Dalla Costa shows that with the New Deal, the state began to plan the ‘social factory’—that is, the home, the family, the school, and above all women’s labor—on which the productivity and pacification of industrial relations was made to rest. *Family, Welfare, and the State* leaves no doubt that the New Deal was not only the last resort to “save capitalism” from the danger of working class revolution, but was also in essence a productivity deal that was structured to maintain a patriarchal and racist order. This is a history that today must be revisited as we ask whether our energies and our movements should concentrate on restoring or defending the welfare state, or constructing more autonomous forms of reproduction.

—Silvia Federici, from the Preface

Were the New Deal and the institutions of the welfare state the saviors of the working class or did they destroy its self-reproducing capacities? Written in the ten years following the publication of the influential *The Power of Women and the Subversion of Community* (1972) and the international organizing efforts of the Wages for Housework Campaign, Mariarosa Dalla Costa’s *Family, Welfare, and the State* reflects on the history of struggles around the New Deal in which workers’ initiatives forced a new relationship with the state on the terrain of social reproduction.

By analyzing the relationship between women and the state, Dalla Costa offers a comprehensive reading of the welfare system through the dynamics of resistance and struggle, the willingness and reluctance to work inside and outside the home, and the relationship with the relief structures that women expressed in the United States during the Great Depression.

Three decades later, revisiting the origins of this system on a sociopolitical level—its policies governing race, class, and family relations, especially in terms of the role that was delegated to women’s labor power—remains vital for a deeper understanding of the historical relationship between women and the state, crisis and resistance, and possibilities for class autonomy.

**MARIAROSA DALLA COSTA** is an influential feminist author and activist, whose seminal book *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, coauthored with Selma James, has been translated into six languages. For decades, Dalla Costa has been a central figure in the development of autonomist thought in a wide range of anticapitalist movements.