

In Memorium

Morris Watnick

Those of us who were privileged to have been his close friends note with special sorrow the death of Morris Watnick, a member of the political science department of the State University of New York at Binghamton on April 1, 1974. He was sixty years of age and had been on the SUNY faculty since 1966, having previously taught at the University of Washington (1960) and at Brandeis University (1961-65).

Born and raised in New York City, Morris Watnick held the B.S.S. degree from the City College of New York (1936) and the M.S.S. from the New School for Social Research (1942). For many years he served with the U.S. Government, first as intelligence research analyst with the Department of State and then as publications editor with the U.S. Information Agency. He held research fellowships at the Russian Research Center, Harvard University (1957-60) and at Ohio State University (1960-61); he was a Fulbright fellow in 1964-65).

His teaching interests centered on Marxist theory and international communist movements, leading him to offer courses not only on China and the Soviet Union but also on the history of political thought, economic planning, imperialism, and the politics of developing areas. Broader still was the range of his scholarship. Those of us who came to him with our manuscripts—for he was a superb editor—were repeatedly startled by the reaches of his learning. He gave unstintingly of himself, enriching our arguments with factual information and theoretical insights. In the circle of his friends he was a brilliant conversationalist, disturbing us with searching questions and rollicking us with pointed anecdotes.

Of his own work he was unduly modest. For two years he was editor of and almost sole contributor to a little-known but remarkable journal, *Under Scrutiny*, published for the U.S. Information Agency. There he wrote quickly and voluminously, in contrast to his later scholarly work where he was more sparing (in part because of recurring illnesses). Yet it was here that he made his mark.

Of his extraordinary essay "The Appeal of Communism to the Underdeveloped Areas" (1952), George Lichtheim (then writing as G. L. Arnold) said: "Mr. Watnick probably has done more than any other recent writer in this field to illuminate the deeper causes of colonial 'unrest' and the link between agrarian disintegration and revolutionary intelligentsia politics." His several essays on the Hungarian Marxist aesthetician and philosopher Georg Lukács, published in *Soviet Survey* (1958-59), earned him international recognition as one of the few people who both knew and understood Lukács' work. With the forthcoming publication of his translation and introductory essay to Rudolf Hilferding's *Finance Capital*, and some of his materials on Georg Lukács and the

theory of class consciousness, Morris Watnick's contribution will be the greater still.

Two of his colleagues at Binghamton, Professors James P. Young and Arthur K. Smith, rendered him fitting tribute when they wrote: "The list of students and faculty colleagues who knew Professor Watnick and learned from him is long, going far beyond those who were fortunate enough to be his students in the formal sense of the word. His friends will remember him with special regard, as a kind and gentle man whose only enemies were sham, hypocrisy, and intellectual dishonesty. At a time when entrepreneurial vigor is all too often confused with dedicated scholarship, Morris Watnick truly knew what it meant to pursue the life of the mind. We are all diminished by his loss, but in a deeper sense we, his colleagues and his students, are enlarged by his example."

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George Lichtheim

George Lichtheim was born in 1912 in Berlin, and spent a few years as a child in Constantinople, where his father, Richard Lichtheim, was at that time representing the Zionist Organization in the capital of the declining Ottoman Empire. Like many of his colleagues in the early Zionist movement, Richard Lichtheim came from a highly assimilated Jewish-German family, and his conversion to Zionism was rooted in the universalist ethos of 19th century Central European liberalism. These seemingly conflicting convictions of his father—a universalism embedded in an historical awareness of the meaning of particularism—were central to the ideas that were to emerge in George's own writings.

It was this richness of the Central European intellectual Jewish tradition that formed the spiritual background of George Lichtheim's early years. Despite the Zionist background at home, George came in his student days in the 1920/30's under the influence of the dissident Marxist ideas of the German *Sozialistische Arbeiter-Partei*: his favorable political authors were Karl Korsch and Franz Borkenau. After the Nazis came to power he spent a brief period in London and then, between 1934 and 1945, he lived in Jerusalem, where he worked for the *Palestine Post*. When the war was over, he was sent to cover the Nuremberg Trials for the *Post*, travelled widely in Europe and subsequently settled in London.

His Jerusalem years were far from easy: though they were intellectually perhaps the most stimulating years of his life, he felt basically out of place. The company he kept in Jerusalem was as exciting as it was unique: he was involved in a literary-cultural circle that included, among others, the historian of Jewish mysticism and messianism Gershom Scholem, the historian of science Shmuel Sambursky, the Egyptologist H. J. Polotsky and many other Jerusalem luminaries. It was the cream of the German-Jewish intellectual elite that found its way in those years to Jerusalem and they adopted George