

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.

HENRI CHAMBRE

*Centre de Recherche et d'Action Sociales, Vanves*

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

terms of intellectual history. Yet Howard is also adept at tracing the filiation of ideas current within that remarkable group. (It may seem a trivial matter, but the copy-editing of this book is appreciably less laudable.)

The study ends by presenting the dialectic as a theory or method "in need of continual modification and renewal." And that serves as link, or as one link among several, with the material of the *Unknown Dimension*, for the interwar Marxists treated therein were engaged precisely in that task. Following two introductory essays by the editors, the theoreticians are treated in three "generations": Andrew Arato on Lukács, David Gross on Ernst Bloch, Mihály Vajda on Karl Korsch, Romano Giachetti on Gramsci, and Stanley Aronowitz on the Council Communists (target of Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism*); then Bertell Ollman on Wilhelm Reich, Martin Jay on the Frankfurt School, Shierry M. Weber on Walter Benjamin, and Jeremy J. Shapiro on Marcuse and Habermas; and, for the postwar period, Jean-Claude Girardin on Sartre, Alfred Schmidt on Lefèbvre, Mario Montano on Galvano Della Volpe, Robin Blackburn and Gareth Stedman Jones on Althusser, and Dick Howard on Mallet and Gorz. The essays maintain a high standard and, taken together, provide a convincing demonstration of the book's thesis that these are the places to look for the most authentic continuation of Marx's project.

LYMAN H. LEGTERS  
University of Washington

WHAT MARX REALLY SAID. By H. B. Acton. New York: Schocken Books, 1971. x, 148 pp. \$1.95, paper.

This book is a welcome paperback edition of a work first published in 1967. Although the title of the book (one in the *What They Really Said* series) is rather presumptuous, the content forms a good and reliable short guide to Marx's main ideas. Professor Acton begins with a chapter on the origins of Marxism, and continues with sections on Marx's materialism, his theory of historical materialism, his economic theories, and his views on the state and revolution. Since the book is a short one, the treatment is necessarily selective, and Acton has wisely chosen to devote most space to a consideration of Marx's materialist conception of history. He gives a succinct and clear account of Marx's ideas and raises the well-known problems of Marx's periodization of history and particularly of the relation of basis to superstructure. The attention paid to historical materialism means that the book does not similarly emphasize Marx's early philosophical writings or his more political works.

In his interpretation Acton relies—quite reasonably—on the better-known works of Marx such as the *Communist Manifesto* and *Capital*; there is little, if any, mention of works such as the *Grundrisse* or *Theories of Surplus Value*, which can give a different impression of Marx's views. This choice of sources sometimes leads Acton to be slightly unfair to Marx—for example, when he says that Marx did not anticipate the increasing importance of leisure in the lives of working men (a subject dealt with at some length in the *Grundrisse*).

All in all, this small book can be well recommended for those wishing to get a general review of Marx's ideas in a short space.

DAVID McLELLAN  
Canterbury