

It illustrates a facet of Marx's intellectual omnivorousness that has been neglected until recently, his interest in anthropology, and indicates a huge and fertile field awaiting cultivation.

Programmatic in a different way, Pierre Vilar's "Marx and the Concept of History" focuses on what is still exploitable in Marx's method. The blatantly partisan Vilar finds the crux of dialectical materialism in the demystifying of bogus necessities. Fortunately for readers who may quarrel with him ideologically (he singles out a 1904 analysis by the young Stalin as a "masterpiece, not only of Marxist literature, but of history"), Vilar writes well—an accusation not likely to be leveled at the others here, alas.

In outlining a central notion throughout Marx's work, David McLellan's "The Materialistic Concept of History" comes across as uncritical of one of the dialectic's more dubious features. This essayist claims that the emphasis Marx's theory places on man's social aspects "only serves to enhance the individuality of Communist, unalienated man." Accurate enough as a description of Marx's views, the argument here is also implausible, to put it mildly—a semantic shell game with the pea under one of its favorite hiding places, the word "alienation." Maybe it would have overstepped the aims of *The History of Marxism* for McLellan to address this question—the series is simply a survey—but readers ought to be informed that the topic is controversial.

There is only one outright dud in *Marxism in Marx's Day*—Nicola Badaloni's "Marx and the Quest for Communist Liberty." It barely stays on the fringes of intelligibility, apparently the victim of a slipshod, inarticulate translator. I hazard this guess because the book was originally published in Italian. That Hobsbawm does not say a word about who translated what, if anything, is one of the baffling features of *Marxism in Marx's Day*.

A page on the contributors would have been helpful too. English-speaking readers will probably be familiar with Hobsbawm, Dobb, Mészáros, and McLellan; as for the others, I wanted an aid in my ignorance.

A graver weakness in the book is its deliberate avoidance of polemics. By design the collection is more in-

terested in gathering straightforward information than in raising ideology-laden questions. Noble enough as far as it goes, but the result is, well, duller than it needs to be. Marx himself, by contrast, was furious, inventive, and sarcastic in demolishing his foes. Confining himself to a modest survey was out of the question, for he sought to throw a loop around all the thought and action of his day. This ambition is what keeps him fascinating. *The History of Marxism*, judging from the first volume, runs the risk of following the all too familiar Marxist pattern of letting hermetic exegesis replace the lunge to encircle everything—something the master himself insisted was a precondition of changing the world. [WV]

**EL SALVADOR:
CENTRAL AMERICA IN
THE NEW COLD WAR**
edited by **Marvin E. Gettleman,
Patrick Laceyfield, Louis
Menashe, David Mermelstein
and Ronald Radosh**
(Grove Press; 397 pp.; \$7.95)

Miles L. Wortman

Among the effects of the Cuban Revolution was a rediscovery of Latin America in the United States. It opened a market for popular works on Latin America and especially for Latin American fiction. Before 1959 the region was the domain of John Gunther, while the works of Octavio Paz, Oscar Lewis, and Gilberto Freire were known only on a few college campuses. Castro cleared the land for Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, and Carlos Fuentes, for Theodore Draper, NACLA, and a hundred Latin American studies programs.

A generation later we have regressed. I cannot think of more than a couple of nonfiction, nonacademic books on Latin America published in the last year. The fault, of course, lies not on publishers' row but in the marketplace. Americans must be taught again about the social complexities and diversities of the area to our south.

This collection is concerned with El Salvador and United States policy toward Central America. Within its

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edited by **Norman J. Girardot
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Left progressive framework it provides valuable information. Harald Jung's historical essay on El Salvador is a highpoint of the book and deserves greater exposure. Michael Harrington's ruminations on the results of the Nicaraguan revolution are particularly interesting. Harrington's sympathetic discussion concludes that any progressive government will be difficult to maintain in Nicaragua because "there are immense forces at work built into the very structure of the world economy which militate against this outcome."

The observation is wise; its application to all of Central America would diminish our tendency to see complicated social issues as civil wars in which we can choose sides. The tendency to make choices in terms of good-guy/bad-guy partisan arguments is present across the political spectrum—in some "liberation theology" as well as in "white papers"—and it is obfuscating intelligent debate. But then again, when we lack intelligent works upon which to base our thought, what more can we expect?

The conflicts and dilemmas that make the El Salvador crisis so difficult to resolve, regardless of ideology, are illustrated in the fine, impartial debate here on Salvadoran agrarian reform, drawn largely from the pages of *Food Monitor*. To summarize briefly and incompletely, the writers agree that a population explosion and industrial agriculture have created a huge mass of landless peasants in this densely populated Latin American country. They all agree to a need for land reform and redistribution of wealth. But they disagree as to the form of reform: whether to distribute land in miniplots, which, some argue, would exaggerate the food scarcity; whether the land should be used to produce food for internal consumption or for cash crops to pay for petroleum and manufactured imports. They agree that the landed oligarchy's opposition must be overcome, but they disagree about how to do it. Is reform possible or at all meaningful? Can the Duarte government carry out land reform with military terrorists and the oligarchy in its midst? Should the whole group be tossed out, with the turmoil and bloodshed that would result and no guarantee that beneficial reform would, in fact, come about in the end? There remain undiscussed

and unanswered questions: What of the disagreement among the rebel groups as to the shape of land reform? What about the pressure of the world economy that Michael Harrington observes in Nicaragua, a pressure that forces revolutionary governments to conform to patterns the revolution opposes? Look at bankrupt Costa Rica. It has the same combination of reduced income from low coffee prices and increased expenditures without the overpopulation. What will be the effect of reform or revolution on the burgeoning urban population of El Salvador, the 40 per cent of the population that requires increasing supplies of food?

The editors have given us a valuable compilation. In it we see the complexity of the crisis. Unfortunately the editors do not themselves grasp the complexity, either in Central America or in U.S. foreign policy—a failure apparent in the introductions, which do not tie the book together as we would wish. The reader must work to profit from the collection.

The editors use the Reagan administration as their "strawman," but the already dated White Paper and the rhetoric of Jeane Kirkpatrick are given far too much space, while other, long-range, and more important issues remain unexplored. Of course we must consider the individuals who actually make policy (and here the White Paper with its Red-scare mentality provides worrisome doubts), but this is but one element among many. The Reagan administration while it struggles to establish a consistent policy toward El Salvador is at the same time in difficulty with the Guatemalan military junta and with the Sandinistas. The Central American problem predates this administration; recall Carter's moves to support Duarte immediately before Reagan's inaugural, not discussed in this book. The complexity of the crisis and the dilemmas posed by internal Central American problems, understood by Harrington and Jung and present in the agrarian reform debate, provide U.S. policy-makers with limited choices, which are in turn further limited by the United States' own domestic politics.

I recommend this book for the jewels within its rough. After all, how many chances do you have to read intelligent writing on Latin America?

THE MONEY LENDERS: BANKERS AND A WORLD IN TURMOIL

by Anthony Sampson

(The Viking Press; 336 pp.; \$16.95)

Benjamin J. Cohen

What is the role of private banking institutions in the late twentieth-century world economy? How did banks come to play such an influential role as the financiers of nations and governments? What are the effects of their global lending operations? Who bears the risks? And might it be true that the system is really no stronger than its weakest link? These are some of the questions posed by Anthony Sampson in his far-reaching new study of the "money lenders"—those sober-suited, pin-striped descendants of the Medici and Rothschilds who today manage the daily flow of literally billions of dollars around the world. Like his previous works on the International Telephone and Telegraph Company (*The Sovereign State of I.T.T.*), the giant oil companies (*The Seven Sisters*), and the armaments industry (*The Arms Bazaar*), this book is smoothly written, easily digested, and studded throughout with entertaining anecdotes to pique the reader's interest. It is an excellent introduction to the universe of international money, and Sampson is one of the best practitioners of the higher journalism.

Ironically, bankers were assigned no significant role at all in the design of the international monetary system agreed on at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944. Bankers were then in disgrace, their reputation in tatters following upon the financial calamities of the interwar period. Principal responsibility for maintaining order in the postwar period was to rest with two novel multilateral institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Yet almost as soon as the war ended the money lenders began to reassert themselves, their main vehicle being the Euro-currency market. The practice of taking deposits and making loans in foreign currencies (which is what the Euro-currency market is all about) originated in London. But as Sampson describes, the trick caught on quickly and spread like wildfire, leading to the establishment of an in-