

Gnosticism and naturalism alike. In Christianity the holy and the daemonic, howsoever like dancers they may seem, are antagonists through all time. The next stage comes after that."

— Reviewed by Laurens MacDonald Dorsey

Reality and the Socialist Dream

Marxism and Beyond, by Sidney Hook,
Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1983. xii + 225 pp. \$19.95.

MARXISM AND BEYOND brings together eighteen pieces written by Sidney Hook over the last twelve years. Professor Hook has been writing and publishing on Marx and Marxism for more than fifty years and in that time his intellectual and political viewpoint has shifted in emphasis rather than changing in any fundamental sense. Hook remains what he was when *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* was first published in 1933 — a secular humanist in ethics and a social democrat in politics. Anyone who looks in *Marxism and Beyond* for new revelations either about Karl Marx or Sidney Hook will be disappointed.

The essential continuity in Hook's outlook over the half century is not perhaps immediately obvious. In that time the man once characterized as "the foremost Marxist among American philosophers" has become a noted exponent of the need to wage a vigorous cold war in order to evade the need to fight a hot one. Addressing the staff and cadets of West Point on the meaning of Western freedom, he mercilessly castigates all those who, wittingly or not, play the Soviet propaganda game by placing the failings of the nations of the free world on the same moral level as the evils of Com-

munist tyranny. Old reprobates like Malcolm Cowley share Hook's condemnation with those who, like David Caute, have sought to establish some sort of equivalence between the Soviet suppression of dissidents and the anti-communist activities of the McCarthy years.

What has changed down the years is not Hook's practical or theoretical philosophy — his *maitres à penser* are the same as they were in the Thirties — but the political and economic map of the world. When he published his first influential book, capitalism, it seemed, had entered that definitive crisis which Marx had predicted. Hitler had just achieved power in Germany, and to many intellectuals it appeared that only transition to some, always vaguely defined, form of socialism could prevent general destitution and total war. Now, as Hook puts it,

... the scene is quite different. Capitalism, despite its many crises and difficulties, is not on the verge of collapse. In most countries it has developed into a Welfare State not anticipated by Marx. The three cardinal doctrines of classical Marxism lie in ruins. The theory of historical materialism — which holds either (in its strong form) that the mode of economic production determines political change or (in its weak form) that it conditions such change — has been refuted by Lenin and Mao Tse-tung. . . . By seizing political power they built a new economic foundation under it, whereas Marx had anticipated that the economic structure of socialist society would be built antecedently to the transfer of political power to the working class. . . . Society has not been increasingly polarized between a handful of capitalists and the workers. The working class has not been progressively pauperized; nor has there been a decline in the rate of profit. . . . The emergence and persistence of nationalism have revealed the limitations of Marx's conception of the overriding significance and weight of the

economic class struggle in understanding historical events.

To Hook it appears, more clearly than it did in his youth, that the political and economic institutions of the free world provide the best chance of realizing the humane ambitions which first drew him to socialism, and these institutions must be defended against tyrants of the Left as much as against anyone else. This appreciation, which is, alas, notably absent among many of his ideological *confrères* in Europe, was sharpened by his first-hand experience, from the 1930s onwards, of the ruthless malice and intellectual dishonesty with which the friends of the Soviet Union, both in the American Communist Party and its numerous powerful front organizations, sought to destroy the lives and careers of all those who could not accept that Soviet Russia was the promised land of human progress.

Before the war Hook stood with that small band of independent socialists who stoutly rejected the siren voices emanating from Moscow. To such men the state created by Lenin and consolidated by Stalin represented an utter perversion of socialist ideals. On this, too, Hook's view remains unaltered. Throughout *Marxism and Beyond* we find a constant effort to establish that, whatever his personal faults and prophetic failings, Marx himself is in no way responsible for what has resulted from attempts to put his ideas into practice. In a long review of Kolakowski's three-volume *Main Currents of Marxism*, Hook takes issue with the author's thesis that Leninism represents at least a legitimate extension of the Marxist project. Accepting that Marx's talk of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was dangerously equivocal, he argues that what Marx had in mind was something totally different from the dictatorship of an ideologically defined "vanguard" party. This may well be true, even though Marx's own intolerance towards all those who opposed him in the First International suggests that, temperamentally at least, Marx was closer to the Bolshevik ideal than

Hook supposes. To cite Marx's quasi-anarchical conception of the good life to come under communism is in any case beside the point. What Marx may or may not have imagined to be the form of a post-revolutionary society is unimportant, compared to the fact, persuasively established by so many authors, that any effort to achieve his utopian purposes was bound to utilize the sort of dictatorial and terrorist methods that brought the Bolsheviks success. There is indeed a socialist dream, which still to some extent clouds even Hook's judgment, but the reality which it practically implies is contained in what Soviet authors rightly call the "actually existing socialism" of the Eastern Bloc.

—Reviewed by David J. Levy

Human Sociobiology

Toward a New Science of Man: Quotations for Sociobiology, by Robert Lenski, Washington, D.C.: Pimmit Press, 1981. xxxvi + 251 pp. \$8.00.

IT IS RARE in the social sciences that one encounters an original or even a wide mind. This may be said particularly, and perhaps paradoxically, of the younger generation of social scientists, who largely specialize in technical improvements on their teachers' insights and theories, and who have been thoroughly conditioned by those fund dispensers upon whom the large graduate programs of the social sciences are almost wholly dependent. I speak in particular of the "exact" social sciences, such as economics and demography.

Robert Lenski has to be counted among those students of society who have something original to say. An outsider to the field, Lenski has published two brilliant if