tween a medieval 'golden age' and an early-modern age of growing inactivity and exploitation." (162)

David Aers expands on this theme in the final chapter, "A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the 'History of the Subject'" — an explicit, and quite sufficiently audible, address to some of his colleagues. Aers questions the tendency within both Cultural Materialism and New Historicism to "[turn] the Middle Ages into a homogeneous and mythical field which is defined in terms of the scholar's need for a figure against which 'Renaissance' concerns with inwardness and the fashioning of identities can be defined as new." (192) The Middle Ages, Aers suggests, was not an enchanted castle in which historical consciousness or interiority slumbered before being roused by (depending on the given theory) Shakespeare, Descartes, Marx or Foucault. To set up such an artificial polarity is to marginalise the historical period preceding one's own area of study, and to portray it as "other, the totally alien or different in which this entity [e.g. individualism] definitely did not exist, indeed against which the entity in question can be defined." (196)

As an antidote to the often dangerous and always tempting blandishments held out by the "simple linear master narrative," *Culture and History* suggests a commitment "to the kind of detailed historical and cross-generic work which radical literary critics have, so far, been rather reluctant to undertake." (197) Aers *et al* certainly cannot be accused of failing to take their own advice. It is to be hoped that historians will see this effort, not as a kind of academic encroachment on their academic terrain, but as a generous invitation to embark on a very promising joint intellectual enterprise. Historians, who are necessarily compelled to generalise the results of their research against the backdrop of the so-called real world, should be pleased by such an overture. Indeed, opposition to these essays is more likely to emanate from the literary community — some members of which may take exception to the way in which the authors postulate a viable existential link between the "text" and its "referentiality to the natural and social worlds." (3)

I should also add that this collection brings to light several late-medieval literary and dramatic works well worthy of further attention. The essays not only broach significant issues, but are consistently engaging, well-written and persuasively argued. At the very least, *Culture and History* should come highly recommended for its relevance and its ready comprehensibility to the student of history. It is pleasant to see, as well be told, that "truth does not always lie at the bottom of a deep well." (195)

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Michael Löwy, ed., *Marxism in Latin America from 1909 to the Present* (New Jersey and London: Humanities Press 1992).

It has often been assumed by more cynical observers that Latin American history is rich in revolutionary practice but poor in revolutionary ideas. Michael Löwy's *Marxism in Latin America* is a long overdue response to the charge. It gathers documents to show that a rich body of revolutionary ideas has emerged in the course of the class struggle in the southern half of the American continent. The subtle and penetrating analysis of Jose Carlos Mariategui drew on Marxist debate in Europe but added to it the dimension of indigenous tradition. In the 1990s a myriad of organizations lay claim to the heritage of Mariategui — yet more often than not they parody the complexity of his thought. Sendero Luminoso (to whom there is not a single reference in this volume), for example, summons his authority to legitimate conclusions far distant from his pursuit of a dynamic unity of theory and practice, his clarity on the central role of the producers, and his understanding that the bourgeoisie was too weak and compromised to carry through any socialist transformation of society. Mariategui was not a solitary figure; his journal *Amauta* was itself evidence of a wide-ranging debate which embraced figures of the stature of Luis Emilio Recabarren in Chile, Anibal Ponce in Argentina and Julio Antonio Mella in Cuba.

Löwy locates the ending of this creative period in Latin American Marxism in 1935, to coincide with the defeat of the uprising in El Salvador in 1932 and the failure of the armed insurrection in Brazil in 1935. The dates are

secondary. What is certain is that the political turning point was the Latin American Communist Conference in Montevideo in 1929 when the Comintern set out to impose its political hegemony on the Latin American left. The Brazilian experience indeed reflected the impact of the sectarian and isolationist "Third Period" politics espoused by Stalin in the early thirties. And it underlined the extent to which Stalinism distorted and contradicted the insights of the previous decade. For nearly thirty years the Communist Parties of Latin America led the best working-class fighters into a blind alley of subordination to a national bourgeoisie which later, and in every case, turned its repressive fury against them — Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua, Brazil are only some examples.

From the point of view of this anthology, the most striking insight is perhaps unintentional — the staggering absence of self-criticism among the Communist Parties. Arismendi of the Uruguayan CP is offered here as an exception to the rule — yet his appraisal of the CP's past is limited and grudging, and certainly fails to confront the strategic political consequences of a so-called socialist politics that held the movement's aims within limits ascribed by the bourgeoisie. The Guatemalan CP's critique of its role in the early 50s is also included; but it too is careful in its appraisal. More significantly Luis Corvalan's apologia for the Communist role in Chile in 1970 and thereafter is not set against any critique, despite the fact that it clearly represented a continuation of the disastrous Popular Front politics of earlier decades. The Pulcayo Theses authored by Guillermo Lora in Bolivia are testimony to the existence of a clear alternative current rooted in a revolutionary socialist tradition, and there is clearly a continuity through Silvio Frondizi in Argentina, Aguirre in Ecuador, the writings of Vitale on Chile and Gilly on Mexico. But that line of argument is lost in the anthology — for Löwy has a different explantation of Latin American revolutionary history, and one whose problems are illustrated in the documents that correspond to Löwy's third stage of Latin American Marxism whose beginnings, he argues, coincide with the Cuban Revolution of 1959.

Whatever the symbolic significance of Cuba, it is clear that the political focus of Latin American revolutionary praxis shifted in the 1970s to Chile, later Argentina, and in the eighties to Central America. The 1980 Programme for a Revolutionary Democratic Government in El Salvador testifies to the extraordinary potential of that moment. A history of Latin American Marxism must surely address the unfolding of that experience, but also provide the sources of the thinking embedded there — in Marcial's split from the Salvadorean Communist Party, for example, in the experiences of workers' power in Argentina in 1969 and 1971 and in Chile in 1972. It is true that this anthology was compiled in 1980 and only translated in 1992, when the revolutionary movement had undergone vast transformations. Those seeking analysis of that experience will not find it here, though a few documents have been added. It could be argued that this is a volume of documents relating to the history of the revolutionary movement — but I would feel constrained to argue that they are the documents of *one* such history.

Michael Löwy has already written a fascinating study of Che Guevara in which he clearly sets out to assimilate Guevara into the Trotskyist tradition. In this volume he suggests that Trotskyism and Castroism are close. Yet Cuba's relationship with the Latin American revolutionary movement has been a contradictory one. The sixties were a period of unequivocal internationalism; yet Castro's speech in August 1968 signposted a wholly different direction, reinforced by his vigorous support for Allende in Chile and military reformism in Peru. Douglas Bravo's cutting critique of Castro is not included here — yet surely it is a key document, revealing of Cuba's increasing distance from a concept of permanent revolution of the kind that Löwy attributes to Guevara. The splits within the Chilean MIR in the late sixties revealed how great was the distance between a Trotskyist concept of revolutionary organization at the heart of the working class and its organizations, and a politics centred on a group of revolutionaries acting *on behalf of* the class and in its place — the "substitutionism" which Trotsky so relentlessly criticised.

The final chapter of the anthology, added for the 1992 English translation, includes the Manifesto of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT). It is one of the most exciting political

documents of recent decades, drawing as it does upon the whole revolutionary tradition as well as the rich and diverse experience of a decade of class struggle in Brazil. Yet Löwy lays great emphasis on the input of revolutionary Christianity on the movement, and gives equal space to Betto's 1986 essay on Christianity and Marxism. This mirrors Fidel Castro's new emphasis on the role of the progressive church (in 1986); it was partly a response to Central America and partly a search for new allies among the Latin American middle classes. None would deny the role that individual Christians have played in Latin American revolutionary movements — Camilo Torres is a beacon of integrity and commitment — but it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the pursuit of alliances with progressive church organizations corresponds to a whole new politics. This new vision was most clearly set out in Nuñez and Orbach's interpretation of the Nicaraguan experience *Fire in the Americas* (1989) whose conclusions represent not a reappropriation of the revolutionary tradition but a new version of a politics of popular fronts.

In the 1990s the revolutionary left faces a range of new compromises proposed by erstwhile Marxists or even in the name of Marxism. What all these solutions to the impact of recession share is the demand that workers accept increasing scarcity and sacrifice. The alternative solutions — those that correspond to the interests of the producers and are born out of their organized collective resistance — will find their source of strength and knowledge in the history of revolutionary organization. But it will arise from a *critical* reappraisal of that history — one that acknowledges that the heart of Marxism is the collective agency of revolution, the working class and its allies. Castroism has long since ceased to contribute to the building of such an international current, and the debate around the popular front has long since been superseded by the political demands thrown up by Central America, Brazil and the new decade. It is those struggles that have set out the questions for a new revolutionary movement; sadly the discussion will need another anthology to complete the valuable but limited collection offered here.

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David MacGregor, *Hegel, Marx, and the English State* (San Francisco: Westview Press 1992).

Some years before becoming a Professor of Sociology at the University of Western Ontario, David MacGregor worked in the bureaucracy of the Canadian state, or, as he calls it, "the Public Service of Canada." (2) As he indicates in the "Introduction" to his latest book, this experience as a bureaucrat informs his interpretations and assessments of the political theories of Hegel and Marx. In Hegel, Marx, and the English State, MacGregor continues the project he began in his previous book, *The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx*, namely, the reinterpretation of Marx as an orthodox Hegelian, and Hegel as a materialist and a "democratic socialist." MacGregor finds in both thinkers a theoretical justification for his right-social-democratic celebration of expanded government intervention in economic and social life. Not only Hegel, he claims, but the Marx of Capital as well, viewed the state as "an organized moral force, a source of identity for its citizens, and guardian of universal interests." (55)

While MacGregor's construal of Hegel as a "feminist" (108) and an advocate of "worker ownership of the means of production" (156) is itself severely idiosyncratic, his depiction of Marx as having "an ardent belief in the inherent rationality and liberating potential of government" (272) seems downright reckless, if not dishonest. Accordingly, MacGregor makes a vigourous attempt to vindicate his interpretations through close readings of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and the first volume of Marx's *Capital.* Not surprisingly, these attempts are unsuccessful, especially with respect to Marx. Ultimately, MacGregor's dubious pretensions to Marxist orthodoxy only obscure the intrinsic content of his position, which is perhaps best described as a neo-Lassallean variant of orthodox Hegelianism. From Lassalle, he borrows the equation of socialism with democratic state power and bureaucratization; from Hegel, he takes over the glorification of bureaucrats as constituting a disinterested "universal class" which resists