Books

Marxism in Metamorphosis

By Alfred G. Meyer

R. N. BERKI. *Socialism.* London, St. Martin's Press, 1976.
A. ROSS JOHNSON. *The Transformation of Communist Ideology: The Yugoslav Case, 1945-1953.* Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 1972.
MIHAJLO MARKOVIĆ. *From Affluence to Praxis: Philosophy and Social Criticism.* Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Press, 1974.
SVETOZAR STOJANOVIĆ. *Between Ideals and Reality: A Critique of Socialism and Its Future.* New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1973.
ROGER GARAUDY. *The Crisis in Communism: The Turning Point of Socialism.* New York, NY, Grove Press, 1970.
G. H. R. PARKINSON, Ed. *Georg Lukács.* New York, NY, Random House, 1970.

THE LATE George Lichtheim once contended that we have come to a point where we can study Marxism dispassionately because it no longer is alive. Contrast this statement with the recent study of socialism by R. N. Berki, reviewed in this essay, in which the author argues that socialism, especially in its Marxist forms, is the all-pervasive global ideology of our century and that all or most important questions of political theory in our age are questions generated within Marxist and socialist thought—a view that certainly projects Marxism as a living ideology.

Both of the authors I have cited may have been referring to the same phenomenon—namely, the variety of interpretations to which the ideas of Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx have been subjected. One could refer to this as the disintegration of Marxism. But one could also see it as evidence that the movement or the school of thought to which we give that name is vibrantly alive today. What must be stressed is that these are not necessarily—or at least wholly—contradictory concepts, as I hope to demonstrate in the course of this essay.

When Marx made his famous remark that he was not a Marxist, he meant to indicate that he disliked the interpretations his own followers and friends, including his sons-in-law, were giving to his theories. "I have sowed dragons' teeth," he once said to Engels, "and have harvested fleas." The truth is that Marx did not believe his closest friends and disciples understood him. Just consider the stormy relationship he and Engels had with their most loyal defender in Germany, Wilhelm Liebknecht. It is obvious to anyone studying this relationship that even during the life of Marx the men and women leading the movement named for him were at odds with each other, and with the founding fathers themselves, over questions of theory and political action. Since then, the process of differentiation or disintegration has continued; and long ago it became impossible to give any kind of authoritative definition of Marxism. It is not a movement but a cluster or constellation of movements.

What holds the constituent parts of this constellation together is little more than the common origin, the common vocabulary, and the common allegiance each of the self-confessed Marxists owes (or believes he owes) to the ideas and policies of Engels and Marx. The historian observing this disintegration of what once seemed a reasonably unified and unambiguous movement may be tempted to make comparisons between what happened in Marxism and what happened in previous schools of thought—from Christianity to liberalism, from the heritage of Plato to that of G. W. F. Hegel.

I thought of both Marxism and liberalism when I recently read Edward P. Thompson's impressive work on the rise of the Eng-

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lish working class.[1] Early in the book he discusses the disintegration of English nonconformism into three distinct strands—the unitarianism of genteel intellectuals, the hard-line sectarianism of the Methodists, and the radicalism of the English Jacobins. His description of the Unitarians suggested the learned and cultured Marxism of the Frankfurt school; his treatment of the Jacobins made me think of contemporary Third World Marxism; and his remarks about Methodism reminded me of Stalinism—especially his description of the double function Methodism fulfilled as a consumption and status ethic for the climbers and the successful and as a harsh work ethic for the poor.[2]

If we turn from the case of English nonconformism to liberalism, we will probably come to the conclusion that a much more complicated system of classification will have to be thought out to accommodate the many divergent schools that have developed from it. The conservative economics of Milton Friedman, the pluralist elitism of Robert A. Dahl, the cold war liberalism of W. W. Rostow and Samuel P. Huntington, the technocratic liberalism of Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, the welfare state liberalism of John K. Galbraith, and many other schools of thought — including democratic socialism and in a certain sense revolutionary socialism, syndicalism, and anarchism—have sprung from the same ideological source: liberal and democratic theory. One look at the divergent pieces into which liberal democratic theory has broken will persuade anyone that Humpty Dumpty cannot be put back together again.

Is the case with Marxism similar?

Ideologies have a tendency to disintegrate into mutually opposite schools because they have tensions, contradictions, unresolved questions, and ambiguities in them to begin with. This is true particularly of the most important, the more seminal ideologies, because their greatness, their lasting impact, is related to the fact that they attempt to integrate much or all of previous thought and to answer the most puzzling questions. With respect to Marxism, an English specialist in literary criticism recently made the point very well in one of the books reviewed here:

> . . . *in the perspective of the history of ideas, Marxism is not a single ideology, or body of doctrine, or set of prescriptions of method in the social or human sciences, let alone a number of unambiguous prescriptions for relating theory to practice in dialectical or other ways. Like Darwinism, Marxism is a large intellectual family of alternative versions of all these things. It is so already in the writings of Marx; in the corpus of publications in which Marx and Engels collaborated; and by the beginning of this century there were many exponents of Marxism . . . whose views, in different areas—whether of dialectical or historical materialism or of the development of these in relation to revolutionary planning—were vastly divergent.*[3]

Indeed, quite a few contemporary Marxists would concede that Marx's ideas lend themselves

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[1] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York, NY, Random House, 1966.

[2] Ibid., pp. 34, 350 ff., esp. pp. 356, 357. It ought to be pointed out that other ideologies have functioned in analogous dual fashion; one might adduce Confucianism, Lutheranism, and the ideology of free enterprise, which, according to some wits, spells free enterprise for the poor and socialism for the rich.

[3] A. G. Lehmann, "The Marxist as a Literary Critic," in G. H. R. Parkinson, pp. 172-73.

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to conflicting interpretations; a convenient example would be the Yugoslav philosopher Svetozar Stojanović, whose most recent book is also reviewed here.[4] It is no more than common sense to assume that the divergent schools base themselves, to some extent, on such conflicting interpretations.

HOW, THEN, might one conveniently sort out the various Marxisms? What schemes might one use to think about this process of disintegration? The effort at classification is not an arid exercise in empty formalism. Instead, it seems useful to worry about the kind of order one might impose on the chaos of facts, because sorting out, classifying, and establishing criteria for such categorization is one essential aid to an understanding of what has happened.

A few years ago the humanist philosopher Henryk Skolimowski sought to provide such a scheme for classifying the divergent schools of Marxism. He identified four key concepts of Marxist philosophy — history, dialectics, praxis, and alienation—and distinguished three positions Marxists have taken with regard to each of these concepts. Skolimowski then assigned to each of these positions a place on the continuum from right-wing, through moderate, to left-wing, thus establishing twelve definitions; and by distilling philosophic positions from a person's writings, one could then identify the writer as right-wing, left-wing, moderate, or confused. The fact that Marx himself, at one time or another, held every one of these dozen views might already indicate how brittle a synthesis Marxism was from the very beginning.[5]

What Skolimowski labeled right-wing Marxism is an interpretation centering on economic determinism and the dialectic of nature; his left-wing Marxism might be characterized as focusing on the active subject and on a critique of Soviet-type societies. Such categories lead to strange classifications. For instance, Engels, V. I. Lenin, and Leon Trotskiy come out as right-wing Marxists; Rosa Luxemburg I would guess to be a moderate; while Georges Sorel falls on the left wing. Like Marx, furthermore, most contemporary individuals would be virtually impossible to classify.

Therefore, it is my general opinion that the political labels picked for this scheme are misleading, and that the scheme suffers from the arbitrary choice of the key concepts chosen. I miss particularly the more political parameters, such as leadership, organization, attitude toward reform, and the crucial element of timing.

All cultures have their magic numbers: seven in Buddhism and Judaism, three and also twelve in Christianity. Sometimes an even holier number is the magic number squared: seven times seven recurs in the Old Testament. For modern civilization the magic number seems to be two—the simplest schemes are binary, and we have computers as well as a numbers system based on binary principles. Positive science, with its either-or proposition, seems to suggest such principles. In social science, the holy number is two squared. I believe that the prevalence of fourfold classification schemes in contemporary social science is explainable in part by the two-dimensionality of our principal medium — paper. We must fit our knowledge to that medium.

Many years ago my friend Robert V. Daniels and I worked out a two-by-two scheme for classifying different schools of communism. Like many other people we had noted that the terms "left" and "right" were unsatisfactory, if only because the extremes often seemed to meet. Indeed, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., had just written a book, *The Vital Center,* in which he suggested that the left-right continuum should be bent to form a circle, in which fascism and communism met at the top, while liberalism was an entire diameter removed from them.[6] In order to explain why one might think of turning a straight line into a circle, Daniels and I suggested that political positions within the Marxist movement be classified according to two criteria—one of them a horizontal left-right axis, distinguishing conservatives or reformists from radicals; the other, a vertical axis, representing the political *methods* various schools or individuals proposed to use. Borrowing terms from Lenin, we suggested that the upper end of the continuum be called "hard," and the lower end, "soft." This classification scheme is not without its usefulness, as Daniels has shown in his book, *The Conscience of the Revolution.*[7]

R. N. BERKI, in *Socialism,* has now come up with an interesting

[4] Stojanović, pp. 138 ff., 145, 148.

[5] Henryk Skolimowski, "Open Marxism and Its Consequences," in *Studies in Comparative Communism* (Los Angeles, CA), January 1971, pp. 23-28.

[6] A. M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center,* Boston, MA, Houghton-Mifflin, 1949.

[7] R. V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1960.

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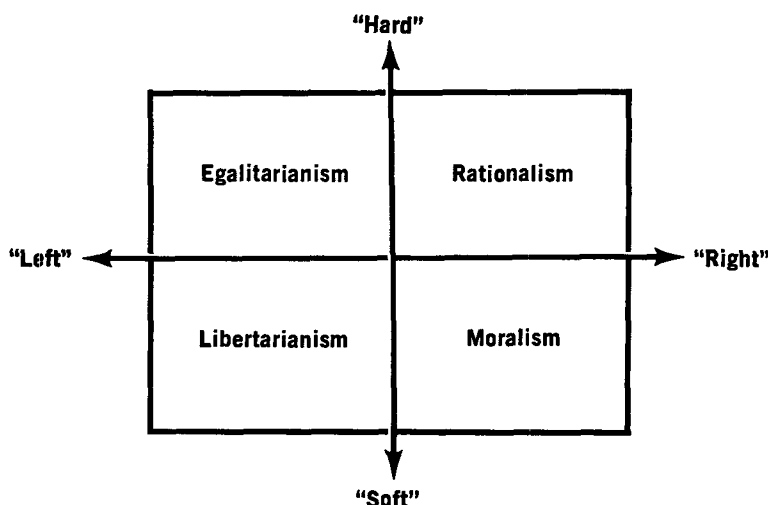
Figure 1: Marxism Schematized



two-dimensional scheme for classifying socialist schools that is, I believe, fairly congruent with the Daniels model but represents a considerable refinement of it. Berki begins with the assertion that socialism is the all-pervasive ideology of our century, that it seeks to address all of humanity and respond to all major problems of today's world. This probably is an exaggeration, and the difficulty which socialism has in addressing some specific problems, especially that of racism, may be adduced as evidence. Nonetheless, one must acknowledge that there is hardly a single current issue which *some* school of socialism or even of Marxism is not trying to address. In any event, according to Berki, contemporary socialism is the grand synthesis of all previous major ideological currents. It recaptures the component elements of Christianity, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Jacobinism, as well as anti-Jacobin radicalism, and makes a new mix out of them. But, because of the disparate raw materials, this mix is highly unstable.

Socialism, argues Berki, has focused on four major problems of human relations, which he identifies as equality, liberty, rationality, and morality. These four preoccupations are not, he emphasizes, compatible with each other, so that any socialist focusing attention on any one of these problems is likely to neglect, explain away, or denounce as unsocialist the rival schools. Egalitarian, libertarian, rationalist, and moralist schools of socialism diverge from each other, interweave with each other, and influence each other in an intricate and ever-changing pattern.

Egalitarian socialism and libertarian socialism, Berki contends, stress utopian goals. If one superimposes his scheme on the Daniels model, egalitarian socialism, which Berki identifies with Third World revolutionary socialism, falls in the upper left quadrant (see the accompanying figure), and libertarian socialism, which he identifies with the Western Left, the Frankfurt School, and the cultural revolution of the late 1960's, in the lower left. The right half of the model represents schools of socialism that stress practical results rather than utopian goals. Rationalist socialism, with its stress on accumulation, organization, hard work, and total control, symbolizes Stalinism; and it would go in the upper right. That leaves moralist socialism, which represents social democracy for Berki, in the lower right.[8]

My own summary of the major groupings would differ slightly from that given by Berki. I would suggest that egalitarian and libertarian Marxists are more preoccupied with problems of human relations, while those in the two "right" quadrants lay primary emphasis on things and institutions. The left-right division is that between "humanists" and "political economists." Or, one might argue that the former are concerned with the subjective preconditions for socialism, the latter with the objective ones. With regard to the creation of the objective preconditions, the rationalist Marxists endorse crash programs in social engineering, while the moralists stress organic growth patterns.

Up and down, hard and soft, it seems to me, correspond roughly to the Marxism, respectively, of underdeveloped or poor as compared to advanced or affluent countries, nations, and classes. Egalitarian and rationalist schools of Marxism are ideologies of the poor, while libertarian and moralist schools correspond more to the

[8] Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Dreispaltung des Marxismus*, Dusseldorf, Econ Verlag, 1970 (published in translation as *The Three Faces of Marxism*, New York, NY, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), distinguishes three basic strands of contemporary Marxism—the "scientific communism" of the USSR, Maoism, and the humanist Marxism of the reform communists. His classification scheme is based more on historic narrative than on conceptual divergences; and it is inferior to Berki's scheme because it excludes the libertarians of the New Left.

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needs of upper-class or Western radicalism.

This reduction of Berki's suggestive scheme to a two-by-two set of boxes is, of course, much too crude to do justice to his scheme. For one thing, the boxes should be without sides; the implication that ideological propensities exist in some finite space makes no sense. Second, the limitations of the two-dimensional medium are obvious. So many other issues enter into the making of any one interpretation of Marxism that even a three-dimensional model, shaped, say, like one of those fancy stars on top of Christmas trees, would not do justice to the complex pattern in which these many issues relate to each other. Nonetheless, when employed with sufficient caution as a mere illustrative device, the scheme has its uses.

No major figure or school fits neatly into any one of the quadrants. For instance, Soviet communism, according to Berki, combines egalitarian with rationalist tendencies, though he argues that since Lenin it has given more and more exclusive emphasis to rationalism—i.e., to accumulation, management, and control. Thus, Lenin himself might be placed near the top of the diagram, straddling the line between egalitarianism and rationalism, while Stalin would be placed much further to the right. In general, as the plethora of examples contained in Berki's book suggests, the conflicts, alliances, policies, and philosophies of various Marxist movements might be understood more readily if we saw them as the interplay of these converging and conflicting interpretations of the socialist heritage.

Despite certain shortcomings, this classification scheme seems so obvious, so self-evident, that one wonders why nobody has thought of it before. Let me test its usefulness here by applying it to a number of books which have little in common except that they all deal with various offshoots or transmutations of Stalinist ideology and practices. In short, they all deal with reform communism. Two of the volumes are by Yugoslav philosophers. One is by a recent defector from the French Communist Party. A fourth is a discussion of the contributions made by the Hungarian philosopher Georg Lukács, whom some people might be tempted to call a founding father of reform communism. Rounding out the list is a history of the beginning of the Yugoslav heresy.

TO QUOTE FROM A. Ross Johnson's study, when Yugoslavia was read out of the Cominform, the excommunication resolution of June 28, 1948 said, in part:

The Yugoslav line can only transform Yugoslavia into a bourgeois republic, lead to its loss of independence and its transformation into a colony of the imperalist countries. (p. 65)

While in retrospect some of this reads mildly prophetic, there was no basis for such a statement in 1948. As Johnson among many others has pointed out, the Yugoslav heresy developed slowly and reluctantly, and very much as an afterthought—i.e., as a post hoc rationalization of the state of excommunication in which the regime found itself, very much against its wishes and its expectations. The Yugoslav party had begun as the most loyal of all Stalinist parties; and Titoism represents the gradual and piecemeal adjustment to the party's having been read out of the fold. Each individual adjustment was controversial; and some problems raised relatively early remained forever unresolved, chief among them the controversy over the role of the League of Communists. Within the ranks of Communist parties, the Yugoslav case has remained unique. More important, one should note that few if any of the ideological adjustments made by the Yugoslavs were inspired or even informed by previous generations of critics and heretics. Instead, the changes were initiated as if in an ideological void. This is to be explained principally by the isolation from Marxist traditions which Stalinism had imposed on all its adherents.

All these generalizations can be drawn quite conveniently from Johnson's book. Unfortunately, his account breaks off precisely when the story becomes more interesting, because in time the ideological isolation of the Yugoslav Marxists was ended. Western influences—specifically, the influences of Western Marxist and socialist intellectuals on Yugoslav ideologists—intensified markedly; and partly as a result of this increasing intellectual intercourse, Yugoslav theory in the last ten to fifteen years has become something quite new.

Earlier attempts at formulating reform communism had been, so to say, in-house movements. The customary slogan of such attempts was "back to Lenin." If Berki's classification scheme makes sense—and I think it does—then we can understand this slogan as meaning an effort to revive the egalitarian principles which, in Lenin's ideology, merged with his strong rationalist preoccupations. Occasionally, reform

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communism also sought to revive elements of the Menshevik or social democratic traditions—i.e., it voiced concerns over the decline of democratic relations within the movement or, to use Berki's formulation, the loss of moralist principles.

Those Yugoslavs who in the last decade or two have cultivated intellectual discourse with Western radicals have discovered the humanist Marx—a Marx in whose writing not only moralist and egalitarian but also libertarian concerns are expressed strongly and are synthesized in a mixture which is as sophisticated as it is puzzling and obscure.

ONE PRECIPITATE of this rediscovery is Mihajlo Marković's *From Affluence to Praxis: Philosophy and Social Criticism,* a collection of lectures he gave at an American university. Like many of his colleagues, Marković has discovered the humanist Marx; and he is obviously aware how important the discovery is. Why, then, is his book such tedious reading? First, because he is now relating his discovery to his American students. That, however, is the wrong audience. Either they are on the left, in which case he is not telling them anything new—indeed, he is telling them things they might know better than he. Or else they are politically conservative or indifferent, in which case they are not likely to listen to a Yugoslav Marxist. The message is therefore bound to fall flat.

Of course, many authors really are talking to themselves even when it seems that they are addressing their readers. What is Marković telling himself in these lectures? Several things, I believe.

The first is that the Marxist movement and its ideology can be rescued from the many errors into which they have lapsed. These errors include Maoism (Berki's egalitarian socialism), which Marković dismisses with a few shrugs as obviously not worth discussing seriously; social democracy, which he tends to characterize as "economism"; the New Left; and finally "statism," a word which stands for Stalinism and which appears to him to be the most pernicious perversion of Marxism. (Curiously, while the entire book is pointed against Stalinism, little is said about the role of the superpowers in world affairs, about the economic, political, and military influence they wield and the effect this has had on contemporary society. That, together with other failings, gives this book a surprisingly dreamy, unrealistic air.)

His second message seems to be that the Yugoslav Marxists have found at least some of the formulas by which the reintegration and revival of Marxism can be achieved. And a third message I read out of his lectures is the conviction that this reinvigorated ideology is valid everywhere. I am surprised to read this in a book written by a Yugoslav. Yugoslavs more than most other Marxists ought to know that most words about human society in general are empty because each culture, each nation, must go its own road toward curing itself of inhumanities. Obviously, his perspective is far removed from Berki's recognition that the kind of socialism responding to the needs of, say, Western intellectuals may be quite different from that suitable for Third World revolutionaries, Western labor leaders, or Soviet industrial magnates.

I see this failing linked to a certain tendency Marković has to view philosophy as an independent variable, detached from politics. Orthodox Marxists would call this the idealist fallacy. Thus the various errors he criticizes are explained purely as philosophic inadequacies, not linked to any interests or to the needs of the system in which they originated. One might argue that he does not offer a Marxist analysis of why Marxism disintegrated after the death of its founders.

The book's main failing, however, is that its author has not managed to liberate himself from the dogmatism in which as a member of the communist movement he was reared. His typical approach to a philosophic problem is something like the following: First, we are confronting a question or a problem. We find that we are using confusing terminology; hence, we ourselves are confused. How can we get out of our confusion? One might think that there were several possible ways: one could throw out the vocabulary and adopt more suitable terms; one might simply use the old vocabulary with added caution; or one might examine reality so that new knowledge could lead to new understanding. Marković's solution is none of these. Instead, he urges his readers to consult Marx. In short, he seeks to solve philosophic problems by reference to holy writ.

Admittedly, Marx often yields interesting suggestions. He was a learned and profound man whose sketchy and obscure philosophic remarks point to many fruitful new avenues of thought. Unfortunately, Marković does not, in my opinion, come up to Marx's subtleties. Instead, his attempt to integrate egalitarian, moralist, and libertar-

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ian Marxism with the rationalist tradition of Stalinism falls flat. I am tempted to refer to Marković as an Aristotelian Marxist, who seeks to do nothing in excess but to steer cautiously between the extremes. All answers he gives are stated as syntheses between extremes; but the extremes usually are given in their most absurd forms, and what is declared to be a synthesis is often in fact a tepid, shallow, and frequently unconvincing middle position. It seems to me that there is a direct link between the pedestrianism of his syntheses and his inability to recognize the brittleness of the grand synthesis attempted by Marx himself.

Because dogmatic ballast encumbers him, Marković has serious trouble dealing with problems that have arisen since the death of Marx. The most obvious example of such a problem is the question whether contemporary technology represents a promise or a threat and what role technocrats might play in a more desirable society. Marković is as confused about, as he is fascinated by, these issues. Is this because Marx himself lived too early to be aware of nuclear energy and computer technology?

In dismissing this one attempt to put the Humpty Dumpty of Marxism together again as inadequate, I am suggesting that it will not convince any of the schools Berki has identified as issuing from the socialist movement—libertarians, moralists, rationalists, egalitarians. Nor does it present a synthesis appealing to non-Marxists either of the left or of the right.

SVETOZAR STOJANOVIĆ, in *Between Ideals and Reality,* addresses much the same issues as does Marković in his lectures. But there are significant differences. Stojanović is much less dogmatic, much more critical of the socialist tradition. He dwells much more on the tensions in Marx's own writings; and some of his efforts to synthesize the divergent interpretations sound somewhat more convincing — for instance, his definition of dialectical thinking as a careful avoidance of the errors of utopianism and determinism (p. 27).

Stojanović provides rich, provocative, stimulating ideas on the degeneration of revolutions and again and again returns to the theme of *rembourgeoisement.* His treatment of statism is bolder than that of Marković; he views it as a new form of class society and draws analogies between Stalinism and the feudal and clerical systems of the Middle Ages. Unlike Marković, he does not get stuck in the realm of ideas. Instead, he links ideas with practice and thus enriches his critique—for instance, in his treatment of democratic centralism. Moreover, he draws his critical ideas not only from Marx, but also from Waclaw Machajski, Roberto Michels, Bruno Rizzi, James Burnham, and other "bourgeois" social scientists. Indeed, although his chapter on bourgeois, socialist, and fascist democracy does not, in my opinion, come up to the general standard of his book, his major thesis—that socialist movements should stop criticizing bourgeois democracy and instead start learning from it (p. 107)—is remarkable. So is his courageous and provocative treatment of the means-end dialectic (also known as the problem of dirty hands) and his argument that, even under a socialist state, workers must be able to resist exploitation and therefore require the right to strike.

In short, even though Stojanović still shies away from criticizing Lenin and is enough of a Leninist to accept without question the need for a revolutionary vanguard (which he considers to be democratic), this book is a bold attempt to reinfuse libertarian, egalitarian, and moralist ideas into a Marxism grown sclerotic with rationalism. He becomes vague and unconvincing only when he discusses constructive alternatives to current socialist and capitalist systems. His proposal for an integral socialist community is offered as a solution to the problem of reconciling the demands for freedom and order; it attempts to steer clear of the extremes of what he calls "anarcho-liberalism" and market socialism. But even as a verbal solution, his proposal sounds hollow. Similarly, his notion of "socialist personalism" as a means to reconcile the need for hierarchy with that for autonomy seems little more than a phrase. These failings, however, do not detract from the value of his effort to revitalize Yugoslav Marxist theorizing.

IN CONTRAST, Roger Garaudy's *The Crisis in Communism,* a book for which the author was kicked out of the French Communist Party, is not a synthesis of anything, but must be described as an abortive rescue operation. Obviously, Garaudy felt a growing sense of embarrassment at the development of the Soviet system and at its oppressive influence on his own and other Western Communist parties. Just as obviously, he seems to have sensed the need for an updating of Marxist ideas, especially in light of the technological revolutions of our

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century and the process of decolonization that has gone on over the last few decades. Garaudy, however, appears inclined to accomplish such updating without giving up too much of the Marxist holy writ, including the strategy, tactics, and organizational pattern with which he has been familiar as a veteran communist. His book proves that either this cannot be done or that it would take a more learned and more profound person than he to achieve such a reintegration.

Garaudy demonstrates that mere indignation at having been duped is inadequate unless backed up by solid knowledge and philosophic sophistication. He has neither. In ignorance he permits himself gross inanities about such subjects as democratic politics in the United States, capitalism in general, and the social consequences of the computer revolution. His principal thesis, unsupported by any evidence whatever, deserves to be quoted:

For the first time in history the demands of economic and technological development and the demands of democracy and of human development are both proceeding in the same direction because economic and technological development increasingly postulates the full expansion of what is especially human in man, his aptitude for creation. (p. 39)

He comes up with equally naive notions about long-range development prospects in the major countries of the world, including a surprising utopian vision of a purposeful and prosperous capitalist world. As for political action programs, he appears to me to be hopelessly lost between the conviction that revolution is inevitable and the understanding that both Soviet communism and Western capitalism must be humanized by gradual reforms. In the end, his formula for solving the world's problems turns out to be a new dialogue among civilizations—among the capitalist West, the communist East, and the developing South. His book, far from contributing to the reintegration of Marxism, demonstrates the difficulty of even beginning the task.

FEW PEOPLE seem to have been as eminently qualified for the latter exercise as the philosopher and critic Georg Lukács, who is the subject of the final book under review. A towering intellect, with solid education in philosophy, sociology, and literary criticism, he acquired a good deal of experience in practical radical politics, to which strong *moral* impulses had driven him—impulses which he was to continue confessing throughout his life. *Egalitarian* considerations impelled him, during World War I, to join the Marxist movement and the Communist party. His *libertarian* side was expressed in his strong identification with the Hegelian philosophic tradition; and his *rationalism* came to the fore in his discovery of Lenin. Thus, at least on the level of theory, or more precisely on the level of vocabulary, he seemed to be striving for a synthesis of the divergent elements which, according to Berki, make up the Marxist heritage. Indeed, by focusing on literature and art, Lukács added estheticism as a possible fifth dimension to this structure. From the beginning of his adult life he strove, foremost, to bring culture to the workers, to preserve it for them. Perhaps this could be subsumed under one or several of the other four preoccupations. In any event, his contributions to Marxist esthetics have made a profound impact.

Lukács was one of the foremost pioneers of a humanist understanding of Marxism. His thoroughly Hegelian understanding of the Marxian dialect is all the more remarkable because he elaborated it long before the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, which make this interpretation plausible, were published. In line with his highly sophisticated understanding of Marxist philosophy, he advanced or revived concepts which every student of Marx must use today—totality, concreteness, alienation, fetishism, objectification, mediation, praxis, to name only a few.

In short, Lukács might be characterized as a revisionist in the noblest sense of the word. Yet doubts remain about the lasting impact of his accomplishment, because his attempt at reintegrating the divergent elements of Marxist philosophy, on closer examination, is seriously flawed. I think that the chief flaw is a glaring gap between his lofty words and his actual political behavior. Lukács preached high moral principles but showed no sympathy for moralist interpretations of Marxist political practices. He was conscious of the cultural tasks intellectuals had to perform for the working class; but, in contrast to Antonio Gramsci, whose theories he did not appreciate, he seems to have been concerned primarily with preserving narrowly selected elements of bourgeois culture. A self-confessed dialectician, he loathed all forms of avantgardism, even though it could easily be argued that avantgardists have been the foremost dialecticians of our age. A philosopher of freedom,

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he nonetheless felt the urge to attach himself to a strong historic force—which happened to be the Russian Revolution and its heirs.

On the level of pure theory, Lukács' synthesis at first appears impressive. In practice, however, much of it turns out to be an elaborate, sometimes labored, often talmudistic and obscure, apology for what Berki calls the rationalist interpretation of Marxism, i.e., Stalinism. By instinct a critic and a revisionist, Lukács caved in whenever he was disciplined. Indeed, one could easily argue that by its very nature his method, his interpretation of Marxism, was inadequate for a critical and radical understanding of Stalinist and post-Stalinist societies.

Moreover, while his sermons on the moral duty of the intellectual are in the end no more than complicated and obscure abstractions, his judgments of actual political events or actual works of art often are sources of keen embarrassment for his admirers. The book reviewed here, edited by G. H. R. Parkinson, was written by sympathetic left-wing authors who genuinely would like to learn from Lukács. But in their articles they take him apart rather unceremoniously, dwelling on his political conservatism or fickleness, his philosophic mistakes, the capricious manner in which he at times uses crucial terms, his esthetic stuffiness, and his sheer ignorance about many things he discusses authoritatively. Several of the contributors show that it is possible to translate his prose into clear language; but much of his writing reflects dogmatism, prejudice, or philosophic inadequacies. Very probably, one could attribute many of these failings to the excessive influence of what Berki has called the rationalist interpretation of the Marxist heritage.

While this suggests that, in the final analysis, Lukács has failed as a reform communist, one must be aware that the effects of anyone's writings are unpredictable. His own position as a life-long outsider who desperately wanted to stay within the movement is sufficiently ambiguous—and his language is so opaque, his terms so slippery—that his works could easily be used by reformers as well as conservatives within the communist camp. Probably, however, the ideological bureaucrats of managerial communism would hesitate to quote him even when he agrees with them, because his vocabulary contains too many words from the language of libertarian and egalitarian Marxism.

WORDS, ONCE UTTERED, acquire a life of their own and continue to haunt the consciousness of successive generations. Our society has precious little in common with that of John Locke or that of Adam Smith. Yet their words are part of the political culture which we pass on to successive generations as hallowed parts of our intellectual heritage. Once a year the mummy of Jeremy Bentham is rolled out of its closet so he can participate in a board meeting. Far more often we take the words of Kant, Hume, Mill, and many other ideological saints out of their shrines to display and disseminate them; and surely there are always people whose behavior is changed by the ideas they learn. The liberal heritage has not, of course, prevented the movement based upon these ideas from going in its many divergent directions, if only because the classics of liberal ideology, no less than those of Marxism, rest upon a solid foundation of ambiguities. Nonetheless, they still speak to us with persuasive voices, perhaps precisely because they are ambiguous.

Berki seems to think that in the long run the Marxist movement will manage to reintegrate itself: egalitarians, exemplified by Mao's brand of Marxism, will feel compelled to move closer to rationalism; moralists will yield to the prodding conscience of libertarian traditions. With growing affluence and political stability, the exclusive emphasis which Soviet and East European party leaders have given to rationalist considerations will mellow, so that the gentler humanist values contained in the Marxian synthesis can be accommodated.

What appears more likely to me, however, is a continuation of a dialectic in which divergences and reintegrations intermingle with each other in a continual ebb and flow—excited at times, quiescent at others. Each generation of Marxists since the death of the founders has faced similar ambiguities and dilemmas. Each generation of Marxists, having to make painful choices, has felt the need to justify them by reference to the founders' writings. Accompanied by the resultant noise of words, the process of differentiation has brought forth ever more divergent schools that have little more in common than their joint allegiance to the movement's holy writ. But the very fact of differentiation compels generation after generation of Marxist ideologists to attempt yet another reintegration.

To the extent that 20th-century political thought is generally committed to some sort of socialism, Marx has replaced Kant, Locke, and other 18th century philoso-

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phers as one of the universal points of reference. We—or if not we, then the vast majority of contemporary political theorists — haul him out of the closet of history, making his ideas the points of departure and return.

But as Locke's philosophy became increasingly less adequate as a response to problems of the industrial age, with the result that reference to him was rendered more and more academic, so one might foresee that the ideas of Marx and Engels, however timeless in their profundity, sophistication, and humaneness, will increasingly reveal their inadequacy to deal with problems of the nuclear age. Marx will then join Plato and Aristotle, St. Augustine and Machiavelli, Rousseau, Hegel, and many others, on the pedestal we reserve for the most seminal thinkers of our culture. He will be as alive to our intellectual tradition as they. But his movement will have disintegrated as irrevocably as the Humpty Dumpty of 18th-century liberalism.

Soviet Foreign Policy: Ideology and Realpolitik

By Pierre Hassner

ROBIN EDMONDS. *Soviet Foreign Policy 1962-1973: The Paradox of Super Power.* New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1975.
W. W. KULSKI. *The Soviet Union in World Affairs: A Documented Analysis, 1964-1972.* Syracuse, NY, Syracuse University Press, 1973.
ALAIN BESANÇON. *Court traité de soviétologie à l'usage des autorités civiles, militaires et religieuses* (Short Treatise on Sovietology for Use by Civilian, Military, and Religious Authorities). Paris, Hachette, 1976.

OLD DEBATES never die. They fade away into boredom and wait to be flogged back to apparent life in a new reincarnation. Twenty years ago this magazine hosted a lively discussion on the role of ideology versus power politics in determining Soviet foreign policy. One would have thought that, in particular, Richard Lowenthal's contribution at that time, or Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics* published some years later, had settled the issue by demonstrating the mutual dependence and interpenetration of national interest and ideology, the diversity of dimensions and of functions of the latter, and the different levels of impact on policy, and of susceptibility to change, of ideological and power considerations.[1] But the same crude dichotomies between ideology and power have re-emerged intact after a generation in current debates about détente, the significance of Soviet arms policies, Soviet attitudes toward change in Western Europe, and the source of Soviet conduct in Africa.

Western commentators are not entirely to blame for this, of course. Their renewed polemics have been fueled by more relevant debates among Soviet dissidents—notably Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Andrey Sakharov, and now Aleksandr Zinoviev—about the importance of ideology to the existence of the Soviet regime, and by the emergence of apparent new discrepancies between communist theory and Soviet practice or between the Kremlin leadership's international and domestic behavior patterns. The effusiveness of the 1972 Soviet-American Moscow summit gave rise to a record number of announcements concerning the demise of the cold war and of the Marxist-Leninist

[1] See Richard Lowenthal, "The Logic of One-Party Rule," in *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), March-April 1958, pp. 21-30. Other contributors to the discussion were R. N. Carew Hunt, Samuel L. Sharp, and J. L. H. Keep. See also Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*, New York, NY, Praeger, 1962.

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