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Author(s): Michael Burawoy

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# Introduction: The Resurgence of Marxism in American Sociology<sup>1</sup>

Michael Burawoy  
*University of California, Berkeley*

The court has been sitting in judgement upon historical materialism for one hundred years, and it is continually being adjourned. The adjournment is in effect a tribute to the robustness of the tradition; in that long interval the cases against a hundred other interpretive systems have been upheld, and the culprits have disappeared “downstairs.” That the court has not yet found decisively in favour of historical materialism is not only because of the ideological *parti pris* of certain judges (although there is plenty of that) but also because of the provisional nature of the explanatory concepts, the *actual* silences (or absent mediations) within them, the primitive and unreconstructed character of some of the categories, and the inconclusive determinacy of the evidence. [E. P. THOMPSON]

It would be strange if Marxist theory eternally stood still.  
[NIKOLAI BUKHARIN]

The renewed interest in Marxism within American sociology is only the latest revitalization of that discipline by European thought. Between the two world wars, the Chicago School was inspired by German thought as filtered through Louis Wirth and Robert Park. The two decades after World War Two were dominated by Talcott Parsons's grand synthesis of Weber, Durkheim, Pareto, Marshall, and, subsequently, Freud. *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) set new parameters and directions in the heyday of an expanding field. It was during this period that Parsons, together with a number of eminent colleagues and students, developed and consolidated the basis of structural functionalism, lending American sociology at least the appearance of an overarching coherence. Structural functionalism provided an intellectual framework for celebrating the virtues of American society and fighting the evils of totalitarianism: fascism and communism. It inspired major studies in comparative and historical sociology—such as those of Neil Smelser, Robert Bellah, and Reinhard Bendix—although Bendix

<sup>1</sup> I should like to thank Gretchen Franklin, Harriet Friedmann, Carol Hatch, and David Plotke for their detailed comments on earlier drafts. Requests for reprints should be sent to Michael Burawoy, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

was very much opposed to Parsons's systems analysis. Seymour Martin Lipset played a pioneering role in political sociology, drawing on De Tocqueville as well as Weber, Michels, and Marx. Robert Merton and his students—Peter Blau, Alvin Gouldner, and Philip Selznick—drew out underlying implications of Weber's theory of bureaucracy, welding it to functionalist theory and laying the basis for organizational analysis. Another of Parsons's students, Harold Garfinkel, drew on the work of Alfred Schutz to develop his ethnomethodology. Industrial sociology became a burgeoning field of inquiry at all the major centers. Toward the end of the period, the "new nations" of the Third World temporarily caught the sociological imagination, and structural functionalism was harnessed to modernization theory. Barrington Moore's momentous work *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, published in 1966, signaled a major departure and the dawning of a new period.

Where did Marxism figure in these two decades? Obviously Soviet Marxism constituted a major point of opposition. But there were also subterranean legacies from the past. During the turbulent 1930s, a number of these leading sociologists had developed a serious relationship with Marxism. Although their turn away from any Marxist allegiance was often as striking as it was rapid, some have continued to debate with strands of the Marxist legacy. I am thinking here of such figures as Daniel Bell and Seymour Martin Lipset. Both have spurned the systematizing efforts of "grand theory." Their industrial, political, and cultural sociologies have examined class conflict and its demise, the destiny of the working class, the formation of interest groups, intellectuals and their relationship to social movements of the left and right, and the political and cultural implications of long-term economic change. If their analysis is indelibly marked by their dialogue with Marxism, their conclusions—like their premises—are anything but radical. Indeed, Lipset (1981) recently endorsed the development of an apolitical sociological Marxism. They embraced the self-congratulation and self-assurance of a sociology of the "American Century." Together with Edward Shils, they developed theories of the "end of ideology," symbolized by what they saw as the collapse of Marxism via Stalinism.

The "end of ideology" thesis constituted a major challenge to Marxism, but there were few around to meet the challenge. This is perhaps not surprising. With the exception of the works of Leon Trotsky and a transmuted Frankfurt School, the powerful European Marxism that grew up in opposition to the orthodoxies of Soviet Marxism and the Comintern remained largely unknown in this country. And often those, like Bell and Hook, who were familiar with such writers as Lukács and Korsch were also the very ones proclaiming the end of ideology (see, e.g., Bell 1960, chap. 13; 1981). In the face of anti-Communist repression and the absence of a strong socialist movement or Marxist intellectual tradition in the United States,

there were few Marxists able to sustain a creative dialogue and critique to counter the euphoria of 1950s sociology. In particular, structural functionalism pursued its totalizing mission unhindered by an intellectual opposition that might have brought its premises into line with the emerging political realities and social movements of the 1960s.

The year 1965 saw the first teach-ins on the war in Vietnam. In the same year, Talcott Parsons captured both the triumph and the limits of structural functionalism in a paper he delivered at a plenary session of the American Sociological Association's annual meeting. He dismissed Karl Marx as a social thinker "whose work fell entirely within the nineteenth century . . . he belongs to a phase of development which has been superseded. . . . [His] predictions about the course of the socioeconomic system have been deeply invalidated by the course of events in most advanced industrial societies. . . . [J]udging by the standards of the best contemporary social-science . . . Marxian theory is obsolete" (1967, pp. 135, 109–10, 132). Accordingly, Marxism is reduced to a dogma of "certain categories of intellectuals, who have professed to speak for the masses of the underprivileged in their respective societies and, in their latest phase, for the underprivileged society as a whole" (p. 127). Parsons advances telling criticisms of Marx, claiming that he overgeneralized from "the structure of the early capitalist firm and its market involvements" (p. 109); that he overlooked the possibility of diverse power relations between "ownership-management and workers" (p. 110); that he postulated a false tendency for "the status of the worker component to become progressively homogenized and separated drastically from the proprietary status" (pp. 110–11); that he was "virtually oblivious to the elements of what may be called pluralization" (p. 113); that he missed the role of the state in "directly supporting trade-union organization and welfare legislation, both of which strengthen the position of the proletariat in class struggle" (p. 114); that he attempted to "rule the ideal and normative factors out of 'basic' significance in the determination of social processes" (p. 123); and that he predicted that "the revolutionary situation would develop most clearly and rapidly in the most advanced industrial countries," whereas in fact there has been a "shift in the socialist-communist movement from the advanced industrial societies to the more or less 'underdeveloped' areas" (pp. 124–25).

Parsons's conclusions do not appear to have been based on a careful or systematic reading of the works of Marx and Engels; every footnote is to a non-Marxist source. Nevertheless, his critique hits home at major weaknesses in the writings of Marx and Engels, some of which are directly addressed in the papers collected in this volume. What is remarkable, however, is Parsons's obliviousness to the Marxist literature after Marx,<sup>2</sup> a

<sup>2</sup> Parsons therefore overlooks the convergence of his own systems analysis with, e.g., that of Nikolai Bukharin—the leading official Soviet theoretician in the 1920s. Both Par-

literature whose *raison d'être* was to transcend the shortcomings of Marx's own analysis, developing it in new directions while remaining true to its philosophy of history, ethical imperatives, and methodology.<sup>3</sup> By ignoring 20th-century Marxism, Parsons betrayed not only an unfortunate parochialism but also a fundamental misconception of Marx's epistemology. Its central tenet of the link between theory and practice implies at the very least that social theories—and particularly Marxism itself—must undergo continual reconstruction. Marxism cannot be its own exception; it too succumbs to the forces it claims to be dominant.

Parsons's attempt to hermetically seal Marxism as an intellectual tradition within the 19th century betokens his own pursuit of theoretical closure—a pursuit which led structural functionalism away from the new historical forces being unleashed on its own doorstep. In its isolated and abstract character, social theory proved to be out of phase with the burgeoning collective disaffection of the 1960s: the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement, and the critique of the mass university. Vilified by C. Wright Mills, and later given a more nuanced critique by Alvin Gouldner (who sought to recover the emancipatory potential, the voluntaristic moment of structural functionalism), mainstream sociology came under relentless assault. "Conflict theory" replaced "consensus theory"; contradiction replaced equilibrium; critiques of capitalism replaced its celebration. But in its concern for issues of the moment, this radical sociology of the 1960s often lost the historical and comparative perspective that had characterized some of the best work of the 1950s.

It was only in the 1970s, when the attack on complacent politics and consensus theory had run its course and the experiences of the New Left had to be assimilated, that a new wave of specifically Marxist thought surfaced. It appeared in at least four guises. The first was the widening appeal of the *Monthly Review* School, which had begun its journal in 1949 as a vehicle for developing Marxist theory independent of the Communist party. *Monthly Review* survived the "McCarthy era" to pioneer a Marxist analysis of the Third World, analyzing the imperial role of the United States

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sons and Bukharin were to develop theories of societal equilibrium and evolutionary change, and they both faced criticisms for downplaying conflict and internal contradictions. Seymour Martin Lipset again demonstrates his familiarity with certain strands of Marxism when he writes of Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*: "It represents the one sophisticated attempt by a major Marxist to come to terms with the emerging body of sociological theory and research" (Lipset 1962, p. 27).

<sup>3</sup> In 1906 Trotsky wrote: "Marxism is above all a method of analysis—not analysis of texts, but analysis of social relations. Is it true that, in Russia, the weakness of capitalist liberalism inevitably means the weakness of the labour movement? Is it true, for Russia, that there cannot be an independent labour movement until the bourgeoisie have conquered power? It is sufficient merely to put these questions to see what a hopeless formalism lies concealed beneath the attempt to convert an historically relative remark of Marx's into a supra-historical axiom" (1969, p. 64).

and championing the Cuban and, at times, the Chinese revolutions. As early as 1957, Paul Baran published his path-breaking critique of modernization theory, *The Political Economy of Growth*, which imported Frankfurt School pessimism into an analysis of the dynamics and interdependence of advanced and backward economies. This was followed in 1966 by Baran and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* and by a series of timely studies of U.S. imperialism. Immanuel Wallerstein's more recent analysis of the world capitalist system has affinities with this school.<sup>4</sup>

A second stream of thought, concerning the exceptional character of U.S. society, was developed by Marxist historians. Associated with the journal *Studies on the Left* (and its heirs, *Socialist Revolution* and *Socialist Review*) and with the history department of the University of Wisconsin, William Appleman Williams, Gabriel Kolko, James Weinstein, and others mounted an assault on American liberalism as the ideology of an "enlightened" ruling class preempting popular struggles at home while imposing domination abroad.

A third strand of Marxism drew its inspiration from the Frankfurt School and the tradition of Hegelian Marxism, in particular the writings of Georg Lukács, Karl Korsch, Antonio Gramsci, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and, above all, Herbert Marcuse. The journal *Telos* has been most closely associated with the development of this critical theory, exploring such themes as psychoanalysis, feminism, council communism, existentialism, and the legacy of the Frankfurt School in the work of Jürgen Habermas. With only a few exceptions, the contributors to *Telos* share an unmistakable hostility to all forms of Soviet and scientific Marxism. They shrink from treating society as an "object" to be examined, an object with its own "laws of motion" whose unfolding is independent of human will. Instead they insist on restoring "subjectivity" to human endeavors, the capacity of people to shape their own destiny, and the potential for rational and collective regulation of society—although the most pessimistic would argue that capitalism has penetrated the human psyche so deeply as to erode even the potential for an emancipated society. The pursuit of the themes of domination and resistance, particularly in the realm of culture, established affinities with social historians such as E. P. Thompson, Herbert Gutman, Eugene Genovese, and David Montgomery,

<sup>4</sup> A close relative of the *Monthly Review* School is the work of radical economists who began the journal *Review of Radical Political Economics* in 1969. Apart from being concerned with traditional Marxist debates, their contributions have been shaped by opposition to neoclassical orthodoxies. Thus, the work of Samuel Bowles, Richard Edwards, Herbert Gintis, David Gordon, Heidi Hartmann, William Lazonick, William Tabb, Tom Weiskopf, and many others seeks to bring a sociological and historical dimension to the analysis of such economic institutions as the labor process, labor markets, and schools, as well as patterns of racial and gender discrimination. In a different mold are those, such as John Roemer, who have taken the sophisticated mathematical apparatus of orthodox economics to construct equally sophisticated Marxist models.

all of whom stress the authenticity of struggles by the oppressed. Critical theory's concern with resistance resonates with populist themes in U.S. culture and social movements, also captured by the journal *Radical America*.

Finally, a fourth strand of Marxism, drawing on French structuralist thought, sought to revitalize historical materialism as a social science. Locked in battle with existentialism and Marxist humanism, Louis Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas, Maurice Godelier, Etienne Balibar, and others constructed what is now known as "French structuralist Marxism." They tried to create a space within scientific Marxism, hitherto dominated by Communist party orthodoxy, for original theorizing, what they called "theoretical practice." In its emphasis on the conditions for the reproduction of capitalism, considered as a system of social relations with distinctive contradictions and dynamics, this French Marxism exhibited definite affinities with structural functionalism—affinities which critical theorists and humanist scholars have been quick to exploit (see, e.g., Thompson 1978, pp. 262–76, 340). But for this very reason French structuralism was also a natural medium for Marxist academics to adopt in their debates with American sociology. It led to concrete studies of the state, class structures, the labor process, and urban political economy. Through its close connections with European Marxism, the British journal *New Left Review* was largely responsible for purveying the revamped scientific Marxism. In the United States, *Kapitalistate* and at times the *Insurgent Sociologist* played an important role in disseminating the structuralist perspective.

These four strands of Marxism—the *Monthly Review* School, the corporate liberal school, critical theory, and Marxist structuralism—have all been influenced, although in different degrees, by European Marxism. They are part of a broader shift from the classical Marxism of Kautsky, Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky, and Bukharin to the Western Marxism of Gramsci, Korsch, Lukács, Horkheimer, Adorno, Reich, Marcuse, Lefebvre, Della Volpe, and Althusser.<sup>5</sup> Perry Anderson (1976) characterized this shift as a movement from a dialogue between theory and working-class struggles to one between Marxist theory and bourgeois theory. The major Western Marxists, with the notable exception of Gramsci, all finally became academics, most often philosophers. Thus, Western Marxism is the Marxism of working-class defeats, of socialism in retreat. Given the extent of anti-communism within the working class and the weakness of the Communist party, it is not surprising that this retreat has gone furthest in the United

<sup>5</sup> "Western Marxism" originally referred to the body of Marxism which emerged in response to the optimism of classical Marxism and the orthodoxy of Soviet Marxism. It opposed scientific Marxism with a critical, humanistic Marxism. See Merleau-Ponty (1973), Arato and Breines (1979), and Jacoby (1981). Perry Anderson (1976) redefines "Western Marxism" to include both Hegelian and scientific works that reflect the separation of theorizing from working-class struggles. It is in this latter sense that I use the term here.

States, where the university is virtually the only refuge for Marxists. American Marxism has, therefore, a particularly pronounced academic character, being separated not only from the working class but from social movements in general. As David Plotke (1982) has argued, this has led to contradictory impulses toward immersion in social movements, on the one hand, and a critique of their limitations, followed by withdrawal, on the other. The tension is reflected in divergent theoretical tendencies toward pessimism (drawn from the Frankfurt School or the “iron laws of history”) and toward a populist romanticism (drawing on certain American cultural traditions and at times the triumphalism of the Communist movement).

Even if few are now able to straddle the divide between university and social movements on the back of Marxist theories, the impetus for the revival of interest in Marxism in the United States did come from the protests and disillusionments of the 1960s and early 1970s. Sustaining that revival without a permanent base outside the university will depend on forging links with an international movement and winning a place for Marxist ideas within academic discourse. Both have been occurring. The international character of the New Left has brought with it the translation of Marxist classics into English. Monthly Review Press and New Left Books have been responsible for opening Marxist legacies to the English-speaking world. With the availability of original works, there has also been an explosion of secondary analyses, situating the different phases and branches of Marxism in their historical contexts, subjecting them to internal critique, and rebuilding Marxist traditions. This has been further encouraged by the proliferation of journals, the development of networks and collectives, and the staging of conferences. That is, during the last decade Marxists have begun to develop rudimentary institutional bases from which they can talk to one another and question the assumptions underpinning academic disciplines. If the 1960s involved the rejection of mainstream sociology and the 1970s saw the emergence of Marxisms, often in isolation from debates in sociology, then the 1980s will test their capacity to address problems more powerfully than alternative theories without losing their critical stance toward contemporary society.

The assimilation of contemporary Marxism into sociology has already begun. Sociologists are experimenting with Marxist ideas and testing Marxist theories of class structure, work organization, the state, and the international division of labor. The contents of the *American Sociological Review* and the *American Journal of Sociology* testify to the growing appeal of Marxist concepts.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, American Marxists have

<sup>6</sup> Contemporary sociological dialogue with Marxism has advanced much further in England, where a distinctive “neo-Weberian” school has coalesced around the writings of Anthony Giddens, Frank Parkin, David Lockwood, Michael Mann, Howard Newby, Steven Lukes, and others.



begun to recover sociology's preoccupation with normative orders, socialization through family and school, the resilience of bureaucracy, and the conditions for authoritarianism. Where appropriate, Marxists have begun to adopt sociology's techniques of analysis in order better to evaluate their theories. We can observe these embryonic tendencies in journals of Marxist inspiration such as *Politics and Society*, *Theory and Society*, and *Political Power and Social Theory* (which takes its name from Barrington Moore's book of the same title).

This volume is intended to demonstrate the fruitfulness of both forms of convergence: sociology's appropriations from Marxism and Marxist appropriations from sociology. Thus, there are essays that self-consciously build within the Marxist tradition, taking one or another of its defining problems as a point of departure, yet bear the marks of dialogue with sociology. There are other essays that borrow from Marxism to enrich their sociology. But all engage Marxist or Marxist-inspired theory with empirical analysis, using a wide variety of techniques, from participant observation to time-series analysis, from interviews to archival work. Some evaluate the relative merits of different Marxist theories, while others compare the explanatory power of Marxist theories with that of contemporary sociological theories. While the essays do not deal directly with such topics as culture and ideology, Marxism and feminism, urban political economy and social movements, race and nationalism, the Marxian appropriation of psychoanalysis, or issues of philosophy and methodology, they do tackle issues at the intersection of Marxist and sociological discourse: the organization of work, the state, class structure, and economic development. In the remaining pages of this Introduction, I will explore the linkages among these diverse papers and between them and other Marxist works. What I will offer is less a summary of each paper than a loose framework within which their interrelations can be understood.

#### WORK, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY

It is difficult to comprehend the enormous transformation that the Russian Revolution brought to Marxism, not only in the writings of Lenin and Trotsky but also in the Western Marxisms they stimulated. There is no shortage of Marxist theories explaining why early capitalism gave way to advanced capitalism rather than to socialism and why socialist revolutions have taken place in predominantly peasant societies rather than advanced capitalist societies. Indeed, much of 20th-century Marxism can be understood as an attempt to come to terms with such facts. But as Marxists continually modify and sometimes even transform their theories to take into account unanticipated developments, it is also necessary to reinterpret the past in accordance with those transformed theories. In short, history

continually compels its own reconstruction. In the case of Marxism, this must begin with a critique of Marx's understanding of early capitalism in Britain.

Marx warned those of his German compatriots who shrugged their shoulders at the conditions of the English working class, "*De te fabula narratur*"—of you the future is told. "The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future" (Marx 1967, pp. 8–9). There can be no disputing the essential truth of Marx's prognosis. Capitalism has penetrated the furthest corners of the globe. But that penetration has been uneven, occurring at different times, at different rates, and in different forms. Moreover, it has combined with pre-existing social formations in a variety of ways. This combined and uneven character accounts for the diverse political responses to the development of capitalism.

Marx himself claimed in *Capital* that the political consequences of capitalist development are inherent in the capitalist mode of production itself, irrespective of its historical and societal context. He saw the modern factory as a despotic regime made necessary by the competitive pressures of the market, which continually compelled technological innovation and work intensification, and made possible by the availability of workers dependent for their survival on the sale of their labor power. But the factory was also the crucible of revolution. The undisputed domination of capital over labor was to turn into its opposite, "the revolt of the working class." But the mechanisms for the transformation of subordination into resistance remained obscure.

As social historians have been clamoring for some time, it was not the proletarianized factory workers but those artisans threatened by modern industry or craft workers facing deskilling who turned out to be the backbone of the most militant and radical struggles in 19th-century Europe. Thus, in the Lancashire cotton industry—Marx's prototypical modern industry—first the handloom weavers and then the "aristocracy" of mule spinners were the most active in petitioning for parliamentary reform, in the cooperative movement, the 10-hour movement, the anti-Poor Law campaigns, and the Chartist movement. Not only the autonomy of craft workers, but preindustrial cultural tradition, provided resources for resistance. The "freeborn Englishman" provided the essential cement in the formation of the English working class (Thompson 1963). Artisans, outworkers, and factory operatives drew on community to buttress their struggles against the depredations of capitalism. The family, the friendly society, the cooperative, the pub, and the church were all arenas of resistance out of which was woven the social fabric of class. In other words, the popular class struggles of the 19th century sprang from the survival of community both within and outside the place of work, not where prole-

tarianization and deskilling had advanced most but where they were being resisted.

Julia Wrigley's paper in this volume pursues these themes by drawing out some of the connections between resistance and domination at work and resistance and domination in the community. During the Industrial Revolution in England, manufacturers came to depend on systems of subcontracting and inside contracting, in which craft workers were responsible for the organization of production and the hiring and payment of helpers. These systems arose either as a result of entrepreneurs seeking to externalize risks or because skilled workers used their monopoly of knowledge to force their employers into a dependent relationship. In either case, factory owners had an interest in artisans acquiring scientific knowledge, and so they helped to found and sponsor Mechanics' Institutes. But these institutes subsequently became sources of resistance to capitalists' assertion of control over production through mechanization and the division of labor. The eventual separation of mental and manual labor in the second half of the 19th century therefore had to be closely linked to struggles over the dissolution of scientific education for the working class. Victory for capital in the workplace heralded the development of a dual system of education, aimed at "conceivers" on the one side and "executors" on the other.

Recent work on the English textile industry provides ample confirmation of Wrigley's implicit thesis—that the transformation of the labor process has political repercussions beyond the factory. Rejecting those explanations for the demise of radicalism in the heart of industrial England after 1850 which rely on the rise of a labor aristocracy, Gareth Stedman Jones (1975) focuses instead on the importance of the demolition of skill. New forms of politics emerge when workers are stripped of their control over production and work relations have been restabilized on the basis of modern machinery. Struggles over the appropriation of nature, over the control of production, give way to struggles over the appropriation of the product, over ownership and wages. Patrick Joyce (1980) explores Stedman Jones's argument in great detail, showing that, where labor is transformed from a subject guiding production into an object dominated by production, the formal subordination of labor to capital gives way to its real subordination, and community turns from an arena of resistance into an instrument of capitalist domination. In Yorkshire, where mechanization spread slowly and where mills were often small, workers were able to protect their autonomy and develop a more independent labor movement than in Lancashire, where modern industry advanced more rapidly. In Lancashire the new dependency of operatives on their employers gave rise to an overweening paternalism in the mill towns during the second half of the 19th century. Furthermore, in distinguishing between Tory and Liberal working-class communities in Lancashire, Joyce claims that the particular complexion of

paternalism was decisively shaped by the political and cultural origins of the millowners.

In a similar way, Dwight Billings's essay in this volume highlights the importance of preexisting class relations in the development of the textile industry, this time in North Carolina. Contrary to conventional wisdom, but in line with Jonathan Wiener's recent work on Alabama (1978), Billings argues that the old planter class took a major part in creating the new industry. The world of the slaveholders colored the industrial relations of the mill towns, which in many ways came to resemble the earlier plantations. Different patterns of industrial relations emerged where the planter class was not involved, as in coal and tobacco in the South and textiles in New England.

We have argued so far that radical popular struggles of the 19th century arose in resistance to proletarianization and deskilling, often mobilizing preindustrial legacies and rooted in social spaces beyond the control of capital. Once the real subordination of labor to capital is accomplished, community is domesticated and struggles develop in response to new types of labor control. Marx envisaged only one form of labor control within modern industry—the despotic form—made necessary by the anarchy of the market among firms and made possible by the dependence of the laborer on the wage. While he did recognize that the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production ineluctably led to the concentration and centralization of capital, and thus to a lessening of competitive pressures, he saw this as capitalism's last gasp before its final dissolution. In reality, the rise of the large corporation laid the basis for a new and more stable form of capitalism, and with it appeared new forms of labor control.

Richard Edwards (1979) has provided a preliminary systematization of the link between changes in market structures, patterns of class struggles, and these new forms of labor control as they have evolved in the United States. He distinguishes three historically successive forms of control: simple, technical, and bureaucratic. In the 19th century, firms were generally small and markets competitive, so that management exercised arbitrary and personalistic domination over workers. With the 20th-century growth of large-scale industry, simple control gave way to new forms. After a series of unsuccessful experiments, capital sought to regulate work through such technological arrangements as the assembly line. This mode of control generated its own forms of struggle, and after World War Two it gave way to bureaucratic regulation, in which rules are used to define and evaluate work tasks and govern the application of sanctions. Bureaucratic regulation and the associated systems of collective bargaining, grievance machinery, and internal labor markets, usually found in the corporate sector, stabilize industrial relations in consonance with oligopolistic market structures. Although each period generates its own prototypical form of control, all never-

theless coexist within the contemporary U.S. economy as reflections of different market relations.

Robert Thomas's paper on the organization of work in the California lettuce harvest demonstrates the limits of Edwards's scheme. Here is an industry which by market criteria is clearly oligopolistic, yet which has a decidedly competitive-sector form of labor control. Thomas's participant-observation study of lettuce picking uncovers two forms of work organization. In the first, the lettuce is handpicked by crews consisting of both documented and undocumented workers. The position of undocumented workers is always precarious, and they attempt to earn as much as possible as quickly as possible—a tactic facilitated by a piece-rate system—thus setting the pace for the documented workers. A despotic regime of labor prevails. In the second labor process, the lettuce is machine wrapped; work pace and relations are governed by technology. Here we find women workers on low hourly wages. Without union protection and in transient employment, the work force is subject to arbitrary and personalistic domination by management.

In explaining these distinctive patterns of labor control, Thomas emphasizes the external "negative status" of the work force. Both gender and citizenship are manipulated by management to assert dictatorial power over the organization of work. Yet there is a further condition that fosters the binding of work and community to the advantage of management: the state's abstention from the regulation of industrial relations in agriculture. Agribusiness has been excluded from all the major labor legislation of this century, in particular the Wagner Act and its amendments. This has facilitated a despotic organization of work in the fields, deploying a succession of displaced minorities and migrants as pools of cheap labor. The 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act and the partial unionization of farm workers resulted in mechanization, which in turn led to a weakening of the union.

One conclusion emerges clearly from Thomas's paper and, implicitly, from those of Billings and Wrigley: we cannot explain variations in capitalist relations of production without taking account of the state.<sup>7</sup> The organization of work in California agriculture depends on the state to generate supplies of cheap labor and to establish conditions for labor's subordination at the point of production. The persistence of coercive paternalistic industrial relations in the cotton mills of North Carolina depends not only on company control over the community but also on the exclusion of unions. Manufacturers exploit labor legislation which requires majority support for a union before its recognition, which outlaws union shops through right-to-work rules, which favors employer interference in organizing campaigns through free-speech amendments, and which disenfranchises strikers

<sup>7</sup> Larson (1977) makes the same point in her analysis of the rise of professions.

in union elections. The decline of craft control in British industry in the second half of the 19th century was assisted by official schooling policies and the dissolution of the Mechanics' Institutes, once centers of working-class power.

In short, we have come a long way from Marx's attempt to characterize England as the prototypical capitalist society. Its pioneer status in fact made it exceptional. In order to explain variations in capitalist relations of production, we have had to restore to the center of the stage what Marx either took for granted, deliberately ignored, or used as illustrative material: the historical legacies of the preindustrial period, the development of different market relations among firms, the linkages binding work and community, and the impact of the state on forms of labor control. Attending to these factors not only elucidates the decline of popular struggles in the first industrial nation but also, as Bonnell (in press), Johnson (1979), Koenker (1981), and others have recently shown, explains the revolutionary impulse behind sections of the Russian working class in 1905 and again in 1917.

#### THE CAPITALIST STATE

Although never theoretically developed, Marx's own account of the transformation of the labor process, in particular the substitution of machinery for labor power, also draws attention to the role of the state. In restricting the length of the working day, factory legislation forced manufacturers to seek new ways of intensifying production and thus maintaining rates of profit. Marx explains the Factory Acts as the result of working-class struggles against capital, parliamentary struggles between Whigs and Tories, and the autonomy of factory inspectors, who valiantly fought to enforce the new codes against resistance from employers, the judiciary, and even the operatives. Clearly the state is not "the executive committee of the bourgeoisie," a view which some mistakenly attribute to Marx (e.g., Parsons 1967, pp. 109, 114, 117). In the "Communist Manifesto" Marx and Engels actually write, "The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the *common* affairs of the *whole* bourgeoisie" (emphasis added). Factory legislation is just one example of the state acting against the economic interests of the dominant classes in order to protect their political interests in the reproduction of the capitalist order. But where Marx and Engels identified the political interests of the whole bourgeoisie as maintaining the "external" conditions of the capitalist economy, more recent analyses also focus on the regulation of its "internal" conditions. That is, in addition to its political role the state plays a crucial economic role in countering capitalism's tendency to destroy itself through ever more serious crises.

In this respect one of the most important pioneering analyses is Baran

and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* (1966). Writing in the 1960s, they argued that the distinctive problem of the advanced capitalist economy was not the falling rate of profit, as Marx had argued in volume 3 of *Capital*, but the absorption of surplus. In the pursuit of profit, large corporations were now producing more than could be consumed. The ensuing crises of underconsumption could be temporarily muffled by the irrational utilization of surplus through waste—unnecessary consumption, built-in obsolescence, burgeoning sales and advertising expenditures, and, above all, military expenditures. The warfare state was not a political but an economic necessity, a response to an actual or anticipated recession, a means of boosting demand in Keynesian fashion.

In their paper, Larry Griffin, Joel Devine, and Michael Wallace set out to examine this theory for the period from 1949 to 1976. They discover that the state is responsive not so much to the needs of the economy as a whole as to the particular interests of “monopoly” capital and, to a lesser extent, organized labor. Their results offer more support for James O'Connor's analysis in *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (1973) than for Baran and Sweezy's argument. In O'Connor's view, the state attempts to reconcile the contradictory pressures of capital accumulation by large corporations and the legitimation of the social order through concessions to the organized sectors of the labor force. Griffin, Devine, and Wallace argue that declining profits in the corporate sector and unemployment among unionized workers were among the forces prompting increases in military expenditures, whereas these expenditures fell when profits increased and unemployment dropped. Their paper immediately raises the question whether, as the war industry becomes increasingly research based and capital intensive, military expenditures can continue to be understood as a countercyclical fiscal policy. Can the development of the monstrous MX missile program or research into postnuclear laser technology supply the same new employment per dollar invested as the manufacture of tanks, helicopters, bombers, and rifles has in the past, or provide the same economic impulse to other corporate industries outside production for “defense”? If military Keynesianism worked in the past this might also be attributed to the international economic dominance of the United States. In a situation of heightening competition from Europe and Japan—countries without such huge military budgets—expanding the production of the means of destruction is more likely to cripple than to stimulate the economy.

Griffin, Devine, and Wallace supply an empirically based corrective to the official account of escalating military expenditures—dubious claims about international parity which exaggerate the strength and aggressiveness of the Soviet Union. To be sure, once established, such appeals to national survival do develop into a self-fulfilling prophecy, generating a logic of deterrence which compels both sides to play a seemingly endless game

of leapfrog. But proclaimed threats to national security benefit both the United States and the Soviet Union by justifying untold atrocities to keep their satellites in line, whether they be in Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia. Furthermore, with recent technological developments, commitment to this logic of deterrence has prompted some nuclear strategists to leap from the camp of the MAD (mutual assured destruction) to that of the NUTs (nuclear use theorists) who think the unthinkable—the possibility of a successful first strike (Joseph 1982). However, even if it assumes an autonomy of its own, the logic of state-to-state relations, as we will see again in Harriet Friedmann's paper, cannot be understood outside the relationship of the state to domestic class forces. We will now explore this further.

Baran and Sweezy (1966), O'Connor (1973), Holloway and Picciotto (1978), Offe and Ronge (1975), and Habermas (1975) all offer distinctive sets of theories of the capitalist state. They tend to rely on some logic of capital accumulation and pinpoint a "functional gap" that the state must fill if accumulation is to continue. Curiously, these theories, which highlight the economic rather than the political functions of the state, have received most attention in Germany and the United States, where popular struggles have been relatively weak. In countries such as France and Italy, where class struggles have been more expansive and the working class is informed by a radical tradition, different theories of the state have gained popularity. Against the orthodox notion of the French Communist party that the state is but an instrument of monopoly capital, new images of the state appeared in the 1970s. These stress the state's role in the regulation and containment of popular struggles, rather than its role in the management of the economy. Although produced at very different times, the theories of Poulantzas (1973) and Gramsci (1971) address similar questions: How is it that the working class and its allies have not captured state power, have been contained within a capitalist framework? The theories that emerge underline the importance of alliances among dominant classes: the formation of a "power bloc" under the leadership of a "hegemonic" fraction. The state presents the interest of that bloc as the universal interest, the interest of all, while dividing and atomizing the subordinate classes. Both Poulantzas and Gramsci stress the role of ideology in providing the terrain of struggle and the cement for the social order. In normal times the state appears to be autonomous; its apparatuses are constituted as formally neutral in relation to classes. In times of crisis this neutrality is suspended and the state comes to the defense of the capitalist order.

Eurocommunism provided the context for a new turn in Marxist theories of the state (see, e.g., Poulantzas 1978; Claudin 1978). The state is no longer seen in terms of the functions which it somehow "necessarily" per-



forms; it is no longer a monolith which must be “smashed” before fundamental changes can occur. It is replete, instead, with internal contradictions which can be exploited by subordinate classes. It is neither an object to be manipulated nor a subject standing above society. Instead it is now seen as the condensation of class forces, so that reformist strategies which shift the balance of those forces can be considered. The state is viewed as a site of struggle, but for real change to take place, it is necessary for struggles outside the state to lend support to those within it, and vice versa. Social movements and parties now become interactive and interdependent. In this type of analysis, the limits of struggles within the state become less important than the struggles themselves; a peaceful transition to socialism is on the agenda.

In the light of these theoretical controversies, it is not surprising that the Chilean experience has become a battleground for alternative political perspectives. After it was voted into office in 1970, the Unidad Popular (UP) attempted to carry out a peaceful transition to socialism, based on Chile's legacy of parliamentary politics. The experiment ended three years later with a bloody military coup. What happened in the intervening years calls into question two perspectives on the transition to socialism—both of which underestimate the importance of divisions and struggles within the state. Against the social democratic perspective, which reduces the problem of inaugurating socialism to the electoral victory of a socialist party, the Chilean defeat demonstrates that controlling the state involves much more than taking over the executive branch. Against the left-wing perspective that anything short of smashing the state is cooptative, the experience of the UP shows how assuming power through elections can precipitate the intensification of socialist struggles. The outcome was by no means a foregone conclusion. Debates have raged over whether the UP moved too quickly or too slowly in consolidating its position. On the one side, a more gradualist program would have involved alliances with the Christian Democrats and certain middle strata, in particular small employers and sections of the peasantry, and would have devoted more energy to the construction of an organizational basis of support. On the other side, it is claimed that the UP was naive in its commitment to constitutionalism and parliamentary democracy, was too cautious in neutralizing the military and arming the civilian population, and failed to exploit the momentum of popular mobilization at critical conjunctures. The debate inevitably revolves around alternative conceptions of the (“dependent”) capitalist state. Can shifts in the balance of forces, both within and outside the state, pave the way for a peaceful transition to socialism? Or does the capitalist state in the last instance always defend the capitalist order, in which case any transition to socialism requires the destruction of that state?

Two decades of debate have also posed the relevance of the Chilean ex-

perience for advanced capitalist countries. Would a peaceful road to socialism in Western Europe, with its very different class structures, political traditions, and international position, be less vulnerable to investment strikes, declining living standards, and military intervention? Is it possible, for example, that the Swedish social democrats could implement the gradual expropriation of capital without a counterrevolution (Stephens 1979)? If the Eurocommunist perspective is perhaps overly optimistic about the possibility of social democratic reforms, it nevertheless opens the black box of the state. It is now possible to address a problem unexamined by earlier functionalist accounts: how the state does what it is supposed to do.<sup>8</sup> Under what conditions might the state seriously fail in its “role” of “preserving the cohesion of the entire social formation”?

In explaining the particular procapital interventions of the state, both Block (1977*b*) and Lindblom (1977) have argued that state managers recognize their own interests as firmly tied to those of capital accumulation and therefore act in accord with the interests of the “capitalist class.” In other words, a distinctive feature of capitalism is that the interests of capital—that is, profit—must be secured before any other class or group—including state functionaries—can realize its own interests. Yet, as Theda Skocpol (1980) has commented, it is not clear how state managers achieve that enlightened view of their own interests transcending the logic embedded in their own political apparatuses. The achievement of this Olympian perspective is rendered even more problematic by the constraints state managers face from struggles within the state. But breaking down the state into its constitutive elements and moving toward an organizational analysis of its apparatuses risks emphasizing its contradictory nature at the expense of its unity—a unity that becomes most clear in moments of crisis, when the capitalist order is threatened. Organizational analysis also highlights the autonomy of the state, leading one to wonder how capitalism continues to survive—precisely the point of departure of the earlier functionalist theories. It also encourages the neoconservative fallacy that restricting the size of the state will somehow “unstrangle” the economy.

Pat Shannon’s article on accident compensation in New Zealand addresses this complex of problems around state autonomy. It is an attempt to understand the unity of the state in terms of the preservation of the conditions of capital accumulation, while focusing on the contradictory political pressures within the state which produce specific policies. Shannon distinguishes between the questions of “why” the state intervenes—to protect the profitability of monopoly capital—and “how” it intervenes—the legislative and

<sup>8</sup> Many Marxist theories have postulated an omnipotent, enlightened, and cohesive dominant class which manipulates the state for its own ends. Such crude “instrumentalist” perspectives were unable to explain the opposition of the dominant classes to state interventions or the virulent divisions within the dominant classes.

bureaucratic processes leading, in this case, to the Accident Compensation Act and its amendment. The legislation proposed by the state was tailored to the needs of one fraction of capital, monopoly capital. Shannon attributes that proposal to the form of the New Zealand state, in particular its powerful executive, and to New Zealand's location in the world economy, which makes it reliant on large-scale foreign investment. Following the initial proposals, the competing interests of various state apparatuses as well as anticipated and actual struggles outside the state reshaped the legislation's content. These internal and external limits to state policies account for the divergence between the interests of monopoly capital and the provisions of the act. The importance of Shannon's study lies in its attempt to go beyond "functionalist" conceptions, which define the state in terms of its "effects," to incorporate an understanding of how the "form of state" and struggles within as well as outside the state shape the production of those effects. He offers an institutional approach to distinguishing among different forms of states without losing sight of their capitalist nature.

#### CHANGES IN CLASS STRUCTURE

With this consideration of some recent developments in Marxist theories of the organization of work and the state, the groundwork is laid for examining the class structure of contemporary capitalist societies. Until recently, theories of stratification have tended to focus on patterns of social mobility, taking as given the structure of "empty places"—usually the occupational structure arranged on a linear continuum—through which individuals move. Marxists, on the other hand, derive the class structure and its dynamics from theories of the labor process and consider individual mobility patterns a secondary concern, related to class consciousness. Harry Braverman's (1974) derivation of changes in class structure has the virtue of being particularly simple. The transformation of work under advanced capitalism involves the expropriation of skill from the direct producer. Conception, having been separated from execution, is itself subject to fragmentation and deskilling, which result in the expansion of clerical and service occupations.

Following a similar analysis of fundamental economic changes, Daniel Bell's *The Coming of Post-industrial Society* (1973) has thrown out a major challenge to Marxists, forcing them to come to terms with their own understanding of the transformations of class structure under capitalism.<sup>9</sup> Put simply, Bell claims that the "axial principles" of contemporary U.S. society are shifting: from the production of goods to the pro-

<sup>9</sup> See Plotke (1980, 1981) for an explicit response to that challenge; see also Mandel (1975) and Castells (1979).

duction of services, from a society based on the coordination of people and machines to a society organized around theoretical knowledge, from the centrality of the market to the centrality of planning. The working class is being replaced by professional and technical classes. The emergent labor process, a “game among people” serving one another, is displacing a labor process in which the game is between people and machines. Bell argues that rising professional and technical classes cannot be seen as a “new working class”; instead, they spell the demise of the working class and, with it, any notion of a “proletarian revolution.”

Erik Olin Wright and Joachim Singelmann take up Bell’s challenge in their examination of changes in the class structure of the United States between 1960 and 1970. They pose the question in terms of Wright’s class categories. Is the proletariat expanding or contracting? Are supervisory, professional, and technical workers—whom Wright and Singelmann subsume under the “contradictory class locations,” between workers and capitalists on the one hand and workers and the self-employed on the other—increasing or declining in numbers? Whereas Bell would claim that the proletariat is shrinking, Braverman’s analysis of the degradation of work through deskilling suggests the opposite.<sup>10</sup> Wright and Singelmann discover that the overall changes confirm Bell’s thesis: over the years 1960–70, the importance of the proletariat declined relative to that of supervisory, technical, and professional employees. But they also demonstrate that the aggregate effect was due to the expansion of those sectors of the economy which are dominated by more “skilled” personnel. Within each sector, however, including services, they discover a tendency toward proletarianization.

The trajectory of the class structure depends, therefore, on the relative strengths of the two tendencies: the expansion of those sectors with relatively low levels of proletarianization (state and service sectors) and the development within each sector of a working class stripped of any significant skill or autonomy in the workplace. To understand the evolution of the class structure of advanced capitalist nations such as the United States, we must comprehend not only changes in the labor process and the expansion and contraction of the state, issues which we discussed earlier, but also the changing industrial structure. And this can be examined only in the context of a changing international division of labor.

#### THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOR

As was remarked earlier, Marx conceived of the expansion of capitalism on a world scale, but as a unilinear process, in which noncapitalist modes

<sup>10</sup> Braverman, of course, recognized that new skilled workers are created with the introduction of new technology, but in ever smaller numbers. These skilled workers, moreover, are themselves subjected to the deskilling process. Thus, although there is reskilling, it is swamped by the countertendency toward deskilling.

of production would be destroyed through the forcible intervention of the market. Marx was little concerned about the implications of the world system of nations for an international division of labor. More attuned to the realities of imperialism and wars, Lenin, Kautsky, Luxemburg, and even Trotsky nevertheless also saw noncapitalist modes of production disintegrating in the face of capitalism's thirst for profits, markets, and raw materials—although each pictures this disintegration in a different way, with different political and economic consequences. Significantly, the “optimism” of Marxist orthodoxy has been shared by theories of modernization: both regarded the expansion of capitalism, along with its benefits and irrationalities, as relatively unproblematic.

This optimism turned sour after the Second World War, as liberated colonies found themselves saddled with escalating and apparently insurmountable economic problems. While modernization theory turned to the impediments of “traditional institutions” and “primordial loyalties,” Marxists reconstructed their understanding of imperialism. They took as their basic premise the difference between the development of the first industrial nations and subsequent economic development, which took place in the context of already consolidated advanced capitalist nations. Paul Baran (1957), André Gunder Frank (1969), and Samir Amin (1976), to name but three, have argued that Third World nations could not recapitulate the development trajectory of Britain, which was able to exploit the international market for its own ends. Instead, they have argued, either we await the demise of capitalism as a world system or Third World nations must withdraw from the imperial order to pursue a strategy of self-reliance through socialist planning. Their analyses rest, in one way or another, on the conception of the international economic order as a chain of metropolises and satellites, with development at one end coming at the cost of underdevelopment at the other. In other words, between the center and the periphery there is “unequal exchange” due to transfers of surplus by multinational corporations, terms of trade advantageous to central countries, lower wages in the periphery, and so forth.

Crucial as these contributions have been, they nevertheless retain some of the defects of the modernization theory they attempt to refute. First, they tend to substitute one teleology for another: the development of underdevelopment is as inexorable as the advance of modernity. Second, they adopt an ideal type of analysis, in which underdevelopment in the periphery is compared to some unexamined model of “development” in the center. In the same way, modernization theory as it is applied to the Third World has worked with all sorts of implicit and questionable assumptions about the rise of capitalism in the West. Both underdevelopment theory and modernization theory homogenize “the periphery” and are therefore unable to interpret variations among countries and whatever development does

take place. Finally, as a result of their reduction of politics to economics, early models of underdevelopment theory carry a certain determinism.

One of the most important attempts to rescue underdevelopment theory from some of these defects is Fernando Cardoso and Enzo Faletto's *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (1979). This comparative historical study underlines the diverse economic responses of Latin American societies to the development of international capitalism. In rejecting the teleologies of theories of underdevelopment and modernization, Cardoso and Faletto substitute an analysis of the way external linkages are mediated and carried by various classes and class fractions, acting at both the political and the economic levels. By endowing the political realm with a certain (unspecified) autonomy, Cardoso and Faletto are able to illuminate alternative patterns of development in Latin America, distinguishing three types of dependency: (1) enclave economies, in which capital originates from outside and products, usually raw materials, are sold in an external market; (2) economies controlled by a local bourgeoisie, in which there is national capital accumulation, but products are again sold on an international market; and (3) dependent industrializing economies controlled by multinational corporations, but with a substantial part of the product sold in the domestic market.

Peter Evans's study of economic development in Brazil, published in this volume, is in the tradition of Cardoso and Faletto. He starts from the view, widely held in such countries as Brazil, South Africa, and Nigeria, that import substitution can go only so far in promoting development and that a further stage requires active intervention by the state to bolster and protect an indigenous bourgeoisie. Although the local bourgeoisie cannot be the dynamic force that it was in the first industrial nations, neither is it reduced to a transmission belt of international capital, as it is often portrayed in underdevelopment theory. On the contrary, it can become an essential contributor to national economic development. Under what conditions and with what consequences, Evans asks, can the state facilitate such an expansion of indigenous capital? As the critical factor he highlights the restructuring of the market to facilitate collaborative ventures between state entrepreneurship and private capital. The consequence is a new form of capital, which joins state oligopolies and local capital into a single hybrid "oligopolistic community."

The examination of industrializing nations of the Third World highlights the changing international division of labor. Reservoirs of cheap labor power and particularly female labor, the technological explosion in communication and transportation systems, the international fragmentation of the labor process, repressive labor codes and fiscal policies favorable to international capital—all predispose manufacturing industry to move into industrializing nations of the Third World (Fröbel, Heinrichs, and Kreye

1980). In these countries we discover features reminiscent of the advanced capitalist nations at the same time that the economies of the latter experience "peripheralization": the development of informal sectors, increasing levels of unemployment, dual labor markets, and so on (Portes and Walton 1981). In short, just as theories of underdevelopment have always claimed that Third World nations could not be understood without reference to the rhythms of economic development in the metropolises, it is now impossible to examine the class structure of advanced capitalist nations without reference to economic changes in the periphery. The new international division of labor underlines the interdependence of the world capitalist system.

Changing patterns of international relations not only require the development of theory to fit the new realities but also lead to the reinterpretation of the past. Thus, in coming to terms with the changing international division of labor under "late capitalism," Ernest Mandel (1975) resurrects the idea of long waves, first analyzed by Kondratieff and Schumpeter, to periodize capitalist development according to cyclical changes in the rate of profit as determined by three technological revolutions, all of which took place in advanced capitalist countries. The first was based on the harnessing of steam power to industrial production in the second half of the 19th century. The second, beginning in the 1890s, led to the generalized application of electric and combustion engines to all branches of industry. The third involved the development of electronic apparatuses and the gradual introduction of nuclear energy beginning in the 1940s. Each technological revolution defined new needs for central capitalism and led to corresponding transformations in the international division of labor. In a similar way, Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) embarked on the study of the origins of capitalism after coming to the conclusion that underdevelopment in Africa had to be understood in terms of transnational transfers of surplus. Again, contemporary developments compel the continual reconstruction of history.

#### FROM MODES OF PRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL RELATIONS

While Peter Evans raises important questions about the nature of the state in industrializing nations of the Third World, about the relations of dominant classes to the state, and more generally about the political conditions of dependent development, taking external linkages as a point of theoretical departure nevertheless tends to eclipse other equally important issues. First, the analysis is likely to dwell on the dominant classes and their relationship to one another and to the state, rather than on relations between dominant and subordinate classes. When these are considered they are usually examined in connection with, and as derivative of, external linkages. Second, dependency theory leaves unclear how international forces determine which

countries will be export platforms, enclave economies, or industrializing nations. Endowing the political with an unspecified autonomy in no way explains the diverse consequences of the capitalist world economy for peripheral societies.

Alternative approaches take the class structure as the preeminent barrier to development and, therefore, as their point of theoretical departure. They study the patterns through which one class appropriates surplus from a class of direct producers, be they peasants, serfs, petty commodity producers, or wage laborers. A social formation is understood as the “articulation” of different modes of appropriating surplus—that is, the relations of interdependence and domination among different modes of production (Wolpe 1979; Taylor 1979; Foster-Carter 1978; Leys 1978). The state is seen in terms of regulating relations between and within modes of production, at the same time as it is a site and object of struggles. The character of the social formation—its class structure, if you will—fosters and permits certain types of penetration by external forces. The logic of these external forces is usually left unexamined.

To oversimplify, dependency theory sets out from the standpoint of the dominant classes of the Third World facing the daunting economic presence of metropolitan states, international financial agencies, and multinational corporations; it begins with the international economic order and external ties and proceeds to derive class structure. “Modes of production” analysis, on the other hand, begins with class structure and moves outward to the world economic system. Strategies for contesting underdevelopment suggested by the first framework involve the manipulation of external forces in the pursuit of nationalist goals, in particular capitalist growth (as in Brazil), whereas the second framework points toward the transformation of the class structure and the pursuit of socialist goals as a precondition for development (as in Cuba). Obviously neither perspective can ignore the other, but they do point to different priorities in development.

What role do political relations among states play in these two frameworks? While neither dependency theory nor modes of production analysis reduces the political to the economic, both implicitly claim that international economic forces are for the most part sufficient to guarantee capitalism’s dominance in the periphery. This is not to say that political interventions do not take place or that they are unimportant, but that capitalism is increasingly able to reproduce itself without extraeconomic force, without forms of external and direct political domination, such as colonialism. This is the implication of Colin Leys’s “neocolonialism” and Cardoso and Faletto’s “internalization of external interests.” It is as if imperialism had accomplished its task and we are now witnessing, for the first time, capitalism as a truly international phenomenon. Bill Warren’s *Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism* (1980) captures and develops this inversion of



Lenin's *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. But Warren's position is too extreme. We know that state-to-state relations are critical in maintaining and transforming the international economic system (Block 1977a). How does one examine these relations from a Marxist perspective?

In her paper on the international food order, Harriet Friedmann offers an original strategy for studying international relations from the standpoint of relations among modes of production (see also Friedmann 1978). Setting out from a discussion of the class forces within the United States, she highlights the significance of political relations among states for the reproduction of capitalism on a world scale and for class structure in Third World countries. Tracing the production and distribution of wheat surpluses, she shows how state-to-state relations have been critical in uprooting peasantries of the Third World and then allowing them to starve in the cities. The tragic story begins with farmers in the United States successfully campaigning for agricultural subsidies. This led to rising food surpluses which, in the 1950s and 1960s, were put to use in the form of "aid" to the Third World. Unable to compete with the importation of massive supplies of cheap wheat, peasants in the recipient countries were pushed out of basic food production, accelerating processes of proletarianization, overurbanization, unemployment, and the devastation of indigenous agriculture. When food aid diminished in the 1970s, due in part to geopolitical forces but also to the declining influence of the farmers' lobby in the United States, countries that had become dependent on cheap food found themselves increasingly impoverished. Friedmann underlines the continuing importance of political relations among states in generating, albeit unintentionally, reservoirs of cheap labor which were attractive to capital migrating from central countries. Just as the political realm cannot be reduced to economics at the level of the nation-state, political relations among states cannot be reduced to the international division of labor.

#### STATE SOCIALISM

Having reached the logic of world power, we can now retrace our steps. We began by restoring Marx's analysis of capitalism to the context of his times, highlighting those features of 19th-century Britain which differentiated it from other countries and contributed to its subsequent development. In remaining true to Marx's method, we have continued to take the relations of production, their conditions of existence, and their dynamics as our point of departure. In explaining variations in the form and regulation of the capitalist labor process we were led to the critical role of the state. We proceeded to examine the state itself as performing specific functions, on the one hand, and as a contradictory unity of specific institutions, on the other. Understanding the development of the labor process and of the state

is still not a sufficient basis for the analysis of the dynamics of class structure. We must also grasp the changing international division of labor and the role of different peripheral societies in the global economic system. Finally, we suggested that, although international political relations could not be reduced to—indeed, often reshaped—economic relations within and between nations, nevertheless class factors remain an essential component of the explanation of the genesis and reproduction of state-to-state relations.

Throughout, I have emphasized the capitalist character of the labor process, the state, the class structure, and indeed the world system. There is a presumption, all too rarely confronted within Marxism, that somehow things are different (and “better”) under socialism. Too easily Marxists compare the realities of capitalism with an unexamined and often unstated ideal notion of socialism. While such a “false” comparison provides a basis for critique, central to any Marxist analysis, it does not come to terms with the limits of the possible. Perhaps one of the greatest disservices to the Marxist tradition rendered by Marx and Engels was the disparagement of the construction and examination of “utopias,” the study of the meaning and possibility of socialism as well as the variety of forms it could assume.<sup>11</sup>

Equally important, but almost as rare, is the examination of existing state-socialist societies as a basis for what could be and an illumination of what is capitalist about capitalism. Notwithstanding the debates among socialists in the 1930s, Marxism has been reluctant to confront what Alvin Gouldner calls its “nightmare”: that the abolition of private property is not the “basis of a new emancipation but of a new, many times worse, domination” (1980, p. 382). When Marxists have examined such societies, they have too often been concerned with explaining them away as an aberration, a product of hostile international forces, the underdevelopment of the forces of production, the legacy of the Asiatic mode of production, or the megalomania of unscrupulous leaders. They have too easily presented the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as an exception or deviation (e.g., a “deformed workers’ state”) from some unelaborated ideal, rather than examining their distinctive class structure, form of state, and so forth.

Exceptional in this regard is Ivan Szelenyi’s paper, which approaches the study of class societies along two dimensions: the mode of appropriation of surplus and the mode through which that appropriation is legitimated. In capitalism, private property is the basis of both appropriation and legitimation. In state socialism, surplus is appropriated and distributed by central state apparatuses, acting in the name of a scientifically determined collective interest. Whereas in the one society capitalists, as expropriators of surplus, form the dominant class, in the other intellectuals emerge as a dominant class, based on their monopoly of scientific knowledge “neces-

<sup>11</sup> For a recent contribution to this issue, see the important article of Carmen Sirianni (1981).

sary” for the rational—that is, purposive—redistribution of goods and services. Intellectuals become the natural executors of a substantive rationality.

Szelenyi refers to intellectuals as being on the road to class power, since they are engaged in struggle against a “political elite” which captured state power in the period of socialist primitive accumulation, more commonly known as Stalinism. Although the dynamics of state-socialist societies can be seen in terms of the struggles between the political elite and the intelligentsia, these are shaped by the more fundamental struggles between the dominant class of planners and the subordinate class of direct producers. Here Braverman’s analytical distinction between conception and execution is projected from the economic plane onto the political and ideological planes, where it expresses two opposed principles of legitimation and surplus appropriation. Direct producers claim control over what they produce, opposing the planners’ logic of rational redistribution with the principle of workers’ self-management. Szelenyi speculates about the institutionalization of the struggle between these two principles, about the possibility of a socialism with two antagonistic classes.

The contrast between advanced capitalist and state-socialist societies becomes clear. In the former, intellectuals are an intermediary class, holding one of Wright’s contradictory class locations. They are divided in their allegiance between the dominant and subordinate classes, while at the same time advancing their own professional interests. Daniel Bell’s claim that they are fast becoming a more significant group, as the axial principle of the postindustrial society moves from property to knowledge, is perhaps more descriptive of state socialism than of advanced capitalism. This is not to say that planning and technocrats are not becoming more important in capitalist societies, but that they emerge to fill “functional gaps” created by the irrationalities of the market—just as, in state-socialist societies, market institutions blossom to compensate for the irrationalities of planning.<sup>12</sup>

While the reexamination of 19th-century Britain illuminated the first paradox of Marxism—that revolutionary working classes emerged in backward rather than advanced societies—the delineation of the specificity of state-socialist societies sheds light on the second paradox of Marxism: that proletarian revolutions are likely to develop as anti-Marxist movements and in those societies whose leaders already claim to be socialist. Here a proletarian class consciousness develops, both from the dominant ideology, which distinguishes planners from direct producers, and as a result of the penetration of the state, in the form of the party, trade union, and state managers, into the place of production. Economic struggles, whatever their

<sup>12</sup> As recent events in Poland demonstrate, we still know very little about either the relations among the Soviet Union and East European countries or the relations among the military, the secret police, the party, and government bureaucracies.

intent, are immediately political and express demands for self-regulation by direct producers. Furthermore, as Szelenyi argues, the working class can begin to wage collective struggles with the emergence of civil society. And this, of course, happened in Poland, in part because of the institutional strength of the Church, which nurtured and protected socialist but nevertheless anti-Marxist nationalist movements.

But what does this mean for Marxism? Is it then the false consciousness of an intellectual class, a class that presents its own interest as a universal interest, that pursues its own interests in the name of the proletariat?<sup>13</sup> To be sure, Marxism has been appropriated by the dominant classes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to justify a form of bureaucratic despotism. Insofar as the working class or intellectuals in those countries develop a class consciousness, it is more than likely to be anti-Marxist.<sup>14</sup> Can the same be said of other socialist countries? Does Marxism retain its critical function in Cuba, or in Yugoslavia? Does it provide a terrain upon which subordinate classes can effectively wage struggles on their own behalf? Clearly, Marxism has different political implications in different social and historical contexts. It is precisely because intellectuals in advanced capitalist countries are not on the road to class power that Marxism is able to retain its critical moment, posing alternatives to the existing order.

#### FOR AN AMERICAN MARXISM?

What are the prospects for an American Marxism? Is the current renewal just another flash in the pan which, as in the 1930s, will evoke only a transient commitment from intellectuals? At the beginning of this essay, I suggested that the recent surge of interest originated in the New Left, the internationalization of Marxism, and the development of an institutional basis, mainly around journals. None of these forces points to a sustained

<sup>13</sup> In calling for a general emancipation in which everyone becomes an intellectual, Rudolf Bahro, a dissident East German Marxist, writes: "The workers—individual exceptions apart—were never Marxist in the strict sense. Marxism is a theory based on the existence of the working class, but it is not the theory of the working class. It was always Left intellectuals who found themselves in a position to understand Marxism as a whole" (1978, p. 197). Szelenyi (1980) regards Bahro's call for the renewal of the party as another attempt by intellectuals to present their own particular interests as the interests of all. Where Bahro denies the existence of a "working class" in Eastern Europe, Szelenyi insists on its existence as a center of opposition.

<sup>14</sup> In the post-1956 thaw, dissenting Marxists in Eastern Europe appealed to the writings of the young Marx against the repressive practices of Stalinism. But it was not long before Communist parties had turned Marxist humanism into official slogans and undercut any oppositional potential. For both workers and intellectuals, Marxism is now too tainted and its dissemination too effectively controlled to be used as a basis for resistance or a call for emancipation.

commitment, as the New Left becomes a memory cut off from the present, as Marxism fragments internationally, collapsing in many Western European countries, and as journals face severe financial difficulties.

But there are countertendencies rooted in the very changes I have been describing: the transformation of the labor process, the changing functions of the state, the new international division of labor, a reorganization of international political relations, and the recomposition of the U.S. class structure—and (although this is not dealt with in this volume) changing relations between men and women, both within and outside the family. Moreover, the university lies at the intersection of many of these changes, making their analysis that much more urgent and immediate to the academic.

Just as sociology responded to the call of the immediate postwar era, Marxism has now taken the baton, trying to piece together a coherent analysis of these interconnected transitions. The optimistic sociology of the 1950s followed the defeat of fascism in a heroic if tragic war. It emerged together with the unquestioned supremacy of the United States in the international order, the Cold War, a period of economic growth and widespread confidence in the superiority of parliamentary democracy and “civic culture.” Marxism is more consonant with the present climate of pessimism, following defeat in an ignominious war and the exposure of deceit and corruption in the highest circles of government. It is more consonant with the continuing economic decline and rising unemployment which have prompted the dismantling of what existed of the welfare state, with the continual challenges to the United States’ international domination, which have prompted renewed aggression against foreign powers and the resurrection of the Communist scare, so that nuclear holocaust once more hangs over our heads. This scenario fits only too well Marxism’s assessment of capitalism as beset with deep-seated tendencies toward economic crisis, political irrationality, and escalating global conflict.

In the final analysis, Marxism can never become anything more than a subordinate presence within the university if it is to retain its oppositional character. But that presence may not only push Marxism in new directions but may also be necessary for the vitality of sociology. At a time when the classical inspirations of sociology are beginning to wilt under technocratic impulses and pressure to be “useful,” the renewal of an open, always provisional, empirically rooted Marxism could do much to animate debate over those basic issues at the heart of the sociological tradition. As Alvin Gouldner once wrote, Marxism and sociology are like Siamese twins: “The demise of the one presages the demise of the other. They have a common destiny not *despite* the fact that they have developed in dialectical opposition but precisely *because* of it” (1973, p. 401).

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