

iar, but he presents it well. In addition, he correctly shows Marx's ambivalent attitude toward industrialism, his lack of sympathy for the victims of colonialism, and his belief in German and American supremacy over subject peoples. Although the tone of the book is highly critical, Wesson praises Marx for stressing the significance of technology, putting economics into history, and showing how ideology often masks self-interest. Marxism, he finds, has been particularly fruitful in the field of sociology, as witness the galaxy of theorists from Mannheim to Mills who draw heavily, if selectively, upon his work. Nor does Wesson condemn revolution per se, finding it necessary for absolutist nations with all-pervasive governments, closed ruling castes, and intolerable tax burdens.

Yet much of the book reads like a lawyer's brief, and the verbal overkill weakens many of Wesson's most thoughtful arguments. Is it really true, for example, that "before the Russian Revolution, Marxism was of no special importance in European politics, much less Western culture"? Or that "Marxism is moved much more by hatred of possessors than love of the unfortunate"? Or that "fascist ideology was only a shallow mimicry of Marxism"? Surely Wesson's comparison of Marxism to the weird pseudo-science of Immanuel Velikovsky (he of "worlds in collision" fame) is a bit heavy-handed. Wesson notwithstanding, many Marxists join the movement not out of any attraction to a "metaphysics of revolution," but rather because they seek order in a chaotic world, rationality in

place of what they perceive as the anarchy of the marketplace.

At times we are dealing with half-truths at best, or at least with topics far more complicated than Wesson would have us believe. Take, for example, Wesson's claim that Marx "took delight in violence," or that "Lenin's politic approach to the nationality problem practically won the civil war." He asserts, without showing evidence, that "the Soviet Union today probably profits little by control over its satellites."

Nonetheless, Wesson's book is rich and rewarding. One looks forward to the rebuttals, if there are any, by Marxist writers.

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Correspondence (from p. 2)

According to my understanding, a component of a genuine commitment to human rights is an implicit affirmation of the premise that ends and means must be consistent. Or, that while societies necessarily vary as to culture, economics, and political structures, neither "security," "development," nor anything else justifies the violation of the individual, the avoidable failure to meet basic material needs, or the denial of political and civil freedoms.

Thus, if the Carter administration does intend by its pronouncements on human rights to affirm the interrelationships between means and ends just mentioned, it must follow through on that logic and step back (unilaterally, if need be) from the depravity of nuclear armament. Two very modest steps would be to forgo building the neutron bomb and to renounce any first use of nuclear weapons.

One can no more defend peace by preparing the destruction of the world than one can build democracy by jailing one's political opponents. I agree that rights may be defined, priorities argued, and gross violations denounced. One can only be disturbed, however, that the American public apparently expects Mr. Carter's defense of human rights to be accompanied by the augmentation of U.S. military forces and the willingness to use them.

It is urgent that we, as a people, learn to distinguish between "moral interventionism" (i.e., speaking publicly on the premise that systemic repression is in no instance an "internal affair") and military interventionism (remember the Vietnam war?) or the revival of American cold war belligerence. And, in the long run, the success or failure of Carter's rights aspirations will rest less upon his rhetorical skills than upon the attainment of disarmament, and the willingness of individuals everywhere to defend without violence the material and civil rights of themselves and others.

Goeffrey Pope

Alkmaar, The Netherlands

The WCC & "Related Phenomena"

To the Editors: I want to express my appreciation and gratitude for the article by Richard Neuhaus on the WCC and related phenomena ("Toeing the Line at

the Cutting Edge." *Worldview*, June). Having been involved, on and off and in various ways, with the World Student Christian Federation for more than twenty years, I find the article right on target with respect to that organization.

And that is tragic. Many American Christians owe huge debts to the WSCF-sponsored evangelists, social critics, and theologians who visited the United States in the period ending 1960. Without the challenges and the testimony given by these sisters and brothers, the faith of many would be far thinner, far more provincial, self-satisfied, and chauvinistic, and, I believe, far less faithful to the Lord of the Church and of the earth.

We have never been in such deep need, as Americans, for such reproof and heartening as can come to us only from Christians overseas. But I know of no way in which that can begin to happen again unless our American churches' representatives are ready and able to change the style of their involvement. Neither "protest" nor "withdrawal" is likely to change much. What is needed is a voice or two that in fact represent at its best the church body in question, rather than toeing the "line" or remaining silent—and by so much impoverishing both the American churches and international Christian community.

Gilbert E. Doan, Jr.

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Human Rights & the Paris Agreements

To the Editors: With regard to the situation of human rights in Vietnam [apropos the three articles in *Worldview*'s April issue that deal with this subject], it might be mentioned that the people of southern Vietnam were ensured a number of rights in the Paris Peace Agreements. In Article 9b the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam pledged to respect the right of the South Vietnamese people to "decide themselves the political future of South Vietnam through genuinely free and democratic general elections under international supervision." In Article 11 the two South Vietnamese parties pledged to respect the "democratic liberties of the people: personal freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the

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press, freedom of meeting, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities, freedom of belief, freedom of movement, freedom of residence, freedom of work, right to property ownership, and right to free enterprise." Article 11 also prohibited "all acts of reprisal and discrimination against individuals or organizations that have collaborated with one side or the other."

Now that the Provisional Revolutionary Government and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have merged into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, it would seem that the new government is legally obliged to respect both Articles 9b and 11. This would be particularly true because the new government has recognized the Paris Peace Agreements as still legally binding by stating that the United States is obligated, not just morally but legally, to respect the commitments it made in the agreements.

Steve Denney

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The "Socialist/Capitalist Dichotomy"

To the Editors: Michael Novak states in "An Underpraised and Undervalued

System" (*Worldview*, July/August) that "Democratic capitalism can function successfully only in certain types of cultures, in which high values of individual responsibility, social cooperation, and the voluntary spirit have for centuries been nourished."

Would this be essentially different from asserting... Democratic capitalism can function successfully only in a socialistic climate?

Is there any real basis for the socialistic-capitalistic dichotomy that we so fondly cherish?

Robert C. Peterson

Trimont, Minn.

Books by Editors

It is our policy not to review, but simply to bring to the attention of our readers, books written by editors of this journal.

In recent weeks *Facing Up to Modernity: Excursions in Society, Politics, and Religion*, by Peter L. Berger, was issued by Basic Books (233 pp.; \$11.50). *Christian Faith and Public Policy: Thinking and Acting in the Courage of Uncertainty*, by Richard John Neuhaus, was issued by Augsburg Publishing House (224 pp.; \$4.95 [paper]).