any political philosophy (ideology, ideal, theory, agency), and for each stage of marxist development, I shall try to state carefully the relations among them. In criticizing the predictions of Marx or any marxist, I shall pay close attention to the time-span appropriate to understanding his work. If the time-span is not designated by the thinker in question, I shall criticize this as an un-marxist slip, and then consider, as a separate problem, the relevance of his expectations to present-day realities. I shall try to confront the fact as opposed to the expectation, the trend versus the theory; but also I shall consider the structural mechanics back of the fact or trend.

Perhaps all these rules may be summed up in one self-admonition, drawn from the practice of Karl Marx himself; understand and use consistently the principle of historical specificity. Any man can think only *within* his own times; but he can think *about* the past and the future, thus attempting to expand "his time," constructing out of its materials the image of an epoch. That—to a brilliant extent—is what Karl Marx did. In his work, the awareness of an epoch becomes available. Intellectually, what he provided was a general model of his social reality. Perhaps it was the best approximation available in its time of its time. Its inaccuracies of detail, its inadequacies of specific theory, are themselves fruitful errors.

That is why Marx's work still lives. It is being used in belief and practice. Living marxism realizes that neither marxists nor non-marxists, or anti-marxist scholars, have done much with it of late, in any rigorous intellectual way, but that this may be due less to anything inherent in the ideas than to political expediencies and other factors extraneous to marxism as theory. Such marxism is a lively part of any viable contemporary social science.

Dead marxism is just the opposite. It means to call upon Marx (or Lenin, or Trotsky, or whoever) as Authority; to treat their texts, or even their phrases, as sacred. Dead marxism is the view that it is all true, and that it contains all that men need to know.

So, I suppose the master rule for critics is: be a plain and live critic of plain and live marxism.

C. WRIGHT MILLS, THE MARXISTS

6. Critical Observations

The usefulness of any criticism depends upon agreement about what is being criticized—and that is an interpretation. The usefulness also depends upon the rules that are being followed—and these ought to be made explicit. The observations that follow are criticisms of Marx as I interpret his work (chapter 4) and are in accordance with the rules for critics (chapter 5).[1]

1. The economic basis of a society determines its social structure as a whole as well as the psychology of the people within it.

2. The dynamic of historical change is the conflict between the forces of production and the relations of production.

3. The class struggle between owners and workers is a social, political and psychological reflection of objective economic conflicts.

Exactly what is included and what is not included in "economic base" is not altogether clear, nor are the "forces" and "relations" of production precisely defined and consistently used. In particular: "science" seems to float between base and superstructure; and it is doubtful that either base or superstructure can be used (as Marx does) as units, for both are composed of a mixture of many elements and forces. Superstructure is a residual category for Marx, something into which to dump everything that is left over.

The distinction of base and superstructure itself is by

1. I shall follow the same order of points as in my inventory, with a preliminary comment (or counter-statement) elaborated in greater or lesser detail. This brief critique does not depend upon any positive alternative. Accordingly, I shall only suggest the outlines of a more adequate social model now available for capitalist society and its historical drift and thrust.

no means clear-cut. The institutional organization of a society, including relations of production, certainly penetrates deeply into technological implements and their scientific developments, including forces of production, shaping their meaning and their role in historical change. Many factors that cannot clearly be considered "economic" enter into what Marx seems to mean by "mode of production" or "economic base." That marxists hold such a wide variety of interpretations also seems to support my point. Moreover, the problem of mediation—exactly *how* the base determines the superstructure—is not worked out well. By what mechanisms and under precisely what conditions are economic conflicts "reflected" into psychological and political struggle is a question to which we shall return. Given the fundamental character of these conceptions, their looseness does lend a certain imprecision to the model as a whole.

4. Property as a source of income is the objective criterion of class: within capitalism, the two basic classes are the owners and the workers.

In the modern age, the "estates" of the medieval order were generally replaced by economic classes. This represents a shift in the prevailing principle of stratification and is one of the major points in the very definition of the two epochs. Various features of this shift from status to class, when generalized, are standard in sociological reflection.

Now, Marx's model stripped away all status remnants, defining the position of men within capitalist society solely in terms of their relation to the means of production, to the sources of their income. In part, this is due to his method of abstraction, and in part to his expectations about the development of capitalism. As method, it is a fruitful simplification if "class" is then used as *one* dimension of stratification. As substantive prediction, it has turned out to be mistaken.

In a similar way, later thinkers have abstracted and emphasized other dimensions, such as status, power, and occupation, and they have refined and elaborated the conception of economic class itself. Each of these methods for understanding the stratification of a society is most fruitfully used, first as a distinct, analytical tool; after that for empirical, historical inquiry of the several kinds of changing relations between each.

But Marx did not systematically confront such problems. In his few comments on the conception of class, as in his general expectations, he stuck to the simplification. In his historical studies he was more adequate, but on the whole his simplification becomes misleading and unfruitful.

Property as an objective criterion of class is indispensable to the understanding of the stratification of capitalist society. Alone it is inadequate and misleading, even for understanding economic stratification. In addition to property classes, which depend on the kinds and the sizes of property involved, we can usefully classify people who own no property in the means of production according to income classes.

Of course many specific combinations of sources and amounts of income are of decisive consequence for the political psychology of both higher and lower classes. For example, although the shift from owners to managers as the immediate controllers of corporate property does not mean that property becomes less important, these changes have led to a "corporate rich" stratum which cannot be understood solely in terms of property ownership.

The simple property versus wages distinction does not permit us to understand thoroughly even the *economic* facts of stratification today. Perhaps we could, had Marx's expectation of the polarization of naked class structure come about, but it has not and in all probability will not in the advanced capitalist societies. Be that as it may: to depend upon this distinction alone leads to further inadequacies of conception.

It enters his confusion—or at the very least, his ambiguity—about the relationship of "class consciousness" and other "subjective factors," with objective material circumstances. Without using other criteria than property, "class consciousness" (or its absence) cannot be explained, nor the role of ideology in political and class consciousness understood. In capitalist societies, among the immense majority who are propertyless, distinctions of status and occupation lead to or away from just those psychological and political consequences of economic stratification expected by Marx. To name only the most obvious, white collar employees, like factory workers, are without property and many receive less income; none the less to treat them together as one stratum, on the criterion of property alone,

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is to abdicate any real effort to understand one of the most consequential facts of stratification in all advanced capitalist societies.

5. Class struggle rather than harmony—"natural" or otherwise—is the normal and inevitable condition in capitalist society.

"Natural harmony" is indeed a myth, which classical economists (and eighteenth-century philosophers) used in their apologetics for capitalism and their hopeful views of progress. Yet it does not follow that class struggle is either normal or inevitable. To assert the first is to make a moral judgment rather than to state an empirical proposition; to assert the second is to ignore the increasing institutionalization of conflicts of economic interests. It is possible within capitalism for considerable periods, to transform class struggle into administrative regulations, just as it is possible to stabilize capitalism itself, subsidizing its deficiencies, defaults, and absurdities, by economic, military and political means. In brief, economic conflicts are not necessarily "contradictions" in Marx's sense, and they do not necessarily lead to the open political struggle of classes.

Perhaps this is most readily illustrated by the character and role of labor unions. Insofar as labor unions represent "classes," and labor-management controversy "class struggle," the object of the struggle has become to receive a greater share of the product, rather than to change capitalism as a social structure. Under such conditions, class struggle in Marx's sense, or in any reasonable meaning that can be given to it, does not necessarily grow sharper, more open, more political in form. On the contrary, it is often fragmented in occupational divisions of ever-increasing complexity. In the slump-boom cycle, the class struggle is intermittent and sometimes altogether absent. Above all, in the political economy as a whole, it has been institutionalized and limited to objectives whose realization lies within the bounty of the capitalist system. Collaboration is as much a fact of class history as is struggle. There are many varieties and many causes of both—historically specific causes which include more than economic conditions.

6. Within capitalist society, the workers cannot escape their exploited condition and their revolutionary destiny by winning legal or political rights and privileges; unions and mass labor parties are useful as training grounds for the revolution, but are not a guarantee of socialism.

The general fact is that rights and privileges, both economic and political, have been won, and that neither unions nor mass labor parties have generally served as such "training grounds." Organizations of wageworkers have been incorporated within the routines of twentieth-century capitalism. Their aims, their functions and their results have been firmly stabilized. They do not "normally" reveal, as Marx held, spontaneous anti-capitalism, much less the attempt to organize a new society. They are economic organizations operating within capitalism, and their policies do not transcend their businesslike function.

Moreover, in some advanced countries—notably, the United States—decisive unionization came about very late and in considerable part was achieved under the legal and political umbrella of a state generally dominated by middle and upper class interests. Such militancy as the unions displayed in their organizing stage declined, and then came to be widely accepted by capitalists. In fact, one of their functions has come to be part of the management of the labor force, a disciplining agent in the plant, in the firm, and even in the industry. They have become bureaucratic organizations which in the main work to stabilize relations between wageworkers and owners and managers of the means of production.[2]

7. Exploitation is built into capitalism as an economic system, thus increasing the chances for revolution.

The first part of the sentence I believe sound as a moral judgment—arguments about "theories of value" quite apart. But it is a moral judgment, disguised as an economic statement. The major and rather obvious point, however, is this: conditions which may be judged (rightly or wrongly) as exploitation have not, as yet, increased the chances for proletarian revolutions in any advanced capitalist society.

8. The class structure becomes more and more polarized, thus increasing the chance for revolution.

The polarization has not occurred; in the course of capitalism's history, the class structure has not been simpli-

2. For convenience of presentation, I am delaying my discussion of labor parties until we come to discuss Social Democracy. See chapter 7 below.

fied, as Marx expected, into two classes. On the contrary, the opposite trend has been general—and the more "advanced" the capitalism, the more complex and diversified has the stratification become.

The wageworkers in advanced capitalist societies have leveled off as a proportion of the labor force—in the USA, for example, this occurred before World War I. With automation, the trend certainly may be expected to continue. The intermediary or middle classes have not dwindled away. Their internal composition has changed, dramatically and drastically. They have become predominantly a New Middle Class of Salaried Employees, rather than an Old Middle Class of Entrepreneurs. As a whole their proportion to the working population has grown enormously.

In the twentieth century this has happened in all advanced capitalist countries. Among entrepreneurial farmers, a drastic decline in numbers; among free professionals, a leveling off; among small businessmen, a leveling off but also a great turnover with a high rate of bankruptcy and of new starts. The most decisive change is the expansion of the new middle class of salaried employees: salaried professionals, managers, office workers and sales personnel have composed the growing strata.

From a marxist point of view, these white collar employees can only be considered "a new proletariat," for they do not own the means of production with which they work, but work for wages or salaries. But to consider them in this category is seriously to limit one's understanding of them as a new set of strata. They are a new twentieth-century pyramid, superimposed upon and overlapping the older entrepreneurial-wageworker pyramid of nineteenth-century capitalism. Their higher-level managers have joined the property owners and with them constitute a corporate rich of a sort Marx did not know. Their middle and lower levels cannot be adequately understood as "merely" a new sort of proletariat.[8] They simply do not fit into the scheme of stratification provided by classic marxism, nor any scheme that is recognizably marxist; their very existence contradicts the expected two-class polarization of modern capitalism.

9. The material misery of the workers will increase, as will their alienation.

8. Cf. *White Collar.*

Economic or material misery has not increased inside the advanced capitalist world. On the contrary, the general fact has been an increase in material standards of living. Wageworkers have generally improved their economic condition, decreased their hours of work, abolished such cruel practices as child labor with which Marx was familiar, gained by their unions varying degrees of control over working conditions in factories, and, because of mechanization have much less brutal, physical toil to do than workers did in the nineteenth century.

Such facts are qualified in a decisive way by the mass unemployment of depression periods; and there is, even in the middle of general prosperity, much economic misery. But, as a whole, the secular trend of advanced capitalism in the twentieth century has been against Marx's expectation of increasing material misery—and for reasons that are not firmly a part of Marx's model of capitalism.

The improvement in the material standards of living is due (a) to institutional reforms of a political nature: the development of welfare programs by the state, and of the welfare state itself, which subsidizes and alleviates the economic deficiencies of the capitalist system. It is due (b) to the economic and political roles within capitalism played by labor unions and, in some countries, by labor parties. These agencies of the wageworkers have been reformist, and they have succeeded in putting through considerable reforms. Prosperity is also due (c) to the development of a seemingly permanent war economy which is, from an economic point of view, sheer waste on an enormous scale. And naturally the increased or continued standards of living rest upon (d) all those political, economic and military mechanisms on which the mid-twentieth-century stabilization of capitalism rests. (These will be discussed below, point 14.)

The relative weight of each of these, and of other mechanisms of capitalist prosperity and increased living standards, is of course controversial, but together, in one proportion or another, they have refuted Marx's expectation of increasing material misery within advanced capitalist societies. Moreover, they are not given sufficient weight in Marx's model of this society.

The shift of critical emphasis, by marxists and by nonmarxists, is from material misery to psychological deprivation, or alienation. This emphasis is well within the orbit

of Marx's mind, especially of the young Marx, but as part of marxist thinking it now lacks the solidity of its old accompaniment, material exploitation. New mechanisms of "exploitation" have to be added. The increased time for leisure is dominated and even expropriated by the machinery of amusement, for example. The chance really to experience, to reason and, in due course, the very capacity to reason are often expropriated.

To read back into Marx these kinds of ideas, in the detail in which we know them, is going too far. They are not there. Although Marx knew the subtleties of psychic exploitation, he did not know many that we know. The mechanisms, the scope, the locale, and the effects of modern alienation do not necessarily contradict anything he wrote but he did not describe them. Moreover, these psychic exploitations are not, we suspect, rooted in capitalism alone and as such. They are also coming about in non-capitalist and post-capitalist societies. They are not necessarily rooted either in the private ownership or in the state ownership of the means of production; they may be rooted in the facts of mass industrialization itself.

However that may be, the marxist conception of alienation, brilliant and illuminating as it is, remains, like class consciousness, a quite rationalist conception. In these conceptions are mixed moral judgments; indeed, into his conception of "alienation," Marx has jammed his highest and most noble image of man—and his fiercest indignation about the crippling of man by capitalism. And he has the strong tendency to impute, in an optative way, these judgments to the psychological realities of the work men do and the life men lead. Often these are not the realities men experience. The question of the attitude of men toward the work they do, in capitalist and in non-capitalist societies, is very much an empirical question, and one to which we do not have adequate answers. At any rate, to say the least, the condition in which Marx left the conception of alienation is quite incomplete, and brilliantly ambiguous.

The case for alienation, then, is much more convincing than that for material misery, although the variety and the causes of alienation go beyond Marx's cryptic and not too clear comments about it. Moreover, alienation does not necessarily, or even usually, result in revolutionary impulses. On the contrary, often it seems more likely to

be accompanied by political apathy than by insurgency of either the left or right.

The psychological alternatives for men in capitalist society are no more polarized than is the class structure. Not conservatism *or* insurgency, proletarian *or* bourgeois, but social apathy, a developed and mature political indifference, is often the determining psychological condition. Such apathy is not readily explained in terms of Marx's rationalist model of ideological forms and class consciousness, or by his conception of alienation.

10. The wageworkers, a class-in-itself, will be transformed into the proletariat, a class-for-itself.

In advanced capitalism this has occurred only episodically and partially. It tends to occur in earlier rather than in later phases of industrialization, and in a situation in which political repression coincides with economic exploitation. But neither the mechanisms nor the full mixture of conditions under which it tends to occur are adequately stated by Marx. In fact, they cannot be so stated in his (economic) categories of stratification; for they involve certain (autocratic) political conditions as well as considerations of the status and the occupational composition of economic classes.

But for Marx the structural development of capitalism —the growth of factories, of their enlarged scale and concentration, etc.—leads to the psychological and political development of the proletariat, to its unity, its consciousness, its revolutionary insurgency. He was quite clearly wrong.

Neither "consciousness" nor "existence" altogether determines the other. They interact, as Marx more or less inconsistently knew. But "intervening variables" are also at work: the means of mass communication, the machinery of amusement, the cultural apparatus—in brief, features of the ideological superstructure. Such variables mediate the relations of "existence" and "consciousness"; they affect each of these and they affect their interplay. They can play and often do play an autonomous role in the development of class consciousness or the lack of it. Existence itself is subject to the definitions of reality carried by the cultural apparatus. Consciousness itself, even self-identity, is also subject to these stereotypes and meanings.

In his notion of class, Marx tends to confuse the objective fact of it, a statistical aggregation of people, with the psychological developments that may occur within its membership. He seems to believe that class consciousness is a necessary psychological consequence of objective economic development, which includes the polarization of owners and workers. To Marx there is no ambiguity about this because the psychological and political results are, in some way not fully explained, the product of economic changes. But the connections between economic facts and psychological changes are not well considered as empirical questions.

The conditions under which class consciousness of the sort Marx had in mind does occur are not fully known, but it is certain that they include more than economic developments in general, or relations to the means of production in particular. This is true even if we assume that economic developments are the prime movers of all historical change. The mechanisms by which such changes in the economic base lead to psychological changes are not worked out by Marx (or by later marxists).

If we agree with Marx that ideas must be connected with material interest to have any effect—must become justifications or criticisms—this is not to agree that ideas are accordingly mere "reflections" of such interests. In a satisfactory model of social structure we must allow a considerable degree of autonomy to the formation and role of ideas. We must trace the ways in which ideas are related to individuals and to institutions with more sophistication than Marx was able to achieve in his general model. In such work we are not limited (for the social bases to which we may impute ideas) to economic classes, however defined, still less to only two such classes.

The inadequacy of Marx's notion of "class interests" is of great moral importance. He does not consider the difference between (a) What Is to the Interests of Men according to an analysis of their position in society, and (b) What Men Are Interested In according to the men themselves. Nor does he confront fully (as we must since Lenin), the moral meaning of the political uses of this distinction. (This is the moral root of problems of leninism and of the meaning of democracy and freedom.)

Marx himself is able to avoid these problems because of

a confusion in his very categories of stratification, and because of the optative mood of his statements. By "to the interest of" Marx means, I take it, long-run general and rational interests. And to him, consciousness of such interests is revolutionary class consciousness. All else is temporary, partial, irrational, not yet fully developed.

But the fact is that men are often concerned with temporary rather than long-run interests, and with particular interests, of occupational trades, for example, rather than the more general interests of their class. Also it is a matter of intellectual controversy and of moral judgment to determine what is temporary or durable, and it is certainly in part a moral judgment to decide what is "rational," and whether or not class interests are the only, or even the main, rational interests. Marx's view of class consciousness is however as utilitarian and rationalist as anything out of Jeremy Bentham. "Class consciousness" is the marxian counterpart to liberalism's image of "man as citizen."

Two possibilities must be considered. First, revolutionary class consciousness in which what is to men's interests is also what they are interested in; objective conditions and subjective development coincide. This point of coincidence between economic and psychological trends is the political target of classic marxism and it is also assumed to be an inevitable product of the course of capitalist history.

But second, there are some occasions when men are *not* interested in what is to their rational interests (however judged) and others when they *are* interested in what is not to their interests. Such men, according to Marx, are "falsely conscious," and they are in this irrational state because objective and subjective developments do not as yet coincide. He assumes that capitalist history will do away with false consciousness. Obviously it has not.

11. The opportunity for revolution exists only when objective conditions and subjective readiness coincide.

Obviously true—and a truism. As already indicated, the two processes have not coincided in any advanced capitalist society, even the most advanced in the worst depression so far—the USA in the 1930's.

12. The functional indispensability of a class in the economic system leads to its political supremacy in the society as a whole.

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This assumption, which underlies Marx's theory of power, seems to be drawn from the history of the bourgeoisie. Becoming functionally supreme within the feudal system, the bourgeoisie broke out of it to form the new society of capitalism. Likewise, reasoned Marx, within advanced capitalism, as the bourgeoisie becomes parasitical, and capitalism beset by contradictions, the workers will become the functionally indispensable class. Accordingly, they too will smash the system that hampers its own functioning; they too will become the ascendant class. Behind the marxian theory of power, in short, there is a grand—and false—historical analogy of bourgeoisie with proletariat, of the transition from feudalism to capitalism with that from capitalism to socialism.

"The ancient slave," Professor Bober has noted, "did not erect the feudal system, nor the serf or journeyman the capitalist system. History does not demonstrate that the exploited class of one society is the architect of the next social organization." [4] Capitalism did not come about because of a class struggle between exploited serfs and nobles or between journeymen and exploiting guildmasters. The economy and the society of the bourgeoisie grew up as an independent structure within feudalism.

In eighteenth-century France, the bourgeoisie became economically and politically powerful enough to gain control over the government, to smash the status and legal privileges of the nobles, and to reconstruct the social structure in accordance with bourgeois interests in an extended free market and a redistribution of taxation burdens. But, these successes of the middle classes were caused by their very wealth, which in the end made it impossible for governments lacking their support to govern.

In contrast, capitalists and wageworkers *are* part of the same economic and social structure: within capitalism, wageworkers are *not* representatives of any independent economic system. As already indicated, what capitalist and wageworkers fight over is the distribution of the product, not the capitalist system of production as such. In contrast with the bourgeoisie (which before the French Revolution was expanding in size and in importance), the

4. M. M. Bober, *Karl Marx's Interpretation of History*, Second Edition, Revised (Harvard Economic Studies, Vol. 31; Cambridge, Mass., 1948), p. 340.

wageworkers of advanced twentieth-century capitalism have in both respects declined.

In addition to the falseness of the historical analogy on which it rests, this theory of power seems too formal to be a useful guide to investigation. More than that, it is often misleading. It obscures the organizational connection between classes and political institutions, and the role of political ideas and ideals, as well as of military force, in capturing and using the power of the state.

The notion is upset, for example, by the fact of Nazi Germany where, on any reasonable account, parasitical and functionally useless elements of German society gained political power. There are of course many other instances of the military seizure and political maintenance of the powers of the state. Economic indispensability does *not* necessarily, and certainly does not automatically, lead to political power. Economic parasitism does not automatically lead to loss of political power.

13. In all class societies, the state is the coercive instrument of the owning classes.

This is true only in part and on occasion. It is certainly not an exhaustive statement of the functions or the interests served by the state in the full variety of advanced capitalist societies. In societies with propertied classes, the state can not adequately be understood as "merely" the instrument of such classes. In societies without propertied classes, the state does not appear to wither away, nor does it miraculously change all its functions and meanings merely because those who dominate society by means of it talk ideologically of the class "interests" the state serves.

Allied with Marx's conception of the state, and its theory of power, is the phrase "the ruling class." As with the conception of the state, this phrase enables those who use it to smuggle in by means of definition A Theory: the theory that the top economic class is also necessarily the top political group. I say "smuggle in" because use of the phrase, ruling class, implies what ought to be examined. To examine the theory, to test it, we must use more clear-cut and distinct terms. Although it was not developed as a criticism of Marx, I have suggested "the power elite" as a useful, unloaded term.

There is more to the difference (ruling class versus

power elite) than mere terminology. The latter conception leaves empirically open the question of economic determinism and the problem of the relative weight of upper economic classes within the higher circles. If the political order and the military establishment are given their due place alongside the economic system, it follows that our conception of the higher circles in capitalist society must be seen as more complex than the rather simple "ruling class" of Marx, and especially later marxists.

This is *not* a matter of something called "elite theory" (whatever that might be) versus "class theory." Both are *structural* conceptions, defined by reference to the institutional positions men occupy and, accordingly, to the means of power that are available to them. It is the shape, the variety, the relations, the weight of such institutions and such positions within them that is at question. And these are not questions that can be solved by definition.

The element of truth—and it is a large and important truth—in Marx's theory of the state is his general conception of the powers of property. Property does provide not merely control over things, but also control over men. This power is exercised in many different spheres of life, and some of them certainly through the state. But two points must be considered.

First, the powers of property in capitalism are restricted by labor unions, which also act through the state, and by other forces that do countervail against the naked political and economic powers of property.

Second, to nationalize property does not necessarily eliminate "the powers of property." It may in fact increase the actual exploitation of men by men in all social spheres; it may be more difficult to oppose exploitation or to do away with it. Marx generally assumed that, with the abolition of propertied classes, democratic mechanisms would accompany the collectivization. For us today, this must, to say the least, be taken as an open question.

Together, these two points raise serious questions about the adequacy of Marx's conception of the state. The source of his error is his economic determinism and his neglect of political and military institutions as autonomous and originative—matters I shall examine later. Here it is sufficient to note that if we *define* the state as a "committee of the ruling class" or "of propertied classes," we cannot very well *test*, within various societies, the range of relations between economic classes and political forms. But if we focus first in a clear-cut and unilateral way upon the means of political rule, and *define* the state, with Max Weber, simply as an organization that "monopolizes legitimate violence over a given territory," then we can be historically specific and empirically open in our reflections. And that is what we ought to do: make of the state an object of inquiry, rather than a theory closed up in a slogan.

This is a matter of comparative and historical inquiry, but even without any such close analysis it is obvious that quite different political systems can and do coexist with similar capitalist economic bases: the United States in 1920, Nazi Germany, England in the 1940's, Sweden today. Surely it is careless to lump all these together as "committees of the propertied classes."

14. Capitalism is involved in one economic crisis after another. These crises are getting worse. So capitalism moves into its final crisis—and the revolution of the proletariat.

The slump-boom cycle is a foremost economic fact about the history of capitalism. But it is a very real question whether or not this cycle is inherent in capitalism, as presently organized in individual nation-states and on an international scale. The political role of the state, in direct and indirect economic actions, of unions and of labor parties, of the economic brinkmanship of military preparation—these and other developments transform the problem of crisis from a problem of seemingly inevitable economic mechanisms into political and military issues of international and domestic scale.

On the stabilization of advanced capitalism, in general, I think we have now to say: Not yet proved one way or another, still in balance. By no means may we rule out severe economic crisis; the general model of crisis set forth by Marx is instructive. *But* to prove Karl Marx's theories correct or incorrect on this point, it is not enough to show that capitalism is in trouble, or even that it is subject to severe crises. To proceed in that way would be to treat Marx as a mere prophet, rather than as the social analyst he was. We must ask: What are the causes of the trouble, the nature of the crises? And what are their results? To these questions Marx is an inadequate guide.

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The mechanics of such stabilization as does prevail—and the instabilities too, as well as the possible downfall—are not due to the internal, economic developments Marx foresaw. The mechanics of stabilization now very much include imperialist mechanics of a sort Marx did not foresee and, above all, the threat of competition with an economically developed, politically consolidated, militarily strong non-capitalist structure—the sino-soviet bloc—about which Marx clearly had nothing to say.

Considered internally, the problems of capitalist crisis are political and military issues rather than economic problems as such. These issues exist because what must be done economically is politically repugnant to the most powerful capitalist interests. War preparation as a means of *economic* brinkmanship is more often more to their taste.

Advanced capitalism, in its political, military and economic forms, has been stabilized on an international scale. Self-corrections within it, of a politically facilitated kind, are at work, not only within but also between the advanced capitalist economies. International aid and support has been available among capitalist societies—for political and military reasons, no doubt—but with the economic result of capitalist prosperity for both North America and Western Europe. Most United States aid since World War II has been used to help resuscitate the capitalist economies of already advanced societies, not to industrialize non-industrial areas. This postwar reconstruction of the advanced capitalist systems (former allies and former enemies alike) has tended to consolidate them as an economic bloc at high levels of economic activity, and to stabilize this bloc politically and militarily on an international scale. The major political meaning of this work lay in the military postures that have been assumed by the USA and USSR. Given that posture, the USA aided the world capitalist recovery and boom, directly by military aid and indirectly by assuming most of the "burden" of military preparation for a possible World War III.

In the meantime, regardless of causes, advanced capitalism has not collapsed in economic crisis; crises or slumps have indeed occurred, but these appear more episodic than secular. Moreover, in overcoming them in non-marxian ways, capitalist society as known to Marx has been changed into other forms, many of them not expected by Marx.

What has come to prevail is a politically and militarily organized capitalism. Its managers *have* alleviated economic crisis, and there has been especially since World War II began, an economic boom on an unprecedented scale.

Marx did not see clearly and adequately the nature of capitalism's monopoly form and the political and military manner of its stabilization. In this monopoly form it has not remained merely "an anarchy of production." Vast sectors of it have been highly rationalized by private corporations, trade associations, and state intervention. Capitalism and bureaucracy, in brief, are not polar opposites. They have been integrated. The anarchy of production has not been generalized; to a considerable extent, it has been rationalized.

The operation of the most advanced capitalist economies at high levels is also due, in considerable part, to "artificially stimulated demands;" built into them is systematic waste on an enormous scale, a scale not even Marx fully grasped. The "status obsolescence" of perfectly serviceable commodities is one example; the change of automobile models by Detroit costs more than several years of "the whole of the productive investment program of all of India." [5] The economic waste of mass advertisement, not to speak of the preparation for war, are further examples.

But this is just the point: Marx did not know that despite all this waste, in part because of it, the engines of capitalist production and productivity could continue and even increase. He saw the waste, the fraud, the contradictions, but he underestimated the fabulous capacities (technical, economic, political) of fully developed capitalism as we know it today.

The gap between possible and actual production in advanced capitalism is indeed, as Marx saw clearly, enormous. This contradiction, objectively speaking, has grown greater and probably will continue to do so, for scientific possibilities *are* restricted by waste, fraud, inefficiency, and short-run profit-seeking. But it is a political gap rather than an "economic contradiction." Increasingly a matter of moral evaluation and an object of political decision, it has *not* resulted even during severe economic depression, in any "proletarian upsurge" to resolve it.

5. Thomas Balogh, *The New Statesman*, 12 December 1959.

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Marx assumes that capitalism is a dynamic system largely determined by economic forces at work within it. As such, his model is a brilliant description, analysis and prediction. But the fact is that "other forces" *have* interfered with the economic mechanics. Some of these are within it—in particular political and military forces; some are outside it—in particular the world consolidation of the sino-soviet bloc as a counter-force to world capitalism. The fate of capitalism as a system now depends upon these forces as well as upon its own internal economic mechanics.

15. The post-capitalist society will first pass through a transitional stage—that of the dictatorship of the proletariat; then it will move into a higher phase in which true communism will prevail.

About this, we have no information: a proletarian revolution of the sort Marx had in mind has never occurred. The revolutions "made in his name" have occurred in types of society quite different than those he had in mind. These we shall consider when we examine post-Marx marxism.

16. Although men make their own history, given the circumstances of the economic foundations, the way they make it and the direction it takes are determined. The course of history is structurally limited to the point of being inevitable.

The general model of history-making set forth by Marx and Engels is (a) a generalization applied to the whole of society of the economic model of the market of classic capitalism, in which events are the unintended results of innumerable deciders (buyers and sellers determining prices, for example). It is also (b) a generalization from one historically specific phase of capitalism—in the main, Victorian Great Britain—to the whole of the capitalist epoch, and perhaps to all previous history as well.

The historic facts now at hand suggest the need for an additional model. These facts are: the increased scope and the centralization of the means of power in every major institutional order of society, political, economic, military. Because of these facts we must construct another model in which events may be understood in closer and in more conscious relation to the decisions and lack of decisions of powerful elites, political and military as well as economic. We must apply this model, with appropriate modifications, to the understanding of soviet types of society, to underdeveloped countries, as well as to advanced capitalist societies.

The categories of political, military and economic elites are thus as important (or more so) to the analysis and understanding of our times as the mechanics of economic classes and other more impersonal forces of history-making.

The marxist model of history is brilliantly constructed and, for one phase of one type of society, it is generally the most appropriate. But taken alone and used universally, it is an undue generalization and as such, inadequate. It assumes a society in which the typical units are small in scale and their mode of interaction, like that of the free market economy, autonomous. In marxist terms, such a society is referred to as "the kingdom of necessity." Marx also refers, of course, to the "kingdom of freedom," to the post-capitalist realm in which men will be masters of their own fate and intention will more closely coincide with resultant event. The realm of necessity still does prevail; and Marx's model of it is useful in all types of society, in much of advanced capitalism, as well as in the undeveloped world. The realm of freedom is still an ideal only; as Marx envisaged it, it exists nowhere.

But these are not the only two models of history-making available; and we cannot suppose that the second is the only alternative to the first. Further models are needed for advanced capitalism as well as for other types of society.

The sequence of epochs Marx imagined, is not necessarily going to happen. The sequence (from feudalism to capitalism and from capitalism to socialism) is the big historical framework of Marx's theory and expectation. We must now modify it: out of advanced capitalism nowhere has socialism, of any sort recognizable as marxist, come; out of feudalism socialism of one type has sprung directly. In this type, moreover, the assumed coincidence of the individual's interests with those of his community—the realm of freedom—is not the unambiguous case.

So these epochs themselves—feudalism, capitalism, socialism—need revision: the capitalism that prevails is not the capitalism Marx knew; the post-capitalist societies that have arisen do not conform to Marx's expectations, either in their origins or in their character. The socialism, much less the communism, that Marx expected is certainly not,

as yet, the society that has come about out of one type of feudalism, in the sino-soviet zone.

17. The social structure, as noted in proposition number 1, is determined by its economic foundations; accordingly, the course of its history is determined by changes in these economic foundations.

The economic means are only one means of power, and they may themselves be shaped, in fact determined, by political and military means and in accordance with military and political aims and interest. "Political determinism" and "military determinism" are often as relevant as, or more relevant than, "economic determinism" to the explanation of many pivotal events in the mid-twentieth century.

The economic determinism of Marx (and along with it, the inevitability of history with which it is closely linked) is usually placed in opposition to the "moral determination" of liberals and of utopian socialists. Both views, I think, are historically specific to the period between the French Revolution and the First World War, and in particular to Great Britain and the United States. Neither can be taken as universal. Both must be reconsidered in the light of events in our own present time and immediately foreseeable future. And we are *not*, of course, limited to either moral or economic determinism.

Since Marx's day, the social structures of capitalism have changed to such an extent as to require a new statement of the causal weight of economic institutions, and of their causal relations with other institutions. In view of the history of marxist movements, the developments in advanced capitalism, and the conditions and prospects of the underdeveloped world—economic determinism has come to seem a fundamental (although a most fruitful) error in Marx's work. The view that economic causes are the supreme causes within capitalism is directly linked with the erroneous expectations about the role of the wageworker, the over-formal theory of power, and the oversimplified conception of the state.

Since the First World War, it has become increasingly clear that political forms may drastically modify—and even, on occasion, determine—the economies of a society. Not the mode of economic production but the mode of political action may well be decisive. As more and more areas

of social life, private as well as public, become objects of political organization, a struggle, for political ideals and for the political and military means of action and decision must, along with economic means, be seen as keys to man's making of history.

This does not mean that economic powers are minor, or that they are not translated into effective political and military power. But it does mean that with the expansion of the state, economic powers are now often defensive and limited, and that they are not the all-sufficient key to the understanding of political power or to the shaping of total social structures.

Many twentieth-century economic developments must themselves be explained by changes in political and military forces. I do not mean to replace "economic determinism" by "political determinism" or "military determinism," but only to suggest that the causal weight of each of these types is not subject to any historically universal rule. It must be historically determined in the case of any given society.

In various capitalist societies, political policies have greatly modified the economic base—and the social effects of economics upon all strata of the population. The welfare state is not "determined" by the mode of economic production, although of course it is made possible by economic developments. What is politically possible within present-day capitalist economies undoubtedly is wider than Marx's doctrine would lead us to expect. Just how wide it is, we cannot predict, but there is nothing inherent in the capitalist economic system that prohibits *political* history-making, including reform and deliberate change of the economy itself.

Within the present era of capitalism, the arena of conflict and the motor of historic change is less the economic base as such than the political and economic institutions joined into the political economy. This kind of political capitalism Marx neither knew nor foresaw. He did not grasp the almost neo-mercantilist form it has taken, nor the extent and effects of politically controlled and subsidized capitalism. The subsidies have been direct and indirect, of a welfare and of a military nature. That they may be considered subsidies of the economic defaults of capitalism does not alter my point: it strengthens it.

The political forces that have modified capitalism in

some countries are reforms carried out in Marx's name; in others, as in the New Deal, they are liberal forces, often led by upper class circles and strongly influenced by the weight of those "intermediary classes" that were, according to Marx, supposed to dwindle away. In part, too, the modifications are of course concessions made by monopoly capitalists in pursuit of their own interests. Capitalists have more political control over economic forces and so can perpetuate their role in political capitalism, thus upsetting the marxist anticipations of economic crisis and its expected results.

In brief, we must generalize Marx's approach to economics. We come then to focus—as did Marx—upon the changing techniques of economic production. But we also focus—as did Max Weber—upon the techniques of military violence, of political struggle and administration, and upon the means of communication—in short, upon *all* the means of power, and upon their quite varied relations with one another in historically specific societies.

So we may speak in a thoroughly marxist manner of the appropriation and monopolization of such political and military means. The emphasis upon the economy must be treated as a convenience of method. We must always try to distinguish its causal weight in the society as a whole, but we must leave open the possibilities of more political and more military autonomy than did Marx.

I think this is a necessary and useful refinement and elaboration of the general model of society drawn up by Marx. It then becomes possible to do *whatever* marxists may wish by way of arguing and investigating economic determinism. But economic determinism becomes one hypothesis to be tested in each specific epoch and society. Military determinism and political determinism may also be so tested. Given the present state of our knowledge, no one of the three should automatically be assumed to predominate uniformly among history-making factors in all societies, or even in all types of capitalist societies.

There is one implication of economic determinism quite detrimental to the present-day usefulness of Marx's work: the role of the nation-state and of nationalism in history. That nationalism would decline and internationalism come to be paramount in the ideology and political policies pursued by wageworkers—these expectations have turned out

to be quite wrong. This is revealed within socialist movements and communist states, within capitalist societies, and within colonial and underdeveloped areas.

Within capitalism, internationalism as a current has generally declined in force since Marx's time. The wageworkers have certainly been no less nationalist than have middle and upper classes. The most dramatic blow to the idea of "internationalism," especially in Germany, was struck by The Second International at the time of the First World War. On August 4, 1914, European "socialism" gave way to "nationalism" in a decisive way.

One meaning of such facts for the marxist model is that classes are only one basis in terms of which consciousness —and specifically, passionate consciousness—of interest may be formed; many other bases interfere with it, however strong at times it may be. Nationalism is only the most obvious example of this more general fact. Yet it *is* a grievous one. Nationalism, contrary to Marx's general assumption, has increased in importance as a political and economic force, as a military form, and as a basis of men's consciousness. In the making of history today, nation-states—and supra-national blocs of states—are the most immediate forms of organization, political consciousness and militant will. Classes, and particularly alliances of classes, do of course operate by means of nation-states, but the political and military powers resting in these political structures and upon nationalist consciousness often reshape classes and alliances of classes. Economic differences are greater between one nation-state and another than between classes within the advanced capitalist nations. Whatever the practice of later marxists may reveal, the idea does not form a systematic part of the work of Karl Marx.

To summarize, at the center of Marx's thought—indeed of all varieties of marxism—there is this proposition: of all the elements and forces of capitalist society it is the wageworkers who are destined to be the dynamic political actors in the maturity and in the decline of capitalism. Virtually every feature of marxism, as we have noted, finds its place as an explanation of why this process goes on and why it must go on.

Intellectually, that is the heart of marxism. The theories of trend, noted in our inventory, lie immediately back of this labor metaphysic and support it as the central propo-

sition about what is going on in the advanced capitalist world.

Morally, too, marxism is an affirmation of the processes by which the wageworkers are becoming a revolutionary proletariat, and a celebration of the revolutionary drama they are going to enact.

Politically, the history of the marxists is at bottom a set of strategies and efforts to further these processes, and so to make possible or to insure the enactment of that drama.

This being so, it must immediately be said that Marx's major political expectation about advanced capitalist societies has collapsed: the central agency which he designates has not developed as expected; the role he expected that agency to enact has not been enacted. The trends supposed to facilitate the development and the role of the agency have not generally come off—and when they have occurred, episodically and in part, they have not led to the results expected.

Wageworkers in advanced capitalism have rarely become a "proletariat vanguard"; they have not become the agency of any revolutionary change of epoch. To a very considerable extent they have been incorporated into nationalist capitalism—economically, politically, and psychologically. So incorporated, they constitute within capitalism a dependent rather than an independent variable. The same is true of labor unions and of labor parties. These organizations function politically and economically in a reformist manner only, and within the capitalist system. Class struggle in the marxist sense does not *prevail;* conflicts of economic interests have quite generally been institutionalized: they are subject to indirect and bureaucratic decision, rather than to open and political battle. There are, of course, basic class conflicts of interest. But there is little class struggle over them.

These points form a serious charge against Marx; they carry implications for the categories and the model which he set forth. To put it in another way, not only have the expectations of Marx failed to come about in any advanced capitalist society, but there are very good reasons to expect that they are not going to come about in the manner and on the scale expected by Marx. It is not merely a matter of an empirical miss: it rests upon theoretical deficiencies of his categories and in his general model of capitalism.

Such, after all, is only to be expected in view of the fact

that Marx's model as a whole, and in virtually all of its parts, is built upon and around the labor metaphysic. Since this labor metaphysic provides the central thrust and the major political expectation of classic marxism, its collapse entails the collapse of much else in his thinking.

Behind the labor metaphysic and the erroneous views of its supporting trends there are deficiencies in the marxist categories of stratification; ambiguities and misjudgments about the psychological and political consequences of the development of the economic base; errors concerning the supremacy of economic causes within the history of societies and the mentality of classes; inadequacies of a rationalist psychological theory; a generally erroneous theory of power; an inadequate conception of the state.

Even being as generous as possible in our application to Marx's work of his own principle of historic specificity, we find him too wrong on too many points. The political, psychological and economic expectations clearly derivable from his work seem increasingly unreal, his model as a whole increasingly inadequate. His theories bear the stamp of Victorian capitalism. It is little wonder: that is what they are about. We must accuse him of dying, his work unfinished, in 1883.

Of course it is easy to confront nineteenth-century doctrine with twentieth-century events—so many decades have passed since Marx's work was done. Such easy hindsight about such work as his may make one feel cheap; but it is inevitable for any possible advance in social reflection and inquiry. Classic marxism today is less an adequate definition of advanced capitalist realities than a political statement in the optative mood.

But we must now ask: Has the value of Marx's *method* of work been destroyed? My answer to this should already be clear: No. His method is a signal and lasting contribution to the best sociological ways of reflection and inquiry available.[6]

6. I do *not* refer to the mysterious "laws of dialectics," which Marx never explains clearly but which his disciples claim to use. The outsider must note that among the dialecticians there is no agreement on the meaning of dialectics. But consider, for a moment, the "three laws": First, quantitative changes produce qualitative changes, and vice versa. The polemic that Marx makes with this "law" is against those who believe that there are no "leaps" (that is, revolutions) in history, but only a minute series of gradual changes. In our revolutionary epoch it is no longer necessary to "refute" such a view by reference to pretentious "laws." It is obvious that if anything changes enough, it becomes something different than what it was to begin with. (Cont'd on p. 130).

But has the value of his general *model* of society and of history been destroyed by the run of historical events that have overturned specific theories and expectations? My answer to this question is, substantively: Yes. The model as Marx left it is inadequate. One can use it only with great intellectual clumsiness and wasted sophistication, and often only with doubletalk. For us today, the work of Marx is a beginning point, not a finished view of the social worlds we are trying to understand. So far as our own orienting political philosophy and our own social theories are concerned, we may not know just where we stand but there is little doubt that we are somewhere "beyond Marx." Proof for

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Second, "the negation of the negation": one thing grows out of another and then does battle with it. In turn, the newly grown produces in itself "the seeds of its own destruction." Marx's texts are full of metaphors from the reproductive cycle and the hospital delivery-room. Things are pregnant; there are false alarms; wombs and midwives abound. And finally, there is bloody birth. Thus the proletariat, born from the womb of capitalism, in turn makes capitalist society "pregnant with revolution." But there is no clear-cut method for recognizing "negation"; one should not mistake metaphors of style for a method of thinking, much less for "a general scientific law of nature." The substantive content is merely this: that things (sometimes) grow out of others and (sometimes) in due course displace them.

Third, the "law" that marxists consider the most important: "the interpenetration of opposites," which I take to mean that there are objective contradictions and resolutions in the world. This is clearly to confuse logic with metaphysics: one can say that the *statements* men make are often contradictory. One cannot say that trees or rocks, or, for that matter, classes "contradict" one another. Men can believe that positive and negative charges of electricity contradict each other, but this clearly is to anthropomorphize electricity.

The simple truth about the "laws of dialectics," as discerned in Marx, is that they are ways of talking about matters *after* these matters have been explained in ordinary ways of discourse and proof. Marx himself never *explained* anything by the "laws of dialectics," although he did not avoid, on occasion, the dialectical vocabulary of obscurantism. "Dialectics" was, after all, the vocabulary of the Hegelian-trained man, and Marx did put this vocabulary to good substantive use: in terms of dialectics he rejected the absurdity of eighteenth-century views of "natural harmony"; achieved a sense of the fluidity and many-sided nature of history-making; saw the "universal interconnection" of all its forces; consistently maintained an awareness of perennial change, of genuine conflict, of the ambiguous potentialities of every historical situation.

We may also understand that if not for Marx, for many marxists, mere reference to "dialectical" serves to let one out of the determinist trap. But for self-appointed "insiders" it is all too often an intellectually cheap way to mysterious insights, a substitute for the hard work of learning. Perhaps their insistence upon this language is due mainly to their having become disciples before having read much else. For us, the "dialectical method" is either a mess of platitudes, a way of doubletalk, a pretentious obscurantism—or all three. The essential error of "the dialectician" is the know-it-all confusion of logic with metaphysics; if the rules of dialectics were "the most general laws of motion" all physical scientists would use them every day. On the other hand, if dialectics is the "science of thinking," then we are dealing with the subject-matter of psychology, and not with logic or method at all. As a guide to thinking, "dialectics" can be more burdensome than helpful, for if everything is connected, dialectically, with everything else, then you must know "everything" in order to know anything, and causal sequences become difficult to trace.

this, fragmentary but nonetheless decisive, has been suggested in the present chapter.

But there is one further question. "Marxism" certainly does not end with Marx. It begins with him. Later thinkers and actors have used, revised, elaborated his ideas, and set forth quite new doctrines, theories and strategies. In one way or another, these are indeed "based upon Marx," although they can be identified with classic marxism only by those who feel they must distort intellectual and political history for their unmarxist need for certainty through orthodoxy. That is not the question. The question is: Are any of these later theories adequate as political orientation and useful for social inquiry today? Let us examine the most important and influential of these.