Simeon's wish to render transparent "the conditions of wage-labour and the circumstances within which those condemned to a lifetime of physical exertion have to struggle for a better life" although each one has his/her own vision of a better life, what is central to its attainment, and through what explanatory frameworks historians best understand worker history.

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The Pursuit of Psychoanalysis under Conditions of Communism

Martin A. Miller, *Freud and the Bolsheviks: Psychoanalysis in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Martin Miller's *Freud and the Bolsheviks* provides a concise history of the vicissitudes of the psychoanalytic movement in Russia. He relates how the psychoanalytic movement started in tsarist Russia, how it adapted and further developed under Communism before it was outlawed, and how it blossomed again since the 1960s. Initially, Russia's cosmopolitan culture proved particularly receptive to psychoanalytic ideas. A number of works by Sigmund Freud had been translated before 1917 and two psychoanalytic societies had been founded. Initially, the new Communist regime allowed a relative freedom in intellectual exploration; some psychoanalysts were eager to demonstrate how their ideas could contribute to construction of the New Man for the new, Communist, society. During the late 1920s, however, debates around the nature of psychoanalysis and the compatibility of Freud and Marx became increasingly strident. Psychoanalysis came under fire for being bourgeois, idealist, biologistic, and pessimistic; critics charged that it was inherently tied to its bourgeois roots and, as a suspect capitalist ideology, had no place in Soviet society. In the 1930s, psychoanalysis disappeared in Soviet Russia. During the next few decades, interest in psychoanalysis in the Soviet Union was limited to a few individuals who secretly kept the writings of Freud and discussed them in private. From the early 1960s on, slowly a new openness to psychoanalysis emerged; as the grip of the Communist party on society loosened, psychoanalytic topics were discussed more freely.

Miller has provided an extremely readable and comprehensive overview of the history of psychoanalysis in Russia and the Soviet Union. By presenting the most important parameters in that history, his book serves as a superb introduction to the topic. The first two parts of Miller's overview, dealing with psychoanalysis in pre-revolutionary Russia and under Communism until 1936, present information available in a wide variety of disparate sources; Miller

conveniently presents the whole story in accessible form. The third part of the book, dealing with psychoanalysis in the Soviet Union after 1960, is based on new research and describes developments not discussed elsewhere. Miller's research is mostly based on published sources; he presents the history of psychoanalysis by summarizing a wide variety of publications dealing with psychoanalytic topics and placing them in their contexts.

The first question one can ask of any book dealing with the history of psychoanalysis written in recent years is why one should focus on the history of psychoanalysis in the first place. Up until the 1960s, when psychoanalysis reigned supreme in the United States, one did not need to provide a justification for writing a historical account of its development. Accounts written at that time, of which Gregory Zilboorg's *History of Medical Psychology* (1941) is the most well-known, generally contrasted the ignorance of the past with the enlightened present and sought to analyze why it took such a long time for the psychiatric profession or society at large to accept the obviously true, valid, and scientific insights of psychoanalysis. Today, psychoanalysis has been largely discredited within the helping professions (although it seems to enjoy great popularity in literary, cultural, and film studies). One historian of psychiatry, Edward Shorter, presented it as a hiatus in the growth of an ever-more powerful somatic psychiatry.[1] If psychoanalysis appears to be discredited in the Western world, one could wonder why an entire book to its development elsewhere should be written. Unfortunately, Miller does not tell us why it is important to tell the story of psychoanalysis in Russia.

A second problem for the historian who sets out to investigate the history of psychoanalysis is that the object of his interest has changed considerably over time. When the psychoanalytic movement started, relatively few ideas had been spelled out and there was considerable freedom to develop new ideas. Probably reflecting this earlier openness within the psychoanalytic movement, Miller states that, in his book, "psychoanalysis" stands for the work of Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Alfred Adler, and others who had at one time or another some connection to psychoanalysis; all in all, they were a rather diverse group of clinicians and theoreticians. In the first decade of the twentieth century, "psychoanalysis" covered a wide variety of ideas. Interested individuals had great leeway to formulate their own approach. It was, after all, not easy to gain an accurate understanding of Sigmund Freud's ideas when one did not read German; Freud's works appeared in translation rather slowly. Because of these reasons, what were actually understood to be essential tenets of psychoanalysis could vary widely among individuals and nations. It would have been helpful if Miller had elaborated what elements of this wide body of ideas were espoused by the Russians and which ones were neglected.

To make the situation even more complicated, "psychoanalysis" was, for a long time, short-hand for a movement which attracted all kinds of individuals who were interested in developing a mental approach to human nature. This

movement was dominated by the approaches developed by three individuals, two of whom are not considered psychoanalysts by today's standards: Pierre Janet, Paul Dubois, and Sigmund Freud. From the 1890s on, Janet had developed his dynamic psychology of alternate mental states to explain phenomena such as multiple personality and the remarkable ability of hypnosis to uncover forgotten memories, ranging from those of traumatic events to rather mundane and unimportant details of life. Hypnosis could provide access to the subliminal consciousness, which was much broader in scope than our everyday consciousness. Not surprisingly, hypnosis became the prime psychotherapeutic method for Janet. Paul Dubois, a Swiss psychiatrist, had developed his rational psychotherapy to deal with neurotic complaints. Through reasoning, suggestion, and persuasion, Dubois challenged his patients to develop a rational perspective on their situation, which would aid them in acting decisively to address the issues that made them unhappy. He was opposed to the use of hypnosis since it would subvert the power of the person to act and paralyzed the will. Freud's theories, developed somewhat later, incorporated elements of both theorists. In the beginning, individuals interested in the mental aspects of life did not feel a strong need to differentiate between these three. The historian of psychoanalysis, or, as I would prefer to put it, the historian of psychological approaches to human nature, has to investigate the relative importance of each of these three approaches in specific historical contexts. Miller mentions that Osipov, one of the first Russian psychoanalysts, was influenced by Dubois and published some of his articles in the journal of the Russian Psychoanalytic Society. Unfortunately, he does not analyze the relative importance of Dubois's approach in Russian psychoanalysis.

Earlier histories of psychoanalysis generally sketched its growth as originating in the works of Sigmund Freud, after which they sketch the dissemination of his ideas. Contemporary historical research on the history of psychoanalysis in North America has become increasingly sophisticated and analyzes a great number of cultural and social factors which made North America receptive to psychoanalytic ideas.[2] American historians interested in the growth of psychological or mental approaches to human nature have elaborated on the importance of the mind-cure movement, North American religiosity, American individualism, the existing self-help culture, and several other factors to explain the popularity of psychoanalysis at this side of the Atlantic. One wishes that Miller had provided similar explanations for the seeming popularity in Russia. His overview of the crisis in somatic psychiatry which led to an interest in psychoanalysis could have been expanded to include a wide variety of other factors.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, one could become interested in psychoanalysis for a variety of reasons. This would, not surprisingly, influence what specific individuals took away from Freud. Miller mentions Lev Vygotsky and Alexander Luria as early Russian enthusiasts for

psychoanalysis. One could wonder, however, what their interests in psychoanalysis consisted of. Neither one remained interested in it for a long time. However, both men developed radically innovative and interesting approaches to the study of the human mind. Vygotsky developed a highly original theory of the socialization of children which incorporated social and cultural factors to a much greater extent than orthodox psychoanalysis did. Luria became famous for his later studies in brain physiology. Miller's study would have profited from a description of approaches to the study of the human mind that existed when psychoanalysis became known in Russia, and which alternative approaches to the mind developed later on. This would place psychoanalysis in its proper intellectual context and acquaint readers with fascinating bodies of thought that are not particularly well-known in the Western world.

The high point of the book consists of the descriptions of the infighting and expulsion of individuals and political groups within the Politburo, the Communist Party, and several state-controlled academic institutions, as well as the consequences of these highly charged political struggles for psychoanalysis as well as any form of psychology. In the decade after the Revolution, a relative freedom reigned in which intellectuals developed a wide variety of ideas on how a Communist society could best be realized. Active debates about how psychoanalysis and Marxism could be combined in the building of the new Soviet society took place. During the late 1920s, following Stalin's political ascendance, this freedom became increasingly restricted. When the political faction which had supported psychoanalysis fell from favour and was ousted from all influential political bodies, the fate of psychoanalysis in the Soviet Union was sealed. In a number of highly visible public discussions, the bourgeois roots of psychoanalysis were decried and exposed as a poison for the true revolutionary spirit. Psychoanalysis had, after all, come into being as a treatment method for the worried well-off and thereby functioned as a panacea for the neuroses in the wealthy, the class responsible for the exploitative social structure of capitalism. At the 1930 Congress on Human Behavior, organized by the Society of Materialist Psychoneurologists of the Communist Academy of Sciences, psychoanalysis was widely condemned as a system of thought incompatible with Marxism. Several intellectuals claimed that earlier attempts to combine Freud and Marx were inherently fallacious and would have to be abandoned. Aaron Zalkind, an earlier enthusiast for Freud's theories, had read the writing on the wall and declared himself as the most ardent opponent of any form of psychologism and idealism in psychiatry and psychology; his speech at the Congress was designed to be the death knell for the Soviet Freudians (despite all this, Zalkind was not able to rescue his career). In 1936, the Central Committee of the Communist Party banned psychoanalysis and related idealist, bourgeois ideas from academic and public life.

Miller reports on this debate in a matter-of-fact way, but does not provide his own perspective on the developments. Were the Soviets afraid of the

unconscious and therefore repressed psychoanalysis? Or were they right in their condemnation of a sick ideology? The first problem for the Soviets with psychoanalysis was that the latter deals with the problem of the imaginary. Psychoanalysis deals with fantasies and desires – the imagination – and pays less attention to actual life experiences and the social and cultural origins of these life conditions. For psychoanalysts, personality development was based on desire and sexual conflict, not on the class structure or economic reality.[3] Soviet intellectuals were, on the contrary, interested on the social determinants of behavior and thought, in particular how the economic foundations of specific societies influences the personality. Psychoanalysis was not particularly useful for gaining insight into such factors. The question of the relative importance of economic, social, and cultural factors on personality development has absorbed the interests of a great number of neo-Freudians, among them Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, and Erik Erikson, who also felt that classical psychoanalysis did not take these factors into account sufficiently. These authors did their most creative work in accommodating social and cultural factors in a psychoanalytic framework. Second, in the Western world, psychoanalysis provided an expensive cure for the wealthy, leisurely classes and thereby unwittingly kept class distinctions alive. It never was available for the masses (although some initiatives were undertaken in Berlin and Vienna to provide psychoanalysis to individuals who could not afford it).

Unfortunately, the 1930 Congress and the 1936 decree ended a period of fruitful dialogue between a limited number of Marxists and a limited number of psychoanalysts (most of whom considered Bolshevism inspired by neurotic desires or as a symptom of deeper-laying psychoses). Attempts to combine insights from both have inspired intellectuals for a long time. However, attempts to come up with a synthesis have often been difficult. Louis Althusser, for example, stated in a moment of exasperation about the relationship between ideology and the unconscious: "I have said that there must be some relation there, but... I can only reply that I don't see it."[4] In other words, the debate about the relationship between Marxism and psychoanalysis, although fruitful and intellectually invigorating for all the decades it has been conducted, has not been particularly conclusive. It is therefore not surprising that Soviet intellectuals found it difficult to fit both ideologies within the same system.

Between 1930 and 1960, hardly anything on psychoanalysis was published in the Soviet Union. Surprisingly, in the 1960s, a whole new trend of Soviet criticism of Freud appeared. In these critiques, psychoanalysis is never dismissed out of hand; instead, detailed critique is given, some of which anticipated arguments later articulated in the West. It appears that these critiques provided an acceptable "code" to discuss psychoanalytic topics publicly; those interested in psychoanalysis needed to earn a reputation as critics to gain access to Freud's writings. In the 1980s, psychoanalysis was more openly discussed in the Soviet Union; in 1979, the famous Tbilisi conference on psychoanalysis was

held, which had a lot of Western participants. During glasnost and perestroika, psychoanalytic matters were discussed widely, as they are today in an attempt to make sense of a post-Communist Russia. One could wonder whether the renewed interest in psychoanalysis was based on a liking of everything the Communist regime disliked or whether it was due to other factors; unfortunately, Miller does not provide an explanation.

At some points, Miller reflects on the status of psychoanalysis in widely-read Russian novels, some of which clearly reflect psychoanalytic ideas but were politically savvy enough not to make this too obvious. Here, Miller misses an important chance to analyze the importance of psychiatric and psychological analyses of characters in Russian novels as well as the authors ofthese novels. In Russia, it appears that psychoanalytic ideas were applied to analyze literature, the arts, and politics before they were used in psychotherapeutic practice. Miller mentions the applications of psychoanalysis to literature of Nikolai Osipov on Lev Tolstoy and the writings of Tatiana Rosenthal, among them an extensive analysis of the author Fiodor Dostoyewski. Russian psychiatrists spent ample time on such analyses; seen the importance of the Russian literary tradition, they could make the importance of their discipline clear to the public by providing new perspectives on well-known literary characters. Of course, it was helpful that many Russian novels contain elaborate descriptions of the mental life of its characters who suffer from wide variety of psychological disturbances (one only has to think of Dostoyewksi's *The Double*, *The Idiot*, and his *Notes from the Underground*, and Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*). This specifically Russian tradition has hardly been studied historically and constitutes, in my opinion, one of the most interesting culturally-specific applications of psychiatric and psychoanalytic theory in Russia and the Soviet Union.

As I said before, *Freud and the Bolsheviks* provides a superb overview of the history of psychoanalysis in Russia and the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the author does not make clear why the reader should care about the topic of his book. It is not clear, for example, whether the author intends to use the history of psychoanalysis to shed light on developments within Russia and the Soviet Union or whether he intended to do the reverse and use the history of Russia and the Soviet Union to shed light on psychoanalysis. On the first page of his book, Miller states that his book is principally concerned with, among other things, the consequences of the establishment of a psychoanalytic presence in Russia and the Soviet Union (ix). This, however, is the last we hear about this potentially highly interesting topic. In the last pages, he seeks to answer the question why psychoanalysis has been fought, debunked, and discredited with an apparently endless vigor in the Soviet Union (161-8). After provocatively stating that "psychoanalysis became a powerful symbol of a deep problem endemic to the Soviet system itself" (164), he fails to follow up by informing the reader about the nature of that deep problem. He mentions the psychoanalytic emphasis on individualist concerns, which, understandably, was opposed to Soviet

collectivist values, but this hardly explains the deep enmity the Soviets felt for Freud. It could be, for example, that discrediting Freud became a propedeutic effort for any Soviet intellectual to develop his or her ideological teeth in the same way we ask college students today to write critical essays on any non-controversial topic. Be that as it may, Miller's book leaves a number of rather difficult questions unanswered which will occupy historians of psychoanalysis and historians of Communism for the next few years.

Moreover, one could reflect on why the late 1920s and 1930s were the most prominent years for Freud-bashing in the Soviet Union, while the 1990s proved to be the same in supposedly highly individualistic North America. Were the same factors at work? Were they highly divergent? Or has Freud, for reasons that are not entirely clear, always been an interesting figure-head whom everybody loves to hate and who can easily be criticized in any cultural context when, really, quite different points are being made? Such questions are inevitably part of a broader cultural history of psychoanalysis which transcends an analysis of the dissemination of a specific and, over time, highly codified body of ideas.

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[1]. Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York 1997), chapter 5, "The Psychoanalytic Hiatus."
[2]. See, for example, Nathan G. Hale, *Freud and the Americans: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876-1917* (New York 1971); *Freud and the Americans, 1917-1985: The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States* (New York 1995).
[3]. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in, their *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis 1983 [or. 1972]) attempt to develop a psychoanalytic theory of the unconscious in which desire is understood to be directly connected to the material conditions of existence. See, in particular, chapter 1.4, "A materialistic psychiatry."
[4]. Louis Althusser, *Writings on Psychoanalysis: Freud and Lacan*. Translated by Jeffrey Mehlmann, edited by Olivier Corpet and François Matheron (New York 1996), 5.

Dematerializing Marxism

Gen Doy, *Materializing Art History* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998).

At the conclusion of this reappraisal of Marxist art history, Gen Doy, with a perhaps unintended nod to Marx's eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, reminds the reader that we need to be aware of the reasons why, and the manner in which, Marxism has been interpreted in various ways, in different economic and political situations. The material reasons for different interpretations, distortions and reformulations of Marxism are important in understanding the state of Marxist art and cultural history today (257).