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## **Vigilantism in International Relations: Kubáľková, Cruickshank and Marxist theory**

FRED HALLIDAY

Over the past few years Vendulka Kubáľková and Albert Cruickshank have produced a substantial and wide-ranging *oeuvre* on the issue of Marxism and international relations. Their first work, *Marxism–Leninism and Theory of International Relations*, published in 1980, stressed the importance of engagement between these two bodies of thought, and this theme is restated in a more composed manner in their later *Marxism and International Relations*.<sup>1</sup> The themes of these books have been reiterated in article form, and most recently in their essay “The ‘New Cold War’ in ‘critical International Relations studies’” (in the July 1986 number of this *Review*). There is much that is disputable in their writing, and their recent essay on the new cold war is no exception: but, before turning to some debatable aspects of their interpretation of the debate on the New Cold War, it may be worth emphasizing the points of more general value in their work.

### **The systematic recognition of Marxist theory**

First, Kubáľková and Cruickshank break with what had hitherto been the predominant mode of treatment of Marxism within International Relations—namely that of dismissal and caricature, often a bland ignoring of its arguments, often too a slipshod simplification.<sup>2</sup> This treatment reflected many factors—a shared, Anglo-American, rejection of Marxism; the cold war climate in which the subject of International Relations developed as an academic discipline after the Second World War; the silences about Marxism of conventional political science and economics upon which much International Relations drew; the institutional pressures of a discipline often concerned with a rather narrowly interpreted set of methodological questions; the delimiting preferences of funders and official sponsors. Whatever the reasons for this treatment, the result was that most textbooks and discussions of International Relations could afford to relegate or suppress Marxism altogether. The recent discussion of dependency theory confined Marxism to a specific, north–south enclave. Kubáľková and Cruickshank break with this tradition, in that they give Marxism systematic recognition.

A second merit of their work is the attention they pay to Soviet writings on international relations. The weaknesses of nearly all Soviet writings on social sciences published in the west are well known: they tend to be dogmatic, wooden, repetitive. This is as true in the field of International Relations as it is in other branches of the social sciences.<sup>3</sup> But such a characterization is, in itself, insufficient. Soviet writings also have strengths that are too easily dismissed: a stress on structural and class factors in international relations and an, at times, welcome scepticism about what happens to be the fashion in western academic circles. Both for its intellectual content and for its persistent, if mediate, relation to Soviet policy, this body of work on inter-

national relations merits the kind of attention given to it by Kubáľková and Cruickshank. In a number of other branches of the social sciences a parallel recent re-assessment of Soviet writings, at once appreciative and critical, can be noted: Rozman's work on Soviet writings about modern China and Gellner's on Soviet anthropology are cases in point.<sup>4</sup>

The third merit of the writing of Kubáľková and Cruickshank is their stress on the mutual weaknesses of conventional International Relations and Marxism: it is not a question of arguing that one 'needs' the other, or that one contains a convincing refutation, or vindication, of the other. Rather, with their overlapping concerns and theoretical objects, Marxism and International Relations have much to learn from each other: with the recognition of their distinctiveness and their respective lacunae, theirs can and should be a fruitful encounter. If Marxism has underestimated the salience of the national state, international relations has been rather too coy about the nature and very name of the international system that has provided its *raison d'être*, namely capitalism. This side of the theoretical endeavour of Kubáľková and Cruickshank is, as far as it goes, to be welcomed.

### Contentious features

Recognition of these strengths need not, however, obscure discussion of other more contentious features of their work, ones that significantly weaken the validity of their writing and the strength of their arguments. There are four major problems with their work. In the first place, while their declared goal is to study the relationship between Marxism and international relations, Kubáľková and Cruickshank appear to allot very little importance to what Marx and Engels actually said that may be relevant to the subject. Their claim in their second work that 'international relations did not particularly interest the founders of Marxism' (p. 27) is one of the most extraordinary that they make. In fact, Marx and Engels had a great deal to say both about the international relations of their time and about a range of general issues central to the discipline (such as war, nationalism, and diplomacy). It is, perhaps, not wholly casual that in none of their writings do Kubáľková and Cruickshank appear to acknowledge the existence of another book on the same topic as theirs, one that does give close attention to what Marx and Engels said and which deploys a rather wider range of textual and historical erudition than they can, as yet, muster.<sup>5</sup>

This constitutive eclipse in their analysis leads on to a second absence in their work, namely discussion of the relevance of *Marxist theory as such* to the discussion of the central concepts of international relations: the state, the economy, and the determinants of international relations. Marx and Engels established a theoretical system, based upon the determination of the socio-economic and the centrality of class conflict, that is of great importance for international relations as a whole. The potential relevance of Marxism, with all its aberrations and silences, lies in this theoretical and methodological scope, rather than in the particular observations about international relations or the vapidities of the dialectic that Kubáľková and Cruickshank have culled from their authors.

The third problem with Kubáľková and Cruickshank concerns their attitude to non-Soviet Marxism. They allow the fact that they extensively discuss Soviet writings on international relations, positive in itself, to obscure independent and anterior traditions of non-Soviet Marxism in central and western Europe. The implication of much of their writing is that Soviet Marxism is the main body of Marxist writing today, and that other brands of Marxism are in some way tributary or dependent upon it. Not only is this both historically and theoretically inaccurate, but it also

serves the purpose of associating non-Soviet Marxists closely with the USSR. And this association is one that is material to the fourth major problem in their writings, namely what can be termed its vigilantist orientation. This includes elisions of argument, dubious imputations of motive, foreshortenings of logic. While Kubáľková and Cruickshank seek to open a debate, they also seem interested in defining the terms of this debate in a manner most suitable to them. They admit Marxism to the debate, but deny much Marxist writing a legitimate place in the overall discussion of International Relations. This failing is noticeable indeed in their recent essay on the 'New Cold War' and is such as to prompt the term 'vigilantism': this denotes the ambivalent character of their work, one of simultaneous recognition and control, a patrolling of the field of International Relations in order to identify and, where necessary, apprehend theorists of whom they disapprove. Kubáľková and Cruickshank can be both dense and meandering; it is not always easy to discern what they mean to say. The central message of their assessment of the 'New Cold War' writings does, however, come through loud and clear: *they do not like them*. With equal justice it can be suggested that they do not understand them either.

The 'revisionists', they at various points say, are 'inexpert', 'disingenuous', 'ethnocentric' and 'theoretically confused'. Four issues, in particular, underlie Kubáľková and Cruickshank's assessment of Marxist and revisionist writings on the New Cold War: (i) the identification of a *distinct* school of writings on International Relations, variously described by them as 'revisionist', 'critical', 'Left'; (ii) the concentration on the issue of 'responsibility' of east and west as central to the discussion; (iii) a presumption of the established primacy of International Relations in regard to discussion of inter-state conflict and the broader pattern of international relations; (iv) a concealed homology of Western Marxist and Soviet writing on the new cold war.

### A 'critical' school?

As already noted, Kubáľková and Cruickshank begin their article by identifying a new body of writing in International Relations, to which they variously apply the terms 'critical', 'revisionist' and 'Left'. This identification they conjoin with random reflections, and disparagements, of the generation of cold war revisionist historians of the 1960s and of earlier schools of Marxism. That there is such a new body of thought on the cold war is certainly true: but the manner in which Kubáľková and Cruickshank define it is misleading, and significantly so, since it confuses the basic arguments underlying the writing of this school.

In the first place, the terms Kubáľková and Cruickshank apply are tendentious. To use the term 'critical' of Marxist writings on the cold war implies an identification with a particular brand of Marxism that appears to bear little relation to the body of work under discussion. Kubáľková and Cruickshank discuss the provenance of the term 'critical' but they make little sense of it. Critical theory, in its precise sense, is the theory of the Frankfurt School—of Adorno, Marcuse, Benjamin, Horkheimer and Habermas. The term 'critical' is a development of the original Hegelian idea of a theoretical engagement with, and transcendence of, an already established set of ideas: it is in its most basic sense designed to contrast this critical body of theory, which denies facticity, i.e. the legitimacy and eternality of the given, with what it sees as the 'positivist' approach of those who accept the world as it is, and accept what *is* as what *should* be.<sup>6</sup> The critical theory of the Frankfurt School has had an influence on some branches of social science—on sociology and philosophy, to name but two. It has had its forays into psychoanalysis and literature. It has had virtually no impact

on International Relations, and the founders of the Frankfurt School have had nothing substantial to say about International Relations. The classical international concerns of Marxism—the internationalization of capital, imperialism, revolution—are alien to the Frankfurt School with its more strictly philosophical and social concerns.<sup>7</sup> For a ‘critical’ school of International Relations to emerge, it would have to be one that ranged itself as a negating, transcending, challenge to the positivist inclinations of existing theory. It could ‘negate’ the state, war, sovereignty, the international economy. It might look askance at the positivist penchant of decision-making analysis. Peace Studies might be a candidate for such a categorization, and such comprehensive challenges as those of Charles Beitz, John Burton or Richard Falk might be considered cognate negations, even if on very different theoretical foundations. But the term ‘critical’ is misleading, as much about critical theory itself as about the origins and concerns of the ‘New Cold War’ school. Equally misleading is the term ‘revisionist’ as applied by Kubáľková and Cruickshank.

In answer to the question as to who started the ‘New’ Cold War and who is responsible for its continuation there is not much difference in the findings of the contemporary Left on the one hand and the US Cold War revisionists on the other.<sup>8</sup>

The link Kubáľková and Cruickshank seek to establish between the earlier revisionist historians of the 1960s and the new cold war writings of the 1980s appears sufficient, in their line of argument, to discredit the latter. Since the first revisionists were dismissed by orthodox historians as ‘unacademic’ and were seen as apologists for the USSR, the same is, by implication, valid for the second generation.

There is, on closer examination, only a limited similarity between the two bodies of thought beyond the fact that both reject an established orthodoxy within the western world. Historically, the revisionists—the Kolkos, Appleman Williams, Horowitz—were, as the name implies, a group who rejected an established position, in their case within history. They ‘revised’ orthodox views on the origins of the cold war. In the case of writers on the New Cold War there was as yet little established history to revise. Prejudices about the New Cold War abounded but in many ways the Marxist and related writers got there first: an established orthodox school had not yet emerged. One cannot be ‘revisionist’ when there is nothing to revise. Secondly, the charge made against the first revisionists, that they placed all the blame on the United States and none on the Soviet Union, irrelevant as it was to assessing the documentary and explanatory validity of their analysis, is simply inapplicable to the writers on the New Cold War. Kubáľková and Cruickshank lay a special stress on this question since it is central to their whole argument that the writers on the New Cold War are but Soviet apologists. To support this they have to shift the argument from being about a similar analysis of world politics (in the case of the earlier revisionists) to one about similar methodologies (supposedly true of the second). But the argument and intent are the same, and in both cases wrong. None of the New Cold War authors Kubáľková and Cruickshank discuss fits the stereotype of the revisionist historians: all are critical of the USSR, and all ascribe responsibility for Cold War II, in part, to the Soviet Union. My own book, for example, has a chapter devoted to the internal ‘involution’ of the USSR in the Brezhnev period, and the role this trajectory, epitomized in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, played in discrediting the possibility of any alternative. Equally, it documents and criticizes the manner in which the USSR contributed to the arms race by rivalling the United States. In my Cold War book, and elsewhere, I have argued against the image of the USSR as a docile, passive, innocent element in world politics. What I, and others, have at the same time tried to

do is to assess and, where appropriate, reject the conventional image of Soviet expansionism purveyed in the West. Such an evaluation is rather different from that which Kubáľková and Cruickshank ascribe to the earlier 'revisionists'.

Most importantly of all, however, is the difference between what the two 'revisionist' schools are concerned to analyse. The revisionists were, in the first instance historians, concerned to present an alternative, more accurate, narrative and interpretation of events. The writers on the New Cold War are concerned to analyse the 1970s, but they are doing something more: they are concerned with theoretical issues too. They discuss a set of issues about historical agency and levels of determination in international relations, questions that are absent from the work of the supposedly antecedent historians. It is this, above all, which distinguishes writers on the New Cold War from the revisionist historians.

These misidentifications of the New Cold War writers are important, not just because they mislead about origins and antecedents, but also because they serve to establish the coherence of the school on bases quite other than those which have applied. The unity of the New Cold War writers is not given by the analytic positions they adopt about what happened in 1979 or whatever. Herein lies the misleading focus of Kubáľková and Cruickshank. Their account of the New Cold War school is inaccurate in, among other things, its great overstatement of the analytic homogeneity of this school. Thus on the issue of analysing the arms race, the debate ranges from the determinist theory of Thompson's 'exterminism' to the moderated class agency espoused by Mike Davis and myself. On the issue of the USSR, all writers are critical of the Soviet Union but for different reasons: Chomsky with his image of the 'two dungeons', and Mary Kaldor with her stress on military production as determinant have quite contrasted views. Most importantly of all, there is the protracted dispute about what the main source of international tension is—some locating it in the conflicts within the western states (Kaldor, Frank), others in the need to maintain internal order within the blocs (Chomsky), others in the rivalry of the blocs themselves (Halliday).

If Kubáľková and Cruickshank try to establish the existence of a school on the basis of positions about history, or analytic conclusions, they can only do so by greatly simplifying the debates and ascribing a unity where none exists. It is not here that the unity of the school may be found: rather it resides in something they only glancingly refer to, namely in the theoretical issues, substantive and methodological, that these writers raise.

### **The focus of debate**

From a reading of Kubáľková and Cruickshank it would appear that the main issue of debate is the role of the USSR in world politics.<sup>9</sup> This is what the New Cold War writers are concerned to legitimate, or disguise, and it is here that the greatest concern by all right-thinking International Relations professionals should be exercised. This question of the USSR is indeed important: but there is as already indicated, no unified position about it. Moreover the analysis of the USSR takes place within a broader set of arguments that readers of Kubáľková and Cruickshank could hardly divine. Three of these are of special prominence within the debate on the New Cold War and bring us somewhat nearer the substance of the discussion than Kubáľková and Cruickshank would enable us to do. These three issues are: (a) the question of *agency* in international relations, and specifically the question of agency in regard to the arms race; (b) the relationship between peace and socialism; (c) the salience of east-west conflict.

*Agency*

The current round of debate on the New Cold War began with E. P. Thompson's 1980 essay on exterminism, an article in which Thompson not only drew attention to the dangers of nuclear war but suggested an analysis of why this danger was growing.<sup>10</sup> The core of his thesis was that the arms race, and the attendant inter-state conflicts of the post-war period, had acquired a momentum of their own, beyond the control of individual politicians or governments. A monstrous and potentially destructive force had been unleashed against which an extreme exertion of popular mobilization and political will had to be directed. Thompson rejected the very question of who, the United States or the Soviet Union, had started the cold war. The question of origin, so central to the early orthodox revisionist debate, was simply irrelevant. He saw the Soviet Union and United States as locked today in an isomorphic conflict, in which each fed on the exterminism of the other. In the face of this dramatic analysis, one that combined a degree of responsibility and urgency better meriting the term 'realism' than much of the doleful complacency normally denoted by that term, a wide-ranging debate took place. Some writers agreed with Thompson and indeed took his analysis even further, arguing that 'exterminism' was not merely inherent in the post-1945 nuclear arms race, but was a deep, historically constituted, dynamic within western civilization as a whole. For such writers, epitomized by Rudolf Bahro, the only solution was a rejection of industrial civilization itself, a total ecological and spiritual transformation, that would reject modern society as a whole, together with its nuclear weapons.<sup>11</sup> For others, however, Raymond Williams, Mike Davis and myself included, Thompson had conceded too much to the impersonal, structurally determined, implications of his concept. The arms race, like all social and political activity, resulted in events that were not foreseen or desired by their originators: but, for all its annihilating potential, it bore a mediate relation to rational intent and to other, non-extermistic, and somewhat familiar, political concerns.<sup>12</sup>

*Peace and socialism*

The classical Marxist position, enunciated most clearly by Lenin in his writings on imperialism and the First World War, was that the struggle for peace and for socialism were necessarily interlocked.<sup>13</sup> Since war was a product of capitalist rivalries, only the abolition of capitalism could ensure the passing of war. In the post-1945 period, and in particular with the advent of nuclear weapons, this position has been altered and revised. The Soviet position has accepted that nuclear war is not inevitable, even if wars of national liberation remain so. China, which initially opposed the Soviets for their 'revisionism' on this issue, has now also accepted this position, and has apologized for its earlier insouciant attitude to nuclear weapons. The position of the western peace movement has been related to, but distinct from, this debate within the communist movement. Communist parties have long been champions of 'peace', even at the risk of demeaning this value by investing it with a partisan pro-Soviet import. This was true in the first post-war peace movement of the early 1950s, the second of the early 1960s and the third, that of the 1980s. The position that Thompson and many others in the peace movement have adopted provides a similar analysis, albeit one drawn from very different assumptions. Their starting point has been the need to rally all human subjects in defence of common goals, in this case the saving of humanity from extinction. Their appeals to the population as a whole, and their analysis of the threat of war imply that a politics of

peace, including governments committed to abolition of the arms race, are possible on a broad trans-class basis. Similarly, appeals for a neutral or independent Europe, separate from both the Soviet and American blocs, presuppose that such a goal is attainable within the existing political and social systems. Put more directly, capitalist states, and specifically a capitalist Europe, can fulfil the function of ensuring peace.

Thompson's arguments, and populist extensions of it as in the German Green Party, have been subjected to considerable challenge and debate. Thompson's critics do not argue that nuclear war is inevitable, let alone desirable. What they do argue is that the central Leninist thesis remains valid: that the danger of nuclear war will remain until socialism has been established. There can be no quick or easy solution to the problem of nuclear weapons: the mass movements of the 1980s, well-intentioned as they are, are doomed to failure, since they fail to confront the social, class, interests underlying the arms race and its attendant ideologies in the capitalist countries. This line of analysis locates the sources of the arms race not in an abstracted exterminism, or in the convenient automaticities of the balance of power, but in identifiable social forces within the industrialized countries. As Mandel put it, the disagreement with the peace movement is not that the latter has overstated the danger of war, by focusing on nuclear weapons, but that it has underestimated it, by dissociating the issue of nuclear weapons from the broader social context in which the arms race takes place.<sup>14</sup>

### *The salience of east-west conflict*

Of equal importance in the debate on the new cold war is the question of the east-west conflict and the salience it has in international relations as a whole. Kubáľková and Cruickshank are quick to identify closet Soviet apologists here. They do this not only by misrepresenting what the writers in question say, but also by taking arguments out of context. This is more than just a 'rediscovery of America', a restatement of the obvious, as our authors suggest.<sup>15</sup> The context in which a number of writers, myself included, lay a special stress on the east-west conflict is one in which others have denied its relevance. The focus on the arms race and on the issue of peace leads, in many cases, to a reluctance, or absolute refusal, to admit the salience of the east-west conflict itself. Thus Kaldor and Frank locate the origins of the Second Cold War itself in the conflicts within the western economies and, in a parallel way, within those of the east. Chomsky sees the difficulties as lying in the difficulties both the United States and the Soviet Union have in disciplining their respective spheres.<sup>16</sup> Alan Wolfe locates the dynamic within US domestic politics.<sup>17</sup> Others see the main problem as being in the third world. All see the Soviet-US and broader east-west conflicts as secondary or as a mere charade, designed to mask the real contradictions, *within* the two power blocs.

This is a position that appears to have much to recommend it. The arms race, and the cold war generally, do serve functions other than that of confronting the apparent enemy. It may be easier for the Soviet leadership to discipline its own population if tension is higher. The rise of cold war militancy in the United States in the late 1970s was, in part, a reflection of domestic conflicts and tensions, and of frustrations that had nothing to do with the USSR-OPEC, Japanese imports, the Iranian hostage crisis. But what I and the others who dissented from this view sought to do was to reestablish, in however qualified a way, the relevance of the Soviet-US conflict itself and of the ideological and systemic clashes involved. In so doing, of course, we ran the risk of appearing to confirm what the proponents of either side were themselves



saying. Some critics therefore accused us of merely repeating US cold war rhetoric, because we saw the USSR and its policies as contributing to the cold war. Kubálková and Cruickshank chose to take the other tack. In both cases, however, the analytic issues are obscured by polemic. The key issue is not how close the 'east-west' writers like myself are to established political stances, but how valid on independent criteria the positions are. Kubálková and Cruickshank seem not to regard this question as worth their attention.

### **A presumption of primacy**

This simplification of the substantive issues debated in the literature on the New Cold War is underpinned by a further simplification, that of methodology and approach. In essence, this consists of a misleading account of how the intersection of International Relations and Marxism came about. At various points in their article, Kubálková and Cruickshank argue that Marxism has, in recent years, come to deal with a set of issues that were previously the reserved domain of International Relations. While they are, on certain conditions, in favour of a dialogue between the two approaches, their position is one that accords historical and, by implication, conceptual primacy to International Relations. The 'revisionists' are, they say, 'inexpert in the field'. One can, however, argue the reverse: namely that International Relations as an intellectual discipline had developed in isolation from a comprehensive theoretical system that predates it and which has established prior positions on much of the terrain which International Relations aspires to develop. It is not Marxism that has entered the field of International Relations, but the other way around. Once again, this is not merely a matter of antiquarian or terminological concern.

The two major contributions of Marxism to the theory of inter-state and, more broadly, international relations were made well before the first chairs in international relations were ever established. The one was in Marx's own work, namely the assertion of the international character of the economy and of the distinctive social, in this case, capitalist character thereof.<sup>18</sup> So much of subsequent theorization about the international system, its history, workings and development, has ignored this central assertion of Marx's. The 'system' as it developed cannot be understood by empty political or sub-mathematical formulas, since these abstract the system from the social character that determined its growth and formation. Similarly, this system was established by capitalist states, not 'states' in abstraction from their socio-economic context as International Relations literature suggests. It is not surprising that some of the most illuminating writings on the international system should have come not from mainline International Relations writers, or from those who deploy the post-imperialist euphemism of the 'western system', but from historical sociologists who, while often critical of Marxism, are not afraid to use the term capitalism and to see in it a key to comprehending the pattern of international relations in this and earlier centuries.<sup>19</sup>

The second major contribution arose in the two decades prior to World War I and centred on the issue of imperialism.<sup>20</sup> The import of this debate has, in retrospect, been reduced to that of being one about the relations of metropolitan to colonized countries, about underdevelopment and what, in today's parlance, the 'North' did to the 'South'. As such the literature of that period tells us very little: Hobson, Lenin, Luxemburg, Hilferding and the others were not primarily interested in underdevelopment, and subsequent work, empirical and theoretical, has superseded them. Their theorization of colonialism has been justly refuted, by Marxist and non-

Marxist alike.<sup>21</sup> But the core question posed in this debate, one of the most sophisticated on the nature of the international system to have taken place in modern political thought, was of a different kind, and was concerned with the developed industrialized countries. It was an attempt to theorize the relationship between socio-political system, arms production and the expansion of the international economy and at the same time to theorize the politico-economic character of international hierarchy, beyond mere assertions about unequal power. These issues lay at the heart of the debate on imperialism: Lenin's work was above all an attempt to conceptualize the origins of the First World War and to draw practical conclusions from it. The siren of prediction is one that may be avoided by all engaged in social science. But those concerned with this could hardly find a more accurate presentiment than that of Lenin, whose argument was that the war that began in 1914, a product of the development of capitalism, would itself provide a fissure in the capitalist system and lead to social revolution. A year after he had formulated his theory of imperialism, Russia, the 'weakest link' in the chain, broke.

It is here that the place and relevance of the recent debate on the New Cold War comes into focus. Far from being a belated intervention on the terrain of International Relations, it is rather a development of precisely that debate which was conducted within liberal thought and Marxism in the period up to and during the First World War. The triangle of concepts that the theorists of the earlier generation sought to relate—the internal structure of industrialized capitalist society, the arms race and war, the international workings of the economy—is the same as that underlying the arguments on the New Cold War, one in which Marxists and non-Marxists have joined. It is not that Thompson, Bahro, Mandel and the others are trespassers on the ancestral lands of International Relations: rather, they are continuing to argue on a terrain occupied by their forerunners, one upon which the proponents of International Relations have more recently settled.

### **The 'Soviet connection'**

These three areas of interpretation are important to their overall argument, but the core of the Kubáľková and Cruickshank position would seem to revolve not around these questions of debate and provenance, so much as around the argument that the 'revisionist' school as a whole is colluding with Moscow covertly to defend a Soviet point of view. Kubáľková and Cruickshank rightly point out that Soviet writing on the international system is not discussed in the debate on the New Cold War. This is largely true, although it ignores the engagement of western writers with unofficial Soviet writers, as well as the ongoing dispute with the official Soviet peace committees. It has also to be said that across the whole range of contemporary Marxist debate in the West there is little or no attempt to take Soviet writing seriously, some branches of history and linguistics being partial exceptions. But this failing is a flimsy base indeed upon which to erect the full charge of pro-Soviet apologia that Kubáľková and Cruickshank want to construct. In their most succinct section on this Kubáľková and Cruickshank reveal what they see as the intent behind the debate on the New Cold War: 'The clear intentions of the Western Left are: (1) to avoid identification with and approbation of the Soviet (domestic) model as the future model for other 'anti-systemic forces'; (2) to avoid identification with the Soviet's own Marxist-Leninist theory of 'correlation of forces' as an explanatory model of world politics; and (3) to avoid identification with those Soviet foreign policy objectives that are aimed at an explicit tilting of the US-USSR strategic balance and at weakening the imperialist defence system.'<sup>22</sup>

It is not difficult to show that this approach is spurious and ill-intentioned. It rests first upon a declaration of what the 'intentions of the Western Left' are supposed to be, as if some conspiracy has been revealed. No evidence of these 'intentions' is produced. Secondly, it rests upon an equally tired trope, namely the fallacy of the undivided middle. The fact that on some issues Soviet and western Marxist writers share similar positions proves nothing about the relation between them. No doubt most agree that the earth is round, that nuclear weapons are dangerous, that peace is desirable, and so on. One could equally show that much of the western Marxist writing shares similar positions on some questions to cold war writers in the United States. Pro-Soviet reviewers of my work on the New Cold War proceeded very much in the Kubáľková–Cruickshank mould, charging me with 'anti-Soviet' slanders.<sup>23</sup> The relevant question is not whether there is coincidence on some issues, but rather whether, overall, the conceptual and political positions are similar. Here Kubáľková and Cruickshank can reach their conclusions only by ignoring those aspects of the analysis, political and theoretical, that diverge markedly from the Soviet view. They purport to take these into account but this seems little more than a feint: indeed, in the best traditions of the vigilantist, they imply that differences with the Soviet view only mislead, and serve to conceal a deeper agreement. Had they themselves taken adequate account of what Soviet writers say about the 'revisionists' they would have come to a rather different conclusion.

Kubáľková and Cruickshank are equally alarmed by the way in which the 'revisionists' handle certain more empirical issues: the latter portray the Soviet Union as the weaker partner in the west–east conflict, and refuse to accept a conventional view of Soviet 'expansionism'. This, they say, puts into question 'the whole integrity of the Left analysis'.<sup>24</sup> They argue that the criteria used by 'revisionists' to compare Soviet and western strengths prejudice the comparison and, falsely, present the United States as stronger. Yet they do not themselves engage on the terrain of the 'revisionists', namely an attempt to use available data to compare the strengths of the two camps. That many of our arguments are similar to those of conventional writers such as George Kennan means little to Kubáľková and Cruickshank. It is as if, in their view, data are irrelevant.<sup>25</sup> Yet some empirical referents are essential in any computation of the strategic and economic capacities of the two blocs. Kubáľková and Cruickshank concentrate only on the criteria used, and in so doing distort the argument. In reply to my argument that the West is economically far stronger than the Soviet Union, they say that consumer levels are irrelevant in wartime: but they ignore the real argument, which was that in the peacetime competition of the bloc consumer levels do play a role, in making the American way of life more attractive on a world scale. Here is, of course, one of the places where it would be uncomfortable for Kubáľková and Cruickshank to cite Soviet sources too closely since it is one of the proud boasts of the Russians that they have reached some sort of military 'parity' with the United States. The rather detailed refutation of this by western Marxists and other New Cold War writers, as of western assertions about Soviet 'superiority', is not something that Soviet writers would be allowed to tell their audiences.

All in all there is much that remains to be argued about the relative strengths of the two blocs, and about the conceptual evaluations and empirical data to be used. Similarly, the degree to which the USSR was responsible for the end of *détente* is something that can be debated by reference to facts; but the method used on both questions by Kubáľková and Cruickshank is not to engage in these arguments, so much as to imply that those who even try to argue about them seriously, avoiding the rhetoric about 'Soviet threat' and 'rough parity' put about by the two main camps, are themselves colluding with the Russians. The essence of vigilantism is not to

defend a particular position, but to deny the legitimacy of discussing it in the first place. Claims about Soviet strategic 'superiority' and about Soviet 'expansionism' have been common currency, and virtually unchallenged, in most western academic and journalistic writing, for the past decade or so. What Kubáľková and Cruickshank seem to argue is that the very disputing of these ideas is impermissible.

In line with their selective use of available sources, and their rather ideological approach to empirical questions, Kubáľková and Cruickshank make great play of what they see as the 'inexpert' nature of the Left's writings on the USSR. The claim made is, indeed, that were the 'Left' to acquaint itself further with the professional writings on the Soviet Union it would not be able to argue as it does. This curious line of argument is itself sustainable only by ignoring the substantial body of literature, within Soviet studies, that does precisely open up the possibilities of an alternative analysis of Soviet foreign and military policy. In the field of history, one need only mention the works of E. H. Carr, Robert Davies, Jonathan Haslam and, earlier, Issac Deutscher. In the field of contemporary studies the works of David Holloway and Stephen Shenfield on Soviet military policy, and Jonathan Steele on foreign policy are notable.<sup>26</sup> Most significant of all, because their names are never mentioned by Kubáľková and Cruickshank, to whom their presence in the debate must be most unwelcome, are the two independent Soviet writers Zhores and Roy Medvedev.<sup>27</sup> We are not told if these writers, whose professional credentials are second to none, are also to be taxed by our authors with the charges of 'ethnocentrism' and 'blindspots' so easily marshalled on their final page. A more attentive reading of 'critical' Sovietologists by Kubáľková and Cruickshank might tell them a thing or two.

## Conclusion

The growing intersection of Marxism and International Relations is a product not only of a greater participation by Marxists in debates on international relations, but also of a broader revival of interest in western Marxism across the wide range of social sciences that has been in train since the 1960s. If anything, International Relations has remained relatively exempt from Marxist influence longer than other disciplines, and its issues were relatively absent from the 'critiques' and 'alternatives' that emerged from the intellectual and academic upheavals of two decades ago.<sup>28</sup> During the 1970s Marxism did find some recognition in International Relations, but in a specific, delimited, context which restricted its theoretical scope and was presented in a partial fashion, namely dependency theory.<sup>29</sup> Later, Marxism came to play a larger role in the revival of international political economy where it was both taken seriously and subjected to careful criticism.<sup>30</sup>

The situation in the 1980s, however, is one that has gone beyond these initial intersections. It opens up the possibility of a more comprehensive application to International Relations of the theoretical developments within Marxism that have accompanied the revival of western Marxism, and, simultaneously, a questioning of Marxism in the light of the issues posed by International Relations. The central terrain of International Relations has been that of the state and of conflict between states, and it is here that many of the most interesting debates and challenges may be found. For its part, recent Marxist theory has posed again the question of the state, not by saying that the state is depassed or irrelevant, but rather by trying to reconceptualize the state itself. If classes operate on an international scale, and if economic processes are transnational, these none the less operate through states, and through the restructuring and inflecting of states to meet current needs. The state remains the focus of political, economic and social power even as the origins and

scope of that power change. It is here, as much as anywhere, that the point of a fruitful and mutually beneficial debate involving International Relations, as an academic discipline, and Marxism may be found.<sup>31</sup>

The debate on the New Cold War is part of this overall Marxist revival although many of those who have participated in it are not in any strict sense Marxists. But the importance of the New Cold War argument lies precisely in the way that its theoretical assumptions, and the substantive issues of analysis that it raises, are ones that are of concern to both International Relations and Marxist theory more generally. The reception of the New Cold War literature by Kubáľková and Cruickshank is, in this sense, inapposite and misleading. It misrepresents the issues around which the New Cold War debate has revolved. It ignores the historical continuity between this debate and earlier Marxist debates. Most important of all, it presses the New Cold War literature into a distorting, Old Cold War, framework by presenting the New Cold War writers as apologists. We are used to the imposition of such conformist discipline in the eastern bloc. It is regrettable to see the same reflexes, and practices, transposed with such apparent ease to the west. Western Marxism has a history that long predates, and is independent of, the orthodoxies of Soviet officialdom, as much as it has dissented from the conventional wisdoms of the academies of the West. Its recent involvement with the debates of International Relations is a welcome development, the full promise of which is far from being realized, and is something from which both International Relations and Marxism can, with due modesty and perseverance, draw some benefit.

## References and notes

1. Respectively (London, 1980), (Oxford, 1986).
2. For example, Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 5th edition (New York, 1978), pp. 48–57.
3. For discussion see Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism* (London, 1958).
4. Gilbert Rozman, *A Mirror for Socialism* (London, 1985), especially pp. 259–65; Ernest Gellner, 'Soviets Against Wittfogel' in John Hall (ed.), *States in History* (Oxford, 1986). See also Jerry Hough, *The Struggle for the Third World* (Washington, 1986); and Christopher Hill, 'The Bourgeois Revolutions in Soviet Scholarship', *New Left Review*, 155, January–February 1986.
5. Thus Kubáľková and Cruickshank do not even mention the most competent available survey of Marxism writings on international relations—Miklos Molnar, *Marx, Engels et la Politique Internationale* (Paris, 1975).
6. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (New York, 1963), gives a magisterial survey of the 'critical' dimensions of Hegel's thought.
7. For a lucid assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Frankfurt School see Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London, 1976).
8. "The 'New Cold War'", *Review of International Studies*, xii (1986), p. 171.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
10. E. P. Thompson and others, *Exterminism and Cold War*, edited by *New Left Review* (London, 1982).
11. Rudolf Bahro, *From Red to Green* (London, 1984).
12. See the contributions by Williams, Davis and Halliday in *Exterminism and Cold War*.
13. Lenin's writings on this are ably discussed in Neil Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, vol. 2 (London, 1981), chapters 2, 3 and 11.
14. Ernest Mandel, 'The Threat of Nuclear War and the Struggle for Socialism', *New Left Review*, no. 141 (September–October 1983), p. 49.
15. "The 'New Cold War'", p. 174.
16. Mary Kaldor, *The Disintegrating West* (London, 1978); André Gunder Frank, *The European Challenge* (Nottingham, 1983); Noam Chomsky, *Towards A New Cold War* (London, 1982).
17. Alan Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat* (Washington, 1979).
18. Most clearly stated in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Part 1.
19. For example John Hall, *Powers and Liberties* (Oxford, 1985); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York, 1974); Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, 1979); Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge, 1986); Eric Wolf, *Europe and the Nations without History* (New York, 1984).

20. Tom Kemp surveys the economic aspects in *Theories of Imperialism* (London, 1967). Part III of Bernard Semmel (ed.), *Marxism and the Science of War* (Oxford, 1981) covers the social and military aspects.
21. Bill Warren, *Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism* (London, 1982), chapter 3 provides a lucid Marxist critique of Lenin's writings on imperialism.
22. "The 'New Cold War'", p. 174.
23. *World Marxist Review* (May 1984), pp. 116–18. According to the reviewer my book is 'punctuated with anti-Soviet snarls'. He criticizes me for ascribing the cold war to conflict between social systems rather than to what in his view is the correct source, namely the nature of imperialism. Like Kubáľková and Cruickshank, the reviewer also sees it as part of his duty to delve into motives: 'Despite the quasi-scientific and not quite intelligible jargon, Halliday's design is clear: he wants people to believe that it is possible to combine lies with truth. This eclectic function is the basis for the thesis of "shared but unequal responsibility"' (p. 118).
24. "The 'New Cold War'", p. 175.
25. Thus, in my *Threat from the East? Soviet Policy from Afghanistan and Iran to the Horn of Africa* (London, 1982), I try, on the basis of available information, to evaluate the validity of the thesis that Soviet instigation lay behind the late 1970s upheavals in the Arc of Crisis. No-one has, to my knowledge, contested in printed the argument that I advance there.
26. David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* (Yale, 1982); Jonathan Steele, *The Limits of Soviet Power* (London, 1984).
27. See for example Roy and Zhores Medvedev in *Exterminism and Cold War* (London, 1982).
28. There is no chapter on International Relations in: Theodor Roszak (ed.), *The Dissenting Academy* (New York, 1967); Trevor Pateman (ed.), *Counter Course* (London, 1972); or Bertell Ollmann and Edward Vernoff (eds.), *The Left Academy* (New York, 1982).
29. The conventional presentation of Marxist theory on north–south relations presents only the 'development of underdevelopment' or dependency approach. The alternative 'development of capitalism' approach, epitomized by Warren, is given far less attention.
30. A fine example of critical but appreciative treatment of Marxism is Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony* (New York, 1984) where a range of authors including Marx, Gramsci, Lenin, and more recent writers such as Fred Block and Harry Magdoff are discussed in a calm and positive tone. A similar approach is to be found in Susan Strange's discussion of Ernest Mandel and others in *Casino Capitalism* (Oxford, 1986).
31. An important study of the internationalization of class conflict within specific states is given in Carolyn Vogler, *The Nation State* (London, 1985).