

pointing out that in the project of overthrowing capitalism's rule the problem is that the working class and the peasantry have not been the subject of history, not that they have. By the 1960s Dunayevskaya and *News and Letters* were already positing African Americans, youth, and women as the subjects of history, and actively participating in their struggles. Dunayevskaya understood that postmodernism is one of the 'cultural substitutes' for genuine revolution put in place by people excusing their failure to fight for the total reorganization of capitalist society (225).

The truth, eloquence and continuing relevance of Raya Dunayevskaya's impressive body of work is here, but the reader will need to be patient and open-minded. Readers up to the challenge will discover Dunayevskaya's brilliant observation that Marx's labour theory of value is really a value theory of labour. They will come to appreciate Dunayevskaya's powerful evocation of the need to realize the innate abilities of the world's men and women through the negation of class rule, racism, and misogyny. They will be impressed by Dunayevskaya's insistence that *News and Letters* be a paper edited by a wage worker that features the voices of workers, women, people of colour, inmates, and other prisoners of the Capitalist Dream. For these reasons alone *Raya Dunayevskaya: Philosopher of Marxist-Humanism* is well worth reading. Readers may emerge from the experience uneasy at Gogol's unquestioning adulation of Dunayevskaya, but willing to concede that she points us beyond totalitarianism, rampant capitalism and postmodernism to a more human future.

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Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperialism and Human Rights: Colonial Discourses of Rights and Liberties in African History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006).

The ambition suggested in Bonny Ibhawoh's *Imperialism and Human Rights* is a bit misleading as the book focuses closely on colonial Nigeria and not the entire continent, but the issues raised here fit in the bigger discussion among historians who are trying to map the antecedents of the human rights movement. Ibhawoh traces the uses of a rights discourse by colonial elites against the colonial government. His aim is twofold: first, to demonstrate that a rights discourse was appropriated by Africans who used it to position themselves politically across a broad array of contested issues such as antislavery, property rights, the colonial legal system and customary law, and, second, to interrogate the politics of this rights discourse which often shored up the interests of a colonial elite against other indigenous political powers.

In concluding his study, Ibhawoh wryly remarks that the practitioners of the rights discourse who acceded to power after independence abandoned this pol-

itics and human rights became again by necessity the politics of opposition in Nigeria (171). This irony is clearly indicated by Ibhawoh but one wonders whether it does not create a false equivalence between the struggle of colonial elites to position themselves at political advantage with the riskier struggles of opposition in the repressive postcolonial era. Ibhawoh also points out the degree to which Nigeria's successive military governments were able to manipulate human rights language for political ends internationally and demonstrates the continued susceptibility of this discourse to be co-opted, leaving the opposition with an impoverished political discourse (172). Although Ibhawoh does not put the emphasis on this point, he traces a history of failure: the failure of human rights discourse to become the basis for a legal postcolonial regime. Yet Ibhawoh at once establishes that a rights discourse played an important role in negotiating colonial political identities providing some important grounds of legitimacy for postcolonial proponents of human rights. Thus Ibhawoh answers back to those historians of the human rights movement who do not find antecedent uses of human rights discourse in colonial Africa.

Perhaps the place where the continuity between colonial and postcolonial discussions is most evident is in Ibhawoh's discussion of what he calls "social rights discourses" which address "marriage and divorce, debates about family rights, and the agitation for social inclusion by marginalized groups" (115). The history here, according to Ibhawoh, tells of the closing of ranks of African and British patriarchy over the rights demanded by women. For example, the easing of divorce laws which was motivated by an effort to ameliorate the plight of women and shore up their rights provokes a fraying of family values by shifting the discussion to a debate over legal reparation for the bride price paid and casting marriage very narrowly into the mold of a financial transaction (122). As a result we see a retraction from those freedoms and a closing of ranks of men against women who continue to wage some of the same struggles today. In his discussion of the petitions by the Idumuashaba, a people viewed traditional as *osbu* or indigenous slaves, Ibhawoh illustrates again the limitations of social rights discourses. The Idumuashaba were deft and inventive in their appropriation of a rights discourse to petition for social inclusion and, whereas the colonial government condemned slavery, it would not go so far as to legislate social inclusion. Ibhawoh thus concludes that the British "believed that the social residues of the long tradition of slavery in Africa could not be abolished by legal fiat" (132). Such struggles for social inclusion form the basis for a fascinating, continuous history of rights agitation.

Ibhawoh's non-triumphalist but constructive account of a changing human rights discourse is refreshing. He contextualizes his study within the debate on culture and human rights, and correctly tries to de-essentialize views of African identity that have shaped rigid divisions between ideas of communal and individual identity. Ibhawoh does this without losing track of the historical specificity of his subject, colonial Nigeria. His introduction provides a lucid summary of the Africanist discourse on human rights and its ties to cultural nationalism (26-27).

His preferred emphasis correctly lies on “the cross-fertilization of ideas between Africa and the rest of the world” (28).

Thinking of Ibhawoh’s study in the context of the most comprehensive history of the human rights movement to date, Paul Gordon Lauren’s *The Evolution of International Human Rights* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), reveals the tensions between the local and international narratives. Lauren’s is a progressive history in which empire created the international political stage for the emergence of a new dispensation of human rights. Lauren is at great pains to demonstrate that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the product of an international and hence multicultural political community. The smaller chapter of a local history as drawn by Ibhawoh disturbs the easy relation in Lauren’s study between the particular and the general. The international history is limited when it is told as the sum of the world’s parts, because, if Nigeria is one such part, then unambivalent progress is a difficult argument to make and the networks of negotiation which mark the “evolution” (Gordon’s word) of human rights merely shift from one interested party to another. But, if the emphasis on the international narrative flattens out detail, a comparative context could have usefully broadened Ibhawoh’s ultimately slim history. Since the title of the book suggests a continental perspective, one cannot help but wonder how different the nuances of this history would have been had Ibhawoh used some comparative analysis. One comparison which might have been particularly fruitful is a comparison with Kenya’s colonial political history especially given the striking difference in degrees of violent repression in the two colonies. Ibhawoh’s extensive discussion of land rights in Nigeria, moreover, could bear comparison to the central role that land rights played in Kenya’s struggles and their eloquent articulation in Jomo Kenyatta’s *Facing Mount Kenya*.

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Marina Sitrin, ed., *Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina* (Oakland: AK Press, 2006).

On the evening of 19 December 2001, soon after Argentine President Fernando de la Rúa had declared the state of siege, popular protest erupted on the streets of Buenos Aires and other major cities throughout the country. Banging pots and pans, Argentines marched towards downtown areas where they met with other groups demonstrating against the government. The following day, unable to control the situation, de la Rúa resigned. For the next two weeks, the country had four different nominal presidents until the situation stabilised with the appointment of Senator Eduardo Duhalde to serve the remainder of de la Rúa’s term. After the fall of the de la Rúa’s administration, violent protests and mass demonstrations dimin-