Marx. Much of the general description of the intellectual world of the turn of the century that Shatz gives is quite familiar (Bakunin's critique of Marxism, the "Economist" critique of Russian social democracy, the Zubatovshchina), but the focus on Machajski casts it an interesting new light.

From Shatz's account it is clear that biographical information on Machajski is far from abundant; it is also clear that his ideas (or perhaps one should say his "idea") are more interesting than his life. Nevertheless, I would have preferred to see a greater effort to anchor such powerful ideas in a biographical account.

Nevertheless, this modest study is extremely successful not only in proffering the answers that Machajski gave to questions about the Revolution and its betrayal by the socialists, but also in adumbrating the important questions that lay behind Machajski's violent and passionate polemics. If we have largely lost sight of Machajski (Konrád and Szélényi, for example, do not appear to know him), the questions which he focussed on are almost as "actual" today as when he first wrote about them.

Abbott Gleason
Brown University


Revolution and Culture: The Bogdanov-Lenin Controversy is the newest addition to a growing literature on non-Leninist Bolsheviks, Alexander Bogdanov most prominently. Speaking very broadly, historians have been at pains to "rehabilitate" Bogdanov, to show that he was a far more complex, independent and interesting Bolshevik and Marxist than Lenin ever let on. "Bogdanovism" and "Leninism" represented "alternative approaches to building socialism," two "fundamentally different conceptualizations of the relationship between revolution and culture" (p. 13) according to Sochor.

In Sochor's view, Leninism held that political revolution established the material conditions, the requisite social relationships, for the birth and development of a culture corresponding to those relationships. Specifically, the seizure of power by workers and the formation of a workers' state opened the way for workers to build a socialist society and a culture appropriate to it: socio-political transformation antecedent cultural transformation.

The alternative, Bogdanovism, stood Leninism on its head: cultural transformation antecedent socio-political transformation. It was the view that the seizure of power by workers through political revolution merely heralded the maturation of "proletarian culture" already evolving within the womb of modern capitalist society. This lengthy cultural evolution under capitalism paralleled and reflected the transition from small-scale artisanal forms of production to large-scale industrial ones, from competitive production in the market by individual firms to collective regulation of production by trusts, conglomerates and multinational corporations, from
forms of social existence anticipating the rise of capitalism to those prefiguring its fall.

Bogdanov and Lenin also understood the relationship between the party and the proletariat in distinctly divergent ways, according to Sochor. Thus, Lenin "mythologized" the party, cast it "in the role of transmitter of knowledge and interpreter of Marxist dogma" and as the exclusive leader of the working class. In contrast, Bogdanov denied a vanguard role to the party and "challenged" authority "in all guises." Bogdanov "glorified the workers and their innate aptitude for attaining knowledge, political consciousness, and self-transformation" and for creating proletarian culture. Bogdanov and Lenin were consequently "at odds" on the relationship between the party and the working class, Sochor concludes (p. 175).

Nevertheless, Sochor counterposes much too sharply the views of Bogdanov and Lenin. Despite their "alternative approaches" to socialism, their "fundamentally different" understanding of the relationship between revolution and culture and their incompatible positions on party-class relations, the two men were political allies for nearly five years. Between 1904 and 1909 Bogdanov was a Leninist politically (or was it Lenin who was Bogdanovist?). It is not at all clear how both men could have worked together in the RSDLP if they fundamentally disagreed about the RSDLP's role among workers and about their vision of the working class. What kept them together in this period?

Over time the Bogdanov-Lenin alliance did break up. Bogdanov (or was it Lenin?) did come to see in "Leninism" not only a fundamental alternative to Bogdanov's ideas about building socialism, as Sochor writes, but a politically incompatible alternative, as Sochor stresses. The split of 1909 was indeed about what the RSDLP's role should be in the organized Russian labor movement.

For Sochor the debate opposing Lenin and Bogdanov ultimately was about crafty and ruthless Leninist politicians seeking to ensnare politically untutored workers defended by Bogdanov, a conflict pitting Lenin's party of professional revolutionaries against Bogdanov's class of self-transforming workers. In Sochor's view, Lenin is for leadership whilst Bogdanov "challenges" authority "in all guises."

Here again, this interpretation raises more questions than it answers. It is doubtful if Bogdanov ever challenged the RSDLP's vanguard role in the workers' movement let alone questioned the need for authoritative leadership of that movement. This is why he had, after all, joined the Bolsheviks in 1904. In 1909 Bogdanov thought workers needed and were seeking his leadership and authority, not Lenin's.

In any case, the divergent evolution of Lenin's and Bogdanov's thinking on the role of the party led the two men to part politically in 1909 and, by 1917, to stand on opposite sides of the political divide during the Russian Revolution. By 1917, Leninism and Bogdanovism had indeed become incompatible alternatives to building socialism.

In 1917, Sochor writes, Bogdanov "grew increasingly upset with the direction" the Russian Revolution was taking (p. 93), seeing "negative reverberations in a number of areas" (p. 94), chiefly in culture. Bogdanov feared the direction of events in 1917 because it pointed to a political revolution executed by a Russian working class not yet endowed with a well-