In spite of such difficulties, the aggregate analysis in the Blechman-Kaplan volume usefully supplements the case histories.

Read back-to-back, the two encyclopedic volumes overwhelm post-Vietnam assertions about the powerlessness of force, the greater reliance on economic instruments of foreign policy, and the greater relevance of ecological threats to national security. These seem to be aspirations rather than empirically verified generalizations. The events and changes since publication, e.g., the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Reagan political-military decisions, are not, regrettably, leading us in the direction of demilitarized foreign policies. Let us hope one tendency from the past will not change: both superpowers must of necessity continue to be guided in their final calculations about force and war by their supreme interest in and international responsibility for the avoidance of nuclear war.

ABRAHAM BARGMAN

Brooklyn College

Marxism: For and Against. By ROBERT L. HEILBRONER. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1980. Pp. 186. \$9.95.)

Heilbroner's book is both highly readable and interesting. Although the serious student of marxism will find nothing that has not already been said about Marx, this book (if only because of its style and openness) represents a refreshing alternative to the plethora of literature that is either for or against marxism. Heilbroner begins his work by asking two formidable questions: "Why is it that the work of Marx, from which marxism springs, exerts such fascination after more than a century?" Furthermore, "Why should we still turn to Marx for insight into contemporary affairs, when the world has changed almost out of recognition from the time in which he wrote?" Heilbroner wastes no time in answering these questions. He argues that Marx's importance (and in this he likens Marx somewhat to Plato and Freud) resides precisely in his discovery of "an unsuspected level of reality beneath the surface of history, above all beneath the history of the period that we call 'capitalism'" and the discovery of a "mode of inquiry to reach that buried reality."

Having identified the signal contribution of Marx to social thought, Heilbroner organizes his book around the theme of an assessment of three major problem areas in marxism. The first problem area, he contends, concerns the question of what exactly is marxism. How are we to distinguish among the various (and at times seemingly contradictory) claims made upon the legacy of Marx? Without engaging the debate, Heilbroner maintains that a unity of four underlying premises identifies a body of thought as marxist: (1) a dialectical approach to philosophy; (2) a materialist interpretation of history; (3) a socioanalysis of capitalism; and (4) a commitment to socialism. These are also the titles of the four main chapters of the book. And each chapter (as might be expected) presents arguments for and against marxism. This approach, however colorfully it might be presented, does cause some confusion. For example, in the chapter on dialectics (perhaps his best)

Heilbroner writes quite favorably of the marxist conception of reality but given his approach to marxism (which rejects either-or assessments) he was perhaps bound to conclude that "the two-sided aspects of dialectics [identifying 'contradictions' as the essence of reality but yet not being able to identify these 'contradictions'], at once so rich and so poor, so useful and so useless, so powerful and so impotent" made the dialectical method "intellectually elusive." In short, what Heilbroner seems to give with one hand, he seems to take back with the other.

A second problem area of marxism, says Heilbroner, concerns the relationship of marxism as a theory to the political reality of "socialism" as it has been established in places like the Soviet Union and China. He clearly sees a relationship. But he is hesitant about its extent. Is Christianity to be judged fundamentally on the basis of the Inquisition? Is capitalism to be judged fundamentally on the basis of America's involvement in Vietnam? "No one would tolerate a judgement of Christianity that weighed in the balance only its complicity in torture, war, and exploitation. So, too, if marxism is to be saddled with responsibility for Soviet and Chinese inhumanity, it must also be given credit for the immense material and cultural improvements that these regimes have brought to their peoples." A third problem area of marxism, says Heilbroner, concerns the nature of marxism as a revolutionary doctrine. He maintains that marxism (given its "self-declared objective" of destroying capitalism and introducing socialism) has a tendency to "polarize" everyone into two opposing camps. Heilbroner, it should be clear, contends that another approach to marxism is possible beyond that of either "total embrace or rejection." Yet it is uncertain whether his attitude towards marxism (no matter how sensible and balanced it appears) can avoid the vexing problems that he so honestly and ably identifies elsewhere.

CURTIS STOKES

University of Michigan-Dearborn