

area. After a brief description of his survival under first the Soviet and subsequently the German occupation of Latvia in the Second World War, the author launches into the history, both real and legendary, of the Eastern Baltic and more specifically the city of Liepaja (Libava in Russian).

Fact and fiction melt together virtually indistinguishably. Ebershtein has offered footnotes, but the value of the book is not in its scholarly trappings. Indeed, as witnessed by the author's providing (p. 151) a poorly printed Latin text of Tacitus followed by a Russian translation of an old German rendering of the same, the scholarly qualities of the book may best be passed over in silence. Nevertheless, the book offers a delightful introduction to Baltic lore. The reader will surely enjoy such accounts as the efforts of the Lithuanians to claim Roman ancestry, or the mythology of amber.

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CRITIQUE OF HEAVEN. By *Arend Th. van Leeuwen*. The first series of the Gifford Lectures entitled "Critique of Heaven and Earth." New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972. 206 pp. \$10.00.

If the evolution of the religious ideas of the young Friedrich Engels is well known, through his letters to his friends the brothers F. and W. Graber and to his sister Mary, that of the young Marx is scarcely so familiar. It is customary to write that the problem of God did not concern him, or that if it did, he "had no difficulty in ridding himself of religion in his personal life" (J.-Y. Calvez, *La pensée de Karl Marx*, Paris, 1956).

Thus it is a contribution important to the elucidation of this question that van Leeuwen makes in this first series of Gifford Lectures. His study of the available documents written by Marx from 1835 to 1841—from the essays for his final examination at the Trier school to his doctoral thesis (1841) entitled "The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophies of Nature," and including poems and a letter to his father (1837)—leads van Leeuwen to write, "I would even be inclined to suggest that Marx's early development conceals a deep-rooted dilemma very close to the heart of the Christian dilemma in a post-Christian civilization" (p. 17). In examining the German vocabulary of the essay "Reflections of a Youth Before Choosing a Profession" in the light of those concepts of the Enlightenment in which the young Marx had been immersed both in his family circle and in school, and in comparing this text with the essay devoted to a commentary on a chapter of St. John's Gospel, van Leeuwen reveals how deeply Lutheran Christianity—especially its practical theology—had penetrated Marx's thought. Thus through Marx's attendance at the Left Hegelian Doctors' Club in Berlin, the thesis of 1841, and the article "Introduction to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law" in 1843, the critique of religion undertaken by Marx forced "the Christian faith to an unprecedented confrontation with its own situation" (p. 17). It was indeed before his encounter with Feuerbach that he moved toward such a radical critique. And "to be radical is to take things by the root" (Marx, "Introduction . . .").

The careful study of the thesis of 1841 leads van Leeuwen to another proposition that is no less important. In the mirror of Epicurus Marx discovered his own exile, from a Christian era in which God was dead, to another region, the future.

The critique of religion is the culminating point of the critique that Marx made of Hegel and his philosophy. But it is also the point of departure toward what was to become most essential for him: the critique of the economy above all.

For van Leeuwen, however, the fundamental question that underlies the entire work of Marx is a different one: to understand how one can radically alter a philosophical or economic system which is universal, though created by man. It is the question that emerges in the thesis of 1841. Critiques of civil society, law, and political economy would constitute the real struggle with genuine contradictions, the ones that Epicurus had not been able to surmount.

This brief account of van Leeuwen's chief theses, though it risks making rigid his carefully nuanced reasoning and conclusions, may nevertheless enable one to perceive the new light they throw on the study of Marx's critique of religion. Even if one or another of van Leeuwen's interpretations does not compel complete agreement, they remain enormously stimulating for the scholar analyzing the thought of Karl Marx.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARXIAN DIALECTIC. By *Dick Howard*.

Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972. London and Amsterdam: Feffer & Simons. xiii, 205 pp. \$7.95.

THE UNKNOWN DIMENSION: EUROPEAN MARXISM SINCE LENIN.

Edited by *Dick Howard* and *Karl E. Klare*. New York and London: Basic Books, 1972. xiii, 418 pp. \$12.50.

The cutting edge of current Marxian thought, and of the study of Marxian thought, in the United States seems to consist of two major themes: the continued reworking of the early writings of Marx and the rediscovery of the West European strain of Marxian thought that went largely unnoticed while the Soviet orthodoxy was establishing itself. The first of these undertakings is quite advanced; the second is of more recent vintage. But they combine in an interesting way to disabuse North Americans, many of whom learned of Marxism-Leninism before they learned of Marxism, of the still widespread notion that the Russian experience since 1917 is the authentic test—for better or worse—of the validity of Marxism. (The Russian Revolution may be Marxism's only "success," but if we are going to be patient about the withering away of the state, we should be equally patient about labeling it a success in Marxian terms.)

The two books under review represent these two themes, and the involvement of one person in both already suggests the degree to which the themes unite in one intellectual project. Howard, a perceptive and even tenacious interpreter of Marx, focuses on the very early writings (up to but not including the *German Ideology*) in his effort to establish the stages through which Marx passed in arriving at a mature dialectical method. It is a close textual reading which culminates in recognition of the proletariat as mediator between philosophy and the world. Advocates of a strictly empirical reading may be discomfited, but I find Howard's case convincing that the proletariat was for Marx a product of ratiocination, a necessary element of his method rather than the outcome of observation. In situating this work within the literature, one might say that Howard corrects and amplifies the early students of Young Hegelianism philosophically much as McLellan has done in