

Book Reviews

The Unfinished Revolution. An essay on the sources of influence of Marxism and Communism. Adam B. Ulam. Random House, New York, 1960. 210 pp. \$5.

The continuing preoccupation with the meaning of Marxian socialism and communism cannot be regarded as an idle academic pastime. No other doctrinal scheme in the social sciences has ever had comparable, world-wide repercussions as "applied science" in the course of less than a century after its promulgation. In view of the enormous range of the literature dealing with Marxian socialism from the point of view of a variety of academic disciplines and of politics, domestic and international, it is to be expected that truly useful contributions to our understanding of this phenomenon are far from common and merit attention. It can be said at once that, in my opinion, Adam Ulam's study is one of these contributions.

Certain approaches to the study of Marxism have been characteristic of much of the work in this field. There are, on various levels of sophistication, the polemical and propagandistic writings determined to vindicate Marxian truths or to demonstrate the errors of Marxism; frequently they obscure in the process all distinctions between the realms of theory and practice. (Because of the proliferation of "schools" in the house of Marxism itself, related efforts to prove one group's orthodoxy against another's heterodoxy are legion.) Much work of a primarily expository, partly interpretive nature—whether from the historian's, the economist's, or the political scientist's point of view—has aimed at a coherent view of the Marxian (or Leninist) position, seeking to cope with baffling difficulties of method and terminology, and of the substantive doctrine itself. There are critical appraisals "from without," explicitly based on the values of another philosophical

or religious position (including such important contributions as Father Wetter's study of dialectical materialism) and, much more rarely, "immanent critiques," such as Herbert Marcuse's *Soviet Marxism* (1958) which, starting with Soviet Marxism's theoretical premises themselves, set forth their ideological and sociological consequences in order to reexamine the premises in their light. Manifestly, none of these loosely defined categories are mutually exclusive, since no interpretation is possible without an adequate presentation of Marxian thought itself which, in turn, poses the problem of selecting the body of thought that is to be so identified in the given case.

Among the questions which have understandably agitated and divided students (and some practitioners) is that of the connection between Marxist-Leninist theory and the actions and policies of the Soviet regime. In a sense (while it is designed to throw some light on it) Ulam's concern is with the obverse: what were the main practical assumptions which, at its inception, affected the theory and have, in turn, accounted for its vitality despite manifest flaws, as well as the remarkable variations of its acceptance in time and places. For this, as Ulam points out, we have acquired a new awareness, because "since World War II we have realized that we are in the midst of a yet unfinished revolution." The developing areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in the throes of the early or intermediate steps of the industrial revolution, experience, under different conditions, the convulsions that Western Europe underwent during the first half of the 19th century, the environment of the young Marx and Engels: "The birthpains of modern industrial society . . . are being enacted before our eyes. We can see more clearly what Marxism was *about* than could the generation for whom it was a movement of protest against capitalism, an obsolete economic

theory or a philosophic justification for an international Communist conspiracy. Also . . . within the context of a highly industrialized society, both the insights and the limitations of Marxism are more clearly perceptible now that a society based on Marxist ideology is challenging the greatest nonsocialist state for industrial and political supremacy. . . . We can begin to see Marxism not only as a set of theories and prophecies . . . , but as something that 'exists in nature' as well." Thus, in effect, Ulam proposes to deal with the character of ideas-in-action which, because they are charged with human emotions, "have shaped and continue to make the modern world."

Ulam's argument can be only sketchily, and therefore somewhat unfairly, suggested here. The significance of Marx's and Engels' work is seen especially in its responsiveness to the basic tendencies of the formative industrial age of the first half of the 19th century, more especially the worship of science and mechanization, with the unlimited faith in their power to transform mankind, and, in its very opposite, the deep-seated protest against the soullessness and destructiveness of the machine age. In this he sees the "social psychology" characteristic of the period of transition from the preindustrial to the industrial society. Upon this hypothesis, Ulam examines certain crucial aspects and concepts of Marxism to demonstrate that, whatever rational difficulties they may pose to the critic, they are held together by a consistent attunement to the "spirit of that age" as the author sees it. Hence, dialectical materialism is seen as part of the "rationalist revolution against traditionalism and the status quo." Marxian economic theory, whose crucial concepts stem from the classicists, extolling the revolutionary leverage of the admired (yet resented) industrialism which will initiate a higher relation of man to the material forces, is grounded on the assumption that the English 19th-century development can serve as a universal model. The capitalist, at once promoter and beneficiary of industrial progress, is devoured by it as the historical process works itself out. The very simplifications of the Marxian view of classes and the class struggle are seen to stem from the overwhelming preoccupation with the dynamics of that development which both fascinates and repels. Marx's often-noted reticence on the nature of socialism is here explained by the proposition that Marx

really envisaged socialism as a capitalism without capitalists. Marx's ideal worker is pictured to be as ruthlessly rational in his planned struggle as the capitalist himself. Thus, far from desiring the simple destruction of capitalism (like many of the socialist-utopians under attack by Marx and Engels), Marxism really aims at salvaging its essential disciplines into the future. It is at such points that the author's interpretations will appear to some readers as questionable. What is truly consistent throughout the Marxian system, according to Ulam, is the revolutionary repudiation of the status quo and the confident acceptance of the immutable laws of material development which will work themselves out to the full.

Other aspects of the Marxian ideology are illuminated in a chapter devoted to the "sources of Marxism," a term which apparently is to encompass both relevant intellectual influences and the underlying social phenomena they are shown to reflect. The characteristic preoccupation with the fundamental clash of city and country ways in a transitional period is seen to have affected Marx as it did many of his contemporaries. This is, of course, at the root of the Marxian concept of alienation which, as others have brought out, Marx has in common with many contemporary conservative thinkers. Such considerations underlie Ulam's proposition that, while the faith in science and technology shared with liberals of all shades is crucial to Marxian logic, anti-industrialism with some associated traits of anarchism is basic to the Marxian emotional pattern. An examination of the work and aspirations of Cobbett, Proudhon, and the Chartist movement in their relevance to Marxian attitudes leads Ulam to the conclusion that "Marxism is the type of socialism that believes in industrialization but can live as a revolutionary movement of importance only in symbiosis with a widespread anti-industrial feeling."

Since in the author's view, with which many will agree, Marx and Engels fundamentally persisted in their understanding of the socioeconomic conditions of capitalism as they had formulated it by about 1850, Marxian doctrine failed to take into account the manifest and major changes of that system during the next decades. Hence, Marxism became set in a pattern closely linked to an early transitional system and could not effectively appeal to the evolving British labor movement of

later decades, just as its growing "irrelevance" accounts for the efforts of German Revisionism and the decline of German Marxian orthodoxy precisely as German labor built up an organized mass movement in a maturing industrial system.

On the other hand, it is this very characteristic of the Marxian heritage which leads to its impact in Russia since the 1880's, its adoption as the "philosophy of total liberation," and the Leninist adaptation to that environment. As Stalinism succeeds in making over Soviet society in the process of accelerated industrialization, neo-orthodox Marxism-Leninism loses its hold and meaning in the Soviet community as it becomes essentially irrelevant to this stage of development. From the need to create new appeals and revive the ideological motivation of Soviet man, the masters of the Soviet system turn outward: even though Marxism-Leninism has become growingly artificial at home, it can serve, with the support of Lenin's theory of imperialism, "as the natural ideology of underdeveloped societies in today's world," while the offerings of Western liberalism are at a disadvantage by comparison.

The power of Communism in this situation is seen to lie in the inherited insight it carries into the psychology of masses and leaders in societies affected by the traumatic experiences of drastic change (both in terms of aspirations and aversions) and the meaning it attaches to change; while it ascribes the evils to capitalism-imperialism and its agencies, it instills a sense of purpose and a goal. Among the lessons which Ulam believes his analysis implies for the West, there is the view that ideological competition is less important than providing the social and economic foundations upon which democratic ideas and institutions may become meaningful. It is his belief that such institutional supports as trade unionism and sound administration count for more than adherence to formal constitutional procedures.

Ulam's *Unfinished Revolution* is a remarkable appraisal of the operative forces underlying Marxian socialism and communism in the light of hindsight and of modern experience. Its impressive single-mindedness, which will deter some, commands respect. It also gives unity to a vast and complex body of materials. No doubt such unity has its risks since it results in some labored or problematic interpretations

of Marxian theory (such as his view of Marx's real opinion concerning the relation between social revolution and the fate of capitalism or his cavalier dismissal of Marx's views on the Paris Commune as of slight significance). This is not only a stimulating re-evaluation of an important body of doctrine and intellectual history; it might also serve as a healthy reminder to decision-makers that ideas and ideologies, "theirs" and ours, are in some crucial ways linked with their socioeconomic and, more broadly, their particular cultural foundations.

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Fast Neutron Physics. Part 1. Techniques. J. B. Marion and J. L. Fowler, Eds. Interscience, New York, 1960. xiv + 983 pp. Illus. \$29.

This book is a gold mine of information on how to do work in experimental, fast-neutron physics (here taken to be from 1 kev to several hundred Mev but primarily below 40 Mev). The book contains many tables and graphs. The material is concerned chiefly with fast-neutron physics with positive ion accelerators, from which most of our information on fast-neutron interactions has come. However, some areas are not covered—for example, reactor experiments on fast-neutron radiation effects and neutron experimentation with electron linear accelerators, although they fall within the neutron energy range considered.

The volume includes discussions of neutron sources, recoil-detection methods, and detection by neutron-induced reactions, and a section on special techniques and problems covering a variety of subjects, such as time-of-flight techniques and fast-neutron radiation hazards; the portion on hazards includes a discussion of neutron radiation biology for physicists.

The editors have assembled an outstanding group of workers in neutron physics as contributors to the volume; and they have chosen, probably correctly, to allow each contributor to write an independent section and, therefore, to tolerate some duplication. Some of the articles are extremely good and contain much new information not available elsewhere. I was particularly impressed by the usefulness of the arti-