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MARXISM AS BOURGEOIS SOCIOLOGY

...Before “man” began to exploit “man”, he began to dominate woman; even earlier, the old began to dominate the young through a hierarchy of age-groups, gerontocracies, and ancestor-worship. Power of human over human long antedates the very formation of classes and economic modes of social oppression. . . It is no longer simply capitalism we wish to demolish; it is an older and more archaic world that lives on in the present one – the domination of human by human, the rationale of hierarchy as such...

Marx’s work, perhaps the most remarkable project to demystify bourgeois social relations, has itself become the most subtle mystification of capitalism in our era. I refer not to any latent “positivism” in the Marxian corpus or to any retrospective recognition of its “historical limits.” A serious critique of Marxism must begin with its innermost nature as the most advanced product—indeed, the culmination—of the bourgeois Enlightenment.

It will no longer suffice to see Marx’s work as the point of departure for a new social critique, to accept its “method” as valid despite the limited content it yielded in its day, to extol its goals as liberatory apart from its means, to view the project as tainted by its dubious heirs or adherents.

Indeed, Marx’s “failure” to develop a radical critique of capitalism and a revolutionary practice emerges not even as a failure in the sense of an enterprise that remains inadequate to its goals. Quite to the contrary.

At its best, Marx’s work is an inherent self-deception that inadvertently absorbs the most questionable tenets of Enlightenment thought into its very sensibility and remains surprisingly vulnerable to their bourgeois implications.

At its worst, it provides the most [subtle apologia](#) for a new historic era that has witnessed the melding of the “free

market” with economic planning, private property with nationalized property, competition with the oligopolistic manipulation of production and consumption, the economy with the state—in short, the modern epoch of state capitalism.

The surprising congruence of Marx’s “scientific socialism” — a socialism which reared the goals of economic rationalization, planned production, and a “proletarian state” as essential elements of the revolutionary project—with the inherent development of capitalism toward monopoly, political control, and a seemingly “welfare state” has already brought institutionalized Marxian tendencies such as Social Democracy and Euro-Communism into [open complicity with the stabilization of a highly rationalized era of capitalism](#). Indeed, by a slight shift of perspective, we can easily use Marxian ideology to describe this state capitalist era as “Socialist.”

Can such a shift of perspective be shrugged off as a “vulgarization” or “betrayal” of the Marxian project? Or does it comprise the very realization of Marxism’s most fundamental assumptions—a logic that may have even been hidden to Marx himself?

[When Lenin describes socialism as “nothing but state capitalist monopoly made to benefit the whole people,” does he violate the integrity of the Marxian project with his own “vulgarizations”? Or does he reveal underlying premises of Marxian theory that render it historically into the most sophisticated ideology of advanced capitalism?](#)

What is basically at stake in asking these questions is whether there are shared assumptions between all Marxists that provide real premises for Social-Democratic and Euro-Communist practice and Lenin’s futuristics. A theory that is so readily “vulgarized,” “betrayed,” or, more sinisterly, institutionalized into bureaucratic power forms by nearly all of its adherents may well be one that lends itself to such “vulgarizations,” “betrayals,” and bureaucratic forms as a *normal condition of its existence*. [What may seem to be “vulgarizations,” “betrayals,” and bureaucratic manifestations of its tenets in the heated light of doctrinal disputes may prove to be the fulfillment of its tenets in the cold light of historical development.](#)

In any case, all the historical roles, today, seem to have been totally miscast. Rather than refurbishing Marxism so that it can catch up with the many advanced phases of modern capitalism, it may well be that [many advanced phases of modern capitalism in the more traditional bourgeois countries have yet to catch up with Marxism as the most sophisticated ideological anticipation of the capitalist development.](#)

Let there be no mistake that I am engaged in an academic play of words. Reality exhibits even more compelling paradoxes than theory. The Red Flag flies over a world of Socialist countries that stand at mutual war with each other, while Marxian parties outside their perimeter form indispensable props for an increasingly state capitalist world that, ironically enough, arbitrates between—or aligns itself with—its contending Socialist neighbors.

The proletariat, like its plebian counterpart in the ancient world, shares actively in a system that sees its greatest threat from a diffuse populace of intellectuals, urban dwellers, feminists, gays, environmentalists—in short, a trans-class “people” that still expresses the Utopian ideals of democratic revolutions long passed. To say that Marxism merely takes no account today of this utterly un-Marxian constellation is to be excessively generous toward an ideology that has become the “revolutionary” persona of state capitalist reaction. Marxism is exquisitely constructed to obscure these new relationships, to distort their meaning and where all else fails, to reduce them to its economic categories.

The Socialist countries and movements, in turn, are no less “socialist” for their “distortions” than for their professed “achievements.” Indeed, their “distortions” acquire greater significance than their “achievements” because they reveal in compelling fashion the ideological apparatus that serves to mystify state capitalism. Hence, more than ever, it is necessary that this apparatus be explored, its roots unearthed, its logic revealed, and its spirit exorcised from the modern revolutionary project.

Once drawn into the clear light of critique, it will be seen for what it truly is—not as “incomplete,” “vulgarized” or “betrayed” but rather as the historic essence of counter-revolution, indeed, of counter-revolution that has more effectively used every liberatory vision against liberation than any historic ideology since Christianity.

MARXISM AND DOMINATION

Marxism converges with Enlightenment bourgeois ideology at a point where both seem to share a scientistic conception of reality. What usually eludes many critics of Marx's scientism, however, is the extent to which "scientific socialism" objectifies the revolutionary project and thereby necessarily divests it of all ethical content and goals.

Recent attempts by neo-Marxists to infuse a psychological, cultural, and linguistic meaning into Marxism challenge it on its own terms without candidly dealing with its innermost nature. Whether consciously or not, they share in the mystifying role of Marxism, however useful their work may be in strictly theoretical terms.

In fact, as to the matter of scientific methodology, Marx can be read in many ways. His famous comparison in the "Preface" to *Capital* of the physicist who experimentally reproduces natural phenomena in their "pure state" and his own choice of England as the "locus classicus" of industrial capitalism in his own day obviously reveals a scientistic bias that is only reinforced by his claim that *Capital* reveals the "natural laws" of "economic movement" in capitalism; indeed, that the work treats "the economic formation of society (not only capitalism—M.B.)... as a process of natural history..."

On the other hand, such formulations can be counter-balanced by the dialectical character of the *Grundrisse* and of *Capital* itself, a dialectic that probes the internal transformations of capitalist society from an organic and immanent standpoint that hardly accords with the physicist's conception of reality.

What decisively unites both the scientism of physics and the Marxian dialectic, however, is the concept of "lawfulness" itself—the preconception that social reality and its trajectory can be explained in terms that remove human visions, cultural influences, and most significantly, ethical goals from the social process. Indeed, Marxism elucidates the function of these cultural, psychological, and ethical "forces" in terms that make them contingent on "laws" which act behind human wills. Human wills, by their mutual interaction and obstruction, "cancel" each other out and leave the "economic factor" free to determine human affairs. Or to use Engels's monumental formulation, these wills comprise "innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallograms of forces which give rise to one resultant—the historic event." Hence, in the long run, "the economic ones are ultimately decisive." (Letter to J. Bloch)

It is by no means clear that Marx, who adduces the

physicist's laboratory as a paradigm, would have disagreed with Engels's social geometry. In any case, whether social "laws" are dialectical or not is beside the point. The fact is that they constitute a consistently *objective* basis for social development that is uniquely characteristic of the Enlightenment's approach to reality.

We must pause to weigh the full implications of this turn in what could be called Marx's "theory of knowledge." Greek thought also had a notion of law, but one that was guided more by a concept of "destiny" or *Moir*a than "necessity" in the modern sense of the term. *Moir*a embodied the concept of "necessity" governed by *meaning*, by an ethically conditioned goal fixed by "destiny." The actual realization of "destiny" was governed by justice or *Dike* which preserved the world order by keeping each of the cosmic elements within their appointed bounds.

The mythic nature of this conception of "law" should not close our eyes to its highly ethical content. "Necessity" was not merely compulsion but moral compulsion that had meaning and purpose. Insofar as human knowledge has a right to assume that the world is an orderly one—an assumption that modern science shares with mythic cosmologies if only to make knowledge possible—it has a right to assume that this order has intelligibility or meaning. It can be translated by human thought into a purposive constellation of relations.

From the implicit concept of goal that is inherent in any notion of an orderly universe, Greek philosophy could claim the right to speak of "justice" and "strife" in the cosmic order, of "attraction" and "repulsion," of "injustice" and "retribution." Given the eventual need for a nature philosophy that will guide us toward a deeper sense of ecological insight into our warped relationship with the natural world, we are by no means free of a less mythic need to restore this Hellenic sensibility.

The Enlightenment, by divesting law of all ethical content, produced an objective cosmos that had order without meaning. Laplace, its greatest astronomer, removed not only god from his description of the cosmos in his famous reply to Napoleon, but also the classical ethos that guided the universe. But the Enlightenment left one arena open to this ethos—the social arena, one in which order still had meaning and change still had purpose. Enlightenment thought retained the ethical vision of a moral humanity that could be educated to live in a moral society. This vision, with its generous commitment to freedom, equality, and rationality, was to be the well-spring of Utopian socialism and anarchism in the century to follow.

Ironically, Marx completed Enlightenment thought by bringing the Laplacian cosmos into society—not, to be sure,

as a crude mechanist but certainly as a scientist in harsh opposition to any form of social utopianism. Far more significant than Marx's belief that he had rooted socialism in science is the fact that he had rooted the "destiny" of society in science.

Henceforth, "men" were to be seen (to use Marx's own words in the "Preface" to *Capital*) as the "personification of economic categories, the bearer of particular class interest," not as individuals possessed of volition and of ethical purpose. [Humans] were turned into the objects of social law, a law as divested of moral meaning as Laplace's cosmic law. Science had not merely become a means for describing society but had become its fate.

What is significant in this subversion of the ethical content of law—indeed, this subversion of dialectic—is the way in which domination is elevated to the status of a natural fact. Domination is annexed to liberation as a precondition for social emancipation.

Marx, while he may have joined Hegel in a commitment to consciousness and freedom as the realization of humanity's potentialities, has no inherent moral or spiritual criterion for affirming this destiny. The entire theory is captive to its own reduction of ethics to law, subjectivity to objectivity, freedom to necessity. Domination now becomes admissible as a "precondition" for liberation, capitalism as a "precondition" for socialism, centralization as a "precondition" for decentralization, the state as a "precondition" for communism.

It would have been enough to say that material and technical development are preconditions for freedom, but Marx, as we shall see, says considerably more and in ways that have sinister implications for the realization of freedom. The constraints, which Utopian thought at its best placed on any transgression of the moral boundaries of action, are dismissed as "ideology."

Not that Marx would have accepted a totalitarian society as anything but a vicious affront to his outlook, but there are no inherent ethical considerations in his theoretical apparatus to exclude domination from his social analysis. Within a Marxian framework, such an exclusion would have to be the result of objective social law—the process of "natural history"—and that law is morally neutral. Hence, domination can be challenged not in terms of an ethics that has an inherent claim to justice and freedom; it can be challenged—or validated—only by objective laws that have a validity of their own, that exist behind the backs of "men" and beyond the reach of "ideology." This flaw, which goes beyond the question of Marx's "scientism," is a fatal one, for it opens the door to domination as the hidden incubus of the Marxian project in all its forms and later developments.

THE CONQUEST OF NATURE

The impact of this flaw becomes evident once we examine the premises of the Marxian project at their most basic level, for at this level we find that domination literally “orders” the project and gives it intelligibility. Far more important than Marx’s concept of social development as the “history of class struggle” is his drama of the extrication of humanity from animality into society, the “disembeddedness” of humanity from the cyclic “eternality” of nature into the linear temporality of history.

To Marx, humanity is socialized only to the degree that “men” acquire the technical equipment and institutional structures to achieve the “conquest” of nature, a “conquest” that involves the substitution of “universal” mankind for the parochial tribe, economic relations for kinship relations, abstract labour for concrete labour, social history for natural history. Herein lies the “revolutionary” role of capitalism as a social era. **“The bourgeois period of history has to create the material basis of the new world—on the one hand the universal intercourse founded upon the mutual dependency of mankind, and the means of that intercourse; on the other hand the development of the productive powers of man and the transformation of material production into a scientific domination of natural agencies,”** Marx writes in *The Future Results of British Rule in India* (July, 1853).

“Bourgeois industry and commerce create these material conditions of a new world in the same way as geological revolutions have created the surface of the earth. When a great social revolution shall have mastered the results of the bourgeois epoch, the market of the world and the modern powers of production, and subjected them to the common control of the most advanced peoples, then only will human progress cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.”

The compelling nature of Marx’s formulations—their evolutionary schema, their use of geological analogies to explain historical development, their crassly scientific treatment of social phenomena, **their objectivization of human action as a sphere beyond ethical evaluation and the exercise of human will**—are all the more striking because of the period in which the lines were written (Marx’s *Grundrisse* “period”). They are also striking because of the historic “mission” Marx imparted to English rule in India: the “destruction” of ancient Indian lifeways (“the annihilation of old Asiatic society”) and the “regeneration” of India as a bourgeois nation (“the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia”).

Marx's consistency in all of these areas deserves respect, not a tasteless refurbishing of classic ideas with eclectic exegesis and a theoretical adorning or "updating" of Marx with patchwork conclusions that are borrowed from utterly alien bodies of ideas. Marx is more rigorous in his notion of historic progress as the conquest of nature than his later acolytes and, more recently, neo-Marxians. Nearly five years later, in the *Grundrisse*, he was to depict the "great civilizing influence of capital" in a manner that accords completely with his notion of the British "mission" in India:

"the production (by capital) of a stage of society compared with which all earlier stages appear to be merely *local progress* and idolatry of nature. Nature becomes for the first time simply an object for mankind, purely a matter of utility; it ceases to be recognized as a power in its own right; and the theoretical knowledge of its independent laws appears only as a stratagem designed to subdue it to human requirements, whether as the object of consumption or as the means of production. Pursuing this tendency, capital has pushed beyond national boundaries and prejudices, beyond the deification of nature and the inherited, self-sufficient satisfaction of existing needs confined within well-defined bounds, and the reproduction of the traditional way of life. It is destructive of all this, and permanently revolutionary, tearing down all obstacles that impede the development of productive forces, the expansion of needs, the diversity of production and the exploitation and exchange of natural and intellectual forces."

These words could be drawn almost directly from D'Holbach's vision of nature as an "immense laboratory," from D'Alembert's paeans to a new science that sweeps "everything before it . . . like a river which has burst its dam," from Diderot's hypostasization of technics in human progress, from Montesquieu's approving image of a ravished nature—an image that, judiciously mixed with William Petty's metaphor of nature as the "mother" and labour as the "father" of all commodities, clearly reveal the Enlightenment matrix of Marx's outlook.

As **Ernst Cassirer** was to conclude in an assessment of the Enlightenment mind: "The whole eighteenth century is permeated by this conviction, namely, that in the history of humanity the time had come to deprive nature of its carefully guarded secrets, to leave it no longer in the dark to be marveled at as an incomprehensible mystery but to bring it under the bright light of reason and analyze it with all its fundamental forces." (*The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*)

The Enlightenment roots of Marxism aside, the notion that nature is "object" to be used by "man" leads not only to the total despiritization of nature but the total despiritization of

“man.” Indeed, to a greater extent than Marx was prepared to admit, historic processes move as blindly as natural ones in the sense that they lack consciousness. **The social order develops under the compulsion of laws that are as suprahuman as the natural order.** Marxian theory sees “man” as the embodiment of two aspects of material reality: firstly, as a producer who defines himself by labour; secondly, as a social being whose functions are primarily economic.

When Marx declares that **“Men may be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like (but they) begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence,”** (*The German Ideology*), he essentially deals with humanity as a “force” in the productive process that differs from other material “forces” only to the degree that “man” can conceptualize productive operations that animals perform instinctively. It is difficult to realize how decisively this notion of humanity breaks with the classical concept.

To Aristotle, “men” fulfilled their humanity to the degree that they could live in a polis and achieve the “good life.” Hellenic thought as a whole distinguished “men” from animals by virtue of their rational capacities. If a “mode of production” is not simply to be regarded as a means of survival but a **“definite mode of life”** such that “men” are **“what they produce and how they produce”** (*The German Ideology*), humanity, in effect, can be regarded as an instrument of production. **The “domination of man by man” is primarily a technical phenomenon rather than an ethical one.**

Within this incredibly reductionist framework, whether it is valid for “man” to dominate “man” is to be judged mainly in terms of technical needs and possibilities, however distasteful such a criterion may seem to Marx himself had he faced it in all its brute clarity. Domination, too, as we shall see with Engels’ essay “On Authority,” becomes a technical phenomenon that underpins the realm of freedom.

Society, in turn, becomes a mode of labour that is to be judged by its capacity to meet material needs. Class society remains unavoidable as long as the “mode of production” fails to provide the free time and material abundance for human emancipation. Until the appropriate technical level is achieved, “man’s” evolutionary development remains incomplete. Indeed, popular communistic visions of earlier eras are mere ideology because **“only want is made general”** by premature attempts to achieve an egalitarian society, **“and with want the struggle for necessities and all the old shit would necessarily be reproduced.”** (*The German Ideology*).

Finally, even where technics reaches a relatively high level of development, “the realm of freedom does not commence until the point is passed where labour under the compulsion of necessity and of external utility is required. In the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of material production in the strict meaning of the term. Just as the savage must wrestle with nature, in order to satisfy his wants, in order to maintain his life and reproduce it, so civilized man has to do it, and he must do it in all forms of society and under all possible modes of production. With his development the realm of natural necessity expands, because his wants increase; but at the same time the forces of production increase, by which these wants are satisfied.

The freedom in this field cannot consist of anything else but of the fact that socialized man, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power; that they accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it. But it always remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human power, which is its own end, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can flourish only upon that realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its fundamental premise.” (*Capital*, Vol. III)

The bourgeois conceptual framework reaches its apogee, here in images of the “savage who must wrestle with nature,” the unlimited expansion of needs that stands opposed to “ideological” limits to need (i.e., the Hellenic concepts of measure, balance, and self-sufficiency), the rationalization of production and labour as desiderata in themselves of a strictly technical nature, the sharp dichotomy between freedom and necessity, and the conflict with nature as a condition of social life in all its forms—class or classless, propertied or communistic.

Accordingly, socialism now moves within an orbit in which, to use Max Horkheimer’s formulation, “Domination of nature involves domination of man”—not only “the subjugation of external nature, human and nonhuman” but human nature. (*The Eclipse of Reason*) Following his split from the natural world, “man” can hope for no redemption from class society and exploitation until he, as a technical force among the technics created by his own ingenuity, can transcend his objectification. The precondition for this transcendence is quantitatively measurable: the “shortening of the working day is its fundamental premise.” Until these preconditions are achieved, “man” remains under the tyranny of social law, the compulsion of need and survival.

The proletariat, no less than any other class in history, is captive to the impersonal processes of history. Indeed, as the class that is most completely dehumanized by bourgeois conditions, it can only transcend its objectified status through “urgent, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative need . . .” For Marx, “The question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat at the moment, considers as its aim. The question is what the proletariat is, and what, consequent on that being, it will be compelled to do.” (*The Holy Family*)

Its “being,” here, is that of object and social law functions as compulsion, not as “destiny.” The subjectivity of the proletariat remains a product of its objectivity—ironically, a notion that finds a certain degree of truth in the fact that any radical appeal merely to the objective factors that enter into the forming of a “proletarian consciousness” or class consciousness strike back like a whiplash against Socialism in the form of a working class that has “bought into capitalism,” that seeks its share in the affluence provided by the system. Thus where reaction is the real basis of action and need is the basis of motivation, the bourgeois spirit becomes the “world spirit” of Marxism.

The disenchantment of nature yields the disenchantment of humanity. “Man” appears as a complex of interests and class consciousness as the generalization of these interests to the level of consciousness. To the degree that the classical view of self-realization through the polis recedes before the Marxian view of self-preservation through Socialism, the bourgeois spirit acquires a degree of sophistication that makes its earlier spokesmen (Hobbes, Locke) seem naive. The incubus of domination now fully reveals its authoritarian logic. Just as necessity becomes the basis of freedom, authority becomes the basis of rational coordination.

This notion, already implicit in Marx’s harsh separation of the realms of necessity and freedom—a separation Fourier was to sharply challenge—is made explicit in Engels’s essay “On Authority.” To Engels, the factory is a natural fact of technics, not a specifically bourgeois mode of rationalizing labour; hence it will exist under communism as well as capitalism. It will persist “independently of all social organization.” To coordinate a factory’s operations requires “imperious obedience,” in which factory hands lack all “autonomy.” Class society or classless, the realm of necessity is also a realm of command and obedience, of ruler and ruled. In a fashion totally congruent with all class ideologists from the inception of class society, Engels weds Socialism to command and rule as a natural fact. Domination is reworked from a social attribute into a precondition for self-preservation in a technically advanced society.

HIERARCHY AND DOMINATION

To structure a revolutionary project around “social law” that lacks ethical content, order that lacks meaning, a harsh opposition between “man” and nature, compulsion rather than consciousness—all of these, taken together with domination as a precondition for freedom, debase the concept of freedom and assimilate it to its opposite, coercion. Consciousness becomes the recognition of its lack of autonomy just as freedom becomes the recognition of necessity.

A politics of “liberation” emerges that reflects the development of advanced capitalist society into nationalized production, planning, centralization, the rationalized control of nature—and the rationalized control of “men.” If the proletariat cannot comprehend its own “destiny” by itself, a party that speaks in its name becomes justified as the authentic expression of that consciousness, even if it stands opposed to the proletariat itself. If capitalism is the historic means whereby humanity achieves the conquest of nature, the techniques of bourgeois industry need merely be reorganized to serve the goals of Socialism. If ethics are merely ideology, Socialist goals are the product of history rather than reflection and it is by criteria mandated by history that we are to determine the problems of ends and means, not by reason and disputation.

There seem to be fragments in Marx’s writings that could be counterposed to this grim picture of Marxian Socialism. Marx’s “Speech at the Anniversary of the *People’s Paper*” (April, 1856), for example, describes the enslavement of “man” by “man” in the attempt to master nature as an “infamy.”

The “pure light of science seems unable to shine but on a dark background of ignorance” and our technical achievements “seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force.” This moral evaluation recurs in Marx’s writings more as explanations of historic development than justifications that give it meaning.

But Alfred Schmidt, who quotes them at length in *Marx’s Concept of Nature*, neglects to tell us that Marx often viewed such moral evaluations as evidence of immature sentimentality. The “speech” mocks those who “wail” over the misery that technical and scientific advances yield. “On our part,” Marx declares, “we do not mistake the shape of the shrewd spirit (one may justifiably translate “shrewd spirit” to read “cunning of reason” — M.B.) that continues to

mark all these contradictions. We know that to work well the new-fangled forces of society, they only want to be mastered by new-fangled men—and such are the working men.” The speech, in fact, ends with a tribute to modern industry and particularly to the English proletariat as the “first born sons of modern industry.”

Even if one views Marx’s ethical proclivities as authentic, they are **marginal** to the core of his writings. The attempts to redeem Marx and fragments of his writings from the logic of his thought and work becomes ideological because it obfuscates a thorough exploration of the meaning of Marxism as a practice and the extent to which a “class analysis” can reveal the sources of human oppression. We come, here, to a fundamental split within Socialism as a whole: the limits of a class analysis, the ability of a theory based on class relations and property relations to explain history and the modern crisis.

Basic to anti-authoritarian Socialism—specifically, to Anarchist Communism—is the notion that hierarchy and domination cannot be subsumed by class rule and economic exploitation, indeed, that they are more fundamental to an understanding of the modern revolutionary project. **Before “man” began to exploit “man,” he began to dominate woman; even earlier—if we are to accept Paul Radin’s view—the old began to dominate the young through a hierarchy of age-groups, gerontocracies, and ancestor-worship. Power of human over human long antedates the very formation of classes and economic modes of social oppression.** If **“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,”** this order of history is preceded by **an earlier, more fundamental conflict: social domination by gerontocracies, patriarchy, and even bureaucracy.**

To explore the emergence of hierarchy and domination is obviously beyond the scope of this work. I have dealt with it in considerable detail in my forthcoming book, *The Ecology of Freedom*. Such an exploration would carry us beyond political economy into the realm of the domestic economy, the civil realm into the family realm, the class realm into the sexual realm. It would provide us with an entirely new psychosocial set of foundations from which to read the nature of human oppression and open an entirely new horizon from which to gauge the true meaning of human freedom.

We would certainly have to shed the function Marx imparts to interest and technics as social determinants—which is not to deny their role historically, but to search into the claims of non-economic factors such as status, order, recognition, indeed, into rights and duties which may even be materially burdensome to commanding strata of society. This much is clear: it will no longer do to insist that a classless society,

freed of material exploitation, will necessarily be a liberated society. There is nothing in the social future to suggest that bureaucracy is incompatible with a classless society, the domination of women, the young, ethnic groups or even professional strata.

These notions reveal the limits of Marx's own work, his inability to grasp a realm of history that is vital to understanding freedom itself. So blind is Marx to authority as such that it becomes a mere technical feature of production, a "natural fact" in "man's" metabolism with nature. Woman, too, becomes an exploited being not because she is rendered docile by man (or "weak" to use a term that Marx regarded as her most endearing trait) but because her labour is enslaved to man. Children remain merely "childish," the expression of untamed and undisciplined "human nature." Nature, needless to say, remains mere object of utility, its laws to be mastered and commanded in an enterprise of conquest.

There can be no Marxian theory of the family, of feminism, or of ecology because Marx negates the issues they raise or worse, transmutes them into economic ones. Hence, attempts to formulate a Marxian feminism tend to degenerate into "wages for housewives," a Marxian psychology into a Marcusean reading of Freud, and a Marxian ecology into "pollution is profitable." Far from clarifying the issues that may help define the revolutionary project, these efforts at hybridization conceal them by making it difficult to see that "ruling class" women are ruled by "ruling class" men, that Freud is merely the alter ego of Marx, that ecological balance presupposes a new sensibility and ethics that are not only different from Marxism but in flat opposition to it.

Marx's work is not only the most sophisticated ideology of state capitalism but it impedes a truly revolutionary conception of freedom. It alters our perception of social issues in such a way that we cannot relevantly anchor the revolutionary project in sexual relations, the family, community, education, and the fostering of a truly revolutionary sensibility and ethics. At every point in this enterprise, we are impeded by economistic categories that claim a more fundamental priority and thereby invalidate the enterprise at its outset.

Merely to amend these economistic categories or to modify them is to acknowledge their sovereignty over revolutionary consciousness in altered form, not to question their relationship to more fundamental ones. It is to build obscurantism into the enterprise from the outset of our investigation. The development of a revolutionary project must begin by shedding the Marxian categories from the very beginning, to fix on more basic categories created by hierarchical society from its inception all the more to place

the economic ones in their proper context. It is no longer simply capitalism we wish to demolish; it is an older and more archaic world that lives on in the present one—the domination of human by human, the rationale of hierarchy as such.

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