

administration. Shoikhedbrod also affirms some remarks by the English Marxist historian E. P. Thompson, who argues for the historical significance of struggles for rights and laws. Shoikhedbrod, using his interpretation of Marx's critique of liberalism, provides a more systematic account of the importance of constitutionalism and the rule of law in constraining arbitrary power, providing essential space for contestation in egalitarian struggles, and forming crucial preconditions for the communism that will achieve right and legality in a higher form.

The clear strength of Shoikhedbrod's work is his engagement with the legal and juridical aspects of these debates. He offers an important corrective to the dismissive attitude found in some schools of Marxism. Shoikhedbrod also provides persuasive arguments for the enduring importance of rights, whatever the form of the society. If there is a limitation to the book, it is that Shoikhedbrod describes as "orthodox" the interpretation that Marx ultimately dismisses right and legality. This discounts the variety of disagreements between commentators and the different schools of thought in the long-running debates about Marx and justice. For example, Marx asserts, "As far as right is concerned, we with many others have stressed the opposition of communism to right, both political and private, as also in its most general form as the rights of man." Shoikhedbrod contends that this assertion, like other similar assertions by Marx, has often been "taken out of context." But Shoikhedbrod does not provide enough contextual evidence to refute common-sense interpretations of this passage as Marx's plain disavowal of rights as such. (Admittedly, there are other passages where Marx does seem to affirm some notion of rights.) This book is unlikely to persuade many of the commentators who think that Marx regards his critique of capitalism, as well as his theory of communism, as beyond appeals to justice, though Shoikhedbrod might convince some of them that Marxism needs a robust theory of rights and, indeed, that Marx provides some resources for such a theory.

Shoikhedbrod offers a spirited critique of liberalism and a good case for why no theory or practice, whether communist or otherwise, can dispense with rights and legality. Although Habermas once called himself "the last Marxist," Shoikhedbrod's book shows that, in our age of rising global inequality, this is not the last we have heard from Marx.

Response to Paul Gray's review of *Revisiting Marx's Critique of Liberalism*

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It is always a pleasure to read a review that precisely captures a book's central claims and offers thoughtful criticisms. Paul Gray's (2023) review is especially welcome given that it was written by someone who has rigorously examined the place of justice in Marx's thought and reached the opposite conclusions of those stated in *Revisiting Marx's Critique of Liberalism*.

There is a great deal of agreement between us, particularly over the "enduring importance of rights," though the devil lurks in the details. Gray takes me to task for mischaracterizing as "orthodox" the dominant view that Marx ultimately rejects rights and legality. In Gray's words, "this [description] discounts the variety of disagreements between commentators and the different schools of thought in the long-running debates about Marx and justice." It was not my intention to disregard the diverse range of interpretations that have informed debates about Marx and justice. While the best-known representatives of these debates in the Anglophone world (for example, Evgeny Pashukanis, Robert Tucker, Allen Wood, Allen Buchanan, Steven Lukes, G. A. Cohen, Derek Allen, Norman Geras, Rodney Peffer, Leszek Kolakowski and Jürgen Habermas) are acknowledged, the book is more concerned with bringing to light a peculiar convergence among interpretations concerning Marx's supposed

rejection of justice, legality and rights among admittedly different schools of thought; hence my reference to what has become the “orthodox” view.

As for approaching Marx’s ambivalent statements about rights in the *German Ideology* and elsewhere, the book tries to assess Marx’s positions in “real time”—that is, by examining where he stood when issues of justice, legality and rights were critically at stake. Examples include the 1843 petition by leaders of the Rhenish Jewish community for equal rights, which Marx endorsed; his consistent defence of civil and political rights during the European Revolutions of 1848; and his detailed reflections on legally enforced limits on the working day in *Capital*. In all these critical instances, Marx’s political actions speak louder than his ambivalent statements about rights. As Gray dutifully acknowledges, *Revisiting Marx’s Critique of Liberalism* offers a “‘reconstruction’ of Marx’s critique of liberal rights and law.” In Habermas’ terminology, a critical reconstruction “signifies taking a theory apart and putting it back together in a new form in order to attain more fully the goal that it has set for itself” (1979: 95). There are retrospective and prospective dimensions to the critical reconstruction that was pursued in the book. Retrospectively, the book revisits Marx’s critical reflections on justice, legality and rights, as well as their political reverberations in the twentieth century, taking stock of possible paths that remained untravelled.¹ Prospectively, it looks to the present and foreseeable future, identifying features of Marx’s thought that remain prescient for a world confronting vast inequalities and exhibiting widespread assaults on hard-won rights and liberties.

Note

¹ A more detailed consideration of these issues will appear in a future volume, *The Revolution of Law: Developments in Soviet Legal Theory, 1917-1931*, jointly edited and translated by Rafael Khachatryan and Igor Shoikhedbrod.

References

- Gray, Paul. 2023. Review of *Revisiting Marx’s Critique of Liberalism: Rethinking Justice, Legality and Rights*, by Igor Shoikhedbrod. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. Advance online publication.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1979. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.

Pakistan’s Political Parties: Surviving between Dictatorship and Democracy

Mariam Mufti, Sahar Shafqat and Niloufer Siddiqui, eds., Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020, pp. 336

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Pakistan’s Political Parties is an edited volume that introduces readers to the dizzying political landscape of the world’s fifth most populous state. As the editors (Mariam Mufti, Sahar Shafqat and Niloufer Siddiqui) note aptly in their introduction, Pakistan’s often turbulent relationship with democracy has taken myriad forms since the country’s inception in 1947; four military coups, three constitutions and (only) a dozen general elections in 75 years of independence present quite the opportunity for intellectual unpacking. The editors selected an impressive array of scholars spanning multiple disciplines and subfields to bring their expertise to such an