reviews
THE NEEDS OF MARXISM

Kate Soper


As Hemingway, I seem to remember, somewhere said of Pernod, it is so with this book: it takes you up as much as it brings you down. The analogy, however, is too frivolous for a work whose scholarly sobriety borders on dryness; moreover, it suggests an ease of absorption that might mislead readers who are unaccustomed to that strange brew of half-developed concepts, potent good sense and flights of fancy that can be concocted from Marx's works and labelled (somewhat euphemistically) 'a theory of needs'. For it does not seem to me that Heller has managed to offer us anything much more readily digestible than Marx himself on this subject, even though her project is largely one of exegesis and synthesis - and I speak as one who has spent some time in the attempt to ascertain the meaning and coherence of Marx's various remarks on the subject of needs. On the other hand, it may be true that I have approached Heller's book with too many preconceptions and expectations about what a book on the theory of needs should achieve, and that others less steeped in this aspect of Marxism will find a good deal to interest and inspire them in this book, if only because it sketches out an area for consideration that is scarcely ever discussed in any detailed way, and because it is the product of a good deal of reflection on that area. All the same, I suspect that many readers will wish that Heller had provided more opportunity to share in this process of reflection. As it is, she tends merely to chart its results, and these are often presented in an over-condensed and disjointed form.

In all fairness, it should also be said that she has not been well served either by her translator or by her editor in this English edition. There is a nervous recourse to literal rendering in the translation which betrays a failure to have constricted Heller's precise meaning (and in several instances I have still not managed to decipher this). Even where the meaning is clear, it is frequently couched in rather bizarre expressions, and the reader is confronted with an array of undefined concepts (eg 'community structure', 'society of associated producers', the 'antinomies of capitalism', its 'formation', and so on). In the case of these and other terms, some explanation for their choice either within the text or in a glossary would have been welcome. So too would have been more indications (if only in the form of section headings and bridge passages) of the overall direction and design of the work. As it is, we are offered the pieces of a jigsaw - which is tantalizing because we are not sure if we have all the pieces, and wearisome because so much of the work of assembly is left to the reader who has little idea of the final product to be constructed.

There are two further general features of this book which some may find disappointing. In the first place, there is scarcely a reference to other work bearing on the question of needs, by which I mean either to work outside historical materialism in anthropology or psychology or biology, all of which are pertinent studies, or to attempts by other Marxists to confront the vexed question of needs. Admittedly in the latter case there are a few directly relevant works, and it may be that Heller has not had much opportunity to assess them1 - here I have in mind such writers as Sève and Timpanaro, and the debate on Marx and Freud. Yet she also never mentions either Sartre or Marcuse nor any of the economic studies that bear on the issues she raises (Mandel, Bettelheim, Rubin) and there is scarcely a reference to any work by Lenin or Trotsky or Stalin. In other words, there is no attempt to place Heller's contribution in the context of developments in Marxist study either in the East or the West, though her debt to Lukács is obvious. There is an advantage to this in the sense that her book is refreshingly unparasitical: it also means that it avoids any facile classification in terms of allegiances within current Marxology (it does not, for example, adopt either a straightforward humanist or anti-humanist stance and cannot be located easily in terms of such disjunctions.) Its disadvantage is that it is restricted to Marx's work alone, and thus to a large extent remains a piece of academic Marxology - an exegesis of texts which themselves are regarded as self-sufficient ends: getting at Marx's meaning, rather than assessing its worth or relevance to contemporary events, still seems the dominating concern. Since it scarcely ever ventures beyond Marx's own dicta either for its substance or its exemplification, the book re-

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1 Though her book was originally published in German, Heller is herself Hungarian and associated with a group of Hungarian philosophers of Lukácsian inspiration who have recently been subject to a certain amount of persecution in Hungary.

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This point connects with the second line of criticism the book might invite, namely to its unclassifiable nature from the standpoint of the humanism versus anti-humanism debate. I suggested that this was not in itself a bad thing, but the trouble is that Heller is not aware of its implications, either as these touch upon the debated issue of the continuity of Marx's problematic, or as they affect our interpretation of Marx's work in the light of the traditional fact/value antithesis. Or if she is aware of them, she chooses not to spell them out. More precisely, in regard to the first issue, I am unsure what to make of her appeal in the last analysis to the concepts of the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts ("Species being", "alienation") within the context of a study whose implications suggest in many respects enormous difficulties about the extent to which a Marxist theory of needs can be presented within the problematic of the early works. Thus there is an acknowledgement, if only tacit, of the different interpretations of the problem of needs invited by Marx's early works as opposed to Capital, but the contrasts between the earlier and later works are merely stated rather than given any critical assessment - there is no forthright attempt to expound what is entailed by the inconsistencies to which she points. It is not even as if Heller had the consistency to come out strongly in favour of a continuity in Marx's work; on the one hand there are many indications that she regards it as forming a whole, and that its message on the favour of a continuity in Marx's work; on the one altered conditions of production and distribution of approach would basically consist in a description terms of them. Thus a second approach might be of needs will cut across the distinctions made in another discourse which speaks in terms of Marx's production, and attempt to specify what goods or services we would need or sets of needs. The second approach, in the narrow sense) or represent conditions of production and determination of needs. In this event, the theory will have to extend itself beyond economic determinants of supply and demand to consideration of the biological and psychological factors determining the kind of goods and services that are produced and the role that such factors play in shaping reactions of acceptance, rejection and indifference to such production. This is need as the concept of interaction between production and consumption, rather than need as a concept used for differentiating between goods at the level of consumption.

Thus we can (i) specify different types of need; (ii) view their satisfaction from an effective demand v. possible consumption distinction; (iii) recognize that the latter distinction points in a critical, evaluative fashion at the consumption represented by effective demand (which is seen both as a given set of needs and as exclusive of the satisfaction of an alternative - reduced or expanded - set of needs); (iv) allow that the further problem then is to determine what forces produce (a) the consumption such as it exists, (b) dissatisfaction with that consumption of a kind that finds expression in demand that cannot be fulfilled. Any attempt to answer this last question must refer both to economic factors (the given mode of production) and to biological and psychological factors determining 'production in general', (so that even 'unplanned' modes of production cannot be wholly arbitrary in what they produce but are structured by forces deriving from the nature of human beings, raw materials, environmental conditions and so on). It must also consider the role played by these factors and conditions in moulding reactions to a given set of 'products' - whether these be 'material' in the strict sense or 'immaterial', and whether or not they take the form of consumer goods (use-values in the narrow sense) or represent conditions of existence in the wide sense (working conditions, levels of free time, availability of space, general levels of health, sanitation, freedom from pollution, provisions for education, for leisure, for sexuality, child-rearing, old age, death - in fact within this wide sense of 'products' we can include even such things as the cultural patterns and ideologies within which people live: the whole set of social relations and material or immaterial institutions that embody these. It might be added that in regard to the question of reactions we might want to specify another possible line of approach to be developed by a theory of needs: one relating to a distinction between 'need' and other concepts ('want', 'desire') expressive of attitudes to production.

Why a Marxist theory of needs?

What do we understand by a 'theory of needs', and why does it come up as an issue for Marxism? Heller does not raise either of these questions explicitly, but I think her work can only be assessed in terms of the framework defined by them. In the first place, we can approach the concept of needs in terms of types or sets of needs. From this standpoint we can distinguish, for example, certain categories of needs (economic, material, spiritual, cultural etc), and we can attempt to specify what goods or services we would include in each category. But let us note that this approach would basically consist in a description of needs (rather than in any account of their production), that its categories can only be defined vaguely and that other approaches to the question of needs will cut across the distinctions made in terms of them. Thus a second approach might be in terms of actual versus possible consumption: here we distinguish between the set of goods and services consumed by the members of society at any given point and a set of needs which represent goods and services which would be consumed given altered conditions of production and distribution of social wealth. I think it would be a mistake to chart this distinction in terms of 'fulfilled' and 'unfulfilled' needs, since there would be considerable overlap between the two categories. Thus the consumption of certain goods would seem indispensable to any form of society (eg food, clothing, energy, medicine, recreation etc). The distinction is rather that of effective versus possible demand. Her again, our theory of needs can restrict itself to charting patterns of consumption. That is to say, it can concentrate on needs as consumption. Alternatively, it can raise the question of the production and determination of needs. In this event, the theory will have to extend itself beyond economic determinants of supply and demand to consideration of the biological and psychological factors determining the kind of goods and services that are produced and the role that such factors play in shaping reactions of acceptance, rejection and indifference to such production. This is need as the concept of interaction between production and consumption, rather than need as a concept used for differentiating between goods at the level of consumption.

Not there

In the above schema of possible approaches to the question of needs, no reference has been made to Marxism; this was quite deliberate because it seems important to show the extent to which the issues raised in the provision of a 'theory of needs' have a range and depth that takes us far beyond any-
thing to be found in the Marxist texts themselves: the Marxist theory of needs is not there to be extracted from a reading and exegesis of Marx's texts but is to and is developed. At the same time, the theory of needs only arises as an absent theory to be constituted because of the development of historical materialism. Marxism invites questions about needs which are, so to speak, foreclosed both by pre-Marxist philosophies of man and by non-Marxist economy and sociology. In the first place, Marx makes a radical break with his contemporaries. His contemporary political economists when he insists upon the structural dominance of production over consumption. Where the economists of the 17th and 18th centuries had made their starting point that of needs (rendering production necessary to satisfy them), Marx made his starting point that of production. That is to say, classical economy relates economic facts to their origin in needs, or in their utility to human subjects, thus tending to reduce exchange-value to use-value and the latter ('wealth') to human needs. The object of study of this economics is 'homo oeconomicus' as possessor of a given, definitively human and measurable set of needs. Production, distribution, exchange and all the 'economic' acts which take place stem from the satisfaction of these needs, which are assumed as pre-given to, and thus the ultimate explanation of, those acts. We can see, therefore, that such an approach must use its starting-point to define its ends; hence its positivism: economics as a science which charts economic acts as satisfying the needs it posits as the origin of those acts. There can be no critique of these acts or their outcome because by definition they are the only possible acts within the space of this science.

In this respect we must note Marx's different analysis of consumption. Marx showed that economic needs cannot be defined by relating them to 'human nature': consumption is double - it includes both individual consumption and productive consumption (the distinction between Department I and Department II). A large part of consumption is therefore shown to be outside the direct individual consumption of economic subjects. However, it might be said that if economists (the appeal to 'human nature') do not enter into determination of 'needs' of production, individual consumption does appear to refer us to subjects satisfying needs. It is in regard to this point that Marx's break with classical economy connects with the need to human subjects.

For (i) he defines these needs as historical, i.e. not determined by unchanging human nature; and (ii) actual individual consumption, the individual needs which are satisfied through economic activity, are defined in terms of effective demand and thus recognized as determined by the structure of production - in the first place by the level of development of the productive forces (technical capacities) and in the second place by the relations of production (which fix the distribution of income). Thus even though anthropological considerations must retain a determinate role in the last analysis, since a given structure of production must be related to the nature of its human 'supports', we cannot move directly to this anthropology but must first take account of the economic definition of needs.

Moreover, even where Marx is directly concerned with needs as an anthropological rather than economic concept, he breaks with the traditional approach: he opens up the area in which a theory of needs comes into play because he does not assume them as already given. Instead of charting human development on the basis of a given human nature with its set of human-defining needs (which were at most seen as accruing and developed in the form of satisfaction, rather than changed in their content), he historicizes needs - and thus to the extent that the concept of human nature plays a part in his analysis, it itself is conceived as historical development, not as essence but as the sum of social relations at a given point. Thus, both positivism in economic theory and essentialism in anthropology share a common conception which from the start precludes the posing of the question of human needs because it assumes those needs as their starting point: a starting point about which nothing can be said because nothing is seen as needing to be said. Marx, by contrast, opens up a space for a theory of needs because (a) he relates economic needs to a given structure of production which could be other than it is in fact - thus his work takes the form of a critique - and (b) to the extent that he raises the question of anthropological determination of needs he makes it a precondition of any study in this field that we recognize that needs are historically developed both in form and content.

This is not to suggest that Marx never assumes anything about men's needs; it is clear that if one never allows oneself to make any claims or projections in this respect, one abandons any interest in the fact that economic and social processes pertain to human agents. To suggest, as does Althusser, that the only needs which play an economic role in Marx's analysis are needs as effective demand is to define the economic along the lines of classical economy - as closed system, object of a pure science, that can be studied in isolation from the totality of the conditions of social reproduction in which it functions as a system. Marx is not guilty of this. Even if one regards the early theory of alienation as not representative of his later position, it is nonetheless the case that the analysis in Capital is underpinned by a whole set of assumptions about what would constitute appropriate forms of production for men conceived as rational beings. Thus he constantly speaks of the wastefulness of capitalism, its failure to meet needs, the degrading effects of machinofacture and intense division of labour etc - aspects of capitalist production which place it in a context of anthropological needs, a context, however, which anyone simply concerned with studying the 'logic of capital' would have to relate to as an 'interference'.

A strong point in Heller's work is that she exposes, even if she fails to discuss, the dimensions of Marx's analysis and its implications from this point of view. That is to say, she reveals the extent to which historical materialism as 'science' of history calls in question traditional notions of scientificity based on the disjunction between 'fact' and 'value', and the ascription of all 'facts' to the realm of science and all 'values' to the realm of morality. The anti-humanist/humanist framework erected around contemporary Marxist studies is a reflection of this disjunction, and its effect has been to relegate all questions of needs to the domain of a 'humanist ideology' that is seen as running parallel to Marx's 'scientific' work but incapable of integration with it. Hence the concern with expunging humanist 'residues', or with revealing them as a 'contamination', or as a 'confusion' of two distinct aspects of society. It is a pity that Heller, having exposed this tension, and shown us some of the ways in which it is reflected in Marx's work,
then stops short, being content to tell us simply
that Marx 'never separates value judgements from
economic analysis; if he had done so he would be an
anti-capitalist romantic'. She seems unconcerned
with the epistemological questions this raises.

Nor is she much concerned with questions regarding
the determination of needs, so that in terms of
the schema of approaches to the theory of needs
outlined above, her emphasis is on needs as a con­
cept of consumption. This means that she scarcely
comments at all on Marx's (admittedly difficult and
enigmatic) passages in the 1857 Introduction and in
Pre-capitalist Economic Formations on the relation­
ship between production and consumption, but
prefers to concentrate on his various uses of the
term 'needs' - designate types of need ("material",
"spiritual", etc.), or to designate the basic sets of need
(eg his use of the terms 'natural' and 'necessary' as opposed to 'social' and
' historical' in categorising needs), or on the way
the concept functions in his economic analysis
(eg to distinguish between effective demand and
possible consumption; to specify 'necessary' as opposed to 'luxury' consumption). It is an interes­
ting and commendable piece of exegesis in which she
attempts to determine the extent to which any use of
the concept has what she calls 'valorising emphasis'
and whether it is functioning as a philosophical or
economic category. This leads her onto a discus­
sion of the concept of need as a 'pure value' cate­
gory. In this connection, she argues that in reject­
ing capitalism, Marx takes as his point of departure
'man rich in needs', and that though this idea is
elaborated in the early works and not further
analysed later on, it reappears in the mature works in
references to the workers' 'needs of develop­
ment' and primarily in the concept of 'Radical
needs' - a concept which she claims plays a key role
in Marx's theory.

As a preliminary to a fuller discussion of
'Radical needs', she has a fairly lengthy chapter on
the 'general philosophic concept of needs and the
alienation of needs'. It is a chapter bedevilled by
inadequate explication of concepts (beginning with
the term 'philosophic' itself) and in many places I
found it extremely difficult to follow. Its main
message is that the problem of the alienation of
needs constitutes 'the centre of Marx's philosophi­
al analysis of need'. Alienation of needs is equi­
alent to the alienation of wealth represented in the
concept of 'man rich in needs'. Heller analyses,
though with no great originality, the mechanisms
whereby capitalist production issues in this
alienation as a result of its one-sided development
of man. There are some interesting remarks on the
extent to which Marx foresaw the possibilities
of capitalism's manipulation of needs and some tant­
alizingly brief comments on what might be termed
the 'ideology' of needs. For example, referring to
Marx's remarks on the capitalist mode of produc­
tion's development of 'imaginary cravings' she
writes: "'Imaginary needs' do not exist. Whether
needs are 'normal' or whether they are "artificial"
... depends completely upon the value judgements
with which we define 'normality',". The problem
here, however, is something that is not discussed, is what
determines the value judgements. In statements
such as these Heller seems to be opting for a
wholly relative account of the philosophic concept
of need, but this position is difficult to relate to
her apparent adoption elsewhere (marked, for ex­
ample, by her appeal to a concept of 'Radical needs'
and her preparedness to make use of the framework
provided in terms of 'alienation' and 'man rich in
needs') of positions implying the existence of some
objective criteria for the evaluation of needs.

There is a similar inconclusiveness in another
interesting part of her discussion where she com­
pares the concept of 'interest' with that of need.
The overcoming of alienation consists in the dis­
appearance of 'interest' (as the concept of bour­
egois greed). Wherever Marx uses this term, Heller argues,
whether of individual or general interest,
it is pejorative, ie a reference to the narrow egoist
demands of bourgeois society, and the term is quite
opposed both to that of 'social needs' and to that of
'Radical needs'. The former, so far from being
the concept of a 'general interest' - of a system of
needs suspended above the 'whole or average of
individual needs' - always in fact refers to individual
needs. The idea of a set of 'social needs' over and
above individual needs suggests firstly that personal
needs should be sacrificed to social needs (which
tend to be identified in fact with those of the ruling
class or elite - who then claim to be representing
what are the 'unrecognised' needs of the misguided
masses), and secondly that social needs are 'real',
actual personal needs 'false'. On the contrary,
argues Heller, though Marx uses the concept of
'social need' in various senses, it always refers to
personal needs either in their capacity as socially
produced, or as the set of goods purchasable by the
individual (effective demand) or in the sense of
individual needs - that depend for satisfaction on
the cooperation of others. She also stresses that
when used as an economic category of effective
demand, Marx frequently puts the term in inverted
commas, thus expressing the difference between a
structure of needs that are felt and potentially
realisable at a given stage of social development,
and the actual consumption of a given class. This,
she insists, is not a difference between conscious
effective demand and unconscious needs, but a
difference between being and not being, between
realising and not realising, between what is and
what is not satisfactory.

Now while these distinctions are indeed to be
found in Marx's work and Heller does a reasonable
job of expounding them, it might still be thought an
evasion of the main problems to be confronted by a
theory of need simply to insist on the individual
character of needs. For in regard to 'social needs'
of the socialised man, one of the major practical
problems seems to relate to the manner of reconcil­
ation of any one individual's needs with the satis­
faction of those of any other, and thus with the sum
of individual needs. Unless we assume unanimity
of needs we cannot simply assert theoretically and
abstractly the harmonisation of all individual needs.
It does not prima facie appear at all obvious that the
overthrown private/general interest opposition of bour­
egois society means that all
problems about the relation of individual to society
will be overcome. Will there not be necessary
some 'sacrifice' of individual needs in favour of
the maximum satisfaction possible of social needs
(taken as the sum of individual needs)? In regard
to questions such as these Heller is too ready to
rely on formulaic solutions.

Radical needs

A similar evasion of crucial issues recurs in her
reliance on the concept of 'Radical needs' (I wish,
incidentally, that she had given references to
Marx's alleged use of the concept). She wants to
use the concept to effect the reconciliation between
the objective and evaluative aspects of Marx's work: 'Radical needs', she argues, are the expression of the fact that communism should be realised: they embody the Ought behind the critique of capitalism. But how, she queries, does this Ought become transposed from subjective to objective existence - which I take to be a Hegelianised way of asking about its concretisation in capitalist society, about its non-quixotic or non-voluntaristic status. Her solution is to refer us to the 'Totality (elsewhere designated confusingly as 'formation') of capitalism, which she argues needs 'Radical needs' in order to function: the transition to communism follows from a double necessity - from the natural laws of development of the capitalist mode of production and from the necessary emergence of the collective subject (the bearers of 'Radical needs') as a result of the first development. These two necessities, she further argues, are the expression in Marx of a double theory of contradiction, the one Hegelian in form, the other Fichtean - though both 'inverted' by Marx. The theory of double contradiction is designated confusingly as 'formation') of capitalism, about its concretisation in capitalist society, about its non-quixotic or non-voluntaristic status. Her solution is to refer us to the 'Totality (elsewhere designated confusingly as 'formation') of capitalism, which she argues needs 'Radical needs' in order to function: the transition to communism follows from a double necessity - from the natural laws of development of the capitalist mode of production and from the necessary emergence of the collective subject (the bearers of 'Radical needs') as a result of the first development. These two necessities, she further argues, are the expression in Marx of a double theory of contradiction, the one Hegelian in form, the other Fichtean - though both 'inverted' by Marx. The theory of double contradiction is Heller's solution to the tension between objective, natural economic laws (which find expression in the 'contradiction between forces and relations of production') and the 'consciousness of this conflict and the need to fight it out'. The latter, incorporated in 'Radical needs', emerges as the result of the contradiction capitalism develops between the individual's need to develop his personality and the 'accidental' character of his subordination to the division of labour.

What are these 'Radical needs' which are both generated within capitalism and yet external to it, unsatisfiable under it, and the grounds of its transcendence? In the first place, argues Heller, the need for free time. Such a need 'transcends particular interests and contains in principle that which conforms to the human species'. At the same time, capitalism cannot satisfy it because beyond a certain point valorisation is incompatible with a further shortening of the working day. Secondly, the need for universality: the other side of the extreme division of labour is the emergence of a need for 'fully developed individuals fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change in production...'

But there are two problems here. Firstly, what if these 'Radical needs' and their expression in the form of revolutionary action, fail to surface? What then becomes of Heller's attempt to give concrete legitimisation to the concept, ie to deal with the charge that these needs have only a utopian or subjective-voluntaristic status, rather than reflecting any 'necessity' attaching to capitalist development? Here Heller can only say that history has yet to show us whether capitalist society produces the consciousness of alienation ('Radical needs') which in Marx's day did not exist, and whose existence Marx had therefore to project. Can we be happy, however, with what then remains the abstract imposition of a structure of needs which bears no necessary relationship to the concrete actualities of existing society?

A second problem relates to the fact that Heller tells us that 'Radical needs' are inherent aspects of the capitalist structure of needs. Those needs are not the embryos of a future formation but 'members of the capitalist formation'. Later she tells us that the 'structure of needs in capitalist society belongs... exclusively to capitalist society' - it cannot be used to judge any other society in general, and least of all that of 'the associated producers'. This suggests that 'Radical needs' bear no relation to socialist society's system of needs, which seems odd; also odd is the complementary notion that though 'Radical needs' belong only to capitalism, they are also those responsible for breaking down its reproduction. Heller's answer to these perplexities is that capitalism, by developing the productive forces sufficiently to overcome the division of labour, can and does create needs that belong to its Being but do not belong to its system of needs. Thus only the 'Radical needs' enable man, in the interests of satisfying them, to bring about a social formation that is radically, 'from the root' different from the previous one.

**New senses**

This seems to suggest that while 'Radical needs', qua unfulfilled needs, belong only to capitalism, qua fulfilled needs they belong and to the system of socialist or communist needs. Even if we can make sense of this idea, it is scarcely obvious why it is so absurd, as Heller claims, to attempt to use the system of capitalist society as a standpoint from which to judge what socialism needs to provide. What other basis initially can there be for such judgement save that provided by the emergence of unsatisfied needs? In effect, Heller simply opts out of any discussion of the transition from capitalism to the society of 'associated producers' when she insists that the creatures existing under the latter will have such different 'senses' that no comparison of their needs with earlier needs is possible. To my mind, however, a theory of needs which is content to refer us to the alienation of needs under capitalism, on the one hand, and to the 'radically re-structured human being with his radically new set of needs', on the other, has evaded a crucial part of its task. At this point, it seems to me, Heller presents us with 'Marxist philosophy' at its most retrograde, that is to say, she offers us the most blatant substitution of philosophy for political theory. At the very least, one must raise the question of how much point there is in presenting a Marxist theory of needs which bypasses the issue of its strategic import within the current climate of Marxist thought, and which fails to acknowledge the extent to which the provision of a Marxist theory of needs is put on the agenda precisely because of contemporary political events. I have in mind here the dissatisfaction felt by radicals with the traditional Marxist faith in the ability of capitalism's 'contradictions' and the shortening of the productive forces to generate socialist society, and the failure hitherto of the so-called socialist economies to plan in any adequate way to meet needs, let alone to remove the evils associated with capitalist 'alienation' (extensive division of labour, repetitive work routines, long hours of work, class divisions and bureaucratic structures etc). In this sense, the theory of needs becomes an important issue because of the failure of Marx's 'projections' of socialist and communist systems of needs to attain any concrete form; it cannot therefore rely simply on reiteration of such projections.

Heller is not wholly unaware of the abstract level of her study in this respect, but she justifies it along the following lines:

Marx and Engels rarely deal with the 'how' of the transition; they limit themselves to the comparison of 'ideal types'. Since we are analysing Marx's theory of needs we too can work only with these 'ideal types'. We are

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3 K. Marx, Preface to 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy', Selected Works, p182.
The open philosophy ...

"The students will be afforded ample opportunities to observe the genteeel way philosophers have of contradicting one another... What, however, we should like to avoid is criticism of the courses as such, as opposed to criticism of their philosophical content... the aim is to involve the student, even if only on a small scale, in the evolution of philosophy; only by inviting your participation in this way can we demonstrate that it is not a static discipline but a dynamic process." - Editorial, Open Mind (Open University philosophy Journal) No. 1, January 1976

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Therefore forced to exclude a problem which is crucial to us today, namely the problem of transition... (p100)

Even as the exposition of the 'ideal type' the account she gives is riddled with unanswered questions about its 'how'. We are simply told that the base for the future development of production will be the extraordinary growth in the proportion of fixed capital, yet that living labour will still prevail over dead; that there will be 'unlimited' progress in material production, but that the development of new material needs is inconceivable; that the division of labour and the mental/manual distinction will disappear; that labour itself will become a need instead of a social duty; that it will be inconceivable that there will be any abyss between labour and free time - and so on. In her final pages, Heller has no qualms about expressing Marx's 'vision' in the most mystico-Hegelean terms - eg, what remains of the 'objective spirit' of class society is elevated to the sphere of the 'absolute spirit'; the 'world spirit' is not only recognized in art and philosophy, but in every human relationship; every individual is representative of a conformity to the species that has become real and actual, and 'he recognizes his representativeness in every other person and presents himself as such in relation to them'.

To be fair, Heller admits that such a vision may be utopian, but she would argue that it is still fertile. Marx, she claims, 'establishes a norm against which we can measure the reality and value of our ideas, and with which one can determine the limitness of our actions; it expresses the most beautiful aspiration of mature humanity, an aspiration that belongs to our Being'. The trouble is that so far as the theory of needs is concerned this only seems to bring us back to where we started. Even if it can be argued that the concrete problems of transition are the object of a study other than the one that Heller sets herself, one might still want to insist that part of the task of a theory of needs was to discover what is 'in conformity with our Being', and that it cannot present this as an unexamined presupposition. It seems a pity that despite all the early promise of this work, and the excellence of much of its analysis, its final offering is this lofty, but possibly rather vacuous, concept of our Being.
Radical Confusion

Hilary Rose and Steven Rose (eds.)
The Political Economy of Science: The Radicalsisation of Science, Macmillan, 1976, each about 300pp, £10 hardback, £3.95 paper

These immensely expensive books together contain sixteen articles divided more or less arbitrarily into nine dealing with the political economy of science (PES) and seven with its radicalsisation (R5). No less than six of the articles are written by one or both of the Roses (five in PES), and five of these are modified versions of articles already published elsewhere. Of the remainder, only two are of Macmillan's AUEW-TASS (in PES), and by Joseph Needham (in RS) - are by British authors. With the exception of Enzenberger's critique of political ecology (in PES) the other articles, most of which are of Continental origin, are relatively inaccessible.

At the outset the Roses insist that to develop beyond its 'early pragmatic phase' to a genuine revolutionary consciousness, it is imperative that the radical science movement formulate a theoretical perspective. They have no illusions about the difficulties which this involves: "The magnitude of the theoretical tasks confronting the movement - the need for a political economy of science in contemporary capitalism, its changing mode of production, the proletarianisation of scientific workers, the question of natural science as a generator of ideology, and of the ideology of science with its devaluation of all non- 'scientific' knowledge, its elitism and the subtleties of its particular form of sexism and racism - all these needed definition and welding together theoretically. We had to achieve these tasks in the ignorance of the past history of theory and practice on the question of science in the revolutionary Marxist movement - and, in particular, the experience of the Soviet Union and China" (PES, RS, p.xv)

As a statement of aims this has much to recommend it; the question is whether it provides us with at least some of the equipment which we need to achieve those aims. By and large, as far as I am concerned, they do not. On the contrary, as we shall see, the sloppiness, the superficiality and the empiricist rhetoric of much of the Roses' work in particular can only serve to deflect and to confuse subsequent attempts at a radical critique of science which takes their position for granted.

The topic of science in the Soviet Union is handled in one of the best articles in the collection: Lewontin's and Levin's 'The Problem of Lysenkoism' (in RS). Emphasising that Marxism was still very much alive in horticulture in the 1930s, the authors argue that the Lysenkoist movement was not simply an 'affair' but a genuine attempt at a scientific and cultural revolution. It was a revolution in which an exuberant and enthusiastic communist youth confronted elitist academicians who rationalised their privileged position by appealing to the values of the biological 'pure' science. We know that the revolution failed, and that the importance of Lysenkoism has declined in Russia. Yet, contrary to common opinion, Lewontin and Levins argue that Russian agriculture did not suffer appreciable damage due to the application of Lysenkoist practices between 1948 and 1962. In fact, they show that wheat crop yields in both Russia and the USA increased at roughly the same rate from 1950 onwards, although of course the absolute yields in the latter were more than double those in the Soviet Union, as they had been since 1950. This is a remarkable conclusion which cannot but force a reappraisal of the Lysenko debate as it is conventionally conducted in the West.

It is here surely that the importance of this article lies for us. Without it, I might add, one would be led to think that the developments in Russia were hardly worthy of close analysis by a radical science movement. For insofar as the Roses treat of science in socialist societies, they consistently adopt the line that it is to China that we must turn if we wish to learn what a liberated socialist science would look like. Science for the people in China, science for oppression in both the Soviet Union and the capitalist West; this is the now politically safe stance which the editors adopt on the basis of the most cursory discussion of the relationship between science and society in the countries involved.

Needham's article (in RS) shows just how congenial this sinophilia can be to people the science movement can do without. The inclusion of this essay I regard to be an act of political irresponsibility. According to Needham it is the adoption of Chinese values that will save the West from the mechanico-materialism which the counter-culture, spear-headed by Roszak, has reacted against. The Chinese are levelheaded, they have a cooperative mentality, they espouse an organic humanism. This dominance of morality in contemporary Chinese society, he says, is specifically representative of the slogan 'Put politics in command!' Needham, I have been told, believes that these values can only blossom under socialism, but this article certainly does not make that clear. An ethical revolution, not a socio-political one, is the programme he seems to advocate, a programme which is buttressed by his grossly misleading claim that Mao was a 'social and ethical philosopher, not a military man!' (RS p.190)

Turning now to the incorporation of science and technology into the structure of advanced capitalist society, there is firstly Mike Cooley's solid, unpretentious and informative account of the role of science in the labour process. Here at least we have the beginning of an attempt to study the social relations of production in contemporary capitalism. His piece is complemented by Gorz's (in PES) in which it is argued that capital exercises control over 'young scientists' not only ideologically, but also by encouraging the specialisation of scientific tasks and by the production of an 'over-abundance of scientific talent' which constitutes a kind of industrial reserve army. Gorz's arguments are not particularly convincing; the Roses' study of the incorporation of science (in PES), on the other hand, is downright evasive and misleading. For example, they provide the barest analysis of science policy over the past few decades which will serve to throw light on the relations of state and science in the context of the present crisis. A paragraph which summarises Bernal's position then follows, in which it is asserted that capitalist science is useful to maintain the working classes and to generate profit. Of course, no Marxist analysis should state baldly that science generates profit; nor, for that matter, should it assert that 'natural science generates ideology', as the Roses did in their quoted statement of aims. It is the capitalist class which appropriates scientific knowledge and embodies it in different ways at different periods in the productive process so as to facilitate the extraction of surplus value from the working population. Similarly, it is the capitalist class which articulates and disseminates ideology, not some disembodied abstraction labelled 'natural science'. And changing material conditions demand changing responses from this class, and any Marxist historical analysis of the relationship between the state and science would have to take this into account. Such an approach is not possible though, given the Roses' conceptual apparatus. Since both science and capitalism as a whole around, they are able glibly, to assert in the very next paragraph that the reasons for state involvement in science in the late 1950s and the 1960s 'are clear'. What is not clear, and what needs analysing are the specific forms which the extraction of surplus value takes and the entrenchment of class power took at this time. It is obvious from the Roses' haphazard selection from Marx's writings in their 'theoretical' chapter (in PES), that they are in no position to even pose such questions, let alone set about trying to answer them. Their ahistorical, abstract approach is at such a convenience anyway - it can dissolve every
potential embarrassment in a line. How, for example, do we account for the fact that even now, in times of economic stress, funding for 'particular areas' of 'pure' science continues? Well, science generates profit and maintains state power, doesn't it? So these areas have obviously 'been seen both by governments and industry as integral to their political or economic purpose' (PES, pl0). Q. E. D.

Both of these books are subtitled 'Towards a philosophy of natural sciences' One would have expected that some attempt would have been made to confront the problem of ideology head-on, involving minimally a description and clarification of the different senses in which the term is used, their strengths and their weaknesses. What one finds is that the concept is used with reckless abandon. Granted one gains the impression that ideology is inextricably linked with domination. But how specifically 'ideological domination operates, and thus how it is to be confronted', is left unexplained. For example, Levy-Leblond, whose article (in RS) contains an interesting if not particularly novel account of the way in which power is distributed in contemporary physics, ends his contribution with the stirring claim that the 'long-term abolition of the division of labour between the scientific knowledge of an elite and the empirical knowledge of the mass, maintained in existence today by the dominant ideology, will demand a radical modification of science' (RS, pl75). This view does not, however, square with his claim made earlier in the paper that 'because of the esoteric and spectacular character of fundamental physics its popularisation might exacerbate mystification rather than destroy it. This is surely a cardinal point. For what it suggests is that the social organisation of the division of labour within some kinds of scientific practice might be an unavoidable consequence of the sheer complexity of the discipline involved. For some this is an unpalatable conclusion, but slogans won't demolish it. What is needed, minimally, is an understanding of the precise way in which the organisation of fundamental research is ideological, and why.

One sense in which Levy-Leblond uses the term ideology is that which identifies it with the values or goals which scientific research is directed towards. From this perspective, as he recognises, the advent of socialism does not mean the end of ideology; it means the substitution of a different science with its own ideology (ie values or goals). In similar vein, Rose and Hamner speak of 'ideologies of birth control' in their article on human reproduction. Here the concept of ideology is taken to mean the goals for which birth control is used; we now have 'scientific birth control' by means of the pill, for example, and an 'ideological debate over its employment' (PES, pl50) for liberation or for domination. This seems to suggest that the scientific knowledge embodied in the pill, say, is value-free and neutral. It is only in the question of its technological employment that values come to the fore, shaping the ends to which that knowledge is applied. The choice between such ends is an 'ideological' one, and cannot be settled merely by referring to what is a, ideologically and non-Marxist. The idea that certain conceptions of science, and perhaps some 'scientific' theories constructed in the light of them, can themselves be ideological, is also sometimes suggested by the Roses. At one point they speak of dialectical theories as 'truly scientific rather than ideological' (PES pl02) which suggests that a non-dialectical programme, which they take the reductionist paradigm in biology to be, is ideological per se. But the Roses' acritical and unconscious use of the concept leads them astray. They also speak of the reductionist paradigm as 'bad science because it is ideological' (PES pl10). But if it is non-dialectical then, on their earlier view, it is not science; it is not science at all. It is ideology or pseudo-science. Pseudo-sciences, they also tell us, are used ideologically for human oppression, a different claim again which signals a relapse into the value-free conception of science advocated earlier. It is surely impossible to make any progress under these circumstances. I do not wish to suggest that the distinction between science and ideology is easily drawn. But it is a problem, and what is so frustrating about these books is that no one seems to appreciate what the result is confusion and shoddiness.

To be fair to the Roses, if we treat their articles simply as schematic overviews of ongoing debates on the left, they contain much valuable information which any theory of the relationship between science, technology and the structure of advanced capitalism would have to take cognisance of. Their piece on Race and IQ (in PES) is particularly helpful in this regard. Articles like that on the Radicalisation of science (in RS) and Women's Liberation and Human Reproduction (in PES) while undoubtedly helpful, tend to present competing views and tendencies in such synoptic terms that it is often difficult to identify key areas in the debate in question. In this regard the work on the women's movement is particularly puzzling. In their article they suggest, I think correctly, that there are definite limits to 'descriptive work showing how women are hindered from entering the institutions of science' (PES pl43). Their analysis is intended to go beyond this. Yet one of the two articles on women in science in RS, that by Couture-Cherki, is limited in just this way. The other article by Stehelin is more enterprising, yet again covers a wide spectrum of issues without investigating any particular one in depth.

Both of these books are to be translated into several languages. The Roses' views are thus likely to be widely disseminated and discussed, discussed I may add without the benefit of Werskey's critique, and in the light of the misgivings I have aired, it is debatable whether these books will advance the struggle of the heroic people of this country, and other societies, whose daily lives are crippled and stunted by capitalist science and technology. John Krige

Marx & Spencer?

Joseph Needham, Moulds of Understanding: A Pattern of Natural Philosophy, edited and introduced by Gary Wersky, Allen and Unwin, £7.75.

Joseph Needham is a remarkable person: eminent embryologist, leading authority on Chinese science and technology; he regards himself as a marxist, an 'honoray Taoist', and a follower of the mystical Christian theology of Rudolf Otto. A seemingly incongruous combination, yet one which must make him an appealing figure to anyone who feels textual echoes of the I Ching in On Contradiction, or is struck by the similarities between Engels' introduction to Dialectics of Nature and a pop mysticism such as Watts' The Joyous Cosmology.

This work is intended to introduce his thinking both to readers of his Science and Civilisation in China, and to all those who are critically concerned with technological rationality in bourgeois society. It comprises a critical and biographical introduction; essays selected from four books that appeared between 1931 and 1941; and the text of two lectures delivered in the early 1970s. Considering this time span, there is less inconsistency than might be expected; and as the selection has been approved by the author, it is justified to regard them as a whole.

Needham derives his world-view from many sources, which he regards as complementary and mutually illuminating. These are: The study of the principles and mechanisms of biological organis-
tion, and the categories needed to overcome the sterile debate between mechanists and neo-vitalists.

- Herbert Spencer's generalisation of the idea of evolution into a theory explaining all change, and the metaphysical elaborations of this by Whitehead and de Chardin.
- Marx and Engels' extension of evolution beyond Spencer's limiting class horizons, so as to comprehend contradiction and its overcoming as constitutive of historical processes.
- Traditional Chinese culture, with its integration of immanentist religion, technological progress and social responsibility.

Underlying all Needham's concerns is the belief that organisation is intrinsic to matter, life and society; and that these are hierarchically related, irreducible levels, whose structures are analogous. This premise clashes with the apparent conflict between science and religion; he deals with this by the doctrine that experience is differentiated into forms which are incommensurable but complementary. He asserts that there are five such modes: science, religion, art, history, philosophy. No justification is given for this segmentation of the understanding, nor why it should have just this fivefold nature.

But to accept the untranslatability of forms of experience is to deny that they can be critically analysed; each must be accepted in its own terms. For Needham, as for others, the major role of this doctrine is to defend religion. To the theists who hold that religion can be rationally validated, Needham must reply that they are wrong, that his category of religion logically excludes some of what has been called 'religion': that religion is qualitative and particularist, against science which is quantitative and universalistic, he takes the core of religion to be the experience of the 'numinous'; Otto insists that this notion is utterly inexplicable to one without experience of it, and he attempts to explain it by analogising from feelings of abasement, awe and love. Needham's use of this notion is loose and its function is largely laudatory; it allows him to regard social relations in the Soviet Union and China as expressions of religiosity. Science, he views through the paradigm offered by physics. His attitude towards the epistemological status changes from naive realist, through relativist-constructivist to 'dialectical' realist.

The doctrine that modes of understanding are discrete islands makes it impossible to theorise cultural history as a total picture as oscillations between poles - the flux between the Yin and the Yang. A perspective which insists that 'religion ... is concrete and individual ... qualitative in feeling, opposed to measurement and analysis, "carmicipial" instead of orderly' (p214) can make no sense of the long tradition which regards the practices of mathematics and of mysticism as somehow deeply related. This is an acute weakness in Needham because he often approvingly quotes Browne's 16th-century writings on the numerical patterns of ancient 'gardens of symmetrical vegetables' as revealing 'the mystical mathematics of the City of Heaven'.

Needham's overall view is that the actual urlpatterns of the sentiments between modes is through the incorporation of opposites into the synthetic unity which is their object. This is evolution, in its most extended sense: a universal process generating greater differentiation of parts, together with more complex integrations between them. We cannot consider nature otherwise than as a series of levels of organisation, a series of dialectical syntheses. From ultimate physical particle to atom, from atom to molecule, from molecule to cell, from cell aggregate to living cell, from cell to organ, from organ to body, from animal body to social organisation. (p219)

Organisational levels (or 'envelopes') are functionally related in complex systems; and complexity of order is another system which models all novelty in history:

that ... long procession of morphological forms and physiological achievements ... the first coelomic organisation, the first endocrine mechanism, the first running of the evolutionary success, the first vertebral column, the first appearance of consciousness, the first making of a tool. (p153)

This pan-evolutionism gives him a perspective of grand optimism, within which it is possible to see the attenuation of communism as as inevitable as was the formation of primitive cells from giant protein molecules. One version of Hegel's lectures has him claiming that 'the state is the march of God through the world'. For Needham, communism is the goal of history after his march through the molecules.

A frequent criticism of this view is that it entails political apathy, as all that can be accomplished is the acceleration or retardation of a necessary process. In fact, this pan-evolutionism is irrelevant to the attainment of communism. It may be that the constitution of matter necessitates the formation of life-bearing planets, but this implies nothing about the emergence of life in a given planetary system. Similarly, the transition of a biosphere tends to generate social being, consciousness, class-war and communism says nothing about the completion of this process on a given planet. There is nothing in Needham (or in Engels) to show that each stage of organisation everywhere generates a higher stage; nothing to prevent a given line of evolution sticking at a low level. In their perspective it is as unimportant that a given planet remains at the protozoan level of organisation as that it remains in a slave economy. In the words of Needham's revered Lao Tzu: 'Heaven and earth are ruthlesst and treat the myriad creatures as straw dogs' (Tao Te Ching, ch. 5, Lau trans.)

In the perspective of Engels, Needham happily takes the notion of contradiction as boundlessly accommodating: Instances of dialectical development in scientific knowledge are so numerous that a few moments thought provides an embarrassingly large selection (p220).

For example, until the 19th century there was a dispute between 'The Ovists (who) believed that mammals developed from the egg alone', and 'The Animalculists (who) believed that the animal originated from the spermatozoon only'; this antithesis was overcome when 'the functions of egg and spermatozoon were understood, and the contradiction was resolved' (p221). Applying this notion to the English bourgeois revolution tells us that:

Feudal royalism found its antithesis in the new urban republicanism of the Common-wealth period. But the time was not ripe for the ideas of the Levellers and Independents, and the revolution was a dialectical synthesis. (p223)

Thus, whatever was, was right, its reification guaranteed by the triadic movement of emergence.

Needham's belief that order and progress are imminent in the world is the link between his earlier work on the chemical mechanisms of embryogenesis and his still continuing project on the scientific development of culture and of culture of China. On his view, classical China avoided the traps with which the Judaico-Christian tradition dichotomised the world into creator and created, sacred and profane, mental and manual. Thus, the philosophy which in Europe emerged as dualistic materialism into a hostile and distorting milieu, has always been present as a living current in China; that whilst Western socialism must struggle not only against the bourgeoisie but against a rooted assumption of the selfishness of man, for China its cultural assumption is that man is naturally social and the world a harmonious process.

At a time when many are looking Eastwards in a search for 'alternatives' to science, it is valuable to have the reflections of a brilliant, warm and sincere man, who is uniquely situated in relation to the concerns of 'today's political and religious activists' (ed's intro, p14).

Needham gladly accepts Thomas Browne's words on man as a self-characterisation: 'that great and true amphibium, whose nature is
lobotomy, it is a healthy relief that disposed to live not only like other creatures in diverse elements but in divided and distinguished worlds' (quoted p169). For those of us who regard mysticism as a self-labotomy, it is a healthy relief that flounders, David Murray

Wait for the workers


Ideology and Superstructure was first published in Danzig in 1936 as the outcome of a doctoral thesis. Its author, of Trotskyite and Frankfurt school formation (he studied at Basle university under Fritz Belleville, a friend and disciple of Trotsky, had but a brief political career as spokesman in the early Thirties of the Spartacus League in Danzig. In the same year as his book was published he was arrested by the Nazis and condemned to three years' imprisonment at the Danzig trials. His family secured him an early release from jail, however, and he thereafter lived in exile in America under the name of Frank Fisher until his death in 1970.

How are we to relate today to this youthful and isolated example of Jakubowski's thoughts on historical materialism? It must be admitted, I think, that despite its English publishers' claim that 'it stands out uniquely from the period of virtual coma into which Marxist thought seemed to have fallen between the early 1920s and recent years', it scarcely comes as a dose of adrenaline. It is, surprisingly, distinctly dated air about it, and its interest must surely be mainly historical - and even in that respect limited. For Jakubowski is unconcerned with the historical events of the Thirties (to which his book scarcely refers) but with the 'reception' exposition of the texts of Marx and Engels. Specifically, then, its historical interest lies in its interest as an intervention in the climate of Marxist theory thrown up by the 2nd and 3rd International. Having said that, it should also be acknowledged that it offers a succinct and lucid introduction to the Lukacian interpretation of historical materialism, and could well serve as a text-book in this respect.

For Jakubowski, 'correct' Marxism means Marxist Marxism (based almost exclusively on the 1884 Manuscripts and the 1859 Preface) whose fundamental concept is that of 'humanism' and whose central philosophical contribution lies in its expression of the unity of thought and being, theory and practice. Jakubowski is concerned with rescuing Marx and Engels from economicist and 'metaphysical-materialist' interpretations. Almost everyone other than Lukacs and Korsch is found guilty of distorting historical materialism, either by Kantianizing Marx (Adler and his followers) or by equating materialism with naturalistic matter rather than with social being, and by separating the scientific aspect of Marxism from its status as expression of the proletarian movement (Hilferding, Lenin).

So strongly anti-economicist and anti-naturalist is Jakubowski's conception that he practically abandons historical materialism altogether in favour of a theory in which subjective consciousness plays the determining role in historical development. In his concern to stress that consciousness is a part of social being, social being is all but dissolved into human consciousness, and we are offered, for example, a somewhat Sartrean conception of the economy: 'economic relations stand as an unforeseeable product of an aggregation of voluntaristic impulses from individual consciousnesses... ' And when it comes to the determination in the last instance by the economic it is suggested that this 'monist' conception is approached from a methodological point of view. For Jakubowski, not only does the last instance never in fact arrive, it was never ever really there. All the aspects of the social totality penetrate dialectically in a kind of equilibrium of forces, and it is only from a certain way of viewing it that it is important to distinguish them. But what is the conceptual distinction reflecting in the first place if it is not something pertaining to the concrete? And why is it important?

Of course, one is sympathetic to Jakubowski's rejection of crucial fundamentalist accounts of the relations between infrastructure and superstructure. But the paradox is that he himself remains too dominated by the topological model to escape the mechanistic account that it invites. Thus, though he is critical of the 'schematic finality' of theories such as Plekhanov's, he himself presents an even more schematic three-tier model (economic base, legal and political order, ideological superstructure) based on wholesale adoption of the 1859 Preface formulation, which is then welded together into a dialectical totality with the aid of countless 'connecting links', 'interactions', 'retractions' and 'mediations'. Now two things seem to be wrong with this approach. One is that concepts such as 'interaction' etc remain descriptive and abstract - one wants to see them at work in concrete analysis: what exactly is a mediation? How does it operate in practice? But more importantly, perhaps, the account in terms of a unified expressive totality, with which such concepts are frequently linked, seems to be misconceived from the start in that it fails to locate contradiction and conflict.

There are many reflections of this failure in Jakubowski's work. There is a problem, for example, right at the start about how to get classes into the picture - thus we are told that it is the mode of production in which appropriation takes place by means of exchanges between individuals that is 'split into classes'. We find another instance in the fact that the revolutionary character of the proletariat can only be accommodated by allowing that 'in a sense the proletariat already stands outside bourgeois society' - revolution, in fact, is seen as relatively unconnected with any accumulation of contradictions within the capitalist mode of production; it is simply that at a given moment the proletariat realises its own self-alienation, thereby transcending in it thought and from that standpoint initiating the revolution which installs its de-alienation in practice.

The uncritical glossing over of the problems which attach to the 1859 Preface account of the relationship between the forces of production and relations of production (notion of their 'correspondence' at one stage of development, and their 'conflict' at another) is also responsible for inadequacies and inconsistencies in Jakubowski's account of ideology - on which he particularly concentrates. At one point it is suggested that it is the ground of residue of certain material relations 'which have lost their material reality but have not yet quite discarded their "conscious" expression'; elsewhere the ideological superstructure is described as the 'form' in which material relations are mediated through class struggles (as opposed to the political and legal superstructure where these struggles actually occur); at other times ideology is presented as the expression of the social totality to which it corresponds; and then again, we are offered an account in terms of 'partial' or false consciousness (the ideology of the bourgeois classes, which is only capable of a one-sided understanding of the total reality) from which the proletariat escapes by virtue of its negative relation to bourgeois ideology...

'Historical materialism... recognizes that the proletariat is fundamentally distinct from all other classes in bourgeois society since it is, from the beginning a (negative) totality, a class that is the opposite of the bourgeois society. Hence its standpoint cannot be described as partial, nor is its consciousness ideological' (p100) What is common to all these concepts is the identification of ideology with consciousness, which pre-
cludes from the start an approach which regards consciousness as an indispensable component of the problem of ideology, rather than vice-versa, and analyses the latter as a function in the production of (rather than simply as expression of) the ways in which the thinking subject relates to the world. I have already given some indication of the political implications of Jakubowski's interpretation of Marxism - the main one being that revolutionary change is made dependent primarily on revolutionary consciousness and only secondarily on revolutionary practice. Since, in fact, of course, Jakubowski must confront the problem of which comes first, or whether one does not presuppose the other, he is led to posit a more 'progressive' or more 'class conscious' sector of the proletariat whose role is to explain the actions of the working class to itself and thereby orient it to its goal. The final pages of his book, in which his position is elaborated, represent an exercise in political theorising designed to avoid the twin evils, as Jakubowski sees them, of spontaneism on the one hand and Leninism on the other. It leads to what I find a strangely fatalistic account of the relations between theory and practice in which it is suggested that the working-class movement can only adopt Marxist theory when that theory corresponds to the movement's practice - and we have no alternative but to wait for the moments in history at which the proletariat is in fact 'in a revolutionary mood' in which it is determined to 'harness' the theory to it (whether made from within or from without the working class) will be voluntaristic. But such a conception surely relies on a quite static notion of theory (i.e. one which does not think in terms of its dialectical development into a more or less efficient instrument for living up to its double function of producing and explaining the specious appearances of the world). The translator makes no apology for declining to liquidate the granular, craggly, dialectical diction of Marx; and he says that he has 'generally chosen to err on the side of pedantic exactitude, especially since the English-speaking world has had such difficulty in adjusting itself to the fact that the first chapter of Das Kapital is the most decisive philosophical achievement since Hegel'.

The editorial matter varies in tone: pp4-6, 73-76, 197-199 are scholarly and useful; whereas pp. xi-xv, 43-48 are sectarian WRP attacks on 'revisionists' - notably the leaders of the Fourth International - and of interest to psychopatologists only. Still, it is good to record that the WRP's 'struggle for dialectical materialism' has turned up this gem amongst the garbage - to them goes the honour of first publication in England of two of the texts here. These texts are taken from the First Edition of Capital. When the first proofs reached Marx he was staying with Kugelmann in Hanover and the latter convinced him that readers needed a supplementary, more didactic, exposition of the form of value. Engels wrote to Marx that he did not think it was worth doing this addendum, but did agree that the dialectic of the value-form was unclear and should have been laid out in the manner of Hegel's Encyclopedia. On 22 June 1867 Marx replied to Engels: 'As to the development of the form of value I have and have not followed your advice, in order to behave dialectically in this respect as well. That is to say I have 1) written an appendix in which I describe the same thing as simply and pedagogically as possible, and 2) followed your advice and divided each step in the development into §§, etc., with separate headings. In the preface I then tell the non-dialectical reader that he should skip pages x-y and read the appendix instead. Here not merely philistines are concerned but youth eager for knowledge, etc. Besides the matter is too decisive for the whole book.'

The two first parts of the book before us comprise the original first chapter plus the appendix on the form of value. For the second edition of Capital Marx reworked the whole first chapter as he explains in a Postface: 'In Chapter 1, Section 1, the derivation of value by analysis of the equations in which every exchange-value is expressed has been carried out with great lucidity; similarly, the connection between the substance of value and the determination of the magnitude of value by the labour-time socially necessary, which was only alluded to in the first edition, is now expressly emphasized. Chapter 1, Section 3 (on the form of value), has been completely revised, a task which was made necessary by the two-fold presentation of it in the first edition... The last section of the first chapter, "The Fetishism of Commodities, etc."

If Marx thought that he had solved his problems by reworking the first chapter and incorporating the appendix on value-form, what worth is there in publishing the original materials (other than that of bibliographical completeness)? One reason is already given us by Marx - 'the matter is too decisive for the whole book'. Any scrap of evidence as to Marx's intentions in Chapter One is therefore valuable. This is made more important by the difficulty of the argument, admitted by Marx himself in the Preface, and some points in the appendix seem clearer than in the second form for the whole book. Additional importance is given to the material by its clearly dialectical nature. In the Postface to the second edition Marx makes reference to his debt to Hegel in this connection; he recalls that he even 'here and there in the chapter on value, coquetted with the mode of expression peculiar to Hegel'.

This brings us to one of the points of comparison between the two editions: the second edition shows less evidence of any flirtation with Hegel. Following the strictures of Kugelmann and Engels, Marx no doubt wanted to give the philistine the least possible excuse for complaining of dialectical paradoxes. The substance of the matter is unaffected but for students of the relation between Hegel and Marx the first edition chapter one is more relevant. It is also interesting to note that in the second edition Marx gives greater emphasis to the question of commodity fetishism. A paragraph of the appendix (which includes the famous sentence 'this I call the fetishism...') together with new material, is worked in, and the whole given its own section heading. This may be counted an advance, as may the reworkings of the value-form, which is one of Marx's most brilliant innovations and sets him decisively in advance of Ricardo. (Amongst other things it demon-

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Kate Soper

Marx on Value


This book contains new translations of four texts of Marx's:
1. The Commodity - Chapter One of the First Edition of Capital
2. The Form of Value - Appendix to the First Edition of Capital Volume One
3. Results of the Immediate Process of Production
4. Marginal Notes on Wagner.

Previous translations:
1. Capital Chapter One - the Commodity published by Labor Publications, NY, 1972, is identical with its equivalent here: the American translator 'Axel Davidson' is no doubt one and the same person as Albert Dragstedt.
2. I have a copy of a translation in typescript by W. Suchting and M. Roth.
3. The 'Results' is in an appendix to the recent Penguin edition of Capital Volume One.
4. (a) Karl Marx Texts on Method, ed. T. Carver, 1975 (see my review in Radical Philosophy 13)
   (b) Issue 9 of the Irish Communist Organisation
   (c) Theoretical Practice No. 5.

The book before us brings together texts on value which have been rather inaccessible until recently and which throw additional light on Marx's struggle to perfect his critique of Political Economy. The translator makes no apology for declining to liquidate the granular, craggly, dialectical diction of Marx; and he says that he has 'generally chosen to err on the side of pedantic exactitude, especially since the English-speaking world has had such difficulty in adjusting itself to the fact that the first chapter of Das Kapital is the most decisive philosophical achievement since Hegel'.

The editorial matter varies in tone: pp4-6, 73-76, 197-199 are scholarly and useful; whereas pp. xi-xv, 43-48 are sectarian WRP attacks on 'revisionists' - notably the leaders of the Fourth International - and of interest to psychopatologists only. Still, it is good to record that the WRP's 'struggle for dialectical materialism' has turned up this gem amongst the garbage - to them goes the honour of first publication in England of two of the texts here. These texts are taken from the First Edition of Capital. When the first proofs reached Marx he was staying with Kugelmann in Hanover and the latter convinced him that readers needed a supplementary, more didactic, exposition of the form of value. Engels wrote to Marx that he did not think it was worth doing this addendum, but did agree that the dialectic of the value-form was unclear and should have been laid out in the manner of Hegel's Encyclopedia. On 22 June 1867 Marx replied to Engels: 'As to the development of the form of value I have and have not followed your advice, in order to behave dialectically in this respect as well. "That is to say I have 1) written an appendix in which I describe the same thing as simply and pedagogically as possible, and 2) followed your advice and divided each step in the development into §§, etc., with separate headings. In the preface I then tell the non-dialectical reader that he should skip pages x-y and read the appendix instead. Here not merely philistines are concerned but youth eager for knowledge, etc. Besides the matter is too decisive for the whole book.'

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strates how the money-form is present in germ in the simplest expression of value, where one commodity expresses the value-equivalent of another.

However, it is not the case that all an author's innovations in his own text are helpful. It is curious that at the same time as the development of the last two sections of chapter one, which bring out more clearly that value (stripped of its fetish character) is a social relation, Marx introduces in the second section a rather unfortunate formulation in the definition of abstract labour. In the first edition Marx summarises the difference between concrete and abstract labour as follows:

'It follows . . . not that there are two differing kinds of labour lurking in the commodity, but rather that the same labour is specified in differing and even contradictory manner - in accordance with whether it is related to the use-value of the commodity as labour's product or related to the commodity-value as its merely objective expression.'

(p16 of the present translation)

In the second edition he replaces this summary by the well-known concluding sentence of section two: 'all labour is an expenditure of human labour-power, in the physiological sense, and it is in this quality of being equal, or abstract, human labour that it forms the value of commodities.'

This definition gives rise to a misplaced 'materialism' in the treatment of the substance of value by friends and enemies alike. I, I, Rubin has shown in his Essays on Marx's Theory of Value (reviewed by me in Radical Philosophy 11) the necessity of avoiding a physiological understanding of abstract labour. See also my article 'Marx's concept of abstract labour' (which makes use of the first edition) in Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists October 1976.

Rubin points out (p147n) that in the French edition of Volume One of Capital (1875), Marx gives both definitions; first of all he repeats the above-quoted definition from the first edition after which follows the definition of the second edition. 'It must not be forgotten,' says Rubin, 'that as a general rule, in the French edition of Capital, Marx simplified and in places shortened his exposition. However, on this point 

written on a yellow notepad and signed Chris Arthur.

Books received

Hodge, J. L. et al., Cultural Bases of Racism and Group Oppression Berkeley, Cal, Two Riders Press, 1975, £3.85
Eagleton, T. Ideology & Criticism, London, NLB, 1976, £4.95
Wells, D. Meaning, Understanding, Interpretation, Bristol, David Wells, 1976, 50p (pamphlet)
McBride, W. L. The Philosophy of Marx, London, Hutchinson, 1977, £5.50, pb £2.75
Chanam, M. ed. Chilean Cinema, London, BFI, 1977, £0.75

Gleeson, D. ed. Identity and Structure: issues in the sociology of education, Yorkshire, afferton, 1977, £2.95
Rugg, N. M. People not Cases: a philosophical approach to social work, London, RKP, 1977, £4.25
Topolski, J. Methodology of History, trans. O. Woliejewicz, Dodrecht Holland, D. Reidel, 1976, £15.00
Fraser, J. An Introduction to the Thought of Calvano Della Volpe, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1977, £3.00
Cousin, Victor, Defense de l'Universite et de la Philosophie, presente par Danielle Ranciere, Paris, Solin

News

For various reasons, the news section in this issue is unusually short. We will publish more extended news reports in RP18, including a full account of the 1977 RP Festival. Please send material to the news editor at our London address. RP Newsletter number 4 was produced in March by the Bristol group; the newsletter published reports on local RP groups, other local and international news, and discussions of RP's problems and activities.

To contribute, or to receive copies of the newsletter, please write with s.a.e. to the news editor.

Oxford

Oxford RP held a well-attended series of counter-course seminars last term on the 'history of philosophy' from Descartes to Kant. Beginning on 27 April they are running an 8-week university lecture series called 'History and understanding - an introduction to hermeneutics', organised by Josephine Hodge, covering Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, Apel and Ricoeur (Wednesdays, 2.30pm, Balliol lecture room 23; all are welcome). For other Oxford news, plans and projects see RP Newsletter 5.

Communist University of London 9

CUL9 takes place between 9 and 17 July. Through a variety of courses it offers a Marxist critique of subjects as they are taught in the colleges and seeks to present and develop the ongoing debate within Marxism itself. There are 25 specialist courses, 17 general courses, 14 current problems of Marxist theory and politics, and a wide variety of evening events - films, music, debates etc.

Registration costs £8, advance deposit £2. There are free creche facilities. To register or obtain a free prospectus write to Sally Hibbin, CUL9, c/o 16 King Street, London WC2E 8HY

Notes on contributors

Michele le Dœuf teaches philosophy at the École Normale Superieure de Fontenay, France; she is a member of Geplon the group whose study of science, philosophy of science, philosophy of technology is described in RP16. Ian Craib teaches sociology at Essex University. Kate Soper teaches philosophy at North London Polytechnic. John Krije is teaching and researching in philosophy of science at Sussex University. Martine Meskel and Michael Ryan are students at the Ecole Normale Superieure, Paris