

economy. And if they are, the price would certainly not be too high to pay for the East European peoples.

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DIVORCE IN POLAND: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIOLOGY OF LAW. By *Jan Górecki*. *Studies in the Social Sciences*, 5. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970. 156 pp. Paper.

This is an empirical study of the divorce law in Poland, which bases the determination of reasons for divorce upon the formula received from Soviet law. Between the wars Polish jurists included a new family law—dealing with both marriage and divorce—in their program of legislative reform. The draft was prepared, but for a number of reasons (rooted primarily in local traditions) enactment was delayed. It was adopted in 1945 after the liberation of Poland. The 1945 law was replaced in 1950 by the law modeled after the 1944 Soviet Family, which featured a simple formula permitting either spouse to sue for divorce in case of a “complete and lasting disintegration of marital relations.” The 1950 law was eventually replaced by newer codes, but the divorce formula remained unchanged, and the present divorce practice of Polish courts represents twenty years of continued tradition.

The main purpose of the inquiry was to establish the actual meaning of the key words that determine the reason for divorce—through questionnaires, direct observation of divorce proceedings in court, and interviews with lawyers, judges, and litigants. The data gathered by this method were supplemented by more traditional sources, such as the statistics printed by the Ministry of Justice, data available in other studies, and so forth.

Although the empirical part of the book is largely based on a somewhat limited number of answers to questionnaires, the conclusions arrived at are interesting, and it deserves the attention of jurists and sociologists.

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INFORMATION AND REFLECTION: ON SOME PROBLEMS OF CYBERNETICS AND HOW CONTEMPORARY DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM COPES WITH THEM. By *Peter Paul Kirschenmann*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel. New York: Humanities Press, 1970. xv, 225 pp. \$14.00.

Peter Kirschenmann's book focuses on some of the philosophical problems that have arisen in the Soviet Union as Marxist-Leninist philosophers have tried to adapt cybernetics to dialectical materialism. Kirschenmann deals especially with attempts to show that despite its very general methods, which give it the appearance of a philosophy, cybernetics is merely a science that deals with a number of systems and processes, but within a limited framework which does not place it in competition with dialectical materialism. The author's particular concern is a subdivision of cybernetics—information theory—which he defines as dealing with “signal processes and their relations in communications devices.” This choice of topic is especially relevant because of the close connection between information theory and the basic Marxist-Leninist philosophical assumption regarding the material nature of ultimate reality. The book serves as a case study of the limitations

placed on Marxist-Leninist philosophers because they start from the assumption that information exists objectively and therefore information processes occur independently of consciousness.

According to the author, the task of Marxist-Leninist philosophers in adapting information theory is to develop definitions of information and interpretations of the propositions and concepts of cybernetics which conform to the relatively rigid (although insufficiently clarified) ideological framework of dialectical materialism. This is achieved by interpreting information as a structural property of material things and processes and by interpreting it in terms of the Leninist doctrine of reflection, which attempts to explain knowledge as an image of material reality. Kirschenmann argues that this approach leads them merely to repeat cybernetics propositions in the inexact terms of the doctrine of reflection.

Kirschenmann explicitly indicates that his principal interest in current Soviet interpretations of reflection theory lies in the philosophical aspects of the adaptation of information theory rather than the sociological aspects of the subject and with the conceptual framework Marxist-Leninist philosophers share rather than the differences among them. He might alternatively have adopted a model which stressed the relationship between cybernetics and historical materialism (i.e., the sociological aspects of the problem) as well as differences in approach and interpretation by Marxist-Leninist philosophers. This would have led him to ask different questions and incorporate into his study information relating to the potential transforming or erosive effects that the adaptation of information theory might have on Marxist-Leninist thought. Instead, starting from his exclusive concern with philosophical questions and his monistic model, he concludes that "the Marxist-Leninist discussion of 'information' has tackled little that is new in the line of fundamental philosophical problems. It has rather led back to the traditional difficulties of Marxist-Leninist philosophy."

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RUSSIA: AN ARCHITECTURE FOR WORLD REVOLUTION. By *El Lissitzky*. Translated by *Eric Dluhosch*. Original title (Vienna, 1930): *Russland, Die Rekonstruktion der Architektur in der Sowjetunion*. 2nd ed. (1965): *Russland: Architektur für eine Weltrevolution*. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1970. 239 pp. \$10.00.

THE IDEAL COMMUNIST CITY. By *Alexei Gutnov, A. Baburov, G. Djumenton, S. Kharitonova, I. Lezava, and S. Sadovskij*. Translated from the Italian by *Renee Neu Watkins*. New York: George Braziller, 1970. 166 pp. \$6.95, cloth. \$2.95, paper.

That these two works should appear for review together seems most appropriate. Despite the nearly three decades that separated their writing, they possess a continuity of ideas. El Lissitzky, with Tatlin, Malevich, Melnikov, the brothers Vesnin, and others, charted during the 1920s a revolutionary architecture for the new Soviet Russia. Their experimentation—which placed them in the European context with the Bauhaus in Germany, the de Stijl coterie in the Netherlands, and the Esprit Nouveau in France and earned for them the label "Constructivists"—ceased in April 1932, when socialist realism prevailed. As for Lissitzky, though he was wonderfully cosmopolitan, he was Russian above all. This volume displays his