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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Marc Linder

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DISSSERTATION ABSTRACT

This dissertation deals with the development of Marx' theory of value. The purpose of this study is not merely to reconstruct an adequate formulation of this theory, but rather to try to trace effects of various interpretations of the theory during various periods on the theory and practice of several Marxist movements and societies.

The Introduction is devoted to a discussion of the difficulties inherent in interpreting Marx' theory of value and its evolution as well as to the peculiar relation between value theory and reality in socialist societies.

In the first chapter the attempt is undertaken to reconstruct Marx' theory of value with particular attention centered on the value and commodity forms which have often been neglected in analyses of the Marxist value theory. A special section concerns itself with determining the positional value of "commodity fetishism" within the theory of value, whereby recent erroneous conceptions developed by Marxists and non-Marxists are criticized. In a final section Marx' views of the value-theoretical foundations of a post-capitalist society are discussed.
The second chapter concentrates on the development of Marx' theory of value during the period of the Second International, and in particular within German Social Democracy. The tendency towards neglecting the value-form analysis, to which Marx ascribed central importance, is emphasized. In other sections four representative contemporary Marxists who have in certain important respects maintained this older Social Democratic tradition are examined. Finally certain affinities in interpretation to modern bourgeois Marx-criticism are analyzed.

Chapter three deals with the further development of the Marxist theory of value among Soviet theoreticians, in particular during the period 1917-1927. The discussion tries to indicate to what extent the Bolsheviks were able to overcome the Social Democratic tradition outlined in the previous chapter. The connection between the conceptions of the theory of value and the elaboration of a theory of socialist development in the Soviet Union in particular, but also of a more general theory, is analyzed with particular reference to the outstanding theoreticians of the time such as Lenin, Bukharin, Preobrazhensky, and Leont'ev and Khmel'nitskaia. Synthetic summaries of the relevant economic developments in the period are presented.

The fourth chapter shifts the focus to a radically different social and historical situation--the first decade of the Cuban Revolution. The purpose of this chapter lies in
pointing to the possibilities open to a so-called underdeveloped socialist society during an epoch in which essentially other relations obtain that those which confronted the Russian Revolution. The focal point of the discussion relates to an analysis of a significant series of debates which took place during the 1960s centering on the value-theoretical foundations of the future Cuban society. The broader theoretical and practical implications of this debate and its consequences occupy the remainder of the chapter.

The fifth chapter evaluates the theoretical developments in the Soviet Union and Cuba during the periods under review with respect to their relation to the original Marxist formulations of the value-theoretical foundations of a post-capitalist society and to subsequent political-economic developments in the Soviet Union and possible implications for Cuba.

A detailed bibliography for all the periods and topics of the dissertation is included.
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