

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to the building of such an international current, and the debate around the popular front has long since been superseded by the political demands thrown up by Central America, Brazil and the new decade.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 anthol-

ogy 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 vigorous 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-Lassalleian 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

the egoism of civil (bourgeois) society, as well as a general interpretation of the nature and function of moral and political life.

This political outlook contrasts sharply with that of Marx in particular and the revolutionary socialist tradition in general. For instance, among “the institutions ... required to ensure personal freedom and prevent arbitrary rule by a dominant elite,” (7) MacGregor mentions not only “private property” and a powerful “interventionist state,” but also “soldiers, spies, and the police,” which “are members of the universal class, of course.” (287) Moreover, he insists that “the central force underlying the movement of capitalist production toward communism” is not, as had hitherto been thought, the self-activity of the proletariat, but rather “factory law.” (205)

Nevertheless, MacGregor tries to show that these ideas are contained in the picture of the English state that Marx paints in *Capital*. To make this view plausible, he adopts a two-fold strategy: first, he emphasizes Marx’s many favourable references to the English factory inspectors and the legislation they enforced; and second, he offers a new argument to the effect that there are really two “versions” of Marx’s theory of history — a good “gradualist” version that emphasizes the importance of piecemeal reforms, and a bad “apocalyptic” version that emphasizes the sudden and radical transformation of entire social formations. Both of these strategies reflect MacGregor’s failure to assimilate the significance of Marx’s dialectical method. It is precisely this method which enables Marx to overcome the dualism of reform (including “factory law”) and revolution (the so-called “apocalyptic” side of Marxism). According to Marx’s exposition of his method in the “Afterword to the Second German Edition” of *Capital* (Moscow 1986),

dialectics includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; ... it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence. (29)

In this passage, Marx distinguishes the affirmation of the existing state of things (i.e. the recognition of its “momentary existence,”

its factuality) from the negation of that state (i.e. the recognition of its fluid movement, its historicity). But the relation between these terms is dialectical, not analytical. That is, they are to be entertained “at the same time,” the one “not less than” the other. The dialectical method of investigation, therefore, imposes three tasks on its practitioners: first, “to appropriate the material in detail” (affirmation of the facts); second, “to analyse its different forms of development” (negation of the facts), and third, “to trace out their inner connexion,” that is, to discern the “laws of motion,” or developmental tendencies, by virtue of which the facts are produced by past activity, and changeable by future activity, etc. In short, to find historicity and “fluidity” within the facts themselves. (*Ibid.*, 28) Once the dialectical method is understood in this “materialist” and demystified way, it becomes clear that the alleged “two versions” of Marxism are really two sides of a dialectical unity. From Marx’s point of view, there are two basic modes of mystification: the abstract (one-sided) affirmation of the existing state of things, known as reification, and the abstract negation of that state, known as utopianism. The former conceals the historicity and fluidity of the facts, and misconstrues them as natural and permanent; the latter conceals the “stubborn” factuality of the facts, and misconstrues them as completely fluid and malleable. MacGregor attributes both of these mystifications to Marx, and is thereby compelled to posit two incompatible “versions” of Marxism: a gradualist version which abstractly affirms contemporary economic, legal and political institutions, and an apocalyptic version which abstractly negates those realities. By way of this hypostatization of the two sides of Marx’s dialectical standpoint, MacGregor forsakes one of Marx’s most powerful contributions to socialist thought, namely, his demonstration of the possibility and the need to maintain, in Rosa Luxemburg’s words, a position “between two reefs: abandonment of the mass character or abandonment of the final aim; the fall back to sectarianism or the fall into bourgeois reformism; anarchism or opportunism.” [“Social Reform or Revolution,” *Selected Political Writings* (New York 1971), 131] Thus, Marx does indeed applaud the factory inspectors and the factory legislation, and thereby rejects the “ultra-leftist”

one-sidedness of sectarianism and anarchism, but he by no means does so in a spirit of bourgeois reformism, as MacGregor claims. Working-class struggles within capitalism are not an alternative to but a "moment" of working-class struggles against capitalism: reform is a process which can only be completed by its "negation" in revolution. In Hegel's phrase, "the bud disappears when the blossom breaks through."

In the end, MacGregor's book does not make any substantial contribution to Marxist theory as such. It is part of a different tradition—the tradition of orthodox Hegelianism. This is nowhere more evident than when MacGregor rejects Marx's theory of "surplus value" in favour of the theory that "exploitation originates from the perversion of the concept of property." (175) It is unlikely that today, a century and a half after the collapse of German Idealism, there is still an audience for such an anachronistic account of capitalist society. Nevertheless, if one can forgive its misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Marxism, the book is quite effective as an eminently accessible, if somewhat tendentious, introduction to the political philosophy of Hegel.

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Colin Howell & Richard Twomey, eds., *Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press 1991)

*Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour* is a collection of essays selected from a conference of the same name held at Saint Mary's University, Halifax in 1990. Thematically diverse, essay topics include race, gender, labour and law. The first of five sections includes articles on seafaring and revolution. First Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker examine 18th century working class consciousness and the movement of rebellion and resistance from North America to Europe. Using thoughtful illustrations the authors present ample evidence for the existence of an 18th century working class but class consciousness remains elusive. Switching from a class to an individual, Julius Scott introduces Newport Bowers, a free black

American who journeyed to and briefly lived in Cap Francais, Saint-Dominique during the revolution of the 1790s. Events in the Caribbean and communication of those events through sailing networks are indispensable to Scott's interpretation of Bowers' mentality. Bower's fragmentary history allows only tentative conclusions but the article successfully challenges Eurocentric perceptions of black consciousness and provides an outstanding discussion article for history classes.

Section two features two articles related to law. Nicholas Roger's essay on resistance to impressment in Britain during the American Revolution charts the combination of popular resistance to impressment with radical political resistance associated with John Wilkes and the liberty movement. After radicals adopted the cause, impressment became a noticeably litigious issue. The radicals, however, failed to produce an alternative to impressment. Speculation on whether class differences preordained the failure of resistance might be fruitful in this article. Joseph P. Moore explores how sailors' two "moral universes" (81); one paternalistic, the other capitalistic, shaped events during the 1797 British Spithead and Nore mutinies. Moore suggests each mutiny progressively radicalized the sailors and encouraged democracy during the mutinies. In the next article Sean Cadigan takes issue with the contention that the wages and lien system of Pallister's Act (1775), which guaranteed some cash payment for fishermen, marked the beginning of capitalist relations between fishermen and planters in Newfoundland. Cadigan's detailed analysis traces the fortunes of a planter class which seasonally employed waged labour and sought credit from merchants to maintain their fishery interests. The wages and lien system squeezed the planter class and contributed to their financial failure as well as encouraging the truck system of payment.

The gender section deserves praise for being just that, a section of articles exploring the construction of femininity and masculinity. Dianne Dugaw analyses documented episodes of cross-dressing between 1750 and 1830 and illustrates how property and femininity shaped the reactions of society to these women. Dugaw, a Professor of English, demonstrates exceptional literary analysis skills, enhancing her interpretation of written