

reality, there is small chance that any person or group can deliberately effect social change. Should one take a more optimistic view of the possibilities of individual social action, however, he must still have an understanding of politics that sees no ghosts in the machine and rejects hollow promises of salvation. WV

LIVING WITH NUCLEAR RADIATION
by Patrick M. Hurley
(University of Michigan Press; viii + 131 pp.; \$18.50/\$9.50)

NUCLEAR POWER: BOTH SIDES
by Michio Kaku and Jennifer Trainer
(W. W. Norton & Co.; 279 pp.; \$14.95)

Albert L. Huebner

These two books offer a study in contrasts. Although both attempt to clarify for the lay public major issues in the heated controversy over nuclear power, they differ in scope, in method, and, most of all, in achieving clarity.

It is Patrick Hurley's contention that widespread misconceptions about radiation interfere with the public's ability to make a rational evaluation of nuclear power. He proposes to remedy this by offering a clear, accurate presentation of the facts about "one factor only: nuclear radiation," while avoiding "the larger questions in the debate."

So narrow an approach might be useful, but it is perilous. It invites the intrusion of hidden assumptions and leads to seriously flawed conclusions. Hurley says, for example, that "as a result of public pressure the cost of new nuclear power installations has been so increased as to have slowed the growth of the industry severely." But this public pressure is hardly the sole result of misconceptions about radiation. Some people oppose nuclear power because they fear its link to nuclear weapons; others think it just too expensive. These moral and economic considerations are only a few of the "larger questions" in the nuclear controversy. Moreover, there is considerable evidence to indicate that the troubles plaguing the nuclear industry are largely its own creation, having little to do with public pressure at all.

Even on matters well within Hurley's adopted constraints he guards an unfortunate silence: The exposure a nuclear worker may receive is ten times that allowed a member of the general public, so that these workers are subjected to considerable dif-

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SUSAN HEKMAN



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ferential risk. Average *actual* doses to workers have been declining, in part because radiation exposure is being distributed over a much larger number through the widespread use of temporary workers—occasionally referred to as radiation "sponges"—for tasks in high-radiation environments.

This expanding use of temporary workers needlessly increases the collective radiation dose to society. Furthermore, the temporary workers are particularly vulnerable because they are subjected to substantially higher radiation exposure than are permanent nuclear workers, and the situation is aggravated by the absence of a central data bank to monitor total occupational exposure. A recent report prepared by the U.S. General Accounting Office indicates that the situation will become worse; it projects a substantial increase in the number of temporary workers needed to operate the nation's nuclear power facilities through 1991.

Despite these shortcomings, *Living with Nuclear Radiation* provides in a compact and accessible format an impressive range of general information about an important subject. Hurley is correct in asserting that misconceptions about radiation abound. His book won't make much of a contribution to the nuclear debate, but it *will* provide its

readers with a better understanding of how radiation—from medical X-rays to excessive radon in improperly insulated homes—impinges on their lives.

In contrast, *Nuclear Power: Both Sides* represents a major addition to the nontechnical literature on the nuclear power controversy. Kaku and Trainer sought out leading authorities on the major elements of the conflict: radiation, reactor safety, waste disposal, economics, alternative energy paths. Even the political setting in which the nuclear debate is taking place is considered.

They integrated this material, cut through the impenetrable jargon of the specialist, and wrote an introduction to each section. Then, using an elaborate system of checks and balances, the manuscript was further honed by specialists other than those contributing directly to the book. The combined talents of Kaku, a physicist, and Trainer, a professional writer, worked exceptionally well in accomplishing this formidable task.

The result is a work that offers not only the balance and thoroughness intended, but more. The essays are intelligent and informative. Beyond that, their authors offer a personal perspective on issues that adds an important dimension to the book. John

Gofman, a specialist on radiation, insists, for example, that nuclear pollution infringes on his individual rights; and nuclear physicist Bernard Cohen argues that living without enough energy would cause him greater hardship than would the minor disadvantages he believes accompany nuclear power. These perspectives underscore the point that although some of the issues in the controversy can be settled, or at least clarified, by scientific fact, others lie well outside the limited realm of physical science.

The title *Nuclear Power: Both Sides* may suggest that the essays constitute a debate and, by extension, that there is a winner. Readers expecting so tidy an outcome will be disappointed, but the book accomplishes a more valuable task: Its contributors trace a number of pathways out of our present paralyzing confusion about energy; collectively, they provide enough information and insight to enable the perplexed citizen to determine the best course. W3

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Newly Published

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LENIN LIVES! THE LENIN CULT IN SOVIET RUSSIA

by Nina Tumarkin

(Harvard University Press; 268 pp.; \$20.00)

Robert English

Though we tend to view all Communist personality cults as the simple self-aggrandizement of absolute tyrants, Nina Tumarkin's new study of the Lenin cult shows otherwise. Whereas Stalin and Mao fostered mammoth campaigns that expired soon after their heroes did, the Lenin cult, for which Lenin was not directly responsible, continues to this day. Lenin's body has been on public display for nearly sixty years, and his cult has served the Soviet regime in many ways. An understanding of this cult offers rich insight into the history and politics of Soviet Russia.

On August 30, 1918, less than a year after Russia's October Revolution, an attempt was made on Lenin's life. With a civil war under way and their grip on power entirely uncertain, the Bolsheviks seized upon this event to galvanize popular support. Capitalizing on genuine feelings of popular sympathy and outrage, an attack on Lenin was equated with an attack on the Party. Lenin was described as a genius, a prophet, a savior; he was even compared to Christ. The foundation of the cult had been laid.

As Lenin's stature grew, so too did the Party's legitimacy. What was to be done, then, when the main source of this legitimacy died? Writes Tumarkin:

"So much appeared to depend on Lenin's personal power that his heirs had to keep that power alive as he lay dying. Lenin's illness prompted them to immortalize him as a political symbol and to maintain his constant political presence through the institutions of a cult."

And so, as Lenin lay dying, there appeared Lenin posters and Lenin statues, Lenin squares and Lenin tents, Lenin evenings and a Lenin Institute, Lenin schools and little Leninists, even a new ideology, Leninism. When Lenin died of a stroke on January 21, 1924, the scale of mourning, tributes, and eulogies only strengthened the cult. Observing the crowds waiting to view Lenin's body, one Westerner called it a "post-mortem vote of confidence."

Having aided the Party in its early crisis of legitimacy, Lenin's legacy was harnessed for the ambitions of Lenin's successors. Lenin was dead, but his doctrine would carry on. Who would become the "living interpreter of Leninism"? "All of the contestants [Stalin, Trotsky, Zinoviev,

and Kamenev] strove, in eulogizing Lenin, to make themselves credible as his heirs by emphasizing their past closeness to the leader and by demonstrating their current capacity to act in accordance with his spirit." Not until the early 1930s, when Stalin was firmly in control, was the Lenin cult superseded by Stalin's own.

Though Stalin's personality eclipsed all others for two decades, his cult ended with Khrushchev's secret speech to the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. Lenin was invoked again, this time to bury Stalin. Khrushchev read Lenin's "Testament" denouncing Stalin and condemning his dictatorial, non-Leninist behavior. At the same time, Khrushchev began a new cult of Lenin as "party doctrine was poured back into its original Leninist vessel." What the new Lenin cult lacked in spontaneity it made up in size. A lavish, technicolor production, it had more in common with the Stalin cult than with the original one. And it is no wonder that the spontaneity and genuine affection of the earlier Lenin cult have been replaced by formal routines. There are few witnesses to Russia's revolutionary past still alive today. Moreover, as a military superpower and industrial giant, the Soviet Union has established a legitimacy that is no longer threatened by a changing of the guard. Andropov's recent succession has been remarkably smooth, requiring no revival of Russia's revolutionary roots.

Though Lenin's cult has served political ends, it must not be viewed in that context alone. Some of the book's more interesting points concern the cult's sociocultural roots in traditional Russian Orthodoxy, Bolshevik "god-building," and naive monarchism—an abiding faith in the goodness of the monarch, no matter how cruel his system. Unfortunately, it is here that the study is weakest. To say that posters of Lenin resemble icons, or that Lenin was praised in Christ-like terms, is not enough to conclude that the Lenin cult was a "Bolshevik religion" replacing Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, Tumarkin succeeds in showing that, as with most other aspects of communism, the present system cannot be properly understood outside its sociocultural context.

Equally interesting is the book's role as a biography of V. I. Lenin. Though Lenin was deeply suspicious of flattery and adulation, his all-encompassing leadership, "his teachings, his directives, his constant supervision, and his personal example" created a party so dependent on him that it would be "orphaned" upon his death. Here is Leninism's fundamental departure from Marxism. According to Marx, individuals