

sacrifice basic trade union objectives at the drop of Stalin's cap.

In large measure Cochran's ambivalence about rejecting the Communists as undependable and generally opportunistic allies of the labor movement is rooted in a wavering, confused, and frequently contradictory attitude toward Communists. He is not alone in this. Some of the most politically astute leaders of the CIO, men like John L. Lewis, Philip Murray, and Sidney Hillman, also had generally mixed feelings and nagging uncertainties about their Communist colleagues. For some trade unionists a break with Communists seemed to be an act of disloyalty to old friends. For others the Communists were valuable technicians, seemingly indispensable in the operation of particular unions. Nothing has been more debilitating to the American Left than this inability to decide, finally, whether Communists should be regarded as overzealous working-class militants or, to use the colorful words of James Carey of the old United Electrical Workers, "political acrobats in pink tights."

Because of this apparent confusion about Communists, Cochran asserts that the CIO abandoned its idealism and militancy by expelling Communist-led unions in 1949. The expulsion, according to Cochran, "signalled that the CIO's crusading days were over, and that its constituent unions were hardening into quasi-conservative enterprises." But such an assertion ignores several important realities about the CIO: the important differences between the prewar and postwar economy, the natural tendency toward stabilization and normalcy in mass organizations such as unions, and the changed political environment after the death of Roosevelt. Perhaps most important, Cochran stubbornly avoids the fact that by 1949 the Communist movement had forfeited any claim to radicalism.

With the CIO expulsions the Communist movement was once again reduced to the status of an outsider looking in at the trade unions. Years later Len De Caux, the ousted Communist editor of the *CIO News*, began his autobiography with a statement that sums up the Communist position after 1949. "I hated being an outsider," De Caux wrote. "I envied the comradeship of those who, sharing a common lot, were joined in common struggle."

## The Structure and Form of the French Enlightenment by Ira O. Wade

(Princeton University Press; 2 Vols.; 1146 pp.; \$60.00 [set])

Charles W. Kegley

It is a pleasure to study great and creative periods in the often dismal history of mankind. The Periclean Age in Greece, the Renaissance-Reformation, and the Enlightenment are paradigm cases. The present study is marked by the erudition and sympathetic yet critical writing of a top-flight scholar at the peak of his long career, Princeton's Professor Emeritus Ira Wade, in his massive—here it is the proper word—two-volume, 1,146-page analysis of what he chooses to call *The Structure and Form of the French Enlightenment*.

The title is important because, as the French are wont to say, the adjective often rules the noun. One wonders if the author would not have been well advised to call his analysis "the *Spirit* of the French Enlightenment," and this for two reasons. One is that the terms "structure" and "form" connote, in ordinary language as well as by dictionary definition, the static and fixed rather than the dynamic and living. (Wade does not make clear, by the way, what significant difference he sees, if any, between "structure" and "form.") The second reason why an accurate description of this endeavor is so important is that Wade correctly and repeatedly emphasizes the need to identify the *esprit* of the French Enlightenment. In this effort—in his case a successful one—he is in agreement with and has the support of other major interpreters of the Enlightenment—Tillich, Cassirer, Crock-er, Gay, Berlin, et al., in stressing that a distinctive attitude, a *blick*, a *style*, characterizes (the leaders of) the Enlightenment. One of the author's valuable contributions is his discerning analysis of the lives and the development of the outstanding minds of the French Enlightenment. With enormous care for detail he labors with the question "How did the beliefs and life styles of these men originate, change, and develop in response to their total environment?" For example, Wade unerringly probes

the effort of Rousseau, not only "to understand his time, but to understand himself in his time." In this as in other respects these volumes have much to tell us about the mentality of the present as well as of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Not only students of history and of the history of ideas, but general readers as well, will look for a short descriptive definition of the Enlightenment. One recalls John Addington Symonds's superb statement, at the end of his four volumes, that the Renaissance can be characterized as the discovery of the world and the rediscovery of man. Crocker, in *The Age of the Enlightenment*, reproduces one of the standard descriptions of the Enlightenment as the development of "the unlimited confidence in man and his future." What of Ira Wade? Perhaps wisely, he declines to attempt such a definition, but he is brilliant in making clear the two simultaneous drives of the leaders of the Enlightenment. One was what Tillich, following Kant, stressed: "man's release from his self-imposed tutelege." The other, from Tillich's *A History of Christian Thought*, was the affirmation, "Have confidence in your own reason!" As Wade makes clear, these were joint efforts—violent rejection and vigorous affirmation. The autonomy of man is argued in the passionate rejection of the dominance, even the tyranny, of the Roman Catholic Church and its theological and political control of thought and life. One of the glories of the Enlightenment was what Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and others not only rejected but also affirmed in trying to demonstrate what man using his reason can accomplish. Thus the French Enlightenment represented a combination of pure intellectual inquiry with passionate *practical* zeal. Its leaders went all out to show what man, once he appropriates the empirical (they did not yet call it "scientific" ) method, could do to create a better social and political

life on earth. Liberty, Equality, and yes, Fraternity were values that, as Rousseau eloquently argued, could be achieved if man applied his reason to the realm which Rousseau thought most pervasive in human life—the political—and if man sought to achieve “the common good.” (That in Rousseau’s system the individual citizen appears actually to lose his freedom is a subject for political philosophy.) In a remarkable way these men anticipated the great American philosophers William James and John Dewey in their stress on putting ideas to work. Repudiating metaphysical speculation, they strove to be participating social philosophers and activists. As Wade says, with them “there is an absolute connection between thinking, being, saying, and doing.” Existentialists and pragmatists, applaud!

But were they really philosophers? Wade’s repeated emphasis in the 690 pages of Volume I is upon the claim that “the whole age entrusted [itself] to the philosophers, the Enlightenment is ‘par excellence philosophique.’” Unquestionably the entire enterprise was conducted by writers who, loosely associated with the famous *Encyclopédie*, worked and wrote as philosophers. Yet philosophers today cannot but have serious doubts. Alfred North Whitehead categorically wrote, in *Science and the Modern World*, “*Les philosophes* were not philosophers.” No matter how much we admire the intellectual force and validity of their criticism of existing institutions and “tuteleges,” their work was largely negative, highly eclectic, and their practical effect fairly negligible. The necessary question, of course, is What is philosophy? Wade addresses this question repeatedly, though never head-on.

Volume I emphasizes that the driving force of the Enlightenment was philo-

sophical, and it certainly treats the four “key people” (Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot, and Rousseau) as philosophers. The plain fact is that in standard histories of philosophy Kant and Leibnitz, Locke and Hume are almost never omitted, but not one of the “key people” of the French Enlightenment is included. Rousseau or Montesquieu do usually appear in courses in political philosophy, but three centuries of subsequent philosophers have not considered the four remarkable Frenchmen significant contributors to philosophy, either in method or content. To say, as Saint-Veuve did of Diderot, that he was “fundamentally an encyclopedist, a kind of journalist,” is harsh but it may be correct. The other weakness, in addition to the negativism to which Whitehead objected, is that these men were eclectic. Professor Wade has a strangely high estimate of eclecticism. Diderot, he tells us, said that “Voltaire is the master of eclecticism.” To philosophers this is condemnation, not praise; nor is it correct to say that, after all, Plato was eclectic. Voltaire is described as a synthesizer with the practical zeal of a moralist. This is indisputable, but it helps to account for the fact that Isaiah Berlin, in *The Great Ages of Western Philosophy*, gives Voltaire only a page and a half (quoting fourteen lines from *Philosophical Letters*).

There is a more positive and instructive estimate to be made of the French Enlightenment. This is elicited when we ask, What have we inherited from these brilliant men and what can we learn about the parallels between their situation and ours? The similarities, and differences, are striking. Two similarities stand out. First, there is a parallel exaltation of the empirical. To them, as to most educated people today, the source of knowledge is not “authority,”

not revelation, but the scientific method. If we want to understand ourselves and the universe in which we live, Voltaire and his associates insisted, we must use the scientific method. Second, empirically tested knowledge is seen as the hope of man in ordering his own life and in creating a harmonious social and political order. And it is in the economic-political sphere that the most important decisions are thought to be made.

But the differences are equally significant, and this quite aside from such obvious radical changes as the twentieth-century’s population explosion, nuclear warfare, instant communication, and so forth. One difference, as Wade ably shows, is that despite the passionate rejection of papal power, the key people of the French Enlightenment were deists and believed in the prime importance of “rational religion.” The twentieth century has produced a radical secularism in many educated people—a way of thought and life that simply excludes God and religion. Whether it be the positivism of philosophy or of power politics, religion is simply eliminated from consideration. To be sure, journalists, politicians, planners, and such people have to take account of it, but primarily as an embarrassing anachronism—here and there, as in Iran or Israel or Jonestown, Guyana. But as a central factor in their philosophy of life, religion simply does not matter. Here, curiously, the similarities and differences merge, for the Encyclopaedists of the eighteenth century and the rationalists, humanists, and even Marxists of the twentieth century reject, as Dewey put it, “religion,” and replace it with the “religious.” That is, there is a deep commitment to ideals and goals devised and realizable by human thought and effort alone.

We know what the political results of the Enlightenment have been; it remains to be seen what a thoroughgoing secularism will yield for individuals and for the social order. One does not have to be a Solzhenitsyn to suspect that another alternative—one that speaks for a religion valid for thought and vital as a guide to action—had better not be excluded *a priori* from consideration. Spokesmen for this kind of religion need to possess the wit, wisdom, and capacity of the leaders of the French Enlightenment to articulate their beliefs and promote their cause. As deism was not “the answer” for the post-

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**“As deism was not ‘the answer’ for the post-Enlightenment, so secularism is not the answer for the post-twentieth century.”**

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Enlightenment, so secularism is not the answer for the post-twentieth century.

Despite Wade's obvious and sincere desire to practice the objectivity of the scholar, he gets carried away on occasion by his attraction to the French. Of course Neslier's *Testament*, for example, is "a work of capital importance," but that it constitutes "...beyond a doubt the most complete and detailed treatise ever written in criticism of the Christian religion" is far from beyond doubt. Again, that Rousseau has "been as influential as any of France's great thinkers" is probably a sound estimate, but to write that "...since the formation of Christianity, there has been in Western Europe no man more influential upon Western Civilization" is, as the British would say, a bit thick. Then too, one must raise a question about the basic outline of these volumes, which is grounded in what Professor Wade calls the basic "categories of life." In the first place, this runs into logical difficulty because "self" is not a sphere or category of life as economics, politics, and the other categories are. One of the rules of classification is to select a single principle and stay with it. Wade does not do this. Further, of all the spheres discussed, that of "self" has the least content and excitement and adds little to the whole study. It is also true that the problems of self and personhood have become so complex and taken such different turns in contemporary philosophy and psychology that the thinking of the French Enlightenment on this subject sounds dated and sterile. True, Descartes's overly clear-cut dualism set the stage for all subsequent discussion, but it was not until the twentieth century that the problem of self received the analytical and empirical attention it requires.

Finally, Volume II is actually a work in metacriticism—a painstaking analysis with the aim of discovering the (largely nonexistent) "organic unity" in Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, and the authors of the *Encyclopédie*. For scholars of the French Enlightenment this is interesting, and his judgments seem to be sound, but the length is astonishing.

Wade's contribution is nonetheless immense. Students of philosophy and the history of ideas and those concerned about using basic beliefs to shape social and political action should give this work a careful reading.

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## The Moral Choice by Daniel C. Maguire (Doubleday; 477 pp.; \$10.95)

### John C. Bennett

I doubt whether there is any recent book on ethics that would interest more readers in the subject and, at the same time, stimulate those who are already interested to agree or disagree on many issues. Daniel Maguire writes as a Catholic lay theologian and moralist who has had the advantage of immersion in traditional Catholic moral theology but who is completely free from the hard legalism that often marks that tradition. He makes the most of the situationist elements in Thomas Aquinas, yet makes almost no reference to "natural theology," preferring to use such concepts as the "normatively human." The book is

difficult to classify in that Maguire writes both as a philosophical moralist with strong theological overtones and from a Christian base but without Christian exclusiveness.

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