

THE U.S.S.R. AND THE ARABS: THE IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION. By *Jaan Pennar*. New York: Crane, Russak and Company, 1973. xii, 180 pp. \$9.75.

POLITICS AND OIL: MOSCOW IN THE MIDDLE EAST. By *Lincoln Landis*. New York and London: Dunellen Publishing Company, 1973. xix, 201 pp. \$12.95.

Proceeding from the assumption that ideology is an "indivisible component of the power struggle" in the international system (p. ix), Dr. Pennar sets out to illustrate its significance in a case study devoted to Soviet-Arab relations. The various chapters trace the evolution of Communist theories on "national liberation" and the "noncapitalist path" of development, supplemented by a discussion of the ideological interaction between Moscow and Nasser, the Ba'th, and the Algerian FLN.

It is undeniable that an understanding of the intricacies of Soviet-Arab relations requires a reasonably thorough acquaintance with both the evolution of Communist dogma and the attempts of the "progressive" Arab leaders to couch their domestic and international aspirations in ideological terms. However, heavy emphasis on ideology may result in occasional disregard of the basic underlying factors which bear on important political decisions. Thus, when discussing the 1963 shift in Khrushchev's appraisal of Nasser's and Ben Bella's "socialism" (pp. 70-72), Pennar notes Moscow's endorsement of their "achievements" in the socioeconomic sphere, but fails to provide a satisfactory explanation of why it was given. Further digging would have revealed that the change was dictated not by ideology but by an effort to vindicate Khrushchev's *own* performance in the Third World in the face of the mounting criticism to which he was subjected in the wake of the Cuban fiasco of 1962.

What is even more significant, the author should have noted that—as is true of Moscow-Peking relations—ideology serves as a unique tool for exerting pressure on the rivals, or clients, of whose policies the USSR (or CPR, or the Arab states) for whatever reason disapproves. In this sense, any narrative stressing the intrinsic importance of ideology in interstate relations runs a serious danger of oversimplifying what the author himself describes as highly intricate and complex situations. All in all, however, in emphasizing the basic long-range incompatibility of Soviet and Arab nationalist interests—incompatibility which emerges particularly clearly in their ideological controversies—Pennar has performed a valuable service.

The same cannot be said of Dr. Landis's book. As he himself admits, the USSR faces many difficulties in any effort to establish economic dominance in the Middle East, including (1) the necessity for concluding satisfactory barter deals (p. 105), which the oil-producing states now seem less and less willing to make; (2) the determination of the local governments to preserve their hard-won independence (p. 111); and (3) the probable resistance of the Western powers to any Soviet efforts to establish regional hegemony (p. 112).

Nevertheless, Landis sees Russian barter arrangements for the importation of Iraqi petroleum and Iranian natural gas as ominous portents of a dark future for the West. Although he acknowledges that such deals free Soviet-produced oil and gas for sale to Western markets and thus serve as an important source of hard currency (badly needed for the purchase of wheat and technology), he asserts that these economic arrangements are but an interim stage in Moscow's long-range design for domination of the Middle East. If successful, "Moscow would expect

eventually to achieve a position of strategic economic dominance over the Middle East" and a "level of political authority as predominant power" in the region. This, in turn, would enable the Kremlin "to exert pressures upon capitalist states by threatening their strategic interests, which include the unhampered flow of petroleum from the Middle East." Ideologically speaking, "the U.S.S.R. would be working toward a world energy delivery system within a world socialist planned economy" (p. 121).

Thus the major intrinsic inadequacy of Landis's book, given his own framework, is the failure to appraise the chances for Moscow's likely success or failure in the light of the objective obstacles to Soviet expansion. As a result, his work is based on a number of questionable assumptions concerning Russia's ultimate intentions in the Middle East which have not been tested against the realities of regional politics and economics or against Washington's obvious determination not to abandon the area to the mercy of the USSR.

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PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION: FROM HEGEL TO SARTRE, AND FROM MARX TO MAO. By *Raya Dunayevskaya*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1973. xix, 372 pp. \$8.95, cloth. \$2.95, paper.

If one seeks the central idea of Ms. Dunayevskaya's work, it may be found to be that of *praxis*—but the idea used as backdrop rather than analyzed in depth. I have in mind not what Marxists have said about it and made of it in translating it as "practice" but what Karl Marx himself understood by the term: "ce tout de l'activité réelle de l'homme, cette activité ouvrière, que Marx oppose à l'idéalisme comme au matérialisme," as the French philosopher Jean Lacroix put it twenty-five years ago, or, in Dunayevskaya's phrase, "an activity both mental and manual, [a] 'critical-practical activity,' which Marx never separated from its revolutionary character" (p. 265). But from the moment when Marx's thought became transformed into an ideology, that is to say into a doctrine whose practical purpose is *political*, supported by a conception of the world and an ethic which claim to conform to a *scientifically* established order, and when this ideology became the doctrine of an agency in power (party or state), there was substituted for the *praxis* of Marx a voluntarism more or less uprooted from the analysis of the reality and the movement of a society.

It is around this issue that Dunayevskaya organizes her analysis of the relations between philosophy and revolution. In the first part of the work she places on the same footing Hegel, Marx, and Lenin, considered as philosophers in search of the concrete universal. In the second and third parts, she shows why recent Marxists and philosophers (Trotsky, Mao Tse-tung, and Sartre) have been unable to fill the theoretical void of the Marxist movement and how examination of the different liberation movements of the last two decades in Africa, Europe, the United States, and elsewhere suggests that "the filling of the theoretic void since Lenin's death remains the task to be done" (p. 266). That is to say how necessary it is both to the theoreticians and the revolutionary movements of our time to return to Marxian *praxis*: "It has always been my belief that in our age theory can develop fully only when grounded in what the masses themselves are doing and thinking" (p. xviii).

In the latter half of our century revolutionary groups, wherever they begin,