

the documents so painstakingly collected by Meissner and so nicely presented in these two handsomely printed volumes do not offer any great hope for the eventual outcome their editor so ardently desires.

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CHALLENGERS TO CAPITALISM: MARX, LENIN, AND MAO. By *John G. Gurley*. San Francisco: San Francisco Book Company, 1976. xii, 175 pp. Illus. \$3.95, paper.

This is a curious work. It is characterized on the cover as "a nonpolemical examination of three giants of Marxism," but it would be more accurate to describe it as an uncritical summary of what the author takes to be the central ideas of Marx, Lenin, and Mao, based as much on clues from selected secondary sources as on the writings of his central figures. Although it is an elementary exposition, one expects the author, if only for pedagogical purposes, at least to mention, if not to meet, obvious difficulties which his own text suggests. This he fails to do. His opening sentence, "Marxism and capitalism are now engaged in an intense world struggle," would have puzzled Marx, and will surprise any scholar who can distinguish between a social system and a set of ideas. And if by "Marxism" is meant a movement or a state, Dr. Gurley's account makes inexplicable the struggle which has on occasion led to military clashes between "Marxist" Russia and "Marxist" China. Nor is the bearing of this rift or of phenomena like the line-up of nations during the Second World War—in which societies with a capitalist mode of production joined a society with a socialist mode of production in order to destroy other capitalist societies instead of making common cause with them—explored to test the Marxist theory of war or the Leninist theory of imperialism, both of which the author accepts.

If anything is clear in Marx's writings, it is his view that socialism will come only when the objective material conditions are ripe for it in the highly industrialized West. His theory of historical materialism requires this to be so—changes in the economic foundations determine the political and ideological superstructure. On the face of it, then, does not the seizure of power to build socialism by Lenin and Mao under the banner of Marxism in the most backward areas of the world constitute an empirical refutation of historical materialism? And if not, why not? Even if one were to deny that socialism currently exists in Russia or China, in view of the world-shaking consequences of the events in those countries, how can one account for the attempt to achieve the historically impossible? Does this not show the primacy of political factors in our time? Gurley ignores these questions, although he does admit that both Lenin and Mao first seized political power and then proceeded to build the economic foundations under it—something that Marx declared could not be done and therefore should not be attempted. Judging by how he uses the term in other contexts, Gurley would probably call the situation "dialectical," which is an easy way of refusing to take responsibility for a contradiction or inconsistency in what we say about things or theories.

Gurley's account of the development of socialist societies becomes more confusing—or shall we say "dialectical"—when he discusses the economies of the Soviet Union and Communist China. After Lenin's death and in consequence of it, capitalism "of a new kind" was established in Russia, largely as a result of "Stalin's policy of over-stressing growth of the productive forces thereby postponing real (as opposed to superficial, juridical) socialist transformations of the relations of production."

Leaving aside the difficulty in understanding when and how the socialist relations of production under Lenin were abandoned by Stalin, the reader is puzzled by Gurley's apparent belief that all this accords with the theory of historical materialism. Apparently nothing can disprove it. Not only is he here ascribing to personalities like Lenin and Stalin a heroic role, a type of role which Marx and Engels emphatically deny, he is asserting that a new social formation or system—neither socialist nor one based on the production of commodities for a free market—has come into existence. Like the rise of fascism and the emergence of the welfare state in England and the United States, this "new kind" of capitalism falls completely outside the Marxist schema. What Marx predicted about socialist revolution did not take place, and what did take place he did not predict. And as if to compound the reader's confusion, Gurley then goes on to characterize Mao's theories and practices as being in the direct line of succession to Marxism and Leninism and faithful to their doctrines. But Mao regarded himself as an authentic follower of Stalin's program of building socialism in one country and was fiercely critical of Stalin's successors who have somewhat moderated the systematic terror deemed by Stalin to be necessary to that end.

For one who is properly alarmed at even the mildest threats to intellectual and academic freedom in the Western world, the author seems singularly insensitive to the prolonged and pervasive oppression of the workers and peasants in the societies heralded as viable alternatives to capitalism. And, although his derogatory references to Stalin suggest that he is somewhat queasy about that regime, he seems unaware that under Mao the pitch and extent of the political and cultural terror was greater than in the Soviet Union under Lenin, and with less excuse. Gurley's inability to understand the differences between Marx's "challenges" and the "challenges" of Lenin and Mao may be rooted in his failure to appreciate the difference between Marx's concept of "the dictatorship of the proletariat"—interpreted as a workers' democracy on the assumption that the workers constituted the overwhelming majority of the population—and the Leninist view of the dictatorship of a minority party over the proletariat and all others.

In a book devoted to challenges to capitalism, the author is under a scholarly obligation to analyze the historical development of capitalism and the rise of the welfare state in consequence of the influence of the democratic political process on the economy. Had he considered the reciprocal challenges of the democratic welfare state, on the one hand, and the socialist economies of Russia and China, on the other, his account would probably have been less naïve and more balanced.

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THE SUPREME SOVIET: POLITICS AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN THE SOVIET POLITICAL SYSTEM. By *Peter Vanneman*. Publications of the Consortium for Comparative Legislative Studies. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1977. xii, 256 pp. \$11.75.

The question, Whither Russia?, is about as old as it is interesting. Professor Vanneman's study of developments and trends in one institution, the Supreme Soviet, attempts to answer part of the question. The results are mixed: good research coupled with certain infelicities.

The book falls into two parts: the introduction and chapter 10, which contain the major theses (also found in miniature in chapter 5); and nine chapters of useful descriptive material on the Supreme Soviet. The results of his research, found in chapters 1–9, are as extensive as any available on the Supreme Soviet (even though the book is based on a 1972 dissertation whose sources end about 1970). Part of chapter 2, on