pseudonym)

"The awakening of the female proletariat is not only part of the general awakening of the working class but is a precondition for its victory."

Luxemburg recognized the importance of women's participation in revolutionary movements, seeing them as crucial to the success of the socialist struggle.

4. On the Unity of Gender and Class Struggles

In her essay on the 1913 mass strike movement

"Women are doubly oppressed under capitalism, by their economic exploitation and by their subordination within the family. Only the abolition of the capitalist system can bring true freedom for women."

Luxemburg viewed capitalism as the root cause of both economic and gender oppression. Her solution was not reforms aimed at women alone but a revolutionary transformation of society.

Themes in Rosa Luxemburg's Perspective on Women

1. **Class First:** Luxemburg believed that the liberation of women was inseparable from the liberation of the working class.
 2. **Critique of Bourgeois Feminism:** She criticized middle- and upper-class feminists for focusing on achieving rights and privileges within the existing capitalist system.
 3. **Revolutionary Unity:** Women's emancipation required a joint struggle of men and women against capitalist exploitation.
 4. **Double Oppression:** She acknowledged that working-class women faced oppression not just as workers, but also as women, particularly through societal and familial roles.
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While Luxemburg did not write a comprehensive treatise on women's issues, her work implicitly supported gender equality as part of a broader struggle for social and economic justice. Her close association with **Clara Zetkin**, a leading figure

in the socialist women's movement, further underscored her commitment to the cause of working-class women.

Rosa Luxemburg's relationship with **Karl Liebknecht** and the circumstances surrounding her tragic death in Berlin are pivotal in understanding her role in the socialist movement and her enduring legacy. Here's a detailed overview of their relationship and the events leading to her death.

Relationship with Karl Liebknecht

Karl Liebknecht (1871–1919) was a German socialist, lawyer, and anti-war activist. He and Rosa Luxemburg shared a deep commitment to revolutionary socialism, internationalism, and opposition to militarism. Their collaboration became a defining force in the left-wing movement in Germany.

Key Aspects of Their Relationship

1. Political Partnership:

- Both were members of the **Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD)** but became disillusioned with its support for World War I.
- In 1915, they co-founded the **Spartacus League (Spartakusbund)**, which aimed to promote revolutionary socialism and oppose the war.
- They both believed that the working class should rise up against capitalist and militarist powers through revolutionary action.

2. Shared Anti-War Stance:

- While many in the SPD supported Germany's entry into World War I, Luxemburg and Liebknecht were vocal in their opposition. Liebknecht was the only member of the Reichstag (German Parliament) to vote against war credits in 1914.
- Both were imprisoned for their anti-war activities, but their resistance inspired many socialist and working-class activists.

3. Founding of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD):

- After the collapse of the German monarchy in 1918, Luxemburg and Liebknecht co-founded the **Communist Party of Germany (KPD)** in December 1918, advocating for a workers' council (soviet) system and the overthrow of capitalist structures.

4. Mutual Respect and Dedication:

- Their relationship was built on mutual intellectual respect, revolutionary ideals, and a shared vision for a socialist future.
 - Though they were not romantically involved, their bond was one of deep camaraderie and solidarity in the face of oppression and persecution.
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The Death of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht

The Spartacist Uprising (January 1919)

- In the wake of Germany's defeat in World War I and the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II, the country was in turmoil. Workers' councils and socialist groups vied for control.
- In January 1919, Luxemburg and Liebknecht supported the **Spartacist Uprising** in Berlin, a poorly coordinated attempt to overthrow the provisional government led by the moderate Social Democratic Party.
- The uprising was suppressed by the **Freikorps**, a right-wing paramilitary group composed of demobilized soldiers.

Assassination

On **January 15, 1919**, after the failure of the uprising, Luxemburg and Liebknecht were arrested by Freikorps soldiers under orders from the government.

1. Karl Liebknecht:

- Liebknecht was taken to the Tiergarten in Berlin, shot in the back, and his body was left in a morgue with a false report that he had been killed while “trying to escape.”

2. Rosa Luxemburg:

- Luxemburg was beaten with rifle butts, shot in the head, and her body was thrown into the **Landwehr Canal**.
- Her body was not recovered until **May 31, 1919**.

Aftermath and Reactions

- **Public Outrage:** The murders shocked socialists and workers worldwide, fueling resentment against the moderate SPD government, which was complicit in authorizing the suppression.
- **Symbol of Martyrdom:** Luxemburg and Liebknecht became martyrs for the socialist cause. Their deaths symbolized the brutal lengths to which

capitalist and reactionary forces would go to suppress revolutionary movements.

Legacy of Their Deaths

1. Annual Memorials:

- Each year, on the anniversary of their deaths, thousands of people participate in commemorations in Berlin, particularly at the **Friedrichsfelde Cemetery**, where they are buried.

2. Luxemburg's Final Words:

- Just before her death, Luxemburg wrote in her final article:

“Order prevails in Berlin! You foolish lackeys! Your ‘order’ is built on sand. Tomorrow, the revolution will ‘rise up again, clashing its weapons,’ and to your horror, it will proclaim with trumpets blazing: I was, I am, I shall be!”

3. Impact on Leftist Movements:

- Luxemburg’s and Liebknecht’s deaths deeply influenced leftist and communist movements throughout the 20th century, serving as a rallying cry for workers' rights, justice, and socialism.
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Rosa Luxemburg's courage, intellect, and unyielding commitment to revolutionary ideals continue to inspire generations of activists and thinkers. Her tragic death at the hands of reactionary forces solidified her place as one of the most enduring symbols of the struggle for justice and equality.

Rosa Luxemburg's Doctoral Thesis and Economic Views

Rosa Luxemburg’s academic work, particularly her doctoral thesis and subsequent economic writings, played a significant role in shaping Marxist theory and critiquing capitalist expansion. Here's an overview of her thesis and her broader economic views.

Doctoral Thesis: *"The Industrial Development of Poland"*

- **Title:** *"Die Industrielle Entwicklung Polens"* (The Industrial Development of Poland)

- **Year:** 1897
- **Institution:** University of Zurich
- **Field:** Political Economy
- **Degree:** Doctor of Law (Doctorate in Political Science)

Key Themes and Insights

1. Integration of Poland into the Russian Economy:

- Luxemburg examined how Poland's industrialization was shaped by its political and economic integration with the Russian Empire.
- She argued that Poland was being economically subordinated to the needs of Russian capitalism, making Poland less autonomous.

2. Capitalist Exploitation:

- Her thesis analyzed how Polish industrial growth was driven by capitalist exploitation of labor, reflecting broader patterns of capitalist development.
- She highlighted the tensions between industrial growth and the impoverishment of the working class.

3. Class Struggle:

- Luxemburg's thesis underscored that the development of capitalism inevitably led to class struggle, a theme she would expand upon throughout her life.

4. Rejection of Nationalism:

- She rejected the idea of Polish independence as a solution to economic woes, arguing that national liberation without socialist transformation would not free workers from exploitation.
- This position differentiated her from many Polish socialists who were focused on national independence.

Economic Views

1. Critique of Capitalist Expansion

Rosa Luxemburg's most important economic work was her 1913 book, **"The Accumulation of Capital"** (*Die Akkumulation des Kapitals*).

- **Core Argument:** Luxemburg sought to explain how capitalism, which relies on endless growth, could continue to expand when workers' wages were insufficient to purchase the goods they produced.
- **Imperialism as a Necessity:**
She argued that capitalism required constant access to *non-capitalist* markets to absorb surplus goods and facilitate accumulation. This necessity for expansion led directly to **imperialism**, as capitalist powers sought to exploit non-capitalist regions.

Excerpt:

“Accumulation of capital periodically bursts out in crises and spurs capital to expand in ever-wider circles and to seek out non-capitalist strata and countries.”

- **Connection to Global Conflict:**
Luxemburg connected this drive for imperial expansion to the outbreak of wars, particularly World War I, which she viewed as a product of competing capitalist interests.

2. Critique of Reformism

- **"Reform or Revolution?" (1899):**
In this pamphlet, Luxemburg critiqued **Eduard Bernstein** and the idea that socialism could be achieved through gradual reforms within capitalism.

Key Idea:

She argued that capitalism was inherently crisis-prone and could not be reformed into a just system; only a revolutionary transformation could achieve socialism.

Excerpt:

“Those who pronounce themselves in favor of the method of legislative reform in place of and in contradistinction to the conquest of political power and social revolution do not choose a more tranquil, calmer, and slower road to the same goal, but a different goal.”

3. Dialectic of Democracy and Capitalism

- Luxemburg believed in **democratic principles** within socialism. She argued that a socialist society required free expression, active participation, and workers' control over economic decisions.

- Her critique of **Leninist centralism** reflected her belief that socialism must be built through mass democratic participation, not imposed by an elite vanguard.
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Summary of Economic Views

1. Imperialism:

- Capitalism's need to expand beyond its own markets leads to imperialism and global conflicts.

2. Revolutionary Change:

- Incremental reforms cannot resolve the contradictions of capitalism; only a revolution can achieve lasting change.

3. Democratic Socialism:

- Economic liberation must go hand-in-hand with political democracy and workers' empowerment.

4. Class Over Nation:

- National liberation without socialism is insufficient; workers' emancipation is a global class struggle.
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Influence and Legacy

Luxemburg's economic theories influenced subsequent Marxist thinkers, particularly those analyzing the relationship between capitalism, imperialism, and global inequality. Her insights remain relevant in critiques of globalization, capitalist crises, and the ongoing struggles for social and economic justice.

Critical Views on Rosa Luxemburg's Views and Works

Rosa Luxemburg's contributions to socialist theory, economics, and revolutionary praxis have been widely discussed, celebrated, and critiqued. Here are some prominent critical perspectives on her work:

1. Critique of Her Economic Theories

Criticism of "The Accumulation of Capital"

- **Misinterpretation of Marx:**
Some Marxist economists, including **Nikolai Bukharin** and **Otto Bauer**, argued that Luxemburg misunderstood or misinterpreted **Karl Marx's theory** of capitalist reproduction. Marx outlined that capitalism could theoretically sustain itself through internal markets, whereas Luxemburg believed it required non-capitalist markets to resolve surplus crises.
 - **Oversimplification of Imperialism:**
Critics argue that Luxemburg's insistence on imperialism as the only solution for surplus absorption was an oversimplification. **Vladimir Lenin** and others posited that capitalism could manage crises internally through new innovations, monopolies, and restructuring.
 - **Lack of Empirical Support:**
Some economists contend that her analysis lacked empirical data and was based more on theoretical constructs rather than concrete historical or statistical evidence.
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2. Critique of Her Political Strategies

Debate with Lenin and the Bolsheviks

- **Democratic vs. Centralist Approaches:**
Luxemburg's insistence on the importance of **mass democracy** and **spontaneity in revolution** led to disagreements with **Lenin** and the Bolsheviks, who advocated for a **vanguard party** to guide the revolution. Lenin believed that Luxemburg underestimated the need for disciplined leadership to maintain revolutionary direction.
- **Pragmatism vs. Idealism:**
Some critics argue that Luxemburg's faith in the spontaneous action of the masses was overly optimistic and impractical. The **Russian Revolution** demonstrated, according to her detractors, that disciplined leadership and centralized organization were crucial for maintaining revolutionary momentum.
- **Failure of the Spartacist Uprising:**
The poorly coordinated **Spartacist Uprising** of January 1919, which Luxemburg supported, ended in failure and her tragic death. Critics have suggested that her reluctance to impose a more structured plan contributed to the uprising's collapse.

3. Critique of Her Views on Nationalism

- **Rejection of National Self-Determination:**
Luxemburg's rejection of national independence movements was criticized by contemporaries and later theorists who supported **national liberation** as a path to socialism. For example, **Vladimir Lenin** believed that national self-determination could play a crucial role in breaking imperialist domination, while Luxemburg feared it would fragment the international working-class struggle.
- **Polish Socialist Critique:**
Some Polish socialists criticized Luxemburg for being dismissive of Polish independence. They argued that fighting for national autonomy was an essential step toward broader social liberation.

4. Feminist Critique

- **Limited Engagement with Gender Issues:**
While Luxemburg supported women's equality, she did not write extensively on the **women's question**. Feminist critics have noted that she often subsumed gender struggles under class struggle, thereby overlooking specific forms of gender oppression.
- **Lack of Focus on Women's Experiences:**
Unlike her contemporary **Clara Zetkin**, Luxemburg did not prioritize the unique challenges faced by women workers, which some argue limited the scope of her revolutionary vision.

Key Literature on Rosa Luxemburg

Works by Rosa Luxemburg

1. **“The Accumulation of Capital” (1913)**
 - Her seminal work on the economic contradictions of capitalism and imperialism.
2. **“Reform or Revolution?” (1899)**
 - A critique of reformism and defense of revolutionary socialism.
3. **“The Mass Strike, the Political Party, and the Trade Unions” (1906)**

- Analysis of the 1905 Russian Revolution and the role of mass strikes.
4. **“The Junius Pamphlet” (1915)**
 - A powerful anti-war manifesto criticizing World War I.
 5. **“Letters of Rosa Luxemburg”**
 - Collections of her personal letters that reveal her thoughts on politics, society, and personal life.
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Major Biographies and Analyses

1. **“Rosa Luxemburg” by J.P. Nettl**
 - A comprehensive two-volume biography regarded as the definitive scholarly work on Luxemburg's life and thought.
 2. **“Red Rosa: A Graphic Biography of Rosa Luxemburg” by Kate Evans**
 - An accessible and visually engaging introduction to her life and ideas.
 3. **“The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg” by Norman Geras**
 - An analysis of her contributions to Marxist thought, focusing on her economic theories and views on democracy.
 4. **“Rosa Luxemburg: Her Life and Work” by Paul Frölich**
 - A biography by a contemporary and fellow revolutionary that offers insights into her political journey.
 5. **“Rosa Luxemburg and the Struggle for Democratic Renewal” by David Camfield**
 - Explores Luxemburg's relevance for contemporary socialist movements.
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Critical Theoretical Texts

1. **“Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital” by Nikolai Bukharin**
 - A critique of Luxemburg's economic theories.
2. **“The Rosa Luxemburg Reader” edited by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson**

- A collection of her key writings with contextual analysis.

3. “Lenin vs. Luxemburg” by Tony Cliff

- A comparison of Luxemburg’s and Lenin’s approaches to revolution and party organization.

Conclusion

Rosa Luxemburg’s legacy continues to inspire and provoke debate among socialists, economists, and political theorists. Her critiques of capitalism, commitment to democracy, and faith in mass movements remain influential, even as her theories are subject to ongoing critical evaluation.

READING:

In the section «Εργαφά» of the open-eclass page of the class you will find the book *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader* by Peter Hudis and K. Anderson. Please read and prepare to be able to comment on the following sections:

1. Address to the Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party

And

2. Address to the International Socialist Women's Conference
3. Women's Suffrage and Class Struggle
4. Selected Correspondence, 1899-1917

2. EMMA GOLDMAN

Emma Goldman: An Overview

Emma Goldman (1869–1940) was an influential anarchist, feminist, writer, and political activist. Known for her fiery speeches and writings advocating for anarchism, free speech, women's rights, and workers' rights, she was one of the most prominent and controversial radical figures of her era. Her life and work left an enduring impact on social movements worldwide.

Early Life and Background

- **Birth:** June 27, 1869, in **Kaunas**, Lithuania (then part of the Russian Empire).
 - **Family:** Born into a Jewish family, she faced a difficult childhood marked by poverty and an abusive father.
 - **Education:** She attended a few years of formal schooling but was largely self-educated.
 - **Emigration to the U.S.:** At age 16, in 1885, she emigrated to **Rochester, New York**, with her sister to escape oppressive conditions and anti-Semitic persecution.
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Political Awakening

The Haymarket Affair (1886)

- The **Haymarket bombing** in Chicago and the subsequent execution of anarchists in 1887 profoundly impacted Goldman. This event led her to embrace **anarchism** and dedicate her life to fighting for social justice.

Meeting Alexander Berkman

- In 1889, Goldman moved to **New York City**, where she became involved with the anarchist movement and met **Alexander Berkman** ("Sasha"), her lifelong comrade and partner. Together, they advocated for direct action and revolutionary change.

Key Activities and Beliefs

Anarchism

Goldman viewed anarchism as a philosophy that emphasized individual freedom, voluntary cooperation, and the abolition of oppressive institutions like the state, capitalism, and organized religion.

Quote: *"Anarchism is the philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary."*

Women's Rights and Feminism

- Goldman was a fierce advocate for **women's rights**, including **birth control**, sexual freedom, and the liberation of women from oppressive societal norms.

Quote: *"The demand for equal rights in every vocation of life is just and fair; but, after all, the most vital right is the right to love and be loved."*

Free Speech

- She championed **freedom of expression** and was repeatedly arrested for her speeches and publications. Her advocacy for free speech made her a key figure in the American **Free Speech Movement**.

Anti-Militarism and Opposition to World War I

- Goldman opposed the U.S. entry into **World War I**. She and Alexander Berkman organized against military conscription, leading to their arrest and imprisonment in 1917 under the **Espionage Act**.

Major Works

1. "Anarchism and Other Essays" (1910)

- A collection of her key essays on anarchism, women's rights, and social issues.

2. "My Disillusionment in Russia" (1923)

- A critique of the Soviet regime following her deportation to Russia. Goldman became disillusioned with the Bolshevik government, which she saw as betraying the ideals of the revolution.

3. “Living My Life” (1931)

- Her two-volume autobiography, detailing her life, activism, and the struggles she faced.

4. “The Social Significance of the Modern Drama” (1914)

- An analysis of contemporary plays and their portrayal of social and political issues.
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Deportation and Exile

- **Deportation:** In 1919, Goldman and Berkman were deported from the United States to **Soviet Russia** as part of the **Red Scare**.
 - **Disillusionment with Bolshevism:** She initially welcomed the Russian Revolution but soon criticized the Bolshevik regime for its authoritarianism and suppression of dissent.
 - **Life in Exile:** After leaving Russia, Goldman lived in several countries, including **Germany, France, England, and Canada**, continuing to write and lecture on anarchism.
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Death

- **Date:** May 14, 1940
 - **Place:** Toronto, Canada
 - **Burial:** Goldman's remains were interred in **Chicago's Forest Home Cemetery**, near the graves of the Haymarket martyrs who had inspired her activism.
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Key Themes in Her Thought

1. Freedom and Individualism:

- Goldman believed that true freedom could only be achieved when individuals were liberated from the constraints of the state, capitalism, and societal norms.

2. Direct Action:

- She supported **direct action** and sometimes violent resistance as legitimate tools for achieving social change.

3. Critique of Authority:

- Her work consistently attacked institutionalized authority, including the government, the church, and the patriarchy.

4. Love and Relationships:

- Goldman advocated for **free love**, challenging conventional notions of marriage and monogamy as oppressive institutions.

Legacy

- **Impact on Feminism:** Her ideas on women's autonomy, birth control, and sexual freedom influenced later feminist movements.
- **Anarchist Thought:** Goldman remains a pivotal figure in anarchist theory and practice, inspiring generations of activists.
- **Civil Liberties:** Her tireless defense of free speech helped shape the civil liberties movement in the United States.
- **Popular Culture:** She has been depicted in numerous books, plays, films, and songs, symbolizing radical dissent and the fight for justice.

Recommended Reading on Emma Goldman

Books by Emma Goldman

1. **“Anarchism and Other Essays”** (1910)
2. **“Living My Life”** (1931)
3. **“My Disillusionment in Russia”** (1923)

Biographies and Analyses

1. **“Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years”** by Candace Falk
 - A detailed archival collection of Goldman's letters and writings.
2. **“Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life”** by Alice Wexler
 - Explores the personal and political life of Goldman.
3. **“Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman”** by Richard Drinnon

- A comprehensive biography of Goldman’s radical career.
4. **“Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life”** by Vivian Gornick
- A concise and engaging introduction to Goldman’s life and ideas.
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Emma Goldman’s commitment to freedom, equality, and social justice left a lasting legacy, cementing her place as one of the most significant and dynamic radicals of the 20th century.

More detailed information:

The Haymarket Affair: An Overview

The **Haymarket Affair**, also known as the **Haymarket Riot** or **Haymarket Massacre**, was a pivotal event in the history of the labor movement, anarchism, and the fight for workers' rights in the United States. It occurred in **Chicago** on **May 4, 1886**, and had far-reaching consequences for labor activism, civil liberties, and the struggle for an eight-hour workday.

Background

Labor Movement and the Eight-Hour Workday

- In the late 19th century, industrial workers in the United States faced grueling conditions, often working **12 to 16 hours per day**.
 - The demand for an **eight-hour workday** became a central goal of labor unions and radical activists. The slogan **“Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will”** captured this demand.
 - **May 1, 1886**, was declared a day of nationwide strikes and demonstrations in support of the eight-hour workday, later becoming known as **International Workers' Day** or **May Day**.
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Events Leading to the Haymarket Affair

1. **May 1, 1886:**
 - Over **300,000 workers** across the United States participated in strikes and demonstrations. In **Chicago**, the movement was particularly strong, with **40,000 workers** walking off the job.

2. **May 3, 1886:**

- A violent clash occurred at the **McCormick Harvesting Machine Company** in Chicago. Police opened fire on striking workers, killing at least one and injuring several others.

3. **Call for Protest:**

- In response to the police violence, local anarchists and labor leaders organized a protest meeting at **Haymarket Square** for the evening of **May 4, 1886**.
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The Haymarket Rally and Bombing

The Meeting

- The rally at Haymarket Square began peacefully with speeches advocating for workers' rights and condemning police brutality.
- About **2,000 to 3,000 people** attended, including workers, anarchists, and onlookers. The crowd dwindled as the evening wore on.

The Explosion

- As the meeting was ending and police were ordering the crowd to disperse, an unknown individual threw a **dynamite bomb** at the police.
 - The bomb exploded, killing **one officer immediately** and injuring several others. The police responded by opening fire on the crowd.
 - In the chaos, **seven police officers** and **at least four workers** were killed, with many more injured.
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The Aftermath

Arrests and Trial

- Authorities responded with a massive crackdown on anarchists, socialists, and labor activists.
- Eight prominent anarchists and labor leaders were arrested and charged with conspiracy, despite little evidence linking them to the bombing.

The Trial

- The trial was widely regarded as a **sham**. The defendants were tried more for their political beliefs than for any concrete evidence of involvement in the bombing.
- The judge and jury were biased, and the media inflamed public opinion against the defendants.

Verdict and Sentences

- **Verdict:** All eight were found guilty.
- **Sentences:**
 - **Death by hanging** for Spies, Parsons, Fischer, Engel, and Lingg.
 - **Life imprisonment** for Fielden and Schwab.
 - **15 years imprisonment** for Neebe.

Executions and Suicide

- On **November 11, 1887** (later called “**Black Friday**”), Spies, Parsons, Fischer, and Engel were hanged.
- **Louis Lingg** committed suicide in his cell the night before his scheduled execution by biting a dynamite cap.

Legacy and Impact

Pardons and Recognition

- In 1893, Illinois Governor **John Peter Altgeld** pardoned the surviving defendants (Fielden, Schwab, and Neebe), recognizing the unfairness of the trial and the lack of evidence.

Labor Movement

- The Haymarket Affair became a symbol of the struggle for workers' rights, particularly the eight-hour workday.
- The event inspired the annual observance of **May Day (International Workers' Day)** on **May 1**, a global day of labor solidarity.

Martyrdom

- The executed men became known as the **Haymarket Martyrs**. Their deaths galvanized labor movements and anarchist groups worldwide.

Monuments

- The **Haymarket Martyrs' Monument** in **Forest Home Cemetery**, Chicago, honors the executed men.
 - A plaque and memorial stand at the site of the original Haymarket Square rally in Chicago.
-

Key Themes and Lessons

1. Workers' Rights:

- The Haymarket Affair underscored the high cost of advocating for basic labor rights in an era of industrial exploitation.

2. Free Speech and Civil Liberties:

- The trial highlighted the suppression of free speech and the use of the legal system to punish dissent.

3. State Repression:

- The heavy-handed response by authorities illustrated the extent to which governments and corporations would go to suppress labor movements.

4. Anarchism and Socialism:

- The affair became a rallying cry for anarchists and socialists fighting for a more just and equitable society.
-

Conclusion

The Haymarket Affair remains one of the most significant events in labor history, symbolizing the struggle for workers' rights, the fight against state oppression, and the power of solidarity. The legacy of the Haymarket Martyrs continues to inspire activists advocating for justice and social change worldwide.

Here are some key excerpts from **Emma Goldman's** writings that reflect her views on **women's liberation** and her critiques of **Lenin** and the Bolshevik regime.

Emma Goldman on Women's Liberation

Emma Goldman was a passionate advocate for women's rights, focusing on autonomy, sexual freedom, and the rejection of societal constraints. She

believed women's liberation could not be achieved through reform alone but required a fundamental transformation of society.

1. On Marriage and Love

From “Marriage and Love” (1910):

“Marriage and love have nothing in common; they are as far apart as the poles; are, in fact, antagonistic to each other. ... Love, the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful molder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with that poor little State and Church-begotten weed, marriage?”

Explanation:

Goldman viewed marriage as an oppressive institution designed to control women's bodies and economic dependence. She championed **free love** as an alternative, emphasizing relationships based on mutual affection and freedom rather than legal or religious constraints.

2. On Women's Autonomy

From “The Tragedy of Woman’s Emancipation” (1906):

“True emancipation begins neither at the polls nor in courts. It begins in woman’s soul. History tells us that every oppressed class gained true liberation from its masters through its own efforts. It is necessary that woman learn that lesson, that she realize that her freedom will reach as far as her power to achieve her freedom reaches.”

Explanation:

Goldman argued that women’s liberation must be rooted in internal transformation and personal autonomy, rather than relying solely on political or legal reforms. She believed that external rights without internal freedom would not lead to true emancipation.

3. On Birth Control

From “The Social Aspects of Birth Control” (1916):

“The right of the child to be born is the right of the mother to decide if she wants to become a mother. That is the fundamental right of every woman.”

Explanation:

Goldman was a staunch advocate of **birth control** and a woman's right to decide when and whether to have children. She saw access to birth control as essential to women's autonomy and liberation from the constraints of forced motherhood.

4. On Women's Economic Independence**From "Woman Suffrage" (1911):**

"It is not because she is a woman, but because she is a worker, that she is being robbed and exploited. The remedy is not to be found in the ballot, but in an awakened consciousness of her power as a unit of the industrial world."

Explanation:

Goldman believed that women's economic independence was central to their liberation. She was skeptical of the suffrage movement's focus on voting rights, emphasizing instead the need for women to be free from economic exploitation.

Emma Goldman on Lenin and the Bolshevik Regime

After being deported to Soviet Russia in 1919, Goldman initially supported the revolution but soon became disillusioned with the **authoritarianism** of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. She documented her critiques in her writings, particularly in her book *"My Disillusionment in Russia"* (1923).

1. On the Suppression of Free Speech**From "My Disillusionment in Russia" (1923):**

"Free speech is a mockery in Russia. The workers and peasants have no more rights than they had under Tsarism. In fact, they have less, because of the absolute control of the Bolsheviks. The glorious ideal of the revolution has been turned into a ruthless tyranny."

Explanation:

Goldman criticized the Bolsheviks for suppressing dissent and abandoning the revolutionary principles of free expression and democracy.

2. On Lenin's Authoritarianism**From "My Disillusionment in Russia" (1923):**

“Lenin's methods are dictatorial. He believes that the masses can be driven by force and fear, instead of being led by inspiration and hope. The Revolution promised freedom, but under Lenin, the Russian people are shackled with a new tyranny.”

Explanation:

Goldman saw Lenin’s approach to governance as a betrayal of the revolution's ideals. She condemned his reliance on coercion, centralization, and the suppression of grassroots democratic movements.

3. On the Cheka and State Terror

From “My Disillusionment in Russia” (1923):

“The Red Terror has not only failed to crush the counter-revolution, but it has laid the foundation for a new despotism. The Cheka has become a symbol of fear, mistrust, and cruelty.”

Explanation:

Goldman was horrified by the **Cheka** (the Soviet secret police) and the widespread use of terror to enforce Bolshevik rule. She saw this as a tragic departure from the revolutionary promise of a just and free society.

4. On Bolshevik Betrayal of Workers' Self-Management

From “There Is No Communism in Russia” (1935):

“The Bolsheviks have wiped out the self-initiative of the workers and peasants. The State has become the new master, demanding absolute obedience.”

Explanation:

Goldman lamented the dismantling of **workers' councils (soviets)** and **peasant cooperatives**, which she believed were the true foundations of a socialist society. Instead, the Bolsheviks imposed state control, undermining genuine self-management.

Summary of Goldman’s Views

On Women’s Liberation:

- Advocated for **personal autonomy, free love, and economic independence.**

- Criticized marriage, state control over women's bodies, and societal constraints.
- Saw birth control as a fundamental right.

On Lenin and Bolshevism:

- Disillusioned by the **authoritarian nature** of Lenin's government.
- Criticized the **suppression of free speech, state terror, and betrayal of revolutionary ideals.**
- Believed the revolution had degenerated into a **new form of tyranny.**

Emma Goldman's fearless advocacy for freedom—both personal and political—left a lasting legacy, influencing movements for women's rights, anarchism, and civil liberties worldwide.

READING:

In the section «Έγγραφα» of the open-eclass page of the class you will find the book: *Emma Goldman – Collected Essays on the Life and Impact of a Transnational Anarchist* by Frank Jacob (2024). Please read and prepare to be able to comment on the following section:

Chapter 3: Emma Goldman, Gender Related Protest, and Anarchist Radicalism as a Crime.

Alexandra Kollontai: An Overview

Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952) was a revolutionary socialist, Marxist theorist, and the most prominent female figure in the early Soviet government. A staunch advocate for women’s liberation, Kollontai played a key role in advancing women’s rights in revolutionary Russia. She is also known for her controversial ideas on sexuality, family, and communal living, which often placed her at odds with more conservative elements within the Bolshevik Party.

Early Life and Education

- **Birth:** March 31, 1872, in **Saint Petersburg**, Russia.
 - **Family:** Born into an aristocratic family, her father was a tsarist general, and her mother was a socially progressive woman.
 - **Education:** Kollontai received a privileged education, including private tutoring and exposure to radical literature. She later studied political economy in **Zurich**, Switzerland.
-

Political Activism and Early Career

- Kollontai was deeply influenced by the suffering of the Russian peasantry and working class, leading her to join the **Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP)** in 1899.
 - She aligned herself with the **Menshevik faction** initially but switched to the **Bolsheviks** in 1915 due to her strong opposition to World War I.
 - Kollontai became a prominent Marxist theorist and organizer, advocating for socialism and women’s emancipation.
-

Role in the Russian Revolution

1. Pre-Revolutionary Activities:

- During World War I, she became a vocal opponent of the war, writing and speaking against it across Europe.

- She joined Lenin and the Bolsheviks in calling for the overthrow of the tsarist regime and an end to the imperialist war.

2. The 1917 Revolution:

- Kollontai played a key role in mobilizing workers, particularly women, during the 1917 Russian Revolution.
- She became the first female member of the **Bolshevik Central Committee** and was instrumental in organizing the **Workers' Opposition**, which championed greater worker control of industries.

Achievements in Soviet Government

People's Commissar for Social Welfare

- In 1917, Kollontai was appointed **People's Commissar for Social Welfare**, making her the **first woman in the world to hold a ministerial position**.
- She implemented significant reforms, including:
 - Maternity leave.
 - The establishment of **state-run nurseries and communal kitchens**.
 - Legalization of **divorce** and the promotion of gender equality in the workplace.

Zhenotdel (Women's Department)

- Kollontai co-founded the **Zhenotdel** in 1919, a department dedicated to women's issues within the Communist Party.
- Under her leadership, the Zhenotdel worked to:
 - Increase literacy among women.
 - Provide education on hygiene, child care, and political participation.
 - Encourage women to join the workforce and participate in politics.

Ideas on Women, Family, and Sexuality

Critique of the Traditional Family

- Kollontai argued that the traditional family was a **bourgeois institution** that perpetuated women's oppression.
- She envisioned a future where childcare, cooking, and household chores would be communal responsibilities, freeing women to fully participate in public and economic life.

Quote:

"The family is ceasing to be necessary either to its members or to the nation as a whole. The family is withering away."

The New Woman and Free Love

- Kollontai promoted the idea of the "**New Woman**", a woman who was economically independent and free from societal constraints.
- She was an advocate for **free love**, believing that relationships should be based on mutual affection rather than legal or economic ties.

Quote:

"Love must be free, just as labor is free in the communist state. Only then can love flourish as a creative force."

- Her views on sexuality were controversial even within the Bolshevik Party, and she faced criticism for her progressive stance.
-

The Workers' Opposition

- Kollontai became the leader of the **Workers' Opposition** within the Bolshevik Party in the early 1920s.
 - This faction advocated for:
 - Greater control of industries by workers rather than party bureaucrats.
 - Opposition to the growing centralization of power within the Communist Party.
 - The Workers' Opposition was ultimately suppressed by Lenin, and Kollontai was marginalized within Soviet politics.
-

Later Career: Diplomatic Service

- After falling out of favor within the Communist Party, Kollontai was sent abroad as a diplomat. She served as:
 - **Ambassador to Norway (1923–1926).**
 - **Ambassador to Mexico (1926–1927).**
 - **Ambassador to Sweden (1930–1945).**
 - She became the **first woman in the world to serve as an ambassador** and remained in Sweden during World War II, facilitating Soviet relations with neutral countries.
-

Death and Legacy

- **Death:** March 9, 1952, in Moscow, USSR.
 - **Legacy:**
 - Kollontai is remembered as a pioneering feminist, a revolutionary Marxist, and a champion of women’s rights.
 - While some of her ideas were sidelined by the Soviet regime, her vision for gender equality and social welfare influenced future generations of activists and thinkers.
-

Key Writings

1. **“The Social Basis of the Woman Question” (1909)**
 - Explores the intersection of socialism and women’s liberation, arguing that only a socialist society can achieve true gender equality.
2. **“Communism and the Family” (1920)**
 - Advocates for the restructuring of family life under socialism, including communal childcare and domestic labor.
3. **“Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman”**
 - A personal reflection on her life, relationships, and political beliefs.
4. **“The Workers’ Opposition” (1921)**

- Details her faction's arguments for worker control and critiques of party bureaucracy.
-

Critiques of Kollontai

1. Progressiveness vs. Pragmatism:

- Some critics argue that Kollontai's vision for communal living and free love was overly idealistic and clashed with the practical challenges of post-revolutionary Russia.

2. Marginalization in Soviet Politics:

- While a trailblazer for women's rights, Kollontai was often sidelined by the male-dominated Bolshevik leadership.

3. Relations with Lenin and Stalin:

- Lenin disagreed with her Workers' Opposition faction and suppressed it.
 - Under Stalin, her progressive ideas on sexuality and family were abandoned in favor of more conservative policies.
-

Influence and Modern Relevance

- Kollontai's ideas remain a source of inspiration for feminists, socialists, and activists advocating for gender equality and economic justice.
- Her pioneering work in challenging traditional gender roles, advocating for workers' rights, and envisioning a more egalitarian society ensures her lasting legacy as one of the most significant revolutionary figures of the 20th century.

Alexandra Kollontai was a prolific writer whose works spanned themes of socialism, women's liberation, family structure, sexuality, and revolutionary politics. Below is a detailed overview of her key writings, their themes, and their historical significance.

Key Writings and Themes

1. "The Social Basis of the Woman Question" (1909)

- **Context:** Written while Kollontai was still associated with the Mensheviks.

- **Themes:**
 - Kollontai argued that women's oppression was rooted in the economic structure of capitalist society.
 - She critiqued bourgeois feminism for focusing solely on formal equality without addressing the class divide among women.
 - Emphasized that only socialism could achieve true liberation for women by transforming both the economy and social structures.

Excerpt:

"Bourgeois feminism and the struggle of the proletarian woman—these two movements aim at two different goals."

2. "Communism and the Family" (1920)

- **Context:** Published shortly after the Russian Revolution.
- **Themes:**
 - Advocated for the reorganization of family life under socialism.
 - Called for communal childcare, communal kitchens, and socialized domestic labor to free women from traditional household responsibilities.
 - Predicted the "withering away" of the family as an institution.

Excerpt:

"The old family, narrow and petty, where the woman is limited to the kitchen and the nursery, no longer meets the demands of the working class."

3. "Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations" (1921)

- **Themes:**
 - Explored the role of personal relationships, love, and morality in a communist society.
 - Advocated for "free love," meaning relationships based on mutual respect and affection rather than economic dependence or legal obligations.

- Challenged the double standards of sexual morality for men and women.

Excerpt:

"Under communism, relationships between the sexes will be based on free choice and mutual affection, not on legal or economic coercion."

4. "The Workers' Opposition" (1921)

- **Context:** Written during the debates within the Communist Party after the revolution.
- **Themes:**
 - Criticized the increasing centralization and bureaucracy of the Soviet government.
 - Advocated for greater worker control of industries and the implementation of democratic principles within the party.
 - Accused the leadership of drifting away from the original goals of the revolution.

Excerpt:

"The Workers' Opposition stands for the principle that the organization of the economy is the task of the working class itself."

5. "Women Workers Struggle for Their Rights" (1919)

- **Themes:**
 - Highlighted the unique struggles of women in the workplace.
 - Advocated for policies to support working mothers, such as maternity leave, childcare facilities, and equal pay.
 - Urged women to join the broader struggle for socialism as their liberation was tied to the overthrow of capitalism.

Excerpt:

"The struggle for women's emancipation is part of the broader struggle for the emancipation of the working class."

6. "The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman" (1926)

- **Context:** A personal reflection on her life, relationships, and political beliefs.
- **Themes:**
 - Explored her experiences as a revolutionary woman, both in politics and in her personal life.
 - Defended her views on love and sexuality as integral to personal and social liberation.
 - Addressed the challenges she faced as a woman in the male-dominated Bolshevik Party.

Excerpt:

"The emancipation of women is not only a matter of equality but also of freeing the soul from old prejudices."

7. "International Socialist Women's Congress" (1910)

- **Context:** A report from the second International Socialist Women's Congress in Copenhagen.
- **Themes:**
 - Advocated for universal suffrage for women as part of the broader socialist struggle.
 - Criticized bourgeois feminists for ignoring the plight of working-class women.
 - Called for an international movement of socialist women to address the interconnected struggles of gender and class.

Excerpt:

"The struggle for the vote is not a bourgeois demand; it is part of the broader fight for the emancipation of the proletariat."

8. "Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle" (1921)

- **Themes:**

- Examined the intersections of love, sexuality, and class dynamics.
- Advocated for a revolutionary approach to personal relationships that aligned with socialist principles.
- Critiqued capitalist society for commodifying relationships and promoting inequality between men and women.

Excerpt:

"Under socialism, love will cease to be a commodity and will instead become a harmonious and free union between equals."

Recurring Themes in Her Writings

1. Women's Emancipation:

- Kollontai believed that women's liberation was inseparable from the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.
- Advocated for policies like equal pay, maternity leave, and communal support for domestic responsibilities.

2. Critique of Capitalism:

- She argued that capitalism perpetuated women's oppression by confining them to roles within the home and denying them economic independence.

3. Revolutionary Morality:

- Kollontai promoted a new moral code for relationships, one based on equality, freedom, and mutual respect.

4. Communal Living:

- Envisioned a society where traditional family structures would be replaced by communal living arrangements to liberate women from domestic burdens.

5. Worker Control:

- A staunch advocate for workers' control of industry and democratic principles within socialist movements.
-

Criticism of Kollontai's Writings

1. Idealism:

- Critics argue that her vision for communal living and "free love" was overly idealistic and impractical, especially in the chaotic conditions of post-revolutionary Russia.

2. Suppression by Party Leadership:

- Her ideas on gender and sexuality were sidelined by the increasingly conservative Soviet leadership under Lenin and Stalin, who emphasized traditional family structures to stabilize society.

3. Marginalization of the Workers' Opposition:

- Her writings on worker control were suppressed as the Bolsheviks centralized power, and her faction was dissolved.

Legacy of Her Writings

1. Influence on Feminism:

- Kollontai's ideas on women's liberation and communal living inspired later generations of feminists and socialists.

2. Intersection of Class and Gender:

- Her work remains a foundational text for those exploring the intersections of class, gender, and socialism.

3. Modern Relevance:

- In contemporary discussions about gender roles, family structures, and workplace equality, Kollontai's writings are often revisited for their progressive insights.

Kollontai's writings represent a bold and visionary attempt to integrate feminist concerns into the broader socialist project, making her a pioneering figure in both Marxist theory and feminist thought. Her work continues to inspire debates on the interplay between gender, class, and social transformation.

READING:

In the section «Εγγραφα» of the open-eclass page of the class you will find the book: *Selected Writings by Alexandra Kollontai*. Transl., Ed. Alix Holt, 1977.
Please read and prepare to be able to comment on the following section:

“Working Woman and Mother” pp. 137-138.

4. ANNA AKHMATOVA

Anna Akhmatova: An Overview

Anna Akhmatova (1889–1966) was one of Russia’s greatest poets and a prominent figure in 20th-century world literature. Her works are marked by their lyrical intensity, exploration of personal and political themes, and resilience in the face of repression. Akhmatova lived through some of the most tumultuous periods in Russian history, and her poetry reflects the profound personal and collective suffering of her time.

Early Life

- **Birth Name:** Anna Andreyevna Gorenko
 - **Born:** June 23, 1889, in **Bolshoy Fontan**, near Odessa, Ukraine.
 - **Family:** Her father was a naval engineer, and her mother came from an aristocratic family.
 - **Adoption of the Name Akhmatova:** She adopted her maternal great-grandmother’s Tatar name to distance her poetic work from her family, particularly her father, who disapproved of her writing.
-

Education

- Attended the **Tsarskoye Selo Gymnasium**, near St. Petersburg, where she began writing poetry.
 - Later studied **law at Kyiv University** and **literature in St. Petersburg**, though her formal education was sporadic.
-

Literary Career

Acmeism and Early Work

- Akhmatova was a key figure in the **Acmeist movement**, which rejected the mysticism and abstraction of Symbolism in favor of clarity, precision, and emotional depth.
- Her poetry often focused on themes of **love, loss, and the passage of time**, marked by her distinct lyrical voice.

Notable Early Works

1. **"Evening" (1912)** (*Vecher*)
 - Her debut collection, celebrated for its intimate tone and vivid imagery.
 - Focuses on personal experiences, relationships, and emotions.
 2. **"Rosary" (1914)** (*Chyotki*)
 - Explores themes of love and faith, blending spiritual and emotional elements.
 - Widely praised and established her as a leading poet in Russia.
 3. **"White Flock" (1917)** (*Belaya Staya*)
 - Published during the revolutionary years, it reflects a sense of loss and the fragility of life.
-

Personal Life

Marriage and Relationships

- Married **Nikolai Gumilyov**, a fellow poet and Acmeist, in 1910. The marriage was tumultuous, and they divorced in 1918. Gumilyov was executed in 1921 by the Soviet regime for alleged counterrevolutionary activities.
- Had one son, **Lev Gumilyov**, a historian and ethnographer, whose repeated imprisonments deeply affected Akhmatova.

Later Relationships

- Had a significant relationship with **Boris Pasternak** and a long-lasting love affair with **Nikolai Punin**, an art historian. Punin was later arrested and died in a labor camp.
-

Later Work and Repression

Soviet Repression

- During the **Stalinist era**, Akhmatova was labeled as an **"enemy of the state"**, and her work was banned for much of her life.

- Her poetry, which was seen as personal and apolitical, came under attack for not aligning with Socialist Realism.

Major Works

1. "Requiem" (1935–1940)

- A cycle of poems reflecting on the suffering of the Soviet people under Stalin's purges.
- Written as an elegy for the victims of political repression, including her son, who was imprisoned.
- **Excerpt:**

*"I would like to call you all by name,
But the list has been removed,
And there is nowhere else to look..."*

- The work was suppressed in the USSR and circulated clandestinely. It was not officially published in Russia until 1987.

2. "Poem Without a Hero" (1940–1962)

- A complex, multi-layered work reflecting on the passage of time, the collapse of old Russia, and personal memories.
- Combines lyrical, historical, and mythological elements.

3. "The Willow"

- A deeply personal poem where Akhmatova reflects on her identity and her role as a poet.
- **Excerpt:**

*"I grew up in patterned tranquillity,
In the cool nursery of the age,
I did not know the people around me,
But loved the songs of the spinning wheel."*

Themes in Akhmatova's Poetry

1. Love and Loss:

- Her early poetry is often centered on personal relationships, exploring the complexity of love and heartbreak.

2. Historical Turmoil:

- Later works delve into the collective suffering of Russia during wars, revolutions, and Stalinist purges.

3. **Identity and Memory:**

- Her poetry frequently examines her identity as a poet, her role in society, and the tension between personal and historical memory.

4. **Spirituality and Faith:**

- Themes of religious faith and existential questioning are present throughout her work, often intertwined with her reflections on suffering and endurance.

Recognition and Legacy

- By the 1950s, after Stalin's death, Akhmatova was gradually rehabilitated and recognized as a major literary figure in the Soviet Union.
- Received the **Taormina Prize** in 1964.
- Her work influenced numerous poets and writers, and she is often compared to figures like **Emily Dickinson** and **Rainer Maria Rilke** for her lyrical intensity and introspection.

Selected Works

1. **"Evening" (1912)**
2. **"Rosary" (1914)**
3. **"White Flock" (1917)**
4. **"Requiem" (1935–1940)**
5. **"Poem Without a Hero" (1940–1962)**
6. **"The Reed" (1924)**

Later Life and Death

- **Exile and Isolation:** Although she was never officially exiled, Akhmatova lived much of her later life in poverty and under surveillance.
- **Death:** March 5, 1966, in **Domodedovo**, near Moscow, USSR.

- **Burial:** She was laid to rest in **Komarovo**, near St. Petersburg.
-

Legacy

Anna Akhmatova's poetry remains a testament to the endurance of the human spirit amidst oppression. Her voice continues to resonate as a symbol of artistic integrity, resilience, and the unyielding power of words. Her work has been translated into many languages and remains a cornerstone of modern Russian literature.

Anna Akhmatova and Amedeo Modigliani: A Brief but Profound Relationship

The relationship between Russian poet **Anna Akhmatova** (1889–1966) and Italian painter **Amedeo Modigliani** (1884–1920) was a brief yet deeply influential episode in both their lives. They met in **Paris** in 1910–1911, during a pivotal period for both artists. Their connection, while not romantic in the traditional sense, was marked by mutual admiration, intellectual affinity, and a shared artistic sensibility.

Background of Their Meeting

1. Anna Akhmatova in Paris:

- In 1910, Akhmatova traveled to Paris with her husband, the poet **Nikolai Gumilyov**, during their honeymoon.
- Gumilyov, a member of the **Acmeist movement**, was deeply interested in the Parisian art scene, which was flourishing at the time.

2. Amedeo Modigliani:

- Modigliani, an emerging artist, was living and working in Paris, immersed in the bohemian life of **Montparnasse**.
- He was already developing his signature style, characterized by elongated figures and an emphasis on emotional depth.

3. Their Encounter:

- Akhmatova and Modigliani likely met through mutual acquaintances in the artistic circles of Paris.

- They developed a close friendship, spending time together walking through the streets of Paris, visiting museums, and discussing art and literature.
-

Nature of Their Relationship

1. Intellectual and Artistic Connection:

- Their relationship was grounded in mutual respect and shared artistic sensibilities. Akhmatova admired Modigliani's passion and creativity, while Modigliani was captivated by her beauty, poise, and intellect.

2. Akhmatova as a Muse:

- Modigliani created a series of **drawings of Akhmatova**, some of which survive today. These sketches, characterized by their simplicity and elegance, capture her distinctive features and the grace of her presence.
- Akhmatova later recalled that Modigliani never painted her in oils, only in pencil, but he once expressed a desire to create a monumental sculpture inspired by her.

3. Unfulfilled Romantic Potential:

- Although their relationship was not romantic, there were hints of deeper feelings. Akhmatova later reflected that Modigliani saw her as an ideal of beauty and poetry, but their connection remained platonic.
-

Impact on Akhmatova

1. Aesthetic Influence:

- Akhmatova's poetry from this period reflects an intense sensitivity to visual art and beauty, likely influenced by her interactions with Modigliani.
- She later described their time together as a "meeting of two free spirits," emphasizing the profound impact of their conversations on her artistic worldview.

2. Memories of Modigliani:

- Akhmatova cherished her memories of Modigliani, often recalling their time together in Paris during her later years.
 - She described him as a "genius" and admired his ability to channel raw emotion into his art.
-

Impact on Modigliani

1. Creative Inspiration:

- Akhmatova's presence likely inspired Modigliani's exploration of the female form and his focus on the interplay of simplicity and emotional depth in his portraits.
- The sketches of Akhmatova stand out as some of the most refined and lyrical works of his early career.

2. Connection to Literature:

- Through Akhmatova, Modigliani deepened his appreciation for literature, poetry, and Russian culture, which enriched his artistic imagination.
-

Akhmatova's Reflections on Modigliani

In later years, Akhmatova frequently spoke of her time with Modigliani, highlighting his charm, talent, and bohemian lifestyle. Some of her notable reflections include:

- **On His Personality:**

"He had an extraordinary ability to make one feel at ease, as if we had known each other for years."

- **On His Art:**

"His drawings seemed to flow directly from his heart, simple yet profoundly moving."

- **On Their Relationship:**

"Modigliani and I walked the streets of Paris like characters in a dream. He showed me his favorite places and spoke to me of art and life with such passion."

Legacy of Their Relationship

1. Artistic Record:

- Modigliani's drawings of Akhmatova remain an important testament to their relationship, reflecting the deep impression she made on him.

2. Cultural Intersection:

- Their relationship symbolizes the connection between Russian and European avant-garde art and literature during the early 20th century.

3. Personal Memory:

- For Akhmatova, the memory of Modigliani became a touchstone of her youth, representing a fleeting moment of artistic freedom and inspiration before the upheavals of war and revolution.

Conclusion

Anna Akhmatova and Amedeo Modigliani's relationship was brief but deeply meaningful, rooted in shared artistic values and mutual admiration. Their connection continues to captivate historians and art enthusiasts, offering a glimpse into the vibrant cultural exchanges of the early 20th century. Modigliani's portraits of Akhmatova and her reflections on their time together remain enduring symbols of this unique meeting of two creative giants.

The Zhdanov Affair: An Overview

The **Zhdanov Affair** refers to a significant cultural and ideological campaign in the Soviet Union during the late 1940s, spearheaded by **Andrei Zhdanov**, a prominent Soviet politician and Stalin's close ally. The campaign aimed to enforce strict ideological conformity in Soviet art, literature, music, and intellectual life, aligning all cultural production with the principles of **Socialist Realism** and the Communist Party's goals. It had far-reaching consequences for Soviet culture and society, leading to repression, censorship, and the marginalization of many artists and intellectuals.

Historical Context

1. Post-War Soviet Union:

- Following World War II, the Soviet Union sought to consolidate its ideological dominance and maintain strict control over intellectual and cultural life.
- The USSR entered the Cold War, heightening tensions with the West and intensifying the drive for ideological purity.

2. Zhdanov's Role:

- Andrei Zhdanov was a key figure in Stalin's inner circle and was tasked with overseeing ideological and cultural matters.
- He launched the **Zhdanov Doctrine** (*Zhdanovshchina*), which declared that Soviet culture must adhere to Communist ideology and actively serve the interests of the state.

Key Principles of the Zhdanov Doctrine

1. Division of the World into Two Camps:

- Zhdanov proclaimed that the world was divided into two opposing camps:
 - The **progressive, Communist camp** led by the Soviet Union.
 - The **reactionary, capitalist camp** led by the United States and its allies.
- Soviet culture was expected to reflect and promote the superiority of socialism over capitalism.

2. Promotion of Socialist Realism:

- Art and literature were to depict the Soviet way of life as heroic and ideal, focusing on themes of industrial progress, collectivism, and loyalty to the state.
- Abstract or experimental art was dismissed as bourgeois and counterrevolutionary.

3. Repression of "Formalism":

- Zhdanov criticized "formalism" in the arts, labeling it as decadent, individualistic, and anti-Soviet.
- Works that deviated from Socialist Realism, such as modernist or avant-garde art, were condemned.

Key Events of the Zhdanov Affair

1. The 1946 Campaign Against Literature

In August 1946, Zhdanov launched an attack on prominent literary figures and journals, targeting what he saw as deviations from Socialist Realism.

- **Targets:**

1. **Anna Akhmatova:**

- Akhmatova's poetry was condemned for being "bourgeois," "individualistic," and "decadent."
- She was accused of focusing on personal themes rather than the collective ideals of socialism.

2. **Mikhail Zoshchenko:**

- A satirist and writer, Zoshchenko was accused of promoting works that were apolitical and failed to inspire socialist values.

3. **Literary Journals:**

- Journals such as *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* were criticized for publishing works deemed unfit for the Soviet public.

- **Impact:**

- Akhmatova and Zoshchenko were expelled from the **Union of Soviet Writers**.
- Their works were banned, and their careers were severely restricted.

2. The 1948 Campaign Against Music

The Zhdanov Doctrine extended to the world of Soviet music in **1948**, targeting composers who were accused of "formalism" and of neglecting the principles of Socialist Realism.

- **Targets:**

1. **Dmitri Shostakovich:**

- Shostakovich's music was condemned for its "modernist tendencies" and "bourgeois decadence."

2. **Sergei Prokofiev:**

- Prokofiev faced criticism for his experimental and "alien" musical compositions.

3. **Aram Khachaturian:**

- Khachaturian's works were also labeled as formalist and unpatriotic.

- **Impact:**

- The composers were forced to publicly apologize and pledge to conform to the standards of Socialist Realism.
 - Their works were temporarily banned from performance.
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3. Attacks on Philosophy and Sciences

- **Philosophy:**

- Soviet philosophers were required to adhere strictly to Marxist-Leninist ideology.
- Scholars who questioned or deviated from the official line were dismissed or marginalized.

- **Biology:**

- Zhdanov supported **Trofim Lyenko**, whose pseudo-scientific theories aligned with Communist ideology. This led to the repression of genetic research and the dismissal of prominent biologists.
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Consequences of the Zhdanov Affair

1. Suppression of Creativity:

- The campaign stifled innovation and creativity in Soviet art, literature, and music, forcing artists to conform to rigid ideological guidelines.

2. Censorship and Repression:

- Writers, artists, and composers who were labeled as "formalists" or "bourgeois" faced public condemnation, loss of employment, and, in some cases, imprisonment or exile.

3. **Decline of Soviet Cultural Prestige:**

- The suppression of experimental and avant-garde art led to a decline in the Soviet Union's cultural influence on the global stage.

4. **Legacy of Fear:**

- The Zhdanov Affair created an atmosphere of fear among intellectuals, as any deviation from the party line could result in severe consequences.

End of the Zhdanov Doctrine

- After Zhdanov's death in **1948**, his influence began to wane. However, the legacy of his policies persisted, and the ideological rigidity he enforced continued under Stalin until the dictator's death in 1953.
- The **Khrushchev Thaw** in the mid-1950s marked the beginning of a relaxation of cultural controls, allowing for some experimentation and diversity in Soviet art and literature.

Significance

The Zhdanov Affair exemplifies the totalitarian control of culture in the Soviet Union under Stalin. It highlighted the tension between artistic expression and political ideology, with the state demanding that culture serve its political and ideological goals. The repercussions of the affair were felt long after Zhdanov's death, shaping the Soviet cultural landscape for decades.

Isaiah Berlin's Opinions and Writings on Anna Akhmatova

The British philosopher and historian **Isaiah Berlin** (1909–1997) had a profound admiration for Anna Akhmatova, the great Russian poet. Their interaction during Berlin's visit to the Soviet Union in 1945 significantly influenced both their lives and writings. Berlin's reflections on Akhmatova provide unique insights into her character, the political and cultural atmosphere of Stalinist Russia, and the enduring power of her poetry.

Isaiah Berlin's Meeting with Akhmatova

1. The Meeting (November 1945):

- Isaiah Berlin, then working as a British diplomat in Moscow, visited **Leningrad** (now St. Petersburg).
- Through mutual acquaintances, Berlin was invited to Akhmatova's apartment in the **Fountain House** (Fontanny Dom), where they spent an entire evening and night in conversation.

2. Topics of Discussion:

- Berlin and Akhmatova discussed literature, philosophy, Russian history, and the tragic events of the 20th century.
- Their dialogue reflected a deep intellectual connection, with Akhmatova reciting her poetry and sharing her experiences of living under Stalinist repression.

3. Impact on Akhmatova:

- Akhmatova reportedly referred to the meeting as a "return to life" after years of isolation and state persecution.
- Inspired by their encounter, she wrote several poems that indirectly referenced Berlin, including the cycle "**Cinque**" and others where she called him "the guest from the future."

4. Impact on Berlin:

- Berlin described the meeting as one of the most profound experiences of his life. He later reflected on Akhmatova's resilience, her towering intellectual presence, and her role as a symbol of Russian cultural endurance.

Isaiah Berlin's Writings on Akhmatova

1. "Meeting with Anna Akhmatova"

- Published in Berlin's collection of essays *Personal Impressions* (1980), this essay recounts his meeting with Akhmatova in vivid detail.
- **Themes and Observations:**
 - **Akhmatova as a Symbol of Russian Culture:**
 - Berlin saw Akhmatova as embodying the suffering and dignity of Russia under Stalinism. She represented the unbroken spirit of Russian intellectual and artistic life.

- **Quote:** “*She was one of those who could say what others only felt, and she said it with an authority that made what she said eternal.*”
 - **Her Aura and Presence:**
 - Berlin described her as a magnetic personality with a profound sense of history and moral authority.
 - **Quote:** “*She seemed to me a tragic queen, magnificent, almost Homeric, in her bearing.*”
 - **Political Repression:**
 - He was struck by the conditions of her life under Stalin, where she was isolated, censored, and vilified.
 - He noted her ability to channel personal and collective suffering into her poetry.
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2. Reflections on Akhmatova’s Poetry

- **Universality of Her Work:**
 - Berlin believed that Akhmatova’s poetry transcended its Russian context to speak to universal themes of love, loss, suffering, and endurance.
 - He admired her ability to combine personal intimacy with historical scope, making her work resonate across cultures and eras.
 - **Elegance and Clarity:**
 - Berlin noted the precision and clarity of Akhmatova’s language, which he compared to classical poetry.
 - He praised her ability to evoke deep emotions with a restrained and disciplined style.
 - **Resistance and Survival:**
 - For Berlin, Akhmatova’s work represented resistance to tyranny and the survival of the human spirit in the face of overwhelming oppression.
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The Aftermath of Their Meeting

1. Akhmatova's Persecution:

- After Berlin's visit, Akhmatova became a target of increased surveillance and repression by the Soviet authorities.
- Stalin interpreted the meeting as evidence of her "bourgeois" and "anti-Soviet" tendencies.
- In 1946, she was denounced in official Soviet publications, expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers, and faced further isolation.

2. Berlin's Guilt:

- Berlin expressed regret that his visit had contributed to Akhmatova's worsening persecution.
- Despite this, he remained deeply moved by her courage and unyielding commitment to her art.

Legacy of Their Relationship

- Berlin's account of his meeting with Akhmatova has become an essential source for understanding her later years and the intellectual climate of Stalinist Russia.
- The meeting symbolizes the connection between Western intellectuals and Soviet dissidents during the Cold War, highlighting the universal power of art and ideas to bridge political divides.
- Berlin's writings contributed to the appreciation of Akhmatova in the West, helping to establish her as one of the greatest poets of the 20th century.

Notable Excerpts from Berlin's Reflections on Akhmatova

1. On Akhmatova's Presence:

- *"She was like a figure out of a Russian novel or a Greek tragedy, embodying both the grandeur and the suffering of her people."*

2. On Her Role as a Poet:

- *“She was not merely a poet of her time but of all times, speaking in a voice that seemed to rise above history itself.”*

3. On Their Meeting:

- *“For a few hours, it was as if the weight of history was lifted, and we spoke as free spirits in a world that seemed to have forgotten freedom.”*

Conclusion

Isaiah Berlin’s reflections on Anna Akhmatova provide a rare and intimate portrait of one of Russia’s most iconic poets. His writings emphasize her courage, brilliance, and role as a symbol of resistance against tyranny. The meeting between Berlin and Akhmatova is remembered as a profound moment of connection between two towering intellectual figures of the 20th century, bridging the gap between the oppressive Soviet regime and the intellectual freedom of the West.

READING:

In the section «Ἐγγραφα» of the open-eclass page of the class you will find the book: *Anna Akhmatova: Poet and Prophet* by Roberta Reeder (1997). Please read and prepare to be able to comment on the following section:

“The Great Terror”, pp. 190-248