

not rely on a self-critical posture as the means of achieving progress.

### **VIOLENCE—THE MARXIAN FORCE IN HISTORY**

Wesson states that "Marx stood for violence" and that "Stalin was not mad but a quite successful dictator liberated by Marxism-Leninism from moral prejudices." Since many in our universities will find his statements provocative, I would like to explain why he is correct.

According to Marx, morality is only a mask for class interest. Thus, for Marxists, good will cannot be an effective force in history. Since each class acts in its own class interest, there is no humanistic basis upon which to unite classes and cultivate effective reforms. If there are as many specific moralities as there are class interests, what mediates between moralities? Marx answers that the mediator is violence. Lenin explicitly developed this doctrine of violence. According to Lenin, "the scientific concept of dictatorship means neither more nor less than unlimited power, resting directly on force, not limited by anything, not restricted by any laws, nor any absolute rules. Nothing else but that."

Lenin's doctrine of violence was widely acknowledged by the Communist Party. For example, in 1928 Grigori Pyatkov, later a victim of the doctrine, recognized and approved it: "According to Lenin the Communist Party is based on the principle of coercion which doesn't recognize any limitations or inhibitions. And the central idea of this principle of boundless coercion is not coercion by itself but the absence of any limitation whatsoever—moral, political, and even physical." Marx's reasoning, which leaves violence as the mediator between classes, leads logically to violence as the mediator between the Party and the people (Leninism) and even further to violence as the mediator between the Party and its members (Stalinism).

Wesson is at his best when writing about Third World Marxism. One finds here none of the unwarranted respect that is usually heaped lavishly upon brutal States whose single elite consists of those who rule. Wesson states, truthfully, that "radical leaders of the developing world need only cite what they learned in American or British universities." He could have added: French, German, Italian, Canadian, Dutch, Swedish, and so forth. Khieu Samphan, the Cambodian Communist leader, comes immediately to mind. He learned his Marxism at the Sorbonne, where his thesis stressed social purification at any cost. No doubt he made an A. This is what the West's universities turn loose on humanity.

Wesson says that Marxism is "an

accessory of the authoritarianism which seems unavoidable in the third world." I think it is more. It is the only rationale for minority rule that is acceptable both to the West and to the Soviet Union. The only minority rule in Africa to which the U.S. government has objected is white minority rule.

If Wesson intends an academic career,

I hope he has tenure. Since he is so forthright, he may as well have attributed the success of the Leninist theory of imperialism to the mask it provides indigenous rulers for the ruthless exploitation of their own people.

In a brief passage Wesson makes a point that has been on my own mind ever since I discussed it with Michael Polanyi

## **The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism**

By Daniel Bell

New York: Basic Books. 1975. 301 pp. \$12.95

This work brings together numerous articles by Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell, who is a prominent figure within the so-called neo-conservative group of American intellectuals. The essays are dense, to say the least, and they convey a breadth of knowledge and familiarity with intellectual history that could scare the most erudite among us.

The essence of Bell's message is that the classical liberal era produced too much confidence in man's inevitable progress and stressed our pleasure-seeking, self-centered inclinations far out of proper proportion. The current faith in Marxism is but a mild extension of this classical liberal, secular faith. (Incidentally, it is not only Marxists, but such liberals as John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, who believe in inevitable progress.) And classical liberalism, Bell complains, like other secular creeds, simply has no room for a consideration of values. The value-free stance is inherent in the liberal approach, be it individualist or collectivist.

Bell illustrates these tendencies in modern society with hundreds of quotations. But he essentially just pleads his case. He never gives the critics the slightest chance; he never considers interpretations of his sources that might lead to conclusions different from his own. Bell does not argue his case but claims that history demonstrates it beyond reasonable doubt.

And what solution does he offer? For, needless to say, Bell regards both classical and modern liberalism quite mistaken. He finds the very idea of a secular analysis of human affairs wholly unsatisfactory, considering the reductionist, hedonist frame of reference destructive to some of the best ideas of liberalism, including political liberty itself.

Bell offers us religion. Joining such notable conservatives as Ernest van den Haag, Walter Berns, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Peter L. Berger, Bell believes that religion needs to be resurrected; then a sense of virtue will develop in our midst and will effectively counter the reductionist tendencies and give us a chance for spiritual recovery.

Pace Bell and his cohorts, however, religion does not have a chance. Nor does it any longer differentiate them from the Marxists. Religion is at heart a view of the world that takes reality to be fundamentally mysterious, inaccessible to human understanding—now or ever. But with people no longer in slavery to a ruling elite, or at least no longer accepting this as the norm, they want answers, not fairy tales. And with the Marxists changing their historical materialist pseudoscience into just another utopian faith, Bell & co. will simply echo the collectivists, who are already taking us to hell in a handbasket, with or without theology.

It never occurs to Bell and his colleagues that the secular framework need not be wedded to materialism, reductionism, or the value-free approach. Granted, many secular systems are, but that is not decisive. The needed spiritual recovery is available from a careful investigation of nature and human nature.

—Tibor R. Machan

years ago. People today think of Nazism and Communism as opposites, and it may startle them to learn that that is not how these doctrines were perceived by people at that time. Wesson is correct when he says that "Nazism appealed to many of the same declasses as Communism, and in the years of its rise it was easy to pass from one to the other." This, I believe, underlines my point that the success of Marxism is explained in terms outside itself. Doctrines of violence have been successful in the 20th century because they provide the ideal outlet for secularized moral fervor in a skeptical age.

## UNDERSTANDING MARX

Michael Harrington illustrates many of Wesson's points, such as, "Rights in Marxism are for abstract classes, not real people." And, although suitably muted to be acceptable to chic liberals, Harrington stands in Marx's tradition of "violent and self-righteous polemics, the purpose of which was not to illustrate an issue but to destroy an adversary."

Why shouldn't libertarians learn from Harrington's rhetoric and from Wesson's observation that "any group which perceives its welfare or self-respect abused or threatened can express discontent in Marxist terms"? Libertarians have much

to gain from a "Marxist" theory of the exploitation of the productive by the State, just as the political imagination of the Republic of South Africa should be schooled by the People's Republic of the Congo, which, as Wesson notes, "uses a full set of symbols of socialist revolution, including a flag patterned after the Soviet model, but depends economically on French assistance."

Harrington's book is, in places, a more serious work than I expected it to be. He seems to understand better than most academics Marx's concept of a commodity and its pivotal role in Marx's analysis of capitalism. He agrees with Wesson that Marxism lends itself to the purposes of new elites, although he is quick to relieve Marx of any responsibility for Marxism's being "a perfect ideology for dynamic bureaucracies that are going to save the workers from themselves." He excuses Marx by claiming that "these elites were not, to be sure, the products of Marx's thought, or even of his erroneous version of it."

Harrington's book needed a severe and good editor to impose some discipline on a mind that is prone to contradiction and untenable positions. How, for example, if Marx misstated Marxism, as Harrington claims, can Harrington claim to have discovered the authentic Marx, as he does?

At best, he can only claim an authentic Harringtonism. There are two interesting questions here. How can Marx, if he did not understand his own work and his own method, have any authority to convey? And why does Harrington so desperately want this authority? "I hope to introduce a living presence into the late-twentieth—and even the twenty-first—century," writes Harrington. "Let me call him 'the new Karl Marx.'" But the question is unavoidable to the reader: Why not call him Michael Harrington? Perhaps what is operating here is the old psychological ploy of giving the primitive instincts of hatred and aggression a sophisticated, independent, and moral form. Gods and bibles have often been used as a rationale for shedding blood.

## CAPITALISM'S DEMISE

Harrington's book is a curious mixture of orthodox Marxism, revisionist Marxism, Harringtonism, and personal opinion (some perceptive, some silly) about policy debates and political events of the past ten years. He is particularly exercised by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The book also offers a commentary on more Marxist writers than the reader will have heard about.

Harrington's thesis is that "capitalism has collectivized its contradictions but not abolished them." He sees the welfare state as "the temporary salvation of the system, but also the portent of its end." Capitalism will self-destruct, he says, because it is opposed to the redistribution of wealth. "The successor to capitalism will be collectivist, of course. That has already been settled." He is happy that we will be collectivized, even though he only gives us one chance in three of a humane collectivity. The other possibilities are the totalitarian and the authoritarian.

The main concern for Harrington is that capitalism is finished, sooner or later. It is a subsidiary question whether we all end up in the Gulag. He is so outraged about capitalism that he criticizes it from contradictory standpoints. It is not possible to be a Keynesian and a Marxist at the same time, but Harrington is—because he can attack existing society from the standpoint of both. After insisting that economic crisis is the inevitable result of capitalism, he then condemns the recent depression as "cruel and unnecessary." Economists will join logicians in tearing out their hair. He suggests that on net balance we subsidize the commercially inefficient, not realizing that this is impossible in real terms. But his economics is no worse than the remarkably stupid congressional study, which he cites, that concluded that to give away real income abroad is good business because it helps hold up the level of

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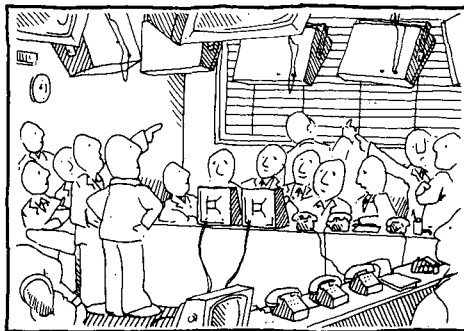
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Harrington, like Marx and American liberals, stands in the Enlightenment tradition that things will get better as existing society is consciously overturned (either at once through revolution or gradually through reform). The act of faith does not explain why things will not get worse. Why, then, do they choose to believe that things will get better as a result of overturning existing society? My answer is that if one believes that change does not mean progress, one does not have a moral guise for the hatred and aggression that have been channeled against existing society that results from a secularized morality. When morality was secularized, moral fervor was rechanneled from seeking individual salvation to seeking the moral perfection of society. Thus, aggression flows naturally against all existing (imperfect) social arrangements. Harrington, like Marx himself, is merely a slave of the Enlightenment. His class consciousness is that of a *philosophe*, a descendant of Rousseau, the product of no mode of production. In Michael Polanyi's words, "Here is moral fury attacking all that is of good repute: all accepted manners, custom, and law."

In an atavistic act of good will, a 20th-century act of folly, I say in Harrington's defense that relatively few intelligent

and sensitive minds have escaped falling into this syndrome. And many of the few who fight the battle for liberty today are people who have pulled themselves out of this syndrome. Perhaps Harrington also will one day abandon the fight *against* and join the fight *for* liberty.

#### DEFENDING LIBERTY

In the meantime, libertarians could become more serious. Many regard liber-

### There is an inconsistency in our intellectual foundations that produced Marxism and its success.

ty a natural state. It is not. Liberty is an *achievement*, fought for by those who believed in it. If libertarians are not prepared to kill and die in defense of liberty, they should be prepared to lose it. That is the clearest message that Harrington's book conveys to libertarians. That Marxists will kill and die to take away liberty is the clearest message of Wesson's book.

In thinking over these books, I am left with the provocative thought that the net social product of a class of intellectuals is

negative. The general welfare would increase if this class were paid not to write and speak. The products of intellectuals are social problems, which they discover and market to earn their living. Without this class to stir up discontent, envy, and hatred, people might go about their business of cultivating their own gardens, of earning their incomes, tending to their families, and being civil to one another. Government would certainly be smaller. Wesson would probably agree with this thought. It would go against Harrington's grain, but if not even Marx understood Marxism, what defense of intellectuals can Harrington offer?

Intellectuals generate enormous social costs by socializing personal problems. Just as in the case of pollution, some way must be found to internalize these costs. Perhaps the only way is to open legal recourse to the victims. The intellectuals and their coterie of regulators, IRS agents, liberal judges, parole boards, and bleeding hearts are the true criminals of our time. In self defense, peaceful individuals must find some way of protecting themselves against them. ☐

Dr. Roberts is the author of Marx's Theory of Exchange, Alienation, and Crisis and Alienation and the Soviet Economy.

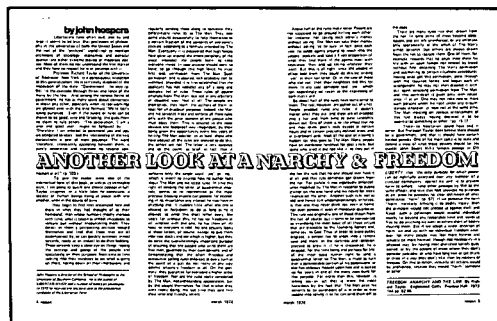
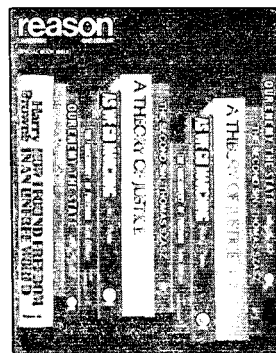
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# RAIDING The Academy

## The Brain Bank of America

By Phillip M. Boffey. With an introduction by Ralph Nader

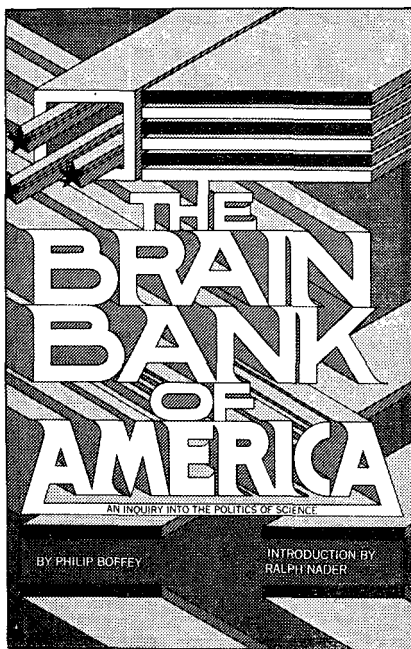
New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975. 312 pp. \$10.95

Reviewed by Adam V. Reed

In the mid-nineteenth century, a group of American scientists organized a National Academy to provide the federal government with reliable scientific advice. Most of the government's operating agencies have created their own in-house scientific research establishments since that time, but the National Academy of Sciences remains the preeminent source of authoritative scientific opinion for Congress, the courts, and federal regulatory agencies.

When scientific issues arise in regulatory controversies, the courts and regulatory boards tend to accept the reports of the Academy as definitive. There is no statutory obligation for them to do so, as the Academy is a private organization, albeit one with a federal charter, like the Boy Scouts and the Red Cross. The Academy's opinions are nevertheless seldom questioned, largely because of the enormous prestige of its members: election to the Academy is the ultimate accolade American scientists can bestow on their colleagues.

The reports of experts selected by that pantheon are seldom challenged, and even more seldom challenged successfully. Even its critics refer to the National Academy as "the Supreme Court of science." And while scientific knowledge changes much faster than legal precedent, instances of an Academy report proving to be in error and having to be reversed are as rare as, if not rarer than, reversed opinions from the Supreme Court.



## Tenuous arguments and sensationalism mark this "study" of the National Academy of Sciences.

When regulatory bureaucrats invoke specious "scientific" arguments to expand their power, it often falls to the National Academy of Sciences to point out that the alleged rationale for more stringent regulation is so much bunk. With the rise of the Nader organization as America's leading advocate of "more and better" regulation, it was only a matter of time before the Academy was Raided. An additional motive was provided by Nader's personal outlook on applicable science. In the introduction to *The Brain Bank of America*, Nader writes, quite seriously, that "more often than not, inventions work against the consumer." There is probably no way to disabuse Nader of that notion short of making him ride from Los Angeles to Washington on horseback.

Given the views of his leader, Boffey's direction is also predictable. The only

surprise, considering the amount of dirt the Raiders usually manage to dig up, is how little evidence Boffey found for his arguments. There is, in this book, not one single instance of an Academy report being wrong in its facts. The most Boffey can find to object to is the makeup and financing of Academy committees.

The scientists who serve on Academy committees work without pay. The reasons why they are willing to do so vary; they include such factors as the prestige of Academy-recognized expert status; a chance—for nonmembers—to get to know members of the Academy and to lobby for membership; a chance to promote one's own views to other experts; and, however unpopular such motivation might be these days, a genuine desire to do one's share for the public good. Nevertheless, NAS committees have expenses: staff and secretarial salaries, plane tickets, postage costs, and printing charges add up, and somebody has to pay them.

## FACT-FINDING, NOT FACTS, FOR SALE

Current NAS studies are paid for by interested government agencies, industrial associations, foundations, and the like. The idea is that anyone who wants an Academy report on record has to pay the costs. Boffey argues that this system puts the National Academy in a mercenary relationship with those who pay for its studies. The argument is that if the Academy committees did not favor the interests of the funding parties, no one would be willing to pay for them. Boffey's evidence consists of cases in which the interests of those who funded the studies were served by the resulting reports.

Can one conclude, from the fact that the results of Academy studies tend to favor the interests of those who paid for them, that these reports were not the best