

two natures in one person because it derives from orthodox soteriology; he accepts the doctrine of salvation through Christ's death on the cross and subsequent resurrection because we find it in the New Testament because –

“if God did in fact act uniquely and decisively, in Jesus for the world's salvation . . . then it seems to me inherently unlikely that he would have left the basic facts and implications of that action without any reliable records and trustworthy teaching about their meaning”.

He accepts that God acted in Jesus for the world's salvation because he is convinced of the truth of the New Testament, it would seem, because “if God did in fact act, uniquely and decisively . . .” *vide supra*; and so on presumably *ad infinitum*. On reflection the author may perhaps have resolved this circular argument, but that is how it stands on pp. 137-8.

Just how uncritical of the New Testament Anderson is can be seen when he says that “For myself, I am content to believe that John 17:5 represents a memory of Jesus's *ipsissima vox*.” This verse reads,

“Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made”, and I wonder whether there are any non-fundamentalist New Testament scholars who would now accept that as one of Jesus's own sayings.

Yet it would be unfair to call Professor Anderson ‘conservative’. That label might well stick to Hick, Nineham and the other preservers of the dreary liberal theology of nineteenth century Protestantism which we find above all in David Friedrich Strauss. Anderson is more radical than that, for he wants to return to the orthodox fathers of the early church and beyond that to the New Testament. The problem is that in the final chapter his own views do not offer anything new because they are proscribed by the conceptual limitations of the Chalcedonian Definition of 451 AD. That document remains a touchstone of orthodox belief and Anderson is right to criticise his protagonists for failing to meet the test of Chalcedon, but a new perspective is needed outside the static concepts of ‘person’, ‘substance’, ‘nature’.

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MARX'S THEORY OF POLITICS by John M. Maguire. *Cambridge University Press*. pp. 251. £9.00.

It is a tenet of Marxist theory that you cannot decipher the power-relations of a society by assuming that the economically determinant class is necessarily identical with the politically dominant one. The English bourgeoisie, for example, were economically determinant long before they gained access to political power. Various Marxists, however, have failed to grasp this point – among them, as Professor Maguire points out in this remarkably learned and lucid study, one Karl Marx. For the Marx of the *Communist Manifesto* just does seem to assume that parallel to the bourgeoisie's growing economic dominance will run an increasing political hegemony; and it is this naive faith in the bourgeoisie's political capacity which Marx is forced to revise in the light of European history after 1848.

What actually happened in that period, as Maguire skilfully illustrates, was from a Marxist viewpoint a good deal more depressing. In England, the political appar-

atus remains stubbornly dominated by the aristocratic oligarchy, with whom the industrial bourgeoisie enter into uneasy alliance on the basis of the long-standing *capitalist* nature of English landed society. In France, the bourgeoisie was unable to sustain the political hegemony it had wrested from the *ancien regime*, “abdicating” that rule in 1851 to the supposedly class-transcendent Louis Buonaparte. In Germany, a chronically weak bourgeoisie remains subordinate to an authoritarian bureaucracy right into the twentieth century.

This is simply one of the issues illuminated by Professor Maguire's scrupulous dissection of the much-neglected area of Marx's specifically *political* thought. Marx's politics have on the whole proved less attractive to commentators than his economics or philosophical anthropology; and indeed in this they have taken their cue from Marx himself, who, as Maguire reminds us, tended to give politics a fairly low profile. Yet it is only recently being

recognised in contemporary Marxist debate that politics is the central *topos* of historical materialism. Once you abandon the displaced Hegelianism which holds that every mode of production contains the seeds of its inexorable supersession (and Maguire has a shrewd demolition of Marx's supposed historical fatalism), what you are left with is essentially the particular balance of class forces in a particular conjuncture. An analysis of that will crucially entail a decodement of the structural relations between the class-struggle and various forms of state; and it is the history of Marx's own forays into this theoretical region which this book so valuably charts. In the end, Maguire suggests, Marx is still left with the problem of how the various forms assumed by the bourgeoisie state are articulated with class-power and class-conflict; but it is salutary, at least, to be reminded that this *is* indeed a problem. For certain recent developments of Marxist theory (the earlier work of Louis Althusser, for example) commit the rationalist error of assuming that, given a particular mode of production, you can somehow deduce the precise forms which will be assumed by the 'superstructure'. On the contrary: all that we can deduce, given a mode of production in class-society, is that certain political and ideological formations will be necessary to attempt to secure the conditions of its self-reproduction. The *character* of those formations, however, remains a matter for 'conjectural' analysis.

Professor Maguire's study is chiefly an attempt to reconstruct the buried theoretical problematic behind Marx's empirical historical reactions to the fate of the 19th century bourgeoisie. It is thus neither an abstract theoretical enquiry nor simply a work of empirical historiography; but while the balance between theory and documentation is on the whole admirably achieved, there are points at which it might have benefited rather more from a theoretical input. Maguire distinguishes between three major types of bourgeois state: 'servile' (serving the essential interests of the bourgeoisie), 'pretentious' (attempting to dominate but not succeeding), and 'dominant' (imposing its 'will' – an unhappy term, perhaps – on the whole of society, including the bour-

geoisie). This typology, he claims, can illuminate the respective situations in England, France and Germany. It is a suggestive model; but its first category seems to me rather risky. For most Marxist theoreticians would now agree that the notion of the state as the mere 'instrument' or 'organ' of a ruling class is irretrievably vulgar and it is not clear how Professor Maguire's 'servile' category avoids such a criticism. The function of the state in class-society, as Nicos Poulantzas has argued, is not to act as an 'arm' of the bourgeoisie but to secure the political, juridical and ideological conditions for its self-expansion; and this implies a class-state relation to which no 'instrumentalist' model can do theoretical justice. Poulantzas also claims that the bourgeois state is characterised by a peculiarly high degree of 'relative autonomy' of the society as a whole; and this is an insight which Maguire's book might well have put to use. As it is, Poulantzas receives no mention in the text, and only a single reference in the bibliography, where his book is mistitled.

There are a few smaller bones one can pick with the book. Its account of the place and functions of ideology within the capitalist social formation at times sails dangerously close to a familiar Marxist form of bourgeois functionalism (capitalism as a closed, self-reproductive totality) which is, let it be said, elsewhere countered. And on p. 160 Maguire seems uncritically to endorse a rather brash statement from *Capital* that 'under-consumptionism' is at the root of all capitalist crisis. Finally, a suggestion for further reflection rather than a criticism. Maguire records at one point Engel's remark that the working class might have to *force* the bourgeoisie to carry out their historical mission; and it is impossible to read such a comment without pondering the programme of the Russian Mensheviks, who held to precisely such a policy. Perhaps the theoretical issues of 'dominant' and 'determinant' classes, the nature of the state and the rest, are nowhere more graphically embodied than in the Bolshevik revolution. And if that is the case, then one might claim that the most adequate theoretician of these problems is not Marx but Lenin.

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