

The double defeat of fascism and old colonialism had indeed created a conjuncture that allowed the popular classes, victims of capitalist accumulation, to impose variously limited or contested but stable forms of capital regulation and formation, to which capital itself was forced to adjust, and which were at the roots of this period of high growth and accelerated accumulation. (39.)

In line with the best of the Marxian tradition, he sees resistance from below not as *potentially* shaping the global political economy at some future point, but as a force that shapes the structures of daily life *historically*. The volume also reveals a mind that reads the world dialectically, as always presenting opportunities due to its own internal contradictions. Yet Amin's dialectic is without teleological guarantees of an immanent socialist horizon: the future could bring socialism or barbarism, stagnation or revolution. Only people make their own history, after all, and Amin certainly lived this maxim.

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Intelligent Materialism: Essays on Hegel and Dialectics, by Evald Ilyenkov. Edited and translated by Evgeni V. Pavlov. Historical Materialism Book Series, Volume 181. Leiden, The Netherlands/Boston, Massachusetts: Brill, 2018. \$138.59. Pp. 253.

Ilyenkov is undoubtedly one of the most original and important Soviet Marxist philosophers of the post-Stalin period, yet knowledge of his work is only slowly filtering through to the West. He was born in 1924 and became a student of philosophy at Moscow University at the end of World War II, when philosophy in the USSR was most restricted. There was a short-lived thaw under Khrushchev after the death of Stalin in 1953, during which Ilyenkov emerged at the center of a small band of "creative Marxists." But orthodoxy was reimposed under Brezhnev, and Ilyenkov clashed with the authorities because of his philosophical ideas. He worked under increasingly restrictive conditions until he took his own life in 1979.

A number of Ilyenkov's most important works covering some of the main themes of his work were translated into English and published by the Soviets, although sometimes in abridged editions and poor translations. (A

bibliography of his works that have been translated into English is at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evald_Ilyenkov.) In recent years, however, there has been a growing awareness that Soviet philosophy was not all state-imposed dogma and that Ilyenkov's ideas played a central role in keeping the flame of independent Marxist thought alive in Russia after the death of Stalin.

The present work is a collection of 10 of Ilyenkov's papers. Two of these are popular and polemical pieces of little philosophical interest, and they could well have been omitted. The remainder are substantial and important articles covering some of the main themes of Ilyenkov's thought.

A Hegelian Marxist, Ilyenkov's work emphasizes the fundamental importance of Hegel's philosophy as the foundation for Marxism, even though he insists that Marx — both early and late — is a materialist who repudiates Hegel's idealism. Ilyenkov was highly critical of the orthodox Soviet philosophy of his day, which he regarded as a mechanistic and reductive distortion of Marx's thought. His interpretation of Marxism is unique and original, but it also continues themes that are present in the thinking of some of his predecessors, including Lukács, Deborin and, particularly, Vygotsky's "activity approach."

The most original and far-reaching aspects of his philosophy are best seen in his account of "the ideal," by which he means the realm of ideas and thought in its fullest extent. The nature of the ideal has been a problem for much modern philosophy and for materialism and Marxism in particular. On the one hand, orthodox dialectical materialism has often regarded the ideal as made up of subjective ideas and thoughts that are conceived based on the material processes of the brain and nervous system. On the other hand, much contemporary non-Marxist philosophy treats thought as a purely social phenomenon embodied in language.

Ilyenkov is critical of both of these approaches. He rejects the view that the ideal is confined to the mental and subjective realms. Drawing on his reading of Hegel, he argues that the ideal is evident throughout the entire range of human activity. The ideal, he argues, is objective and embodied in the world around us.

Thinking manifests itself, its power, its active energy, not only in speaking, but in the entire grandiose process of the creation of culture, the entire body of the human civilization, the entire "non-organic human body," including tools and statues, workshops and temples, factories and chancelleries, political organizations and systems of laws — everything (68).

Hegel, however, is unable to explain the origin of thinking, whereas Marxism sees it as growing out of the development of nature and social life.

These themes are developed and explored at length in this collection in a two-part article on "The Problem of the Ideal in Philosophy," and in a number of highly original and thought-provoking scholarly essays on Hegel's philosophy.

Another main focus of Ilyenkov's work is on Marx's method and the concepts of abstract and concrete. Again, he draws on Hegel to understand Marx's ideas. For Hegel, concrete and real things are always in a process of change and exist in relation to other things; but things as they are immediately given to us are abstract in that they are taken on their own removed from their context and from their history. Marx's dialectical method, Ilyenkov argues, involves starting from what is immediately given and abstract. By taking in the history and relations of the object, it then "rises" to a grasp of its concrete nature. Ilyenkov explains this process through a detailed analysis of Marx's treatment of value in *Capital*.

Other articles in this collection develop an account of Marx's philosophical materialism that draws on Spinoza, and a vigorous and striking defense of Lenin's theory of knowledge in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

In sum, this is an important collection which makes a major addition to Marxist philosophy. The main articles in it are substantial scholarly pieces that make original and thought-provoking contributions to Marxist philosophy and to the Marxist interpretation of Hegel's thought. They provide an excellent overview of some of the main themes of Ilyenkov's work and enable one to appreciate its importance in a number of areas.

The translations are adequate. They contain infelicities and I suspect were not made by a native speaker of English, but they give a good sense of the force and passion of Ilyenkov's writing. Unfortunately, the editor has provided nothing beyond a bare list of original Russian sources. The book would have been greatly enhanced by a proper introduction setting these essays in context and giving an overall account of Ilyenkov's work. But there is enough here to give a good sense of the originality and importance of Ilyenkov's thought, and it is to be hoped that new translations of more of his work will follow.

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