

ROMANIA: A PROFILE. By *Ian M. Matley*. New York, Washington, London: Praeger Publishers, 1970. xii, 292 pp. \$8.50.

This is a handy and generally reliable book of data and insights on Rumania's past and present. It is not a piece of original scholarship, but rather a penetrating description and evaluation of Rumanian geography (physical, human, and economic), culture (language, literature, education, architecture, religion, folk and modern art, and music), ethnic groups, economy, and history.

Matley rightly asserts that Rumania is one of the "least well known countries in Europe." Except for monographs on contemporary Rumanian politics and foreign relations by Stephen Fischer-Galati and Ghita Ionescu, as well as on the economy by J. M. Montias, there is nothing in English of recent vintage by a single author that attempts to survey the various aspects of Rumanian life.

Scholars engaged in Rumanian studies may object to the superficial manner in which several complex matters are treated, and they may wish to challenge one or another of the author's facts and conclusions. But the general reader, including undergraduate students, to whom this book appears to be addressed should feel indebted to Professor Matley for a lucid synopsis of Rumanian affairs.

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A SHORT HISTORY OF SOCIALISM. By *George Lichtheim*. New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1970. xi, 362 pp. \$8.95, cloth. \$3.95, paper.

It is almost ten years since Lichtheim published his well-known "historical and critical study" of Marxism. His most recent book covers a field that is more encompassing: the history of socialism from early socialists such as Owen, Fourier, and Saint-Simon to contemporary Marxism-Leninism, on the one hand, and the liberal socialism of Western democratic parties, on the other. As he himself says, his purpose is "to set up a number of signposts for the benefit of readers who may wish at a later stage to inquire into the details of a particular period or set of problems." Four chapters are devoted to the origins of socialist ideas and the emergence of what has come to be called the "social problem," including the beginnings of the workers' movement; two chapters discuss Marx's social and economic theory; three chapters are devoted to the development of Russian and Western socialism and to the development of communism; and a concluding chapter sketches some "Contemporary Problems of Socialism."

A survey such as this hardly can offer new information. However, it may offer a new perspective. Lichtheim's guiding thought is that "socialism" designates a "historically conditioned response to a particular challenge," namely, to the social problems connected with the industrial revolution in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Western Europe and North America. As a consequence, he opposes not only notions such as "African socialism" or "Arab socialism," which to him are but designations of "medievalism" and "nationalist conservatism," but also the idea that Marxism-Leninism is a genuine form of socialism. As a further consequence of his approach, Lichtheim tends to minimize the importance of strictly theoretical issues which occupy the minds of both contemporary Marxists and contemporary critics of Marxism. Thus, toward the end of his book he devotes several pages to the topic of "historical inevitability," only to classify quarrels such as the one between Popper and the "historicists" as mock battles not involving any real

issues. One may disagree with such judgments as well as doubt whether Lichtheim's perspective is the only legitimate one. However, there can be no doubt that Lichtheim has once more succeeded in writing a survey which not only gives a synopsis of most of the significant facts, ideas, and developments but also provides a bird's-eye view of the subject without ever becoming either superficial or unnecessarily "objectivistic."

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MARX'S ECONOMICS: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT. By *Alexander Balinky*. Lexington, Mass.: Heath Lexington Books, 1970. xiv, 178 pp. \$10.00.

This brief book is a fairly elementary undergraduate textbook on Marxian economics. Balinky differentiates his work from others by attempting to bridge what he terms the "unnatural gap" in many writings on Marx between Marx's economics and his philosophy, history, and sociology. Part 1 (50 pages) is devoted to philosophy and theories of history; a second part (75 pages) outlines Marxian "statics"—value, surplus value, rent, interest, and so forth; and a third (30 pages) gives the author's interpretations of how these forces produce the collapse of capitalism. The book concludes with a ten-page biography of Marx.

In this reviewer's opinion the results are hardly a success. Balinky is not particularly sympathetic to Marx. Yet he does not attempt much in the way of an analytic critique of Marxian theory; for the most part he only indicates the failure of Marx's predictions. Further weaknesses in the book as a potential textbook are the total failure to footnote the numerous quotations from Marx and the absence of an index. There is a classified bibliography (with some peculiar entries).

There are two major flaws in the substance of the exposition. Balinky interprets the theory of value as a temporal and analytic progression from the labor theory of volume 1 to the theory of prices of volume 3. The "modern" interpretation would be that value (*defined* as labor content) and price (the theory of exchange value in ordinary economics) are logically distinct, contemporaneous, and noncontradictory concepts. Both notions were present in Marx's writings before the publication of volume 1, and they are simply verbal transpositions from Ricardo's absolute value and exchange value.

Again, the discussion of the capitalist collapse is confused. Balinky argues that this collapse results from the "contradictions" which lead to the inability of the system to produce even basic economic "needs." Yet his chief citation is from the oft-quoted chapter 32 in volume 1, where Marx appears to attribute the collapse to the progressive polarization in the distribution of income and the alleged immiserization of the proletariat.

In fact, an understanding of Marxian history and philosophy does little to provide an understanding of the logic of Marx's economics, although it may explain the motivation. The concepts and analysis from which Marx started were drawn entirely from the English classical economists. By totally ignoring this origin Balinky introduces a gap at least as unnatural as the one mentioned above, and it contributes more to the difficulties in understanding Marx's system.

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