

43A/23

NEW ESSAYS

153 WEST 21ST STREET - NEW YORK 11, N. Y.

11/15/48

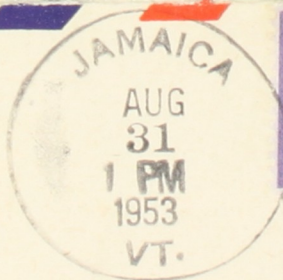
Dear Anton Pannekoek,

included are two reviews of your booklet. I guess there will be some other reviews but sales have slowed up considerably. If you care you may have as many additional copies as you like. Should I send some? I hope you are well and that Mrs. Pannekoek and family Brauns is also well. Please give my best regards to Mrs. van Scheltema.

Best wishes,

Panthea

Mattick
Jamaica, Vermont



439/39
VIA AIR MAIL

Prof. Anton Pannekoek
Regentesselaan 8
Zeist
Netherlands

Lenin as Philosopher. By ANTON PANNEKOEK. New Essays (153 W. 21st St.), New York, 1948. 80 pp. \$1.00. In this work Pannekoek considers the

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BOOK REVIEWS

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philosophic background out of which Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* arose. He traces the development of Marx's and Engels' historical materialism out of Hegel's dialectical idealism and Feuerbach's "middle-class" materialism. The philosophical and politico-economic distinction between these two types of materialism is basic for his evaluation of Lenin. Middle-class materialism was developed as a weapon of the bourgeoisie in their fight with the landed aristocracy. As a consequence it was a type of materialism whose reference point was individualistic, a materialism whose principal tool was natural science and whose principal enemy was the religious ideology in which the absolutistic status quo was rationalized. Historical materialism, on the other hand, was a weapon of the proletariat in their conflict with the bourgeoisie. Its referent is society, and hence it considers such a phenomenon as religion not as a psychological phantasy but as a social phenomenon. It attacks the economic rather than religious structure of society.

The post-Marxian development in Mach and Avenarius was for Pannekoek a reversion to middle-class orientation, but nevertheless more sophisticated and subtle in much of its analysis than pre-Marxian materialism. Lenin, in formulating his philosophy, was bitter about these positivists, but, according to Pannekoek, he missed or misinterpreted many of their real contributions, and agreed with them on many more issues than he acknowledged. This Pannekoek explains by the peculiar politico-economic structure of pre-revolutionary Russia. Russia, at that time, had no well developed bourgeoisie, hence the proletariat were in direct conflict with the aristocracy. Lenin, as an effective practical leader, used what he could of the middle-class materialism in attacking the aristocracy. Following the bourgeois tactics he concentrated his attack on religion. Philosophically in *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, and politically in the Third International he tried to generalize on the peculiar Russian experience and make it the basis of a plan for world revolution. Its inadequacy for the proletariat in well developed capitalistic societies, according to Pannekoek, makes it a dangerous threat to the eventual establishment of a non-bureaucratic workers' state.

The occasional weakness of Pannekoek's philosophical arguments (e.g., his mind-matter dualism, and his confusion of "real" and "material") do not in any significant way detract from the main development. The historical survey is written with a vigour and clarity reminiscent of Engels. The survey is a contribution whether or not the reader is willing to accept Pannekoek's criticism of Leninism. If he is not, then refuting Pannekoek's arguments will certainly leave his own the stronger for the encounter.

RUSSELL L. ACKOFF

Wayne University

THE WILLIAMS & WILKINS COMPANY
MOUNT ROYAL AND GUILFORD AVES.
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

11-11-48

Gentlemen:

The attached clipping appeared in the
July 1948 issue of PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE.

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New Essays
153 West 21st Street
New York, N.Y.

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August 15. He praised those Princes, who have acceded to the Indian Dominion. The Princes may have grievances, frail and fabulous, yet people under them are happy. They have at least seen the era of freedom.

Swimming Bath,

India, 19 SEP 1948

* * * *

Sardar Patel is a strong man; but he has a soft heart. For refugees he has very tender sentiments. Who will not have it? Those, who have suffered and suffered terribly at the hands of barbarous hordes must have relief. The Sardar's one anxiety is that they should be restored to their own position and rehabilitated in a decent manner. He is anxious about food and cloth questions.

et,

please find herewith the 13th. our weekly "The Whip" on page review of your pamphlet, er!"

Our Prime Minister said in his broadcast on August 15 that there was no question of war against anybody except war against poverty. The Sardar is implement-

of the great interest felt in such a subject, I definitely pamphlet as too theoretical, in spite of an intensive reading, something more simpler would have had a greater popular appeal.

However you are welcome to send over any more books that you may produce, and the review given to each one will be on the merits of each book respectively.

Assuring you of my best attention at all times.

Yours truly,

FEROZE S. WADIA, B. A. (Honours),
Bombay Representative
and Correspondent.

"THE WHIP"

OSO
New Essays
Street, New
is a

Feroze S. Wadia,
Rukhiya Manzil,
Opp. Breach Candy Swimming Bath,
Warden Road,
BOMBAY 26. India, 19 SEP 1948

43A/24

To,
New Essays,
153 West 21st. Street,
New York 11,
U. S. A.

Dear Sirs,

Enclosed please find herewith the 13th. September issue of our weekly "The Whip" on page ~~XX~~ 8 of which is my review of your pamphlet, "Lenin As Philosopher!"

In spite of the great interest felt in this country for such a subject, I definitely would classify the pamphlet as too theoretical, in spite of an intensive reading, something more simpler would have had a greater popular appeal.

However you are welcome to send over any more books that you may produce, and the review given to each one will be on the merits of each book respectively.

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Yours truly,

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**Bombay Representative
and Correspondent.**

"THE WHIP"

43A/24

13th Street

SEP 1948
 Indira, 19 Swimming Bath,
 Feroze S. Wadia,
 Rukhiya Manzil,
 Opp. Breach Road,
 Warden Road,
 BOMBAY 26.

Street

LENIN AS PHILOSOPHER

Anton Pannekoek. New Essays

153 West 21 st. Street, New York 11, N. Y. 1.

The work in question is a translation from German of a pamphlet published in Amsterdam in 1938 and is called a critical examination of the philosophical basis of Leninism.

The work itself is very complicated, and the bewildered 'ay-man cannot make much of it, for it presumes a deep knowledge of Marxian theory and practice which very few people can hope to have. When the reviewer took up the work he expected some information, but he is sorry to state that his hopes have not been fulfilled, and whatever may be its merits, its cardinal defect of being too theoretical will stand in the way of its wide circulation.

* * * *

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NEW ESSAYS

153 WEST 21ST STREET - NEW YORK 11, N. Y.

9/29/49

Dear Anton Saenne Koch,

I will try once again for a Guggenheim Fellowship. I want to go abroad and write a book on Germany. Would you be so kind as to recommend me to the Guggenheim Committee in case they write to you? I would appreciate your help very much.

I have sent you some of my recent publications some time ago. I hope they reached you. How are you and your family; how is Dr. Brauns? I am very busy working on a lengthy study on "Merk and Keynes." When completed I will send it to you.

With all my best wishes,

Paul Heath

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Best wishes,

Fantasia H. de

J. Sommerville is a

"Communist fellow -
traveller."

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uality, the result of some innate differences of character? Or do some men, the apostles, really have an insight into a world of non-temporal norms which other people do not have?

These are but one or two of the questions which arise from the reading of this very stimulating work. That they arise is not evidence of the book's weakness, but of its strength. Compared with other studies in the field, it seems to at least one reader close to being a masterpiece, more searching in its analyses, more sophisticated in its demand for concrete evidence, less mysterious in its conclusions, almost always provocative of new ideas.

GEORGE BOAS.

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY.

Lenin As Philosopher, A Critical Examination of the Philosophical Basis of Leninism. ANTON PANNEKOEK. New York (153 West 21 Street), New Essays, 1948. Pp. 80.

This booklet is "translated by the author from the German edition, *Lenin als Philosoph*, Amsterdam, 1938." Its content is chiefly made up of a critique of Lenin's "Materialism and Empiro-Criticism," a critique which attempts to demonstrate that Lenin did not adequately understand the positions of Mach and Avenarius which he set himself to refute in that book. In the course of his polemic Pannekoek briefly explores the views of Dietzgen as well as those of Mach and Avenarius, and also offers a summary characterization of what he calls "middle class materialism."

Pannekoek, however, does not present himself as a proponent of the views of Mach and Avenarius, but rather, as a more thorough Marxist than Lenin. The trouble with Lenin's work, he argues, is not that it attacked those views, but that it attacked them in the wrong way. Moreover, he maintains, the faults he finds with Lenin's book reflect root faults of the whole Soviet regime. Thus Pannekoek is against a great many things: capitalism, the Soviet system, social democracy, middle class materialism, the positions of Mach, Avenarius, Plekhanov, and Lenin, among others.

It is his opinion that Lenin's book does not represent true Marxian materialism, i.e., historical materialism, because of the way it concentrates on the struggle against the roots of fideism in the work of Mach, Avenarius, and their followers. Pannekoek understands this side of Lenin's work as a polemic against the essence of super-naturalistic religion. However, Pannekoek is also against super-naturalistic religion; his objection, again, is to the way Lenin handles the polemic. In Pannekoek's view, Lenin attacks religion from the standpoint of "middle class materialism," which, as Pannekoek conceives of it, is the standpoint of natural science as such. That

37/29

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There are six "provinces of civilization" in which work may be done. They are politics, science, religion, art, economics, and language. In each of these provinces the work of individuals—and Mr. Schrecker firmly denies that there is any work done by groups (p. 22)—is integrated through the operation of norms. Constitutions, tests of validity, orthodoxy, and so on, illustrate them. They are not unrelated to one another, but interact, as may be seen in the inter-relations between religion and art, science and politics, or indeed any selection of the provinces. They are differentiated (pp. 108 ff.) as categorical—*A* must do *B*, and hypothetical—*A* must do *B* if *C* is desired. In more traditional terms, there are terminal and instrumental values. Mr. Schrecker, however, admits (p. 108) that categorical norms have probably never operated in actual history. This is obviously a very important admission and raises the question of what their nature is. Are they ever anything more than the protases of conditional sentences? Mr. Schrecker appears to conclude that they are embodied "in nature," which certainly determines the limits of human efficacy. But, unless we have misread him, he fails to take account of two techniques which humanity seems everywhere to have employed when in danger of being frustrated by nature. One is the technique of rebellion, a kind of work, to be sure, but one which may simply be flight, as when a people, faced with the impoverishment of their soil emigrates, or practices race-suicide; the other is the technique of resignation. If the categorical norms were embodied in nature, it would seem plausible that there would be less variation in the products of human work, in human institutions, language, artefacts, religions. Again, with all due allowances for the slippery ambiguities of the word "nature," of which Mr. Schrecker is not always aware, natural norms would hardly account for the inertia of custom. Custom may establish traditions which are compulsive, as the psychologists say, and which are not only irrelevant to human survival but actually harmful to it.

In each province, Mr. Schrecker distinguishes between two types of worker, the priests and the apostles. The apostles are the creators of new generative norms, the priests the administrators of accepted norms. That the distinction is valid is highly probable, even if the admission that there are men who literally invent, or create, new standards may seem like a concession to the "Great-man-theory-of-history," a theory which is less fashionable nowadays than it used to be. One may agree with Mr. Schrecker that there have been apostles, but one would like to know whence they have derived their norms. In simpler language, is the human imagination really creative or not? By "creative" we mean not merely original in new compositions of old materials, but creative of the materials which are being worked upon. Everyone, we are told, is slightly—Mr. Schrecker says "infinitesimally"—creative. Is a man's originality in work a factor of his individ-

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is, it stops there, and does not embrace social science. "Historical Materialism, on the other hand," he says (p. 18), "lays bare the specific evolutionary laws of human society, and shows the interconnection between ideas and society."

This approach to "Lenin as Philosopher," whatever the strength of moral feeling that may have moved its author, is intellectually arbitrary, since, in the case of Lenin's work, we are confronted with not one, but some fifty volumes, most of which would fall squarely into the category of historical materialism as defined by Pannekoek himself. The quality of Lenin's work as a whole might be found to be good or bad by a critic who examined it from this standpoint of historical materialism, but a criticism which ignores the bulk of the work Lenin did exactly from that standpoint could hardly be expected to possess much value.

By the use of Pannekoek's method one might argue that William James was no philosopher because he wrote a treatise on psychology in which he did not solve certain of the problems of philosophy. It might possibly have saved Pannekoek a good deal of trouble had he taken into consideration the fact that, to Soviet philosophers, "historical materialism" is one division of dialectical materialism in general. A work like "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" falls under what they term the general theory of dialectical materialism, which embraces ontology, epistemology and methodology, while such works of Lenin as "State and Revolution," "Imperialism the Highest State of Capitalism," "The Development of Capitalism in Russia," and many others, fall specifically under historical materialism. If Pannekoek wanted to examine Lenin's claims to the status of an historical materialist, it is clear beyond any doubt that he should have devoted his critique to those of Lenin's works directly concerned with that area.

In connecting his discussion of "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" with the Soviet social system, Pannekoek maintains that what took place in Russia was a "middle class revolution" which has resulted in the development of "state capitalism." In a sense, he says, this may have been necessary for Russia, but it does not represent genuine Marxism. This part of Pannekoek's discussion, which is extremely brief, suffers from undefined terminology and unsubstantiated assertion. Middle class revolutions have usually meant political revolutions which did not go so far as to eradicate private capitalism. It is clear that the Russian revolution was not of that kind.

In this connection, it is a matter of regret not only that Pannekoek does not define his own terms. It is equally regrettable that he does not take account of how his opponents define theirs. Thus he says (p. 75), "The Russian economic system is state capitalism, there called state socialism or even communism. . . ." Soviet writers call their present system neither state

socialism nor communism, but socialism, which, in time, they hold, will develop into communism. While there is no evidence in his essay that Pannekoek reads Russian, such basic concepts as socialism and communism are defined and discussed in numerous Soviet sources which have been translated into English, French, and German.

Pannekoek possesses a wide range of knowledge and experience; if his theses, in this essay, go far beyond his evidence, his treatment is serious and does not suffer from hysteria. These considerations are of more than usual significance, for in this field of problems, to which the movement of world events has given an extraordinary importance, the real dangers lie not in the fact that there are differences of opinion, but in the way these differences are approached.

JOHN SOMERVILLE.

HOOVER INSTITUTE,
STANFORD UNIVERSITY.

The Heathens. WILLIAM W. HOWELLS. Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1948. Pp. 306.

The Heathens, as the title brightly implies, is a work on the religious systems of chiefly non-literate peoples. The author, William Howells, an anthropologist whose past specialization has largely been in physical anthropology and who has been known, most recently, for his book, *Mankind So Far*, begins the present work, modestly enough, by proclaiming his debt to Professor Tozzer of Harvard who apparently introduced him to the subject. But he ends, three hundred pages farther on, with having fairly well eclipsed the master. For his latest book is written in a manner deceptively humorous, with that quick wit which is so often wedded to a clear and trenchant style and a vigorous way of thinking. This manner is somewhat deceptive, I say, because the core of scholarship and analysis is solid, and at most points convincing. In all, the book makes an excellent introduction to the subject, or, because of clarity and good humor, could well serve as text for courses in religion and folklore or be recommended highly for both academic and lay circles, wherever man and his works is an important concern.

Beginning with the point that man is distinguished from all other animals by his culture, and the kindred notion that culture is made possible by language and symbol-using capacity, Howells carefully plots out the religious area of symbol construction and manipulation by locating its characteristic beliefs, practices, paraphernalia, and emotional attitudes in an expansion of the known, tangible "world of reality" and in the inventive or imaginative process whereby man changes himself. Granted this process