



Women, Resistance and Revolution: A History of Women and Revolution in the Modern World

Sheila Rowbotham

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This classic book provides a historical overview of feminist strands among the modern revolutionary movements of Russia, China and the Third World. Sheila Rowbotham shows how women rose against the dual challenges of an unjust state system and social-sexual prejudice. "Women, Resistance and Revolution" is an invaluable historical study, as well as a trove of anecdote and example fit to inspire today's generation of feminist thinkers and activists.

Women, Resistance and Revolution: A History of Women and Revolution in the Modern World Details

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Author : Sheila Rowbotham

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From Reader Review Women, Resistance and Revolution: A History of Women and Revolution in the Modern World for online ebook

Maria says

Great overview of the women's rights movement.

Leonor says

This is overall a great book spanning many years of the women's liberation movement and of female involvement in the most important revolutions of the 20th century. Rowbotham is a Marxist second generation feminism and it is palpable in the book, so one must approach it with this in mind, for better and for worse. The weakest points, which almost tempted me to a three star review, are the points where the author very clearly overpraises certain groups and glosses over severe flaws in some of the systems presented, in particular in the China chapter. She's also unable to escape the otherization of the peoples she describes and at some points the eurocentrism in her view is very glaring.

Peter says

Sheila Rowbotham did a lot to initiate the early engagement between 1970s Women's Liberation and the socialist feminist tradition in this sweeping history of, well, women in resistance and revolutionary movements in the modern world. In this history, she finds many patterns and problems that would emerge in the Women's Liberation movement and continue to be with us to this day.

The primary example of this is the difficult rhetorical and organizational balancing act between emphasizing women's special oppression and attacking the oppressive social systems, such as capitalism, racism, imperialism, etc. in which patriarchy is embedded. Routinely, socialist movements, in and out of power, paid lip service, if that, to women's oppression and little more. Just as frequently, emphasis on attacking sexism apart from the larger context of oppression leads to the dead end of bourgeois feminism. It is tricky. In tracing this dynamic as it played out in the beginnings of the revolutionary period, in the 19th century socialist and suffragette movements, and in the Soviet Union and other revolutionary regimes, Rowbotham demonstrates that the issues surrounding women's liberation are one of the fundamental dynamics of modern politics, alongside the other perennial quandaries that many of Rowbotham's peers among the midcentury leftist historians identified.

This is the sort of book I don't have a ton to say about- it's informative, well-written, useful both for all of the historical examples it brings together and for its analysis. It's poignant in a lot of places too, not least in its depictions of women in third world liberation struggles, written in the period of high hopes for the global transformative potential of those movements. Another poignant testimony is that whenever I read a feminist writer from the second wave that I get a lot out of, I find myself crossing my fingers and hoping to hell she got through the bad decades that have followed, and also avoided becoming a TERF. Rowbotham is still with us and writing, and Google doesn't say anything about Rowbotham having gone down that fell road... fingers

crossed, I guess. *****

<https://toomuchberard.wordpress.com/2...>

Rachel Siska says

This was an interesting book. It looked at feminism in a way that I have not seen before. She covered countries and groups of women I have never studied before. Unfortunately, I felt she occasionally dragged some topics on for too long. Also, it is important to remember this book was published in 1973, so it does not cover anything from the past four decades.

Adrian Colesberry says

I really enjoyed this book. Women revolutionaries are kind of double-subversive in that they are revolting against the primary injustice and then also revolting against the social assumption that men should be doing the revolting.

Jenia says

Really fantastic. Not always an easy read, not always everything I agree with politically, sometimes uses language to describe ideas that we'd describe in a different way now. But they're the same ideas; it's very very good. I really recommend it to anybody interested in the history of feminism, as examined from a revolutionary perspective. Things we're arguing about now are things that were relevant in the 1970s when Rowbotham wrote it, and were relevant in the 17th century which this book starts with.

I have no idea how "true" this book is for women in the various countries Rowbotham describes, but at the very least her chapter on the USSR/Russia rings true to *my* experiences. Things I've been sure of for a while now. It's nice to see my own personal thoughts confirmed on a larger scale, and it's nice to remember our generation doesn't have to start from scratch, that we should be and are building on the ideas of myriad revolutionary women before us.
