

*Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Marxschen 'Kapital'*, by Roman Rosdolsky. Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1968. 2 Volumes. (No price given.) Pp. 680.

Thirteen years after its completion, and only after the author's death, did this work find a German publisher. In 1948 Rosdolsky came across one of the rare copies of the 1939 edition of Marx's *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie, Rohentwurf, 1857-1858*, and began the work here reviewed. Although reissued in Berlin in 1953, the *Grundrisse* has not as yet found the attention it deserves. Apart from the publication of some excerpts in the English language, from French and Japanese translations, and a book devoted to it by Kojiro Takagi, Rosdolsky's is the first extensive commentary on the *Grundrisse*, their relationship to *Capital*, and the reasons for, as well as the discussions around, Marx's changing attempts to write *Capital*.

The writings and letters of Marx reveal that there were two different plans underlying the construction of *Capital*. The first dates back to the year 1857; it was replaced by another one in 1866. Originally, Marx contemplated a work of six volumes, each dealing with a separate aspect of capitalist society. This idea was given up in favor of a more abstract method, which yielded the three volumes of *Capital* and the *Theories of Surplus-Value*. The *Grundrisse* represent the first attempt to write *Capital*, but Marx utilized only part of the work in 1859 in his *Critique of Political Economy*, and this part reappears in revised form in the final version of *Capital*.

Since the publication in 1929 of Henryk Grossmann's *Die Änderung des Aufbauplans des Marxschen 'Kapital' und ihre Ursachen*, an animated discussion has attempted to detect the particular reason which induced Marx to change his plans. According to Grossmann, to deal with just one of the debaters, Marx's reason was purely methodological. Whereas in the first plan the six parts of the contemplated work were to be dealt with from the point of view of their specific subject matter, the second plan was determined by the epistemological requirement to disregard the immediately-given world of appearance in order to lay bare the essential and basic relations of the capitalist production and circulation process. Only after exposure of the general relations of capital production, and by way of a method of approximations, would it have been possible to understand the externalities of the market economy such as profit, rent, wages, competition, credit, foreign trade, and so forth.

Rosdolsky rejects this and other explanations as either wrong or superficial. Grossmann, of course, wrote prior to the publication of *Grundrisse* and could not be aware, as Rosdolsky was after its publication, that what

Marx actually wrote in 1857-1858 does not really differ from the final version of *Capital*. Like the first two volumes of the latter, *Grundrisse* too, offers an abstract analysis of the capitalist production and circulation process. It is only in the third volume of *Capital* that the abstract analysis finds its full meaning in the elucidation of the concrete capitalist world. According to Rosdolsky, Marx did not change his original plan for methodological reasons, for the unvarying method used in all his writings is the dialectical method derived from Hegelian philosophy. He merely arranged his final version differently from that projected in the first plan. This involved some condensation, which extended the first book, out of the contemplated six, into the three volumes of *Capital* through its incorporation of material which, at first, had been reserved for separate treatment. What could not be incorporated in the final version of *Capital*, Rosdolsky suggests, Marx—had he found the time to do so—would most likely have dealt with as a continuation of *Capital*.

*Grundrisse* has a special importance for Rosdolsky because it reveals, more clearly than *Capital*, Marx's use of the dialectical method. Of course, Marx himself pointed out that he approached capitalism from a dialectical point of view. But this was largely ignored in the increasingly economics-oriented interpretations of Marx's theories. With Lenin and Lukacs, Rosdolsky shares the opinion that the dialectic cannot be regarded as a mere stylistic embroidery of *Capital*, for a whole series of decisive categories used by Marx stem directly from Hegel's *Logic*. Rosdolsky substantiates this position by tracing the Hegelian elements in their materialistic transformations in both *Grundrisse* and *Capital*.

The special stress laid upon the Hegelian categories does not, however, yield results decisively different from those won by their relative neglect, as, for instance, in Grossmann's interpretation of *Capital*. In either case, the analysis goes from the abstract to the concrete, considers the domination of the whole over its parts, and differentiates between appearance and reality. In Rosdolsky's version, Marx's abstract model of capital production is not only a presupposition for the right comprehension of the phenomenal world, but, in germinal form, already contains in itself the full concrete reality of the capitalist system in its rise, development, and decay. This is demonstrated by a confrontation of *Capital* with *Grundrisse* in such a way that knowledge of the latter turns into an aid not only for a better understanding of *Capital* but also of the process which led up to it.

The greater part of the book is made up of extensive passages from the works of Marx and Engels which support as much Rosdolsky's commentary on them as the latter elucidate the quoted text. To consider

this part of the work would be equivalent to reviewing both *Capital* and *Grundrisse*. It is, then, rather with Rosdolsky's criticisms of other Marx interpreters that we must concern ourselves: criticisms which are offered at relevant places within the general text and in a number of appendices, some of which are of more recent origin. Among those criticized, either with regard to Marx's methodology, the theory of value, the accumulation process, the problem of realization of surplus value, and the meaning and implications of Marx's reproduction schemes are Lenin, Hilferding, Kautsky, Bauer, Luxemburg, Robinson, and Lange.

For example: According to Rosdolsky, Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of Marx rests on a methodological error, *i.e.*, on her inability to distinguish clearly between the abstract nature of Marx's analysis of the capitalist production and reproduction process—of capital in general—and the actual world of competition of individual capitals. As against Hilferding, Rosdolsky stresses the great importance of the use-value concept in Marx's system, which Hilferding, together with other Marxists, chose to ignore. Against Lenin, Kautsky, and Bauer, Rosdolsky maintains that for Marx capitalism had objective limits, and that his theory of accumulation was also a theory of collapse. He demonstrates convincingly that Joan Robinson's Marx critique merely shows her own lack of understanding as well as her bourgeois bias. Finally, Rosdolsky rejects Oscar Lange's universalization of economic concepts, which, in Rosdolsky's view, is due to Lange's disregard of Marxian dialectics.

Rosdolsky's own interpretation of *Capital*, corroborated by his reading of *Grundrisse*, is not always as clear as are his criticisms of other expositions. Although he insists upon the validity of Marx's theory of the falling rate of profit, he sees the basic contradiction of the capitalist system in its limited consuming power relative to the expanding process of production. In his view, it is this contradiction, which, by hindering the realization of surplus value, leads to recurrent and progressively more devastating crises. Rosdolsky denies, nonetheless, that Marx adhered to a theory of pauperization that implies declining living standards for the working population. There is merely a widening of the contrast between wages and profits, accompanied by the misery of unemployment and that of the poor in underdeveloped nations.

There is not always a convincing connection between Rosdolsky's interpretation of Marx's crisis theory and the accumulation process and its consequences as presented in *Capital*. Although there are underconsumption, overproduction, and the realization problem, these are only various forms in which the basic contradiction of value-production manifests itself in the market sphere. And even though capitalism does not

exist without the market, it is in the underlying social relations of production that its difficulties must be looked for. Rosdolsky knew this, of course, but he did not always succeed in clearly exposing the real relations which make the world of appearance comprehensible. Whatever the shortcomings of this work may be, they do not diminish the importance of Rosdolsky's interpretation of *Capital* and *Grundrisse*, nor the importance of his over-all view of theoretical Marxism.

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*Latin America: Reform or Revolution?* edited by James Petras and Maurice Zeitlin. New York: Fawcett Publications, 1968. \$.95 (paper-bound). Pp. 511.

With the publication of this book, we finally have a reader on Latin America that begins to "tell it like it is," that asks the important historical and economic questions and sets up relevant models of political control.

Most books written on Latin American politics begin by saying that Latin America is composed of so many diverse nations that it is extremely difficult to make generalizations; then, of course, the authors proceed to make generalizations which have nothing to do with the reality of power and poverty in Latin America, which hardly attempt to look behind the "democratic" paper constitutions, which talk of development in an area in which the poor grow poorer, which speak of the harmony of interests with the United States rather than the depraving effects of United States domination, which speak of stability and order in an area in which the only hope is revolutionary change, which forget that the real violence taking place in Latin America today is in the lives of the poor with their struggle to subsist under intolerable conditions. On the other hand, Petras and Zeitlin have selected essays which get to the crux of what these countries have in common to the valid generalizations—the role of imperialism, the role of the class struggle, the role of revolution—initiating the rewriting of Latin American history in terms of its own experience and in relation to the history of the developed world.

This book makes available to the American public, in a popular edition, important essays by some of the best Latin American social scientists, many hitherto unknown in this country. What distinguishes these scholars from the commonly over-specialized Latin Americanist in the