

of Smith's thought. Myers is right to conclude that Smith's vision of material betterment was inspired by the speculation of "noneconomic minds." His mistake was to assume that the most important of them were all British moral philosophers.

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*A DICTIONARY OF MARXIST THOUGHT*, edited by Tom Bottomore, Laurence Harris, V. G. Kieman, Ralph Milliband. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983. Pp. xi-587. \$35.00.

Revisionism, writes David Coates in the volume being reviewed here, "is integral to Marxist theory and practice." A few sentences later he adds: "A body of inherited truths, frozen beyond revision by a pedigree of its authorship, ought to be wholly incompatible with such a tradition of scholarship and political practice" as that created by Engels and Marx. In short, the expression of "orthodox Marxism" is an oxymoron, on par with "democratic centralism," "bureaucratic rationality," and many others. Orthodoxy implies that there can be an authoritative interpretation for every statement made, every concept utilized, in the Holy Writ of the Marxist movement, that is, in the writings left by the two founding fathers.

Any scholarly examination of this legacy must revolve around its inconsistencies, confusions, and lacunae; and the present volume does this with determination and competence. In article after article its contributors show that Marx left some of the most important terms of his vocabulary undefined or that he used them in several meanings; they give the reader a glimpse into the opaque terminology and the difficulties of dialectical reasoning, in which every single statement must be read in a number of different contexts and thus may have several different meanings. Consider the simple statement, in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, that the workers have no fatherland: It is at one and the same time an expression of satisfaction (that capitalism has freed the workers of patriotic illusions), a complaint or accusation (because having no fatherland is a species of alienation and deprivation), and a prediction (because worldwide Communism will render nations and fatherlands obsolete). Any authoritative, orthodox interpretation is apt to simplify this and miss the point.

Again and again the articles in this dictionary stress the ambiguities and uncertainties of the Marxian heritage and the many uses that can

therefore be made of its building blocks. The volume makes clear what has been obvious to students of Marxism for a long time—namely, that the work left us by Engels and Marx has served to inspire or legitimate a wide range of ideologies that subscribe to an equally wide array of philosophic assumptions, political goals, and action programs, from radically revolutionary to stuffily conservative ones. Each of these ideologies interprets the key concepts and statements to suit its own preoccupations. Thus a multiplicity of orthodoxies contend with each other. If Marx were alive to observe this, he would doubtless affirm once more that he, for one, was not a Marxist.

The work being reviewed here is an extremely useful handbook. Its numerous articles in summary fashion cover key concepts in the Marxist vocabulary, important contributors to Marxist, Leninist, and Stalinist theory and practice, and Marxist attitudes toward ideas, events, institutions, and historic figures. Brief but helpful bibliographies accompany all articles.

The contributors to this dictionary are highly competent specialists in the study of Marxism. Most of them are from the United Kingdom or the European Continent; the socialist countries are represented primarily by Hungarian and Yugoslav scholars. Most of the contributors probably call themselves Marxists; and the vast majority would probably emphasize that they are *Western* Marxists. That itself is a term of fairly recent usage, which deserves to be explained.

This history of Marxism can be divided into different phases in a variety of ways. My own method is to describe the development of the doctrine around the turn of the century as the Prussianization of Marxism. This was followed, after World War I, by the Russianization of the movement; and the period after World War II has seen yet another phase, which could be described as the Asianization of Marxism, or the transformation of Marxism into a Third World ideology. Each one of these phases resulted in new orthodoxies—Kautskianism, Leninism, Stalinism, Trotskyism, Maoism, to name the most important ones; and each time the fossilization of the ideology into orthodoxies led to Revisionist reactions that usually took several forms.

The word Revisionism evokes the figure of Eduard Bernstein, who around 1900 sought to liberalize the Marxist movement. The article by David Coates recognizes that in Stalin's time and later the term was used also to read those heretics out of the fold who rebelled against Stalinist conservatism and sought to revive some of the radical critical spirit of Marx. What the article does not recognize is that even around 1900

those criticized as Revisionists included people who sought to radicalize the movement by alerting its leaders to modes of oppression and alienation to which orthodox Marxism closed its eyes. In fact our entire understanding of the nature of Revisionism requires careful reexamination. In the present dictionary, it is still used too much in its conventional meaning.

The dictionary itself, one might argue, is a Revisionist document; and that is its strength as well as its weakness. The strength of its Revisionism consists in its resolve to confront the contradictions, confusions, and deficiencies of the Marxist heritage courageously. Its weakness is that of Revisionists in general: While they have the courage to criticize, they do want to stay in the fold. But that ultimately leads to contradictions of its own because the wish to remain a "Marxist" cannot but blunt the edge of criticism.

An example of blunted criticism would be the brief article on the term "Lumpenproletariat." Tom Bottomore correctly defines its meaning and adds that its main significance is to call attention to the fact that under certain conditions of capitalism large numbers of people may become de-classed and make themselves available to any reactionary political movement. But this misses an important point: The significance of the Lumpenproletariat is indeed that capitalist oppression (under conditions not clearly specified) *demoralizes* the working class. Stated differently: Marx here asserts that alienation (of an unspecified kind) leads to loss of consciousness. But this is the diametric opposite of the principal assumption underlying his entire theory of revolution, according to which alienation leads the proletariat to *attain* class consciousness. The concept of the Lumpenproletariat indicates that Marx had two theories of the working class, one totally the opposite of the other. That surely deserves to be stated clearly.

The ambivalence of Revisionism—critical but eager to stay within the fold—shows also in the weakness of the criticism applied to some of the major Communist leaders. This weakness is most glaring, perhaps, in the case of Trotsky, whose disagreements with Stalin seem to me overrated in the article, while his pioneering contributions to the practice of Stalinism are not mentioned at all. It shows also in occasional attempts to conceal the more unpleasant realities of life in socialist countries, as in Michèle Barrett's article on "Feminism," where after wrongly asserting that in this area "Bebel built on the work of Engels" (in reality Bebel's work predates that of Engels), she can write: "Certainly it can be demonstrated that feminism is treated with more respect in Marxist-

inspired programs than it is by those regimes that have recently come to power on the basis of religious fundamentalism of one kind or another." Being compared with the Ayatollah Khomeini's policy on women surely is the faintest praise with which the Soviet policies in this field have ever been damned!

The apparent fear of straying too far from Marxist conventions shows up also in what has and what has not been included in this dictionary. More articles could have been devoted to early nineteenth-century radicals and socialists, to the liberal and Romantic heritage out of which they developed, to European Revisionists from 1890 on, to oppositionists in the Bolshevik party and the Comintern, to Yugoslav and East European reform communists, and to Third World Communists. I would also have liked to see articles on such disparate topics as leadership and democratic centralism, sexuality and prostitution, ethnicity, and Permanent Revolution. I realize that every reviewer is likely to bemoan the slighting of subjects closest to his or her own interests or ken. Similarly, it would be easy to find fault with some of the brief bibliographies following the several articles. Let me therefore hasten to add that by and large the coverage is sufficiently thorough to make this a highly useful reference work for any student of Marxism. We have reason to be grateful to its editors.

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*ON HISTORY AND OTHER ESSAYS* by Michael Oakeshott.  
Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1983. Pp. 198. \$26.50.

In the first three of five essays that make up this volume, Michael Oakeshott—surely at once the most original and least understood of the major political philosophers of our time—returns to the philosophical investigation of historical knowledge that has been one of his life-long preoccupations. Oakeshott's reflections on history, which first received attention as a result of a notable chapter in his *Experience and Its Modes* (1933) and which were further pursued in a seminal essay on "The activity of being an historian" in his *Rationalism in Politics* (1962), are here given a definitive statement that is remarkable in many ways, but chiefly because of the extraordinary continuity in thought to which it testifies in Oakeshott's philosophy. Oakeshott's principal concern, in this book as in his writings of half a century ago, is to mark in our