

cover what these moral absolutes are and by meditation on the word of God, gain the inner strength to regulate his life by them. Every intellectual advance from Darwin to Wittgenstein has made those assumptions more untenable. Every recent discovery in the social sciences, from literary criticism to economics, has made it more obvious that the basis for morality must be social, not individual. It is true, no doubt, that the Puritan character structure has survived the destruction of the intellectual and moral foundations on which it was based. But it has survived as an empty shell, as a series of negative reflex actions no more coherent or logical than the gentleman-ideal itself. Mr. Christopher Hill once wrote that 19th-century nonconformity was to 17th-century Puritanism what vinegar is to wine. In Mr. Green's book, even the vinegar has lost its flavour.

David Marquand

Marx's Ideology

Marxism. An Historical and Critical Study.
By GEORGE LICHTHEIM. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, 40s.

REVOLUTIONS and great political movements have always been connected somewhat loosely with the doctrines of political philosophers and economists, to say nothing of the teachings of theologians and the hypotheses of the natural scientists. The American revolutionaries were prepared to borrow natural rights from Locke; the "General Will" was a convenient mask for the Committee of Public Safety. The Bible, the Fathers, and Aristotle have always been plundered to make up political handbooks. We may note the *De Monarchia* of Dante and the *Defensor Pacis* of Marsilius, John of Salisbury's defence of tyrannicide, and the gentle experiment of the Diggers. But the texts appealed to are always, as it were, illustrative of the policies advocated. They offer approved models, apt slogans, timely and witty expressions of what are taken to be permanent truths about human society.

Indeed, it would not be extravagant to say that from the Greek city state to the French Revolution there was only one serious philosophy of politics: the presumption that it is the human task to shape the good society in accordance with prudential rules and moral norms that are available to a suitable combination of

intelligence and goodwill in all places and at all times. When David Hume appeals in moral and political matters to fellow-citizens of the republic of letters, the republic of letters is a surrogate for a humanity capable of enlightened decision in all essential matters. There may be Augustinian pessimists and romantic utopians; but even these get their sense from a middle doctrine of which they are both variations.

Marxism is a different matter. It derives from Hegel a kind of thoroughness and pretended omniscience and a consequent impetus to make unprecedented claims: a claim to being the science of the sciences, the inner and (now, at last) revealed pattern of all human thought and social development, the instrument by which man is to be freed from the bonds of alienation, the solvent of religion, the key to the future. Wavering between historical prediction and eschatology, it speaks of the vanishing of the State—though in the interregnum between the revolution and the consummation of the good society the proletarian state is indeed to be *poena et remedium peccati*—which will join the spinning wheel and the bronze axe in the museum of historical curiosities and of the end of human prehistory and the beginning of human history.

Such an intellectual system must, if it is to be anything more than a paranoid fantasy, issue in a political movement related to the system in a fashion quite other than that in which the Jacobins, say, were related to Rousseau. Rousseau and other political philosophers provided cracker mottoes for active politicians who wanted a formula to cover the nakedness of interest. But such political philosophers were not in any case offering operative principles for the transformation of human society. They were, along with other things, engaged in a conceptual enquiry. They wanted to know what one was logically committed to when, in the context of politics, one spoke of "freedom," "justice," "obligation," "contract," "individual and community," and so on. For them, history was what it was for Thucydides and Gibbon, a record illustrating the limits and possibilities of an unchanging human nature.

The monument of Marxism is to be perceived all around us. Its exponents are in power in two great states and a number of smaller ones. And everywhere in the world where there are poor peasants, plantation workers, industrial workers who yesterday were peasants, intellectuals without employment, inflamed nationalists, black and brown men abused by white men, Marxism is a word of power. There is a paradox here. Classical Marxism foresaw its victory in the expropriation of bourgeois property by the workers of developed industrial societies. Instead, it has

been an instrument of change in pre-industrial societies and in societies just emerging from a mediæval economy into the modern world. But the total claims made for Marxism have not been abated; and its being a word of power for simple and agonised people all over the world is related to their awareness that its claims are total. What these claims are may be known only in the sketchiest and crudest way by those who are most enchanted by the doctrine; but they have all the same a sense that behind the slogans of the Communist parties there are vast reserves of intellectual power, a doctrine and a method to turn the old world of pain and conflict into a new world of harmony and peace.

NOTHING IS EASIER than to take the laborious scholasticism of Engels' later writings and the vulgar Marxism of the Stalinist era and show their confusions and absurdities. This has been done with crushing effect by Professor H. B. Acton in *The Illusion of the Epoch*. But there are sophisticated defences of Marxism, defences closely linked with the "revisionism" that forced its way to the surface of the Communist parties, notably in Poland and Hungary, after 1945 and with small ultra-left groups, especially in France, that seek a revolutionary alternative to the Communist parties. Such sophisticated defences

rely heavily upon the early neo-Hegelian writings of Marx and the ideas of Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, and other critics of the dominant trends in Bolshevism. Their aim is to prise away from Marxism the fearful carapace of scholastic commentary which weighs it down, to exhibit its philosophical originality and its revolutionary élan. Sometimes, as with Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, an injection of existentialist phenomenology is thought to be a necessary preliminary to the operation. In any case, this operation is conceived in the academies and remains academic.

It is one of the greatest merits of George Lichtheim's masterly historical and critical study of Marxism that he is aware of the sophisticated possibilities as well as the simple-minded absurdities. He sees Marx as the greatest figure of the 19th century in that he built a system that now seems more than a curiosity, and in this it is quite unlike the systems of Comte and Spencer, and at the same time released into the stream of revolutionary politics the ideas of German philosophy, British political economy, and French socialism. German in its portentousness, and, so to speak, cosmic ambition, Jewish and Christian in its embodiment of a Messianic hope, the system all the same is marked by a sense of social reality and

POLITICAL AFRICA

A Who's Who of Personalities and Parties

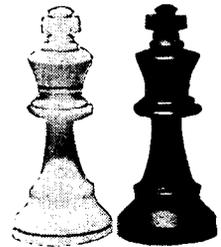
edited by Ronald Segal

What is it? POLITICAL AFRICA is primarily a Who's Who of some 400 leading personalities; but there is also an account of the aims and histories of over 100 of the political parties involved. The work is divided into two parts, Political Personalities and Political Parties, and is fully cross-referenced.

Whose idea? The idea came from Ronald Segal, editor of AFRICA SOUTH, now in exile in London. Mr. Segal knows well the leading personalities in Africa, and he has been careful to keep the analysis objective and factual. His relationship with PRESENCE AFRICAINE in Paris ensures accurate information on French-speaking Africa.

Who will use it? POLITICAL AFRICA will be of interest to all concerned with world politics, and is an essential tool for everyone who has to write, think or speak about Africa.

50s. net



Stevens

a penetrating analysis of the human predicament in the terrible 19th century. No one so well as Marx has brought out the logical absurdity of contemporary materialism which forgot "that circumstances are changed by men, and that the educator must himself be educated." Lichtheim's Marx is a gigantic figure, to be compared with a St. Augustine, a Vico, a Freud; one who has changed the world of man through understanding. The understanding is shown to be partial, and distorted in its transmission by disciples; but the intellectual achievement is there.

Lichtheim brings out what is central and original in Marx in his comment on the passage in *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* which culminates in the splendid affirmation: "Philosophy cannot realise itself without abolishing the proletariat, and the proletariat cannot emancipate itself without realising philosophy." He writes:

This famous passage is commonly cited as proof that in 1844 Marx was not yet a Marxist: in other words, that he had not yet developed the "materialist" outlook which after 1850—and in particular from the 1870's onward—was to become the hallmark in orthodoxy. . . .

Whatever may be said about the evolution of doctrine, there is no "Marxism" apart from Marx's own writings, and the . . . passage is certainly one of his most characteristic early statements. . . . It is true that in later years he took a less exalted view of the part which thought had to play in transforming the world, just as the concept of a social revolution which would transcend philosophy by "realising" its aims disappeared from his writings; but it was never repudiated, nor could it have been, for it is precisely what he meant by the "union of theory and practice." Without this central idea, Marxism is just another species of materialist determinism, and this is indeed what the later socialist movement largely succeeded in making out of it. But the transformation was never complete; at the core of the system, however much it might be watered down by its own author and others to suit the positivist fashion of the later 19th century, there remained something resembling the original vision of a world made new by a unique event fusing thought and action, theory and practice, philosophy and the revolution, into a creative drama of human liberation. It is literally true that apart from this quasi-metaphysical *tour de force* the whole subsequent history of the Marxist movement must remain incomprehensible. . . .

Lichtheim's book is exceptionally rich in its assembled materials. The argument is always penetrating, the exposition clear. Most of all to be admired is the skill with which he relates the development of Marxism to its historical circumstances. This enables him to bring out more clearly than in any other treatment known

to me that stratum in Marxism from which Lenin and Trotsky quarried their peculiar doctrines. At the same time he is able to show, as against Lenin, that Kautsky, for example, was, even as a "defensist," thoroughly Marxist in the sense that belongs to the Marxism systematised by Engels for the German Social Democrats after 1870.

As an intellectual system Marxism is now in dissolution. About this Lichtheim has no doubt. The concluding sections of his book should be read by all who, revolted by Stalinism and such ugly post-Stalinist atrocities as the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, nevertheless hanker after a purified Marxism and a form of revolutionary socialism modelled upon early Bolshevism (as it is romantically conceived). Marxism has withered into the ideology of a totalitarian society; and as such it is the mere husk of an intellectual movement that was once alive but is now beyond the possibility of re-animation. Whatever is encouraging in the latest developments of Soviet society owes little to Marxism, much to the Russian tradition and to the impulses of our common human nature.

J. M. Cameron

Patriot of Plato's City

The Forms of Things Unknown. By HERBERT READ. *Faber, 25s.*

HERBERT READ has taken his stand before now against received opinion. The battle for the "Modern Movement" against "conservative philistinism" has been won and forgotten; and the new enemy is no less of the *Zeitgeist* and the Left than Sir Herbert himself. The present "essay towards an æsthetic philosophy" is addressed in the first place to linguistic philosophers and other critics who claim that their methods have the validity of science. The object of the most important chapters is to show that quantitative standards, when applied in fields where they are inapplicable, are destructive of the very material to which they are misapplied; or rather that the essence of a work of art is by its very nature beyond their reach. This might seem self-evident, but every year more and more such works appear; someone, presumably, has to answer them, and the champion is, of course, Herbert Read.

He disclaims, however, the name of philosopher—as must any "lover of wisdom" at the