MARC LINDER
REIFICATION AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE CRITICS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

STUDIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARX’ THEORY OF VALUE
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PREFACE

For the sake of the reader's orientation it must be noted at the start that this dissertation is written from a Marxist point of view. More specifically, this position involves the acceptance of Marx' Critique of Political Economy qua analysis of capitalism as presented in Das Kapital.¹ With respect to the study of the transition to socialism and the construction of socialist society this means that Marx' demonstration of the possibility of creating a society not based on the relations of exploitation characterizing capitalist production is also accepted.

Just as, however, Marxists are still engaged in reconstructing Marx' Critique of Political Economy with a view toward concretizing the analysis of contemporary capitalism, so too are they engaged in constructing a theory of the transition from capitalism to socialism and of the construction of communism. This present study understands itself as a constituent part of the international Marxist controversy concerning this latter undertaking.

The present work, then, can be considered as a contribution to the development of a theory which in a formal sense does not differ from the products of the scientific division of labor of non-marxist scholars. The need to "justify" adherence to Marxism, while perhaps plausible at universities in the United States where other sorts of "presuppositions" pass unnoticed as "common sense" and Marxism counts as common nonsense or at best uncommon

¹Thus one thrust of this works consists in measuring as it were the critics of political economy against the standard which they claim to be interpreting--Marx' Capital. For self-proclaimed revisionists--who are not the major interest of this study--this particular criterion would obviously cease being relevant with respect to those parts of Marx's theory which they are intentionally "revising."
sense, is obviated by the fact that the non-marxist "disciplines" devoted to the subject matter at hand (Marxology, Kremlinology, etc.) tend to regard an immanent critique of Marxist theory as analogous to demonstrating the existence of internal inconsistencies in any theological doctrines.2

Thus although it is understandable that non-marxist theory is not involved in the creation of the theories we are dealing with here, a review of the relevant literature has revealed how remarkably little non-marxist research has yielded toward an immanent understanding of the subject matter altogether. We have nevertheless attempted to cite and discuss as much of this literature as is pertinent.

What may strike the reader unfamiliar with Marx in the original German as at times awkward and unwieldy linguistic constructions requires a brief defense. Marx' dialectic, schooled in Hegel, presents enormous problems of recreation in English.3 That the problem is no technical or formal one, and that, for example, existing translations of Das Kapital into English—including that edited by Engels—have contributed to the peculiarly low level of Marxist theorizing in the Anglo-Saxon world and in particular have led to a deformation of the

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2 When, for instance, with respect to Soviet economic planning, the need is felt to take account of Marxist theory, it is usually done in the vein of demonstrating the incompatibility between rational economic conduct and "this obsolete theory." Cf. Abram Bergson, The Economics of Soviet Planning, (New Haven and London, 1964), p. 13, who opines that "the labor theory [of value] is not always an incisive guide to resource use." Since that theory was no such guide even under capitalism, it is difficult to understand why it should become one under socialism.

3 Marx and Engels themselves commented on the problems of translating German philosophy and Das Kapital into English. See Marx' letter to Engels, 23 April 1857, in MEW, XXIX, 130, and Engels to Marx, 24 June 1867, in ibid., XXXI, 308f.
value theory presented in the first chapter of Capital, has been documented recently. Rather than perpetuate the already consolidated tradition of an anglicized Marx, the author has made the choice of Germanizing English—if need be at the expense of accepted essaysitic lucidity.

I would like to thank Wolfgang Müller (West Berlin) for the six years of critical encouragement which have made this book possible.

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