

of the tennis court oath's celebration. Works such as Lord Kenneth Clark's *Romantic Rebellion* mention that fact about David's painting. In addition, the reader would be wise to consult J. D. Talmon's *Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*.

One may easily disagree with Hibbert's bland conclusion by observing that Europe's humanity was the true victim of the Revolution, not Napoleon, except in a cheaply poetic sense. On the other hand, the author's purpose of providing an introductory text has been served, but proper perspective may have been lost. *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien!* Of the fate of men and nations, Hibbert remains blind.

Reviewed by JOSEPH ANDREW SETTANNI

Commentary and Rejoinder

I HAVE NEVER defended myself against critical reviews of my books. Professor Donald W. Treadgold's review of my *History of Russian Thought*¹ however, is not so much scholarly criticism as speculation about my intentions and personal views; in general he criticizes not what I have said but what I have, allegedly, "implied." The result of applying such a method is so grotesque, so unjust, that I feel compelled to react. An additional reason is my respect for Treadgold's scholarly achievements and personal integrity. What he has written cannot be dismissed as an expression of ignorance or malice; it is rather, I think, an extreme case of prejudiced judgment, which can and should be corrected.

My critic treats me as a Marxist-Leninist in disguise, as a man who has succeeded, although not entirely, "in mastering the idiom of both sides of the Iron Curtain and in seeking to meet the requirements of being both a Polish citizen and a scholar conforming to recognized international standards (rather than being treated as an honorary

scholar by Westerners who despise, pity, and overlook the politically necessary rubbish in such a person's work)." To borrow Treadgold's favorite word, it is obvious what these words imply: first, that the Iron Curtain has never been lifted in Poland; second, that Polish scholars are bound to be Marxist-Leninists and, therefore, as a rule deserve to be treated by Westerners with contempt and pity; third, that I was motivated not by the desire to make a creative contribution to my field of study but merely by the wish to "conform" to two basically incompatible standards and thus to win recognition both in Communist countries and in the West (in which I have, allegedly, succeeded).

All these assumptions are false. Socialist countries should not all be put in the same basket; differences between them are often as great as between, say, France and Greece. In 1956 the Iron Curtain was at least half-lifted in Poland, allowing the development of a considerable margin of intellectual freedom, which was so skillfully and boldly utilized by many Polish intellectuals that official Marxist-Leninist ideology was reduced in scope, put on the defensive, and indeed eliminated from many fields of intellectual activity, while contacts with the West increased in number and importance. Now Poland is under martial law, the future of its intellectual life in danger and uncertain, but what is relevant for an understanding of my books is rather a fact which became obvious in 1980-1981, namely, that Polish society has turned out to be remarkably free of indoctrination, that official ideology had disintegrated and been weakened to such an extent that the younger generation were often unaware that there were still some dogmas which the Party could not afford to abandon, though it might have to defend them by naked force. As to my own success in reconciling incompatible requirements, it was in fact very limited: Poland apart, I achieved a certain recognition in the West but in the Soviet Union none of my books could be published and access to them is very restricted. They are kept in special files, are not to be found in the catalogues of Soviet libraries, and people who know of their existence must have special permission to read them. This certainly

does not rank as success, especially in view of my dream (unrealistic, to be sure) of influencing Russian intellectuals, helping to broaden their horizons and revealing to them the diversity and richness of their intellectual heritage. I cherished this illusion because I hoped against hope that, as a scholar from a "brotherly socialist country," I might be treated with less suspicion than, say, American scholars, but those responsible for the "ideological front" in the USSR found my works incompatible with their standards.²

Treadgold is disturbed by the "ideological ambiguities" in my *History*. The same objection has been raised whenever I have talked about my works with representatives of official Soviet scholarship: they want me to state each time whether the analyzed ideas are "correct" or not, and how they relate to Marxism. My hermeneutic approach, that is, my efforts to achieve an understanding of different ideologies without committing myself to any one of them, to analyze them not in terms of truth versus falsehood but from the point of view of what they reveal about people and about history, are as ambiguous and unpalatable to them as to my American critic.

True, I have consciously avoided direct criticism of Marxism and of Soviet scholarship. I did not, for instance, begin my book by stating that I reject the notorious dichotomy "materialism—idealism," and the Leninist theory of the so-called "two cultures in each culture" (i.e., "reactionary culture" and the "culture of the popular masses"), or that I oppose the teleological view that the inner logic of progressive thought consists in a gradual approximation to Marxism, or that I deliberately stress the Western sources of Russian ideas and consider the so-called struggle against cosmopolitanism (which has never been officially condemned in Soviet Russia) as one of the most infamous pages in the history of Soviet scholarship, and so forth. I assume that it is self-evident to competent readers and so hold it wise to avoid provoking the obscurantists. Another reason explaining my "ideological ambiguity" is my awareness that there are many Marxisms and that, as an interpretation of intellectual history, Marxism should be tran-

scended rather than merely rejected. I treat Marxism as part of a wider tradition of historical sociology; I refer to this tradition in order to show how to go beyond Marxism while preserving what is valuable in it. It is simply not true that I indulge in "half-baked allusions to the alleged relation between the mode of production and given thinkers or thoughts"; if Treadgold has found the term "mode of production" in my book I should be glad to know on which page it appears. In reality I have preferred to follow other masters of historical sociology and the sociology of knowledge—such as Toennies, Weber, and Mannheim—in trying to find relations between ideas and certain types of social relations or social structures, which is clearly not the same thing as deriving ideas from modes of production.

I wonder what has made Treadgold so intolerant towards Marxist terminology? He should have become accustomed to it, for it is well-known that there are many scholars in the West who, unlike myself, openly declare themselves to be Marxists, sometimes combining this with ultra-leftist political allegiance and with alarming political naiveté; nevertheless, serious critics evaluate their works on their scholarly merits, and do not discredit them in advance because of their terminological preferences. It is difficult to understand why a slight Marxist tinge in the work of a Polish scholar should be treated in such a hostile and suspicious way.

This anti-Marxist obsession is the only explanation for a very strange logic in some of my critic's judgments. Take, for instance, his comment on what I "implied" by calling Vladimir Soloviev "the most outstanding and colorful personality" among Russian metaphysical idealists, instead of calling him the greatest Russian philosopher: "Walicki is clearly not about to accept Soloviev as the 'greatest' and implies that someone else is instead, and perhaps that is—Lenin? At least, if he thinks so, he is wise enough not to court the amusement such an assertion would bring in the West."

I cannot imagine what logic justifies such insinuations. I can only confess that one of the main reasons for ending my book in 1900 rather than 1917 was my extremely poor

opinion of Lenin's main philosophical work, *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, and a desire to avoid provoking unnecessary trouble. I have always been ready to take risks, but I am rational enough to realize that what I think of Lenin as a philosopher has no chance at all of being published in Poland. Opportunism? Perhaps . . .

Another astonishing comment deals with the late Father Georges Florovsky whom I mention in the preface but whom I do not quote in my *History*. My reviewer remarks that quoting Florovsky "may, it is true, be more than one can reasonably ask of a Warsaw resident." Why? Because Soviet scholars avoid quotations from émigré Russians? In Poland it is not so. In my *Slavophile Controversy*—a book published in Warsaw in 1964 and mentioned in this review³—I quote from Florovsky several times and at length. A Catholic publishing house in Poland even wanted to publish a Polish translation of Florovsky's *Paths in Russian Theology* and this project failed to materialize not for political reasons but simply because it seemed better to wait for the new edition of this work which was being prepared by the author.

It is difficult to resist the impression that my critic was not prepared to modify his one-sided view of intellectual life in Eastern Europe and therefore felt a need to bolster his convictions by finding in my book what he expects to find in all books from behind the Iron Curtain: dogmatic Marxism, ignorance and anti-religious prejudice. He passes over in silence the fact that no comparable book has appeared in Soviet Russia, let alone the other "real socialist" countries; instead of singling out ideas that are new and my own, he concentrates on looking for single phrases which seem to corroborate his preconceived image. The results of this search are not impressive. Let us consider briefly just two examples. (1) I wrote that S. Desnitsky, unlike most of his contemporaries in Russia, viewed "Britain rather than France as the home of philosophy"; according to Treadgold I "imply" thereby that this opinion was an odd one and thus expose my ignorance of the history of philosophy. But why this is "implied" remains a mystery; the context gives no support to such allegation. (2) I

describe another Russian philosopher as one who embraced a deist position but made no attempt to construct a system of natural theology. My critic comments triumphantly that deism is natural theology; this remark, however, misses the point since it does not follow that every deist must be deeply interested in theological matters or embark on construction of a theological system. The same kind of logic is applied in other critical remarks, with the difference that the emphasis is not on what I have said but rather on what, according to the reviewer, I ought to have said and did not.

There are, however, even more striking comments. While trying to explain the populist "distrust of parliamentary institutions and ostentatious indifference to 'political forms'" I quoted Mikhailovsky's words on political freedom as an instrument for the exploitation of the people. Treadgold concludes from this that I share Mikhailovsky's view, that I am clearly not prepared to distance myself "from the Marxist charge that freedom is a weapon of bourgeois domination." This is truly outrageous. In my book on Russian populism—a book known to Treadgold who has previously quoted from it and called it "brilliant" and "authoritative"⁴—I devote several pages to the populist and anarchist prejudice against political freedom making it absolutely clear that such views are wrong *even* from a Marxist point of view.

In the next paragraph the situation changes: I am criticized not for what I have allegedly implied but for what I have allegedly failed to imply. To quote: "As Walicki presents Lenin, he seems to have been the *culmination and fulfillment* of 'populism,' and yet Walicki does not say or hint so, and of course no present-day Marxist-Leninist could." In actual fact, however, it was my deliberate aim so to present Lenin's position, and I feel that my statement that it was Lenin who, in later years, "realized the Populist dream of a direct transition from the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy to the building of socialism" would be clear to any critic but Treadgold.

At the beginning of his review Treadgold says: "Evaluation of Andrzej Walicki's book

requires rather more attention to the author's personal circumstances than would ordinarily be the case." If so, it is proper to give here some information about myself. I cannot be regarded as a product of Communist education. My first teacher was the Russian exile Sergius Hessen—an eminent philosopher,⁵ one of the best of Heinrich Rickert's disciples and politically a left-wing liberal. He was never a Marxist or an atheist, but on the contrary was greatly influenced by the religious philosophy of Dostoevsky and Soloviev; nevertheless he recognized many important truths in Marxism and taught me to distinguish between the genuine thought of Marx and official Communist doctrine. I have never concealed my intellectual debt to him; indeed after his death I published in Poland a selection of his works to which I added a warm personal preface.⁶ Unfortunately I could not study philosophy because in 1949 the Stalinization of Polish intellectual life caused it to be temporarily banished from Polish universities. In spite of this I managed to study philosophy privately, as it were, with the help of W. Tatarkiewicz, an outstanding historian of philosophy prematurely forced to retire because of his "bourgeois" views.

The years of my university studies in Warsaw, 1949–53, coincided with the period of rapid and brutal—although less brutal than elsewhere—Stalinization of Polish culture. As a student of Russian language and literature I was exposed to double ideological pressure: that of Polish official Marxism and that of the Zhdanovist standards of Soviet scholarship. I was not able to conform; I ridiculed the Zhdanovist "struggle against cosmopolitanism" and made fun of official philosophy, especially of its cult-worship of Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*. Moreover, my social background was wrong and my father, a university professor, was imprisoned for his wartime activity in the underground Home Army, loyal to the Polish government in exile. Because of this a campaign was organized against me by the Communist youth organization. I was publicly criticized as an "ideological enemy," threatened, repeatedly condemned for my "antisocial individualism," and so forth. As a

result I suffered a nervous breakdown and had to be treated in a sanatorium. The ideological pressures which I had to resist were so strong that they became partially interiorized: I began to feel that Stalinism represented a cruel historical necessity, one which crushed individuals but was sanctioned by the Hegelian *Weltgeist*. I was deeply moved when I found the same problems in Belinsky's "reconciliation with reality."

The "thaw" of 1954–1956 opened a new and infinitely better period of my life. In rejecting the temptations of Hegelian historicism I found support in the works of Belinsky and Herzen who set against the Hegelian *Weltgeist* the idea of the free, autonomous personality; I was equally impressed by Dostoevsky's criticism of secularized millenarianism. All these problems are to be found in my first book entitled *Personality and History* (1959).

Soon after publishing this book I received a Ford stipend and made my first trip to the West. I was warmly recommended to the Ford Foundation by Stanislaw Ossowski, a non-Marxist Polish sociologist who later became quite well known and much respected in the West. (That his collected works have appeared in Poland shows once more the one-sidedness of Treadgold's view of Polish realities.) I took with me the typescript of my unpublished work entitled "From Populism to Marxism,"—an attempt to derive Leninism from distinctively Russian populist tradition, to show the Russian roots of Soviet totalitarianism—which was read and highly commended by R. Pipes. In spite of this I decided to abandon this approach to Russian intellectual history, vividly remembering my debt of gratitude to many Russian thinkers and feeling that it would be unjust to see totalitarianism as a natural outcome of the Russian intellectual tradition. I preferred to present Russian thought in such a way as to make it an intellectually enriching and liberating force. I did not want to replace one kind of dogma with another; I carefully avoided classifying ideas in terms of "what is, and what is not correct" ("*pravilno-nepравilno*," in Russian), trying instead to achieve a sympathetic

understanding of many different viewpoints. I was sensitive to value-relevance but reluctant to express value-judgments. I thought that such a presentation of Russian intellectual history might be useful both for the Poles, who needed help in overcoming anti-Russian stereotypes, and for the Russians whom the long period of compulsory indoctrination had cut off, as it were, from their own cultural roots. At least two persons in the West fully understood and morally supported this attitude of mine: one was Sir Isaiah Berlin, the other the great Polish poet and essayist, Czeslaw Milosz.

In Poland I found moral support and intellectual stimulation in a group of young revisionist Marxists who included L. Kolakowski, mentioned by Treadgold, B. Baczko, J. Szacki, and others. My background was different from theirs since I had never been a party member or a convinced Marxist. In spite of this we became known in the 1960s as the "Warsaw school in the history of ideas." The term "school" perhaps suggests too much, but it is undeniable that a certain similarity of interests and of methodological approach was discoverable in this informal group of scholars. Our works, very different from the standards of official Marxism, were, as a rule, highly appreciated by other Polish scholars; some were later translated into foreign languages and gained international recognition for their authors.⁷ In other words, this milieu of which I was a part was not composed of dogmatic Leninists and ignoramuses.

After the infamous year of 1968, some members of this group were forced to emigrate. I belonged to those who remained and continued their work in Poland. I believed in stubborn, non-spectacular, purposeful work, in liberalizing intellectual life in Poland through positive achievements rather than by engaging in debate and thus exposing one's position. Each good, thought-provoking book was in my eyes a battle won in a long-term struggle. I deliberately avoided provoking and antagonizing the political authorities because I thought it useful to let them believe that a fair amount of intellectual freedom could be tolerated. I did not follow those of my friends and colleagues who became

involved in open political struggle against the system. I feared that such an open challenge could only lead to disaster.

I do not claim that I was right. Perhaps I was wrong. I realize that I exaggerated the importance of purely intellectual activity. It does not mean, however, that I wanted to conform to the official standards. I did everything I could to change those standards, to broaden the scope of intellectual freedom, at least. I am confident that everyone who knows me and my works, including the most active political dissidents, will agree with this.

The present situation in Poland is for me a national and personal catastrophe. I deeply appreciate that, for a time at least, I can live and work in Australia, and I have decided that in the book which I am writing here, I will make my position and my values more explicit.

—ANDRZEJ WALICKI

¹See D. W. Treadgold, "Understanding Russian Culture," *Modern Age*, Vol. 26 (Winter 1982). The full title of my book is *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Stanford, Calif., 1979). ²On the other hand I have been highly gratified by some privately expressed opinions, either orally or in letters, from Russian scholars who have become acquainted with my works (mainly in Polish, since the circulation in Russia of my English work is more strictly controlled). ³A. Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 600 pp. ⁴Cf. D. W. Treadgold, *The West in Russia and in China* (Cambridge, 1973), Vol. 1, 187, 218, and 294 (note 25). The title of my book is *The Controversy Over Capitalism: Studies in the Social Philosophy of the Russian Populists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 196 pp. ⁵See V. V. Zenkovsky, *A History of Russian Philosophy*, trans. by G. L. Kline (London, 1953), Vol. 2, 697-702. ⁶See S. Hessen, *Studia z filozofii Kultury [Studies in the Philosophy of Culture]* (Warsaw, 1968). ⁷Baczko is the author of an excellent book on Rousseau, published in Polish in 1965, and later in French [*Rousseau, solitude et com-*

munauté (Paris: Mouton, 1974)]; he published in French also an equally excellent book on utopias. J. Szacki recently published a comprehensive *History of Sociological Thought* (London, 1979) [in Poland this book appeared in 1981].

MR. WALICKI'S ANSWER devotes a good deal of space to cogent and moving discussion of recent and changing circumstances in Poland affecting intellectual life. The subject of my review was, of course, not Poland but Mr. Walicki's book on Russia. He is right that I implied that compulsion, deriving from the

pressures of Polish intellectual life at the time the book was written, and accounting for some of its shortcomings, was greater than it actually was at the time; I leaned too far over backward in my effort to exculpate the author from what I regard as a lack of feel for much of his subject. I also read what he reports of his own experiences with interest and sympathy. I hope the length of his answer will not lead the reader to overlook the many strongly positive things I said about the book in my review.

—DONALD W. TREADGOLD