Review of "Marxism, Fascism, Cold War" by Ernst Nolte; Lawrence Krader

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Published by: American Sociological Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2069117
Accessed: 06/05/2013 19:30

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proposals peripheral to the real problems—not only problems of equality and justice, but also problems of inflation, unemployment, and foreign policy.

Michel Crozier does not present remedies for problems of inflation, unemployment, or foreign policy. As skilled translator William Beer notes in his helpful postscript, Crozier urges a sort of guerrilla warfare, searching out weak points in the system and attacking them first. What weak points? Provincial and local government, great professional schools, support for scientific research. What to do at these weak points? More than anything else, open up competition: elect a provincial assembly; despecialize the professional schools so they vie with one another; broaden admissions; install a competitive process in the allocation of research funds, appointments, and facilities.

When it comes to strong points of the French system, Crozier’s arguments take on a more negative air. He makes his case against the nationalization of industry, against the provision of new services by government, against the continued power of bureaucracies, against direct efforts to promote equality and democracy. “Equality and democracy cannot be obtained by decree,” he declares, “any more than virtue can. They are won, earned, or gradually built, to use other metaphors” (149).

In these instances, what is Crozier for? He favors opening the way to “entrepreneurs” rather than “rentiers.” France’s real problems, Crozier tells his readers, do not result mainly from the distribution of power among social classes, or the ties between social classes and the state, or the nation’s place in the world structure of power. They result from the fettering of the nation’s creative capacities by bulky, outmoded organizations. Fix those organizations, and you will fix France.

The demonstration proceeds by example and by general reasoning. No sustained descriptions and no systematic evidence appear along the way. A reader who does not already know a great deal about French industry, local government, professional schools, and research will have trouble evaluating Crozier’s analyses. A reader who doubts that free markets promote equality and efficiency will not accept his prescriptions easily. A reader who does not understand that prominent French academics can find an audience for thinly documented political essays will wonder why the book was published at all. Even a reader who knows the French scene will be hard pressed to explain why such a book merited translation.

Marxism, Fascism, Cold War, by Ernst Nolte. Translated by Lawrence Krader. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1982. 348 pp. $25.00 cloth.

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Ernst Nolte, currently at the University of Berlin, is best known for his comparative study of French, Italian, and German fascism, Faschismus in seiner Epoche, published in 1963 (Three Faces of Fascism is the English title). Marxism, Fascism, Cold War is a collection of essays and talks. Nolte’s interests include marxist theory, present-day political life in Germany, and the intellectual understanding of and debate on issues of West German society, as well as the “Eastern” policy of West Germany.

In the first part, Marxism, Nolte begins with an essay on the debate over the “pauperization theory” in the England of the Industrial Revolution. He turns to more controversial material in his discussions of the conservative elements within marxism and the “ideal” sociology in the works of Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto and Capital, which he contrasts to their “real” sociology as developed in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, with its extensive analysis of classes, groupings, and parties of French society. An interesting essay focuses on the relation of “bourgeois” and “Marxist” versions of history. He notes that East German historians pay much more attention to the historical work done in West Germany—negatively critical as much of this attention is—than their West German colleagues do to theirs in return. Another essay in this section, “The Marx Criticism by the New Left” discusses as heterogeneous a set of writers as André Gorz, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Frantz Fanon, Stanislav Ossowski, Barrington Moore, Baran and Sweezy, and Herbert Marcuse. Nolte concludes rather globally that what he calls the New Left “repeats the fate of Marxism, the self-chosen fate of insufficient reflection” (75).
In part 2, Fascism, there is an essay on the behavior of university professors in the Third Reich that delves into the variety of reactions to the Nazi regime, ranging from complete identification with the regime to courageous acts of resistance against it. Noting that most of the tenured university professors in Germany continued their work during this period as if nothing much had happened, he observes that the Fascist “revolution” had a particular ability to disarm potential opponents “by seeming to espouse their affair or at least by seeming not to attack it” (115).

In the third section, Cold War, “University Politics as State Politics” focuses on the contemporary intellectual opposition in Germany. Nolte believes that the present (1970s) chaotic state of the German university is due neither to the frustration of students nor to the anger of underpaid and underrespected middle-level instructors but rather to their broader critique of West German society. Some of their reactions revolve around

the fear that from rearmament an offensive war against the East European states would result some day, as a consequence of the power of surviving military traditions; the supposition that the division of the German national state was to be traced not to overwhelming historical necessities, but to particular interests of the “Rhenish Confederate” Chancellor in Bonn; and the hypothesis that the “restoration of the old social leadership strata” would bring Germany again on the road to an authoritarian or even fascist dictatorship [185].

A provocative essay in this section concerns trends within the West German student movement and the relation of the student movement to what Nolte calls “leftist fascism.” The section concludes with an extensive review of the literature on the Cold War and West Germany’s Eastern policy. Nolte includes in this discussion general analyses, monographs, memoirs, “polemical” disputes, and American and European collections of source material and documents. This section will be helpful to scholars interested in pursuing further research on these questions.

Nolte’s orientation is philosophical and historical in character rather than systematically empirical and theoretical. He reflects on a variety of important issues and brings to the intellectual debate perspectives and understandings that are sometimes neglected. These perspectives will be most useful to scholars and politicians already familiar with the broader background of the works and events to which he refers.

Race and Ethnic Groups


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Two admirable goals guide this comparative book: 1) to explore the relationship of power and resources to ethnicity and ethnic conflict, and 2) to further the insight and methodological gains attached to comparative historical analysis. Unfortunately, the theory of “cultures under seige” supported by six case studies falls short of these goals. In what is essentially a rehash of structural strain theory, Baker provides rich and often insightful historical accounts in support of his major hypotheses, which are neither new nor convincing.

Although he initially professes to be concerned with the role of power and resource inequalities in determining the awareness and consequences of ethnic group interaction, the specification of these inequalities disappear when the details of the white government’s control in South Africa or Rhodesia, or the history of the Quebecois, is presented. Part of the problem is that the dependent variable appears to shift from an explanation of cultural ethnic identity or consciousness to an explanation of why ethnic violence or political mobilization occurred when it did in six Anglo countries. Baker’s answers to both questions rest upon perceptions of similarity and dissimilarity of cultures, somatic characteristics, and threats as perceived by the dominant culture when it is “under seige.”

Baker, primarily a political scientist, seeks to “hold the dominant cultural component constant” (1) by choosing to compare six countries—the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia. The dominant white, Anglo “culture” is assumed to be held constant, which is not only methodologically problematic when historical analysis is being proposed, but contradicted by his own data. For example, Baker discusses how when Africans in...