

pains to distinguish the sociological from the psychological level of analysis. Durkheim is the archetypal sociologist because institutionally he had to be most conscious of what would make sociology a distinctive science in its own right. Because of the highly centralized and elitist system in which he operated, Durkheim's sociological followers were a relatively small group, and these were badly hit by casualties in the World War I. Durkheimian theory survived in France mostly as an adjunct to anthropology; it was in the guise of social anthropology, too, that it made its way across the channel to England. But in the United States, with its much larger sociology departments and general eclecticism, Durkheimian sociology found a secure place, and its identity as an intellectual community was assured.

We end our analysis here in the early twentieth century. After these promising beginnings in Germany and France, the convulsions of world politics intervened to hand sociology over largely to the United States. The Nazis hated sociology, and between their coming to power in 1933 and the end of World War II, German sociologists were either dead or had fled abroad. The German occupation of France also caused many sociologists to flee; although unlike the Germans, many of whom remained in the United States, the French (including Claude Lévi-Strauss) usually returned home after the war. Britain, as we have seen, never did establish sociology in its core academic system until long after this time. The result was that the United States became a *mélange* of world sociology and experienced a mixture and development of different positions. Together the wealth and huge university system of the United States gave it a world leadership for a time in both theory and research. It also spelled the end of the distinctive national traditions, in that most of them had left their original homes and migrated elsewhere.

By the 1970s, the world pattern was shifting again. Vigorous expansion in the British and European academic systems put sociology on a new footing almost everywhere. But now it is time for us to turn back into the inner history of sociology—no longer to look at its institutional bases, but at three of its great traditions of ideas.

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## One: The Conflict Tradition

*Strife is the father of all things. . . . Being at variance it agrees with itself: there is a back-stretched connection, as in the bow and the lyre.*

*Heraclitus, ca. 500 B.C.*

A line of thought going back many centuries emphasizes social conflict. This sounds like it studies only certain dramatic events, but the perspective is much broader and includes all of what goes on in society. Its main argument is not simply that society consists of conflict, but the larger claim that what occurs when conflict is not openly taking place is a process of domination. Its vision of social order consists of groups and individuals trying to advance their own interests over others whether or not overt outbreaks take place in this struggle for advantage. Calling this approach the *conflict* perspective is a bit of a metaphor. The word focuses on the tip of an iceberg, the spectacular events of revolution, war, or social movements; but the viewpoint concerns equally the normal structure of dominant and subordinate interest groups that make up the larger part of the iceberg submerged below.

This conflict vision of society is rarely popular. Conflict sociologists have usually been an intellectual underground. Prevailing views of one's own society have usually stressed a much more benign picture, whether based on beliefs in religious beings underpinning the social world, or on secular beliefs in the goodness of one's rulers and the charitable inten-

tions of established elites. To conflict sociologists, these kinds of justifications are ideologies cloaking real self-interests of groups hiding beneath them. To point this out, obviously, does not usually make one very welcome in mainstream society.

Nevertheless the conflict viewpoint has emerged over and over again wherever there have been politically astute observers. We find it in Renaissance Italy, penned by Niccolo Machiavelli in exile from a coup d'état in Florence; or we find it 2,000 years earlier with Thucydides, also in exile, writing from the conflicts of his native Athens. More remotely, we know of the conflict views of the machinating Hindu statesman Kautilya and of the ancient Chinese philosopher Mo Ti. The conflict viewpoint also emerges wherever intellectuals have seriously tried to write history, whenever they have gone beyond chron-

SOME MAIN POINTS OF THE CONFLICT TRADITION

|           |   |                   |   |
|-----------|---|-------------------|---|
| 1800-1840 | classical economics:<br>Ricardo                                     |                   | Hegel   |
| 1840-1870 | German historical economics<br><i>Realpolitik</i>                   |                   | Marx and Engels   |
| 1870-1900 |   | Nietzsche         | Engels' dialectical<br>materialism  |
| 1900-1920 | Weber<br>Michels  |                   | Marxist theories<br>of imperialism  |
|           |   |                   | Simmel  |
| 1920-1940 | Mannheim  | Lukács<br>Gramsci | Frankfurt School<br>Marxist sociologists<br>of science  |
| 1940-1960 | Gerth; Mills  |                   | functionalist<br>conflict theory:<br>Cosser   |
|           | organization theory<br>stratification theory<br>political sociology |                   |   |
| 1960-     | conflict theory:<br>Dahrendorf<br>Lenski<br>Collins                 |                   | neo-Marxism:<br>world systems theory;<br>historical sociology of<br>revolutions, social<br>movements, and the state |
|           | sex-stratification theory   |                   |   |

icling the glorious exploits of kings to analyze what happened on the historical stage and why. For history has been largely the record of conflict, of war, political uprising, factional maneuver and change. And this is true even if one is writing the history not of the state but of an idealizing institution like religion. The history of every church—Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, or any other, no matter how loving or pacifist its doctrine—has nevertheless been the history of struggle, factions, persecutions, and conflicts, often entwined with economic and political factions in the larger society. Hence, conflict sociologists have tended to focus on historical materials and to be especially aware of long-term patterns of change. This intellectual tradition might just as well be called the "historical" or the "historical-conflict" tradition in sociology.

*The Pivotal Position of Karl Marx*

We could start our account of the conflict tradition with many different thinkers. But for our purposes it is useful to begin with Karl Marx. What is referred to as the thought of "Marx" is actually more of a symbol than the work of one individual. Marx is the center of a tradition that dramatized conflict more than any other. It also became the doctrine of a political movement—at one time revolutionary, but since the victory of the Communists in Russia in 1917 and subsequently elsewhere, Marxism has further had to serve as the statement of an official Establishment. As a result Marxism has gone through many splits and variations corresponding to political disputes within the camp of Communist regimes and of revolutionary movements elsewhere in the world. These political connections and applications are part of Marxism's appeal for some intellectuals, but they are responsible for considerable repulsion on the part of others. For all this, our concern here is with the *intellectual* contribution of Marxism to a realistic understanding of the world as a situation of domination and conflict. This means ignoring whatever is the orthodox or unorthodox socialist or Communist line and concentrating on whatever ideas prove to be most valuable in the lineage marked by the name of

"Marx." The very existence of the Communist regimes in the world today and the shape of their own internal conflicts cannot be understood if the Marxian tradition had not opened up a lineage of conflict sociology.

"Marx" is a symbol, among other reasons, because he pulled together the various ingredients of conflict analysis existing before his day. It is well known, for example, that he drew on the philosophy of Hegel. What is crucial about Hegel is that he gave more emphasis to conflict than any philosopher since Heraclitus. Hegel was the last of the great German idealist philosophers, and among the most dynamic. Kant had demonstrated that reality is never seen in itself but only through the screen of our subjective ideas, including the categories of time and space. Hegel had made these ideas less subjective as well as less static, explaining them as a gradual unfolding of the Spirit that makes up the world itself. In a sense Hegel (like Kant before him) was defending the religious world view in an era of growing science. The Spirit is God, but conceived in a heretical way and modified to encompass a changing historical and physical world whose secrets were increasingly being revealed by the viewpoint of science. Against the growing tide of chemistry, physics, and biology, Hegel placed his defense of the Spirit on the human realm of consciousness. Philosophy, religion, and law are not only subjective realities, but they also have a history and show the Spirit evolving from a lower to a higher form of enlightenment. In this light Hegel wished to show that the overemphasis on the material world, represented by science, was merely a passing stage in the development of the Spirit. Human consciousness inevitably went through a historical stage in which it took the external appearances for the essence of things; the Spirit, which is pure Idea, outwardly manifests itself at one stage as the idea of material things. This is because the Spirit is divided from itself; it is alienated and reified—terms that Marx and some of his followers were later to appropriate for their own world view. Eventually, though, the Spirit would come to full self-consciousness; humans would come to realize that they and the world were both God, both Spirit. The millennium would be achieved.

As in all religious or quasi-religious schemes, the endpoint of Hegel's system is hard to visualize in real terms. Hegel's earlier mysticism (formulated, to be sure, in the heady days of the German national reforms responding to the French Revolution) gave way to an ideological defense of the laws of the Prussian monarchy as representing some kind of historical and rational perfection. By the 1830s and 1840s, when Marx was a student, Hegel's system was fair ground for young liberals and radicals who wanted to take it much further. For Hegel, religion had been a progressive force, pointing the way to future history and the overcoming of human alienation. For the "Young Hegelians" of the 1830s and 1840s, religion was clearly the tool of Prussian authoritarianism and had to be exposed or drastically purified. Some, like David Strauss, used new critical scholarship to expose Jesus as merely a human historical figure; others, like Bruno Bauer (Marx's own teacher), expounded a religion based purely on love without supernatural sanctions or conservative dogmas. Still others, like Ludwig Feuerbach, attacked the entire basis of Hegel's idealism, turning it upside down and insisting that the world is thoroughly materialistic. The power of science, which Hegel had attempted to outflank and contain inside his idealistic progression, nevertheless had continued to grow and religion was no longer upheld by intellectuals but imposed by the brute force of the orthodox state.

The Young Hegelians were Marx's milieu. He shared their leading enthusiasms: atheism and materialism. But Marx was an ambitious intellectual driving to move beyond. Unlike his peers, he was much more politicized. The merely intellectual, apolitical stance of the others aroused only his scorn, as did the soft-hearted and utopian religion of love preached by Bauer and Feuerbach. In a time when Hegel was being criticized by his peers, Marx defended Hegel as superior to those who came after him precisely because he had seen all of history as having a long-term dynamic that moved through certain inevitable stages and did not depend on the utopian schemes and wishful thinking of the individuals of the time. Marx was also attracted by the explicit emphasis on conflict in Hegel's scheme. This was built into Hegel's logic, the technical driving force of his system. It is

the logical contradictions, which Hegel uncovered in every philosophical concept, that produced a dialectic and, hence, change. For Hegel the history of philosophy was the key to the history of the world itself. Marx was later to regard this type of scheme as an ideology. But it needed only to be inverted to be put right: Hegel had the world standing on its head, Marx had only to turn it over upon its feet. Thus, unlike Feuerbach and other materialists, Marx's materialism retains Hegel's full historical vision—inevitable contradictions and changes, stages of development, and utopian outcome included.

Hegelianism was Marx's first intellectual acquisition, and it remained the basic framework of his thinking throughout his career. Already in the early years of the 1840s, Marx had fitted Hegelianism to his political radicalism. An inevitable contradiction existed in the material system of his own day, which would eventually bring about the system's downfall and the ushering in of a new stage. Logically of course it might be that many more stages would follow before the end, but like Hegel, Marx believed that he was living through (or near to) the final transition—the stage at which human alienation would finally be overcome. It remained only to find the mechanism by which this would come about.

The utopian and millenarian element in Marx was to prove to be a weakness in his intellectual system. But it did flow from two aspects of Hegel that gave a favorable impetus to the development of a conflict sociology. One of these was the emphasis on conflict itself as a driving force. Though Hegel drew primarily on philosophical and religious history, he nevertheless assimilated to his grand scheme of historical stages the realities of human domination. Ancient society (Hegel was thinking of the Greeks and Romans) he unsentimentally characterized as a world of masters and slaves, with medieval Christianity as a kind of lugubrious revenge of the slave mentality. It is only a step from here to class domination and conflict. History, said Hegel, is a "slaughterbench at which the happiness of peoples . . . have been victimized." Moreover he saw the conflicts and changes of world history as not random, but as logical and inevitable. No doubt Hegel's own theory of the pattern of these changes is overstated and erroneous, but

the underlying message points directly to the creation of a sociological science. There is a general pattern, Hegel's theory asserts, and basic causal generalizations about social conflicts and transformations can be made. For this reason, however much the Marxian tradition has kept of Hegelian mystification (including the more recent fashion of emphasizing the uniqueness of each period of history), there is an underlying thrust in the direction of a general sociological science.

Historical inevitability for Karl Marx's own career came in the form of a crackdown by the Prussian government on radical antireligious professors like Bruno Bauer. Losing his mentor and his chance of an academic career, Marx went to Paris, the home of revolutions. He quickly went through and beyond the ideas of the French socialists, utopians like Charles Fourier (or his British counterpart Robert Owen) who advocated the drop-out path of building one's own socialist communities: a path that could scarcely avoid the inevitable intervention of, and conflicts with, the surrounding society. More important, Marx read the French historians on their own revolutions, men like François Guizot who saw the actors on the stage as social classes, though they confined themselves to arguing for the triumph of the industrial bourgeoisie over the outdated land-owning aristocracy. Marx's materialism began to take on a class content.

Most important of all, Marx discovered economics. This was not only the archetypal science of the material side of society, it also contained, in its own classics, a good many elements of the conflict perspective. The economics Marx learned was what we now call "classical" economics, to distinguish it from the "neoclassical" economics created by men like Jevons, Menger, and Walras in the 1860s and 1870s. In the "classical" form, economics still rested on the labor theory of value: the doctrine that the source of all value is the transformation of the natural world made by the application of human labor. This already implied a critical element, in that the worker was by implication entitled to the fruits of his or her efforts and was exploited if he or she did not receive them. (Neoclassical economics was to remove this radical implication by eliminating the labor theory of value in favor of the psychological conception of

marginal utility: value became defined not in terms of what supplied goods and services, but in terms of the psychology of the relative demand for them.) Property, too, was seen as a key element in economic theory, especially in the classical form: owners of land and of capital confront workers who own nothing but their labor, which they are forced to sell to keep themselves alive. These "factors of production" were to become the major class actors in Marx's scheme. Marx even found a ready-made vision of harsh economic conflict in such writings as those of Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo—they argued that the interests of the different economic classes are inalterably opposed: for Malthus it was the overbreeding of the working classes that kept their wages down to near-starvation level, for Ricardo it was the inevitable shortage of land that favored the wealth of the landowners.

In such writings Marx found plenty of ingredients for his own vision of social conflict. To be sure, he criticized the bourgeois economists severely: for their inclination towards the stance of the capitalists and for failing to see that their economic "laws" merely represented the workings of one particular period in human history. Marx's Hegelian vision translated the conflicts of the capitalist economy into contradictions that would bring about its downfall and its transcendence by yet another type of system.

After much searching and synthesis of different positions, Marx produced the system for which he had been looking. He brought together his revolutionary political aims to found a socialism that would not be utopian but inevitable: His was a Hegelian vision of a series of historical stages that were driven by inner contradictions towards a final overcoming of human alienation. Marx's materialism was not merely static but resulted from a dynamics of the capitalist economy that produced crisis, class conflict, and eventually revolution. For sheer architecture of intellectual comprehensiveness, Marx's system is astounding. Its impressiveness is such as to compel admiration, quite apart from whether it works or not in the real world—no doubt one reason why Marx's ideas have always attracted followers.

Put briefly: Marx's system rests on the point that labor is

the source not only of economic value, but also of profit. In a pure market system, operating under the impulsion of supply and demand, everything exchanges for its own value. Hence arises the conundrum: Where does profit come from? Marx answers: from labor, which is the only factor of production from which can be squeezed more than the cost of reproducing it. This is, technically, the "exploitation of labor," which means working laborers longer than the number of hours it takes to reproduce their labor. But capitalist competition impels manufacturers to introduce labor-saving machinery, which in turn cuts their own throats. For profit still comes only from the exploitation of labor, and the more that labor is replaced by machines, the smaller the basis of profit becomes. The result, schematically, is a falling rate of profit and a series of business crises. Across these crises, capital becomes more monopolistically concentrated as weaker capitalists are driven out and into the ranks of the workers; simultaneously, productive capacity continually exceeds consumer demand among the displaced and increasingly unemployed workers. Eventually the productive technology of the system is completely at odds with the legal property forms of capitalism. The ideological and political superstructure falls apart; economic crisis is followed by class confrontation and political revolution.

For Marx, the economic mechanism is not the only reason for a materialist dynamic that produces Hegel's inevitable contradictions and transformations. History moves as a whole; Hegel's sequence of philosophies, religions, and laws are also part of the system, but in this case a dependent part rather than the driving source. Economics explains politics, law, and human culture. There is even a deep spiritual element in the whole process. The spiritual alienation built into Hegel's sequence of stages is completely taken up in Marx's economic series. Just as the Spirit is divided from itself in the form of reified ideas of the material world that seem to press on the individual consciousness from the outside, in Marx's vision humanity is oppressed by a material world that is itself created by humans. Workers create the social and economic world by their own labor and are then oppressed by their own products, which stand over against them. Thus, the overcoming of capitalism

and the institution of socialism is not merely an economic change, but the historical overthrowing of alienation. The world created by humans finally comes back under their own control, ending the basic estrangement of the self.

*Friedrich Engels, The Sociologist in the Shadows*

Clearly there is much more in Marx than what we would call sociology. It is a technical economics and at the same time a kind of metaphysics—a philosophy that is both politically critical and activist and that also offers a quasi-religious hope of ultimate salvation of the human essence. All these features plus the fact that they fit together into the imposing architecture of one all-encompassing system have been the great attraction of Marx for intellectuals seeking something more than narrow and uninspiring specializations. At the same time I would have to say that these features are something of a snare and a temptation from the path towards a realistic sociology. Not that there is no worthwhile sociology incorporated within the Marxian scheme, but it has been so tightly entangled with the rest of the system that it has often been downgraded or overlooked and the whole system has been made to survive or fall on the strength of its philosophical and political vision. Yet the economics and the philosophy are actually on shakier ground than the sociology.

Marx is a symbolic figure in yet another sense. It is typical to refer to "Marx" or "Marxism" when what is actually meant is the work of Marx and Engels. Some of the most important "Marxian" works were written by the two men together, including the *Communist Manifesto* and *The German Ideology*. Friedrich Engels in fact is the more sociological thinker of the two. There is something of a myth about the relation between Marx and Engels: that Engels was intellectually inferior and no more than a loyal disciple and weak collaborator in the system belonging to Marx. In actuality Engels deserves to be treated in his own right. In many ways, what he contributed is the solid and more lasting in the "Marxian" contribution to a conflict sociology.

The myth about Marx and Engels is strongly entrenched, among other reasons because it was originated by Engels himself. After their early political agitation and their participation in the abortive revolutions of 1848, Marx went into exile in London, while Engels went to work as a clerk and later the manager of his family's British factory at Manchester. Shortly afterwards Engels all but ceased his intellectual work, while Marx kept alive the underground politics of Communist revolution and worked on his lengthy economic tomes, supported by what funds Engels could send him. Only in the 1870s did Engels reappear in the intellectual and political world, after a 20-year absence. By this time Marx was sick and little productive; Engels took up the slack, writing not only works of his own, but also representing Marx in political and intellectual affairs. Engels became the spokesman of "Marxism," coining its slogans and formulating its doctrines as well as editing and publishing posthumous volumes of Marx's *Das Kapital* after Marx's death in 1883. For all his own activity, Engels cloaked himself in Marx's intellectual identity.

Moreover the pattern was already set early in their career, during the revolutionary decade of the 1840s. In their joint publications, Marx's name always came first. Marx even published under his own name works that were actually written by Engels, such as Engels's analysis of the European upheavals, entitled *Germany: Revolution and Counter-revolution*, written for the *New York Tribune* during 1851–1852. Marx often asked Engels to edit or ghostwrite his manuscripts for him, but without printed acknowledgment; and Marx would arbitrarily change Engels's own writings and send them to the printer without consultation. Engels never protested, never raised an eyebrow. He was already totally loyal. His passivity has seemed to confirm the impression that he was merely the errandboy in the presence of a genius.

But this picture is hardly accurate. Engels in fact was a thinker of considerable originality and breadth: in some respects more so than Marx. Marx himself admitted this in a private letter to Engels late in his life: "You know that, first of all, I arrive at things slowly, and, secondly, I always follow in your footsteps." A strange revelation! Yet it was Engels in fact

who first understood the importance of economics, properly critiqued and detached from its bourgeois ideological underpinnings. It was he who early in 1844 published in Marx's journal a "Critique of Political Economy," while Marx was still fighting the philosophical battles of the Young Hegelians. In this essay Engels argued that private property inevitably leads to ever-growing capitalist monopoly and simultaneously to the growth of its fatal enemy, the working class. Marx's reaction was to attempt to translate this economics into Hegelian terms, in the so-called "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844." And it was Engels who showed, with the publication in 1845 of his own researches in the Manchester factories—*The Condition of the Working Class in England*—that the abstractions of philosophy meant nothing next to the concrete social conditions of a real social class caught in the throes of capitalism.

Engels, in short, led the way, although Marx was already predisposed to follow in this direction owing to the failed idealism of Hegel and the example of Feuerbach. But it is not so well appreciated how much Engels continued to lead, especially into sociology. Although Marx remained preoccupied with critiquing the German philosophers, Engels pushed for a more empirical and more scientifically generalizable conception of the real world. It is Engels who wrote the first draft of the *Communist Manifesto* and gave it a sociological slant, whereas Marx tacked on his usual critique of philosophical and political rivals and enhanced its vividness with his gift for literary phrase and biting invective. And while Marx demonstrated that his own genius could illuminate current political events such as in the brilliant analysis of the French counterrevolution in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), it was Engels who broadened the method to search for historical parallels and generalizations in *The Peasant War in Germany* (1850). Marx was always more the contemporary politician, Engels more the pure intellectual and the greater historical sociologist.

The extensive correspondence preserved between Marx and Engels certainly does not show Marx dominating the relationship intellectually. Instead, it shows Engels throwing out ideas and thinking on paper, while Marx tends to be more preoccupied with reporting personal and political news, detail-

ing his adventures and escapes at the hands of hostile authorities, writing about his difficulties with publishers, and above all spelling out his financial scrapes, and appealing for funds. From the letters alone, one would probably conclude that Engels was more intellectual. This would not be strictly true. But Marx was narrowly focused as a political crusader, and his intellectual life was channeled into an almost monomaniacal obsession with building a system of political economy that would undergird his vision of the Communist future.

For sociology the crucial event in Marx's life was unquestionably his friendship with Engels. We see this from the kinds of writing they produced on their own as compared to what they did together. Before they met, Marx was a left-Hegelian, philosophically disposed to materialism and socialism, but lacking much of a sense of what the economic and social world is really about. After Engels converted him to an economic sociology, they wrote a series of works together. Some parts of these—*The Holy Family*, *The German Ideology*, the *Communist Manifesto*—contain a good deal of Marx's continuing polemic against the Young Hegelians and other rivals on the Left. But these are the pages that hold little interest for us today, whereas the enduring and famous contributions are the pages in which Marx and Engels together set forth their sociology in general terms. It is also in this period that Marx and Engels severally wrote out their analysis of particular revolutions, in a form ranging from analytical journalism to historical sociology. But after 1852 when Engels retired into the business grind at Manchester, Marx's sociology largely disappears, and he produces virtually nothing but technical economics and doctrinal or tactical statements for the maneuvers of Communist politics. Finally Engels returns, and in a series of books and articles from 1878 until his death in 1895 attempts to lift Marxism out of the realm of technical economics and to make it a general science of all questions—sociological, historical, and even encompassing the world of nature.

Marx without Engels would have the materialist-leaning left wing of the Young Hegelians, taken one step further in the direction explored by Strauss, Bauer, and Feuerbach. Perhaps he would have found his own way to economics. Certainly this

became his preferred intellectual home, although he continued to rework Ricardo's economic system from the point of view not only of searching for the proletarian revolution, but also to make it consistent with Hegelian categories of contradiction, alienation, and the dialectic of the individual and the universal. From the early 1850s onwards, Marx worked on a massive project in economics, of which *Capital* was to be merely one portion (along with volumes to come on *Landed Property, Wage Labour, The State, International Trade, and World Market*). The whole system was to be called *Critique of Political Economy*, the same title as Engels's brief work of 1844 that had started Marx upon this path. In his lifetime, Marx published various slices of this work, including an introductory *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), and volume I of *Capital* in 1867. Even this latter was only one third of the first sixth of the whole project, though Engels posthumously got the other two thirds of *Capital* through the press in 1885 and 1894. Almost 100 years later a fragmentary draft manuscript known as the *Grundrisse* was published, to the adulation of admirers. But even this 800-page segment was only a small part of the whole. Clearly Marx had set himself a large task, which receded steadily towards the horizon as he plunged in ever-more pedantic detail into the section before him. Engels was always pushing him to finish up and publish more quickly, but Marx lacked Engels's qualities of turning out a quick and rounded overview. If truth be told, the thousands of pages of Marxian economics, with their involutions through complex Hegelian abstractions, are a tedious maze. They would be sheer boredom to read if they were not enlivened by Marx's political crusade against capitalism and his intellectual opponents, which brings the prose to life by its invective tinged with moral outrage. It is this combination of emotion with endless intellectual abstraction that no doubt impressed Marx's contemporaries as a sign of his genius, and it continues to fascinate those who choose to fall within his orbit.

But to put the matter bluntly: Marx's own personal labyrinth is not a place that sociology should be trapped. It is Engels who breathed sociology into the vision, and it is Engels's own writings—and those of Marx that were collaborative

with, or inspired by, joint work with Engels—that delivers what sociology can learn from this "Marxian" view.<sup>1</sup>

The question naturally arises: Why did Engels efface himself so deliberately before the intellectual persona of Marx? For one thing, Engels and Marx really did converge in some of their ideas, especially in the early part of their careers before Marx became all-absorbed in a Hegelianized economics. Both men were young and active revolutionaries; Engels actually led the military uprising in his own town of Barmen in Germany in 1848. After the eclipse of the revolution, it was Marx who kept up the underground political work, becoming head of the Communist International, while Engels contributed as he could by managing his factory and seeing to Marx's financial support. It was no doubt this political commitment, and Marx's much more forceful political personality, that conditioned their intellectual identities, at least in public. Moreover Marx was a difficult person to get along with. Engels was one of the few acquaintances with whom he did not break; in fact Engels was his one real friend. The terms of their friendship were simply the avoidance of any intellectual disagreement and any overt challenge by Engels to Marx's public preeminence in their collaboration. Perhaps this even appealed to Engels as a practical matter because he was, after all, outwardly a respectable business executive in Manchester society; whereas Marx put up not only with poverty, but with the dangers of the political police and endless struggles with censorship on the Continent. Engels may even have experienced an inner satisfaction on intellectual grounds. After all, it was *he* who had initiated the "critique of political economy" and the system of materialistic conflict sociology in the 1840s, and he must have had the satisfaction of seeing his own project worked out through all its tedious details by his friend's labor. Finally 25 years later, he was able to step back into the intellectual arena in his own right, bearing a more-or-less finished product in hand. With Marx sick and then dead, Engels was left on center stage as a popular and influential spokesperson with plenty of attention being paid to his own thoughts as he took the system on new tangents. One might say, at the price of not receiving his full credit, Engels was



able to reap a pleasant and successful intellectual career—to a much greater degree than did Marx in his own lifetime.

If one wished to play with labels, one could say that the “Marxism” label is a myth and that for purposes of sociology Marx might better be called an “Engelsian.” Marx wrote longer and more systematic works but in a narrow and somewhat monomaniacal vein; Engels was more wide ranging as well as more sociological. Engels was more willing to turn out rapid essays, trying out new ideas on paper—hence, the superficiality of some of his thoughts, such as on the dialectics of nature, or the somewhat facile evolutionism found in treatment of the origins of the family and the state. But Engels also was flexible enough to disavow his methodological mistakes and to foreshadow the progressive development of an ever-more empirically adequate conflict sociology. Of course what Marx and Engels did was an emergent property. Marx, who certainly had a giant’s intellectual force and energy, absorbed Engels’s early leads, amplified them, and made them his own—as one can see in the brilliance of the *Eighteenth Brumaire*. As he was left more on his own, apart from Engels’s influence, the sociology faded before the monomaniac Hegelianized economist. In the final analysis, who contributed exactly what is a minor question. If I pull out themes that can be called “Engelsian”, it is because intellectual works are not all of a piece and not of equal value in every part. At the risk of setting up a slightly mythical “Engels” in the place of an already heavily mythologized “Marx”, let us focus on pulling out the threads of their thought that make the most enduring contribution to sociology.

#### THE THEORY OF SOCIAL CLASSES

Social classes are the center of Engels and Marx’s conception of history. Social classes are economic and, thus, founded on a material base. But they are much more than the bare technology of economic production. Classes are defined by a crucial kind of *social* relationship that ties together the material, ideological, and political sides of society. This is *property*: the legal right, enforced by the state, over some material good. Every major type of society has not only its distinctive form of eco-

nomie production, but also its distinctive form of property and, hence, of social classes. Engels and Marx only sketched out what these types of society and, therefore, types of class system might be; these should not be taken as absolutely fixed stages, but as illustrations of class systems. Thus, ancient societies of the Mediterranean world (Greece, Rome) based their production on property in slaves. Hence the major social classes were the patricians—the class of slave owners; the slaves themselves—the major producers in that society; and an intermediate class, the plebians—defined as those who neither owned slaves nor were slaves. We can see already that the scheme is not a simplistic one. The slaves sometimes rose in revolt, but the major form of class conflict in ancient society was that between the slave owners and the plebians, the intermediate class. These three-sided conflicts, as we will see, are extremely common in world history.

Similarly, “feudal” society (Engels and Marx’s appellation for the agrarian states of the European Middle Ages) is based on productive property, consisting of the land with its laborers legally bound to it. Hence the main classes were the landowning aristocracy, the serfs who were attached to the land, and finally an intermediate class of urban artisans and merchants, with their further subdivisions into guild masters, journeymen, apprentices, and so on. Again there is the possibility of subgradations of property divisions and, thus, of multiple class conflicts. Finally in capitalist society—which is the only society that Engels and Marx knew well—the major form of property is industrial capital. Hence, the major classes and class divisions are between the capitalists—who own the means of production—and the proletariat or workers—who own no property of their own and are forced to sell their labor to stay alive.

Classes are the major actors on the historical stage. It is the classes that fight economic and political struggles, make alliances, and produce historical change. Each class has its own culture, its own outlook. Hence, the ideas and beliefs of each historical era and each sector of society are determined by its lineup of classes. It should be stressed that Engels and Marx do not present us with a mechanical conception of classes flowing from each mode of production. In their concrete historical and

political writings—for example, on the peasant wars in Germany or the revolutions in France—they discern quite a few important class divisions. Thus, the midnineteenth-century upper classes included not only the owners of industrial capital, but also the financiers and the landlord class: and these three segments of bourgeois society may often be wrapped in political struggle with each other. There is also an intermediate lower-middle class of small tradespeople, shopkeepers, small manufacturers, and artisans. These, too, are an independent cultural milieu and can be political actors in their own right; Marx and Engels often refer to “petit bourgeois radicals” coming out of this group. But such classes are not fixed forever; as the cycles of capitalist economy produced more and more industrial concentration, Marx and Engels expected the petit bourgeois would lose their small-scale property and sink into the ranks of the proletariat.

All these classes are clearly enough defined by the relationship to some type of property. But there are other classes whose base is more mysterious in the Marx/Engels scheme. They nevertheless can play an important political and cultural role. For instance, there is the *lumpenproletariat*: beggars, thieves, itinerant workers, and entertainers as well as bourgeois outcasts, gamblers, roués, prostitutes, what in general was then called “la bohème.” Marx described this group as the shock troops of the counterrevolution in France between 1848 and 1851; earlier Engels had described armies of vagabonds playing a duplicitous role, coming and going on both sides in the German peasant wars at the time of the Reformation. The *lumpenproletariat* class—the structural outcasts of society—derives neither from society’s economic base nor from its property owners; nevertheless it is the floating class par excellence, capable of being bought off by either side. It is these structural side forces that make class conflict complicated. Another example would be intellectuals, who usually cater to the whims of their wealthy patrons but who set themselves up as independent and even revolutionary when a truly revolutionary class appears in the economic structure of society.

In the higher classes, too, there are structural groups other than the property-owning ones. Marx mentions especially the

army and government officials: what might be called predatory classes living off the superstructure. These classes would later play an important role in neo-Marxist theories of revolution such as those of Barrington Moore, Jr., and Theda Skocpol. Engels found these kinds of political divisions in the upper classes of feudal society as well; he pointed out that the German nobility of the 1500s was sharply split between the large princes, the upper clergy (the Catholic Church was a wealthy and privileged property owner of the time), and the smaller knights. The wars of the Reformation involved not only an uprising of peasants (with an input from armies of beggars) as well as an urban bourgeoisie (for whom Martin Luther was the spokesperson), but also those different sectors of the nobility fighting among themselves over the property arrangements of society.

Engels and Marx did not invent the concept of social classes; it was part of the common terminology of their European ancestors. What they did contribute was to begin a *theory* of classes, to show their causes and consequences. Their analysis is stronger on the side of consequences: they showed how any political struggle could be analyzed into the conflicts and alliances among social classes pursuing different economic interests. They also proposed a general scheme of the causes of social classes, that is, the conditions under which they arise. This part of their theory was merely suggested and not extensively worked out. In general we see that the type of property system of every era creates certain major class divisions. But we see that there are numerous auxiliary classes; the conditions that produce them and that turn their interests in particular directions in class struggles have remained topics to be developed in the tradition of conflict sociology after Engels and Marx.

#### THE THEORY OF IDEOLOGY

The basic principle of materialism is that human consciousness rests on certain material conditions without which it would not exist. Marx and Engels stated this argument quite early in their careers when attacking (and inverting) Hegelian idealism. But

the argument goes beyond a mere abstract claim that the "superstructure" of ideas reflects the material base. It is not simply a matter of the basic economy determining a set of ideas. There is an intervening set of processes that take account of multiple social classes, their conflicts, and even their degrees of relative autonomy. As Marx and Engels state in *The German Ideology*, the ruling ideas of any epoch are the ideas of the ruling class because they control the *means of mental production*.

There are two refined notions here. One is that social classes have a propensity to see the world in a particular way. Ideas reflect their economic interests and also the social conditions that surround these interests. Ideas as ideology serve the double purpose of exalting oneself but also of acting as weapons to cloak one's interests in an ideal form and to gain deference for them. The aristocracy of the feudal era, for example, espoused the ideals of honor and loyalty. This reflected their position as soldiers and it also implicitly upheld their hereditary claims to own land and to receive humble obedience from their serfs. For "honor" meant both bravery in combat and chivalrous politeness to "honorable" opponents of the same class; the idea also implied that "honor" came from family and breeding and that it excluded both mere profit-making pursuits like those of the merchants and artisans as well as dirty productive work like that of the peasants who supported them. Similarly the bourgeoisie created a new set of ideals: freedom, equality, "the eternal rights of man." Behind this abstract universalism was a class message: it spoke revolutionary words against the hereditary aristocracy, proclaiming the dignity of commerce, working for a living, and rising by amassing one's own wealth. It simultaneously elevated the universal rule of money, which knows no pedigree; put down the aristocracy; and tried to keep the workers in their place by holding out the abstract notion of equality without mentioning that the competition of the marketplace was stacked against them.

In political battles, different ideals become the rallying point for antagonistic classes. Marx cut through the contending parties of France before the 1848 revolution—the "Legitimists," who wanted to restore the old Bourbon monarchy, and

the "Orleanists," who supported a rival royal house—to point to the economic interests that clustered in each camp: the landed property holders speaking for "Legitimacy" and the new finance capitalists advocating the "progressive" policy of Orleans. Politics is fought out in terms of a code, which always must be translated; classes rarely sail under their true colors.

The ideologies of the higher classes always reflect their own interests, albeit in idealized form. That is because they have the capacity to control the *material means* by which ideas are produced. These are the means of mental production: the books, printing presses, newspapers, or church pulpits that announce the viewpoint of those who can afford to pay the bills. Intellectuals, too, are specialists in ideas who nevertheless have to make a living by fitting into the economic structure of the time. In medieval feudalism, intellectuals could only live either by becoming priests or monks and drawing income from the landed estates of the church, or by attaching themselves to some noble patron who expected to be entertained. That is why intellectuals, although free in principle to formulate whatever ideas they can conceive, nevertheless tend to create ideologies favoring the class that feeds them: medieval poets who extol the noble virtues, or priests whose theologies declare the hereditary ranks of society to reflect the eternal order given by God.

When an economic era changes, new forms of support for intellectuals open up—the market for books and newspapers that began in capitalist England and Western Europe in the 1700s, for instance, or the school systems with their demand for teachers. When intellectuals have a choice among alternative means of support, their intellectual autonomy is enhanced, and they can formulate criticisms of the old order and even go over to the revolutionary side. But this does not mean that ideas are simply free floating and autonomous: they always reflect the social and material circumstances of intellectuals and become revolutionary precisely at those times—like the late 1700s when French intellectuals were the harbingers and drum-beaters for the coming 1789 revolution—when the material basis of society and of intellectual production are changing.

Engels and Marx never developed the theory of the means

of intellectual production systematically. But the general conception has been quite fruitful in later sociology. Engels and Marx were mainly concerned with the production of political ideologies. The theory of the material and social conditions applies to various forms of intellectual creation. Arnold Hauser and others have used it to explain the changing forms of art and literature in different historical periods. This line of thought also set off the sociology of science, which began in the 1930s when Marxist scientists such as J. D. Bernal, Joseph Needham, and Boris Hessen attempted to show how science arises only within certain historical and economic conditions. That is not to say that the sociology of science has proceeded in a strictly Marxist direction; Robert Merton and others reacted to the Marxist challenge by attempting to show the inner normative social organization of science in its own right.

In recent years we have gotten closer to a conception of science as a series of *nested layers* of institutions: economic and political systems at the outside that under certain conditions (some of which we have seen in the Prologue) allow university systems or research laboratories to exist. These in turn become an intermediate layer of social and material conditions within which scientists and other intellectuals can operate. But inside this realm, scientists carry on their own conflicts: they break up into separate networks attempting to exploit particular kinds of laboratory equipment; they treat ideas as "intellectual capital" to be invested (in the terminology of the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu); and in Thomas Kuhn's words, they divide into conservatives defending their "paradigms" or into radicals carrying out intellectual "revolutions." Recently sociologists who have examined what actually goes on in scientific laboratories point out that what is considered to be "knowledge" is shaped by the material setting of the research equipment itself and by the ways that results can be announced through the material medium of print. We understand now a good deal more about the means of mental production and are moving closer to Engels and Marx's aim of showing just how ideas reflect their material social circumstances.

I have considered the theory of ideology in two of its offshoots: the explanation of political ideas held by the dominant

classes and the production of specialized ideas by intellectuals. The general theory of ideology has other ramifications as well. It implies that each social class has its distinctive culture and outlook on the world, reflecting the social circumstances in which it lives. This analysis of class cultures, as we will see, took on considerable refinements with Weber's concept of status groups, and it has been developed much further with the empirical research of the twentieth century. In Chapter 2, I will attempt to show how even the Durkheimian tradition adds an important link to the theoretical explanation of why different classes inhabit different intellectual and moral universes. Engels and Marx, with their overriding concern for politics, did not go too far in this direction. But they did contribute some important leads.

In his discussion of the German peasant uprisings at the time of the Reformation, Engels attempted to show why the peasants had to put their revolutionary claims in a religious form. Marx took up Engels's idea in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* to explain why the peasants of France supported the dictator Louis Bonaparte against the Paris revolution. In both cases the general idea is that peasants are immobilized and isolated in their tiny villages and farms. These material conditions kept the peasants from forming any conception of themselves as a class with common interests against other social classes. All they could see was their own local interests plus an unknown but hostile world outside. For this reason peasant consciousness took the form of a mystification: in the one case, it consisted of religious ideas about the impending millennium and the downfall of the Antichrist who ruled the world disguised as the Pope; in the other case, it consisted of a nationalist mythology about the Emperor Napoleon who had come to save France. Both of these ideologies left the peasants at the mercy of political forces they could not realistically comprehend.

From a theoretical viewpoint, the explanation given by Engels and Marx opened the way to an understanding of some crucial mechanisms of class cultures. We can begin to see that all social classes do not form their ideologies in the same way. Higher classes, which are better interorganized and can control the means of intellectual production, have ideologies that are

more abstract and self-exalting; subordinated classes have ideologies that are much less serviceable as weapons for their own interests but that nevertheless reflect the material condition of their own lives. We begin to see that there is ideological stratification and ideological domination as well as sheer economic and political domination. We enter the realm where there is a relationship between real violence and what Bourdieu calls "symbolic violence." And we see the mediator between these two realms: the social and material conditions of everyday life that make up the means of mental production.

#### THE THEORY OF POLITICAL CONFLICT

Politics, economics, and social classes are crucially linked. For the economic system is organized around property, which defines classes, and *property is upheld by the state*. Property is not the thing itself that is owned; the thing is owned by someone only because the state establishes their legal right to it and will act to enforce that claim with the power of the police and if need be the army. Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* poke fun at bourgeois ideologists who think that property somehow is an inalienable right of the individual, having nothing to do with society. Particular kinds of property emerge only in particular social systems. The man who legally owns a piece of land but who has no capital to cultivate it has nothing, only possession of a fiction. Paper money similarly is worth nothing at all unless one submits oneself to the conditions of the society that make it legal tender.

For this reason, any dominant economic class must be concerned with politics. That does not mean it has to be concerned with the day-to-day running of the state. But it has to make sure that the state continues to protect its property interests, and it wants the intervention of the state's power to help it make even greater fortunes. The feudal aristocracy wanted the state to keep the peasants in line, but it also wanted the state to carry out wars that would give lucrative opportunities for conquest, to award monopolies on the profits of foreign plantations, and to tax goods moving along the roads. The capitalist society is even more entwined with the state because it de-

pends on a monetary system and on a complex network of stocks, loans, interest payments, taxes, monopolies and regulations, lawyers, courts, and lawsuits.

We may conceive of an inner and an outer form of politics. The outer involves the personalities of politicians, their scandals, their dramatic foreign policy crises, their slogans of nationalism, corruption, reform, liberalism, and conservatism. The dominant economic class does not need to take an active part in this, although there is always an opportunity for the wealthy to go into politics personally. But the inner form of politics, too boring for the newspapers and the public generally, is what makes the class system operate: here there are little-known maneuvers between the treasury and the banks, the funding of public debts, the setting of contract law and innumerable other technical regulations. Here the dominant class has a real interest and, according to the Marxian conception, almost always gets its way.

Politics is a struggle to control the state. In Marx and Engels's conception, the dominant propertied class always wins this struggle, except in the historical situation when the basic form of production is shifting. Then the political control of the old ruling class breaks down and is replaced by a new class. Here we have to distinguish between the way Marx's economic system was supposed to work and the sociology that Marx and Engels attached to it. Marx's economic conception was that the internal contradictions of capitalism would bring about the concentration of capitalist property, the growth of a huge unemployed and underpaid proletariat, and eventually an economic crisis so large that the only way out of it would be the abolition of the system of private property. The economic prediction has not yet come true; for various theoretical reasons, it can be argued that it never will. Modern Marxists have generally gone another route to look for the causes of revolution, one which is not dependent on economic crisis per se. It would probably be true that if the capitalist economy worked the way Marx said it did, then politics would be overwhelmingly dominated by the capitalist class until the point at which an abrupt transition of power took place from them to the political leaders of the proletariat. In actuality politics looks much messier than this.

Revolutions, when they have occurred, have always had a mixture of different social classes fighting it out in complex coalitions. Marx and Engels themselves, when they analyzed the revolutions of their day, paid a great deal of attention to the struggles between different portions of the capitalist class (or for the Reformation wars analyzed by Engels, struggles between different portions of the aristocracy). In short Engels and Marx's sociology is much more realistic than their economics. If their economics had worked, their sociology would just be one more flywheel on the machine, grinding out political results of economic processes. But if the economics does not work well, that does not mean the political sociology should be abandoned. Far from it: their political sociology provides the opening wedge of a realistic conflict theory that is applicable to all sorts of situations, not just the particular economic scenarios they envisioned. The sociological flywheel comes loose; we can discard the economic machine entirely if we like. We are still left with a series of principles that show who wins what degree of political power, and why. The bourgeoisie need not always win; it becomes possible to explain the conditions under which we get various liberal reforms, representation of working-class interests, as well as class splits. In short we have a powerful tool for understanding all the messy realities of politics.

One crucial principle is that *power depends on the material conditions of mobilization*. This principle goes back to Engels's formulation of why the German peasants could be dominated by the aristocracy. The peasants far outnumbered their oppressors; during the peasant revolts, they created armies many times larger than those of the nobles sent to fight them. Nevertheless the nobles always won. They did so by splitting the peasants, buying off one local group while attacking another. What the nobles had was superior *means of mobilization*: they were organized precisely as a group specializing in long-distance movement and intercommunication, with their horses, their alliances, their familiarity with military maneuvers. Just as the peasants could achieve only a mystified consciousness of the world outside their little local worlds, they had no material means for organizing themselves in political combat. Marx stated the point even more forcefully in re-

gard to the French peasants of his own century: they were split, he declared, "like potatoes in a sack," merely lumped together externally but never achieving any unity. Their material conditions separated them and kept them from achieving any power.

The property-owning class dominates politically because it has more of the means of political mobilization. Capitalism itself is an interconnected system. Business people are actively engaged in trading among themselves, watching competitors, taking loans, forming cartels. The financial network and the market itself are means of communication that bring the capitalist class into a close network. For this reason the business class, especially in its upper financial circles, is already extremely well organized. The business class has a network at its disposal that it can easily use to enter politics when it wants something done. The working classes, on the other hand, have no such natural means of organization. For them to take part in politics, they have to make special efforts to create political organizations and painstakingly try to connect workers from different places together into a common force. Thus, although the workers far outnumber the business elite, the superior means of political mobilization of the latter tends to put the balance of political power in their hands. This together with the upper-class control of the means of mental production—in modern society the ownership of newspapers, television stations, and the like—means that a fairly small business minority can usually define political issues from their own slant and gain political power far out of proportion to their numbers.

For this reason, the capitalist class has historically preferred some form of republican government. A democracy of voters turns out to be favorable to business interests because the business class is most strongly mobilized to win the struggle for power. One might say that the same material conditions that constitute the business system itself are readily turned to dominating the market for votes. Barrington Moore, Jr., a few years ago used this principle to help explain why and where democracy was created rather than socialist or fascist governments; we will take up this and other ramifications of Marx and Engels's political sociology below.

There is one other important reason why capitalists find it relatively easy to dominate the politics of a democracy, at least in the matters of greatest concern to themselves. This is the importance of finances in any government, especially the national debt. Marx pointed out that the revolutionary government of France in 1848 did not dare put into effect any radical economic policies because its own solvency depended on the strength of the French currency. The banks held the government hostage because any policy that disturbed business confidence automatically brought unemployment, fewer government taxes, and generally exacerbated the problems of the government in paying its bills. A government could of course take over the banks and command what it wants by force, but only at the cost of having the entire business system collapse. The government in relation to a capitalist economy is like the owner of a goose that lays golden eggs only as long as it is treated well. Because a government cannot survive unless it can feed its own army and its civil servants, not to mention keeping the confidence of the general population, it needs to maintain economic prosperity. Any shifts to the left tend to be automatically self-negating because they cause a reaction in the business community that creates an economic crisis. We have seen the same mechanism operating many times in the twentieth century: socialist and liberal governments in Europe in the 1920s, or in Latin America throughout this century, have fallen because of the rampant inflation that followed their taking office. In effect this means that any half-way socialist reform is not likely to work. Only an extremely strong revolutionary government can overcome the loss of business confidence and the resulting period of economic crisis by taking all business and financial affairs into its hands immediately and imposing a completely regulated economy.

The scheme also explains the conditions under which the power of the working class can grow. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels pointed out that capitalism itself was overcoming the isolation and fragmentation that characterized the older lower classes. Where the peasants were isolated on their little farms, the very process of business concentration that took place in capitalism was bringing the workers together. As small businesses were bought out, increasingly

larger numbers of workers came into huge factories where they became easier to organize. Not only trade unions but working-class political parties were forming; eventually, with the projection of the business trend toward one huge monopoly, the workers would be brought into a corresponding unity that would finally realize their strength of numbers and overwhelm the capitalists.

This is not quite what happened, but Marx and Engels were partially right on the historical trend and even more so on the right track theoretically. Historically, working-class parties were created as capitalism became more concentrated, although this did not go as far as Marx and Engels expected because the means of political mobilization also shifted and the process of monopolization stabilized at an intermediate point. Within the big capitalist corporations that emerged, the organizational structure itself mobilized different groups of employees into different layers. Below the top management, a middle layer of office workers came to acquire their own consciousness based on their peculiar conditions of work; hence, they became an intermediate political force of their own. Outside these giant corporations and interconnected with them there grew up networks of specialists and professionals: small innovative firms, engineers and architects, lawyers, media people, investment consultants, academics, intellectuals. These various professions have often in their own way been even more mobilized and more interconnected into networks than even the business class. The means of political mobilization remain all-important; what has happened empirically, though, is that these means have mobilized a large number of different, self-interested occupational groups. Modern politics instead of simplifying into the showdown of capitalists and workers has, instead, fragmented into the complex maneuvers of many separately mobilized interest groups. Politics has thus turned into the negotiation of complicated coalitions.

In fact it has probably always been so. Engels and Marx wrote brilliantly on coalitions in their analysis of revolutions in their own time. Their theory of politics still applies, as I indicated, even to new circumstances. It shows us not who the actors are going to be at any given time, but, instead, what

political weapons they can use and what outcomes will result once we know the lineup of players. Modern theories of social movements, especially the resource-mobilization theory of Charles Tilly and Anthony Oberschall, carries forward this line of analysis.

#### THE THEORY OF REVOLUTIONS

Marx and Engels had a general conception of the revolution that they expected would bring about the final downfall of capitalism and usher in socialism. But their more valuable theories of revolution are found in their specific historical studies of the smaller revolutions of their own times (also, in Engels' case, in reflections on the revolutionary aspect of the Protestant Reformation). Their basic analysis is that revolutions go through various phases because of *unstable coalitions among a variety of social classes*. The lower classes often do the largest part of the actual destruction of the old regime by their riots and uprisings. But the lower classes tend to act in the interests of a higher social class. In 1789 and 1848 the proletariat and the petit bourgeoisie fought the battles of the upper bourgeoisie for them, just as in the 1520s the German burghers fought the battles of the German princes against the Roman Catholic Church.

Why is it that revolutions have this peculiar quality of false consciousness and action in the interests of someone else? We have already seen some parts of the answer. The differential control of the means of the mental production results in the higher social classes being able to define what the revolution is about and who the enemies are. The workers or peasants do the fighting, but the bourgeois or the nobles tell them what they are fighting for. Also, because there is a complicated set of classes vying for power, coalitions form and interests get submerged within them. Coalitions are necessarily ideological because they need some general slogans around which they can rally. Thus, different social classes who may be at each other's throats at some time, at other moments have to rally together to defend what they believe is their common interest. In 1848, the Legitimists and Orleanists (landowners and capitalists)

had to bury their feud because property of all sorts was being threatened by a revolutionary republic. One general principle, then, is that a coalition is held together by its enemies. Only after the enemies disappear are the partners free to fight among themselves. Similarly, the revolutionary party in 1848 was a coalition of two antagonistic classes: the lower middle class of small shopkeepers, who favored a form of capitalism, and the workers, who were pressing for socialism. These strange bedfellows were held together by *their enemies*, the reactionary upper classes, who threatened the Republic. The battle between these two groups was fought out in opposing slogans, both of which misrepresented the actual interests involved. The conservatives attacked by branding all of their opponents as socialists and enemies of social order, whereas the revolutionaries had to bury their economic differences and concentrate on their common slogan of defending democracy.

Eventually the conservatives were able to mobilize more resources and to split their opponents, lopping off the radical workers' wing of the republicans. But here another principal came into play: *the danger of victory for a coalition*. The lower-middle classes, having dispensed with their allies to form a smaller group for splitting the spoils (what modern political theorists call a "minimum winning coalition"), now found themselves weakened vis-à-vis the conservatives. Power shifted to the right. But even this was unstable because the conservatives found themselves heading a republican government whose very right to exist they had just been denouncing. They were trapped in their own ideology and further immobilized by the outbreak of squabbles between the coalition members (Orleanists and Legitimists) in their own ranks. The way was opened to yet another political force: Louis Bonaparte and his dictatorship, drawing his shock troops by mobilizing the *lumpenproletariat* and getting his ideological support by playing on the nationalism of the peasants. The only stable stopping place in the war of coalitions was to exhaust and discredit all the class forces.

This model of revolution emerges as a byproduct, a series of comments as Marx analyzed the history unfolding in front of him. It is not a full theory. Subsequent theorists have gone on



to examine not only the mobilization of different classes, but also the conditions that break down the state in the first place and open the way for the revolutionary crisis. We will meet these theories below.

#### THE THEORY OF SEX STRATIFICATION

After Marx's death, Engels formulated a general historical theory of the family.<sup>2</sup> This opened up the issue of equality and inequality among men and women and the social causes of these shifting patterns. Engels put forward the concept of sexual property: that the rights of sexual access are appropriated and guarded in just the same way as are the rights to use economic property. At one time, he argued, there was sexual communism in early tribal societies. Then, as private property was introduced in the economy and classes were created, private sexual property was also enforced, with dominant males making sexual property out of women. Engels's model of a series of evolutionary stages is not too accurate, although he did draw on the leading anthropologists of his time—a period when anthropology was just beginning. Thus, Engels believed there was a stage of matriarchy intervening between primitive communism and the rise of patriarchy. But Engels's attitude about this sort of thing was not dogmatic, and he would have been happy to see his theory modified to fit a better construction of the historical facts.

His theory is nevertheless correct in several important points. Although there almost certainly was no such thing as a universal stage of either primitive sexual communism or of matriarchy, it is true that the kind of sexual property relationships changed from one general type of society to another, though in a more complex fashion. The patriarchal household of the ancient and medieval states was indeed the most male-dominated family system that has ever existed, and women's status generally took a sharp decline with the transition from tribal societies to these class-stratified societies. Engels also pointed to an important phenomenon when he noted that the rise of capitalist society and its private household only gave a formal freedom to women; though they were now free to make

their own marriages, they did so on a marriage "market" in which they lacked any economic property of their own. Hence, the typical capitalist form of courtship and marriage consisted of a woman having to trade domestic subordination and sexual favors for a marriage contract with a man who would support her.

Engels also provided an important general explanation of the different systems of sexual stratification by arguing that they are related to the economic system of the surrounding society. Engels's theory was thus capable of considerable refinement to fit a better understanding of the complexities of the historical data. It took a long time before his theory was seriously developed in this direction. Max Weber, who was interested in feminism because his wife was a leader in the German feminist movement, took up Engels's theory, which he criticized for its weaknesses of historical data but praised as a fruitful starting point. Weber developed a comparative theory of the family that also emphasized the variety of economic structures of the household and the form of sexual property within it. Weber characteristically added political factors as a crucial determinant of the kinds of sexual stratification.<sup>3</sup>

Most refined theories of sexual stratification have only opened up within the last 10 to 15 years, and efforts to put together the various explanatory factors are still being developed. Engels' basic ideas have an important place in this. One line of argument has taken his conception of the economic basis of the family, to argue that women's household labor is part of the capitalist class structure. Women working as wives and mothers, even though they are not paid for their labor, are a crucial part of the reproduction of the labor force, without which the wage laborers necessary for the capitalist economy would not exist. There is, thus, a hidden economic pressure and a hidden class struggle underneath the more overt class relations of the marketplace. Debate still goes on over whether this means that women are a part of the more general working class, or whether homemakers constitute a second, female working class in implicit struggle with both the capitalist system and the male workers who are their husbands.

This is an application of the economic theory to sex stratifi-

cation within contemporary society. Another application is to use the theory to explain the historical differences among societies with different kinds and degrees of sex stratification. Theorists such as Rae Lesser Blumberg and Karen Sacks find a relationship between the degree of women's social power and freedom, and the extent to which they contribute to economic production and manage to control their own economic property. This more refined version of the Engelsian theory does not require a set sequence of evolutionary stages that all societies pass through. Different kinds of tribal societies, for example, can have great male dominance or various degrees of female power, depending on their specific sex-based economies. In the ancient and medieval ("feudal") state societies, women's status tended to drop because they were squeezed out of the core economic production, although some aristocratic women were able to make gains where the system of marital politics gave them control over property. And in our own society, the relative status of men and women within each family is strongly influenced by their own economic positions. Women who have broken into the more lucrative careers have also tended to break the pattern of the traditional marriage market as well.

Engels's theory is pivotal because it emphasized not only economic determinants of family and sexual relationships, but also recognized the phenomenon of sexual property—the propertylike nature of controls over sexuality itself. This line of analysis has developed somewhat separately from the analysis of economic factors. It has given rise to various theories of the politics of sex. Anthropologists like Claude Lévi-Strauss or Marvin Harris have developed "alliance" theories of the family structures in different tribal societies, analyzing them as ways in which sexual exchanges are used as political strategies to tie groups together militarily and economically. I have applied this type of analysis to the shifting patterns of sexual relationships that have characterized both the patriarchal households of medieval agrarian societies and the "Victorian" period of the early modern marriage market, as well as the sexual transformations that have happened in the twentieth century and are still going on today.

Sex stratification is a topic that many sociologists, as well as other people, ignored for a long time. No male-female stratification was seen because a male-dominated social order was simply taken for granted. Engels was a pioneer in bringing this to light as a question for theoretical explanation. More than half a century after his death, his line of conflict analysis of the family, economy, and sex has begun to develop into a sophisticated general theory.

#### *Max Weber and the Multidimensional Theory of Stratification*

Weber's sociology is often seen as antagonistic to the Marxian approach. Actually Weber is more of a continuer of it, a later generation of the historical conflict tradition in the German intellectual world. Weber was born in 1864 and grew up intellectually in the 1880s and 1890s, which is precisely the period in which Engels and his followers were making an impact on German intellectual life. Marx had been generally unknown during his own life, except in the revolutionary underground. But in the 1880s the German socialist party, based on trade unions and following the Marxist theory as their official doctrine, had become a large force in German parliamentary politics. The party itself was participating in elections and becoming gradually less revolutionary, but it was big enough to be able to support its own newspapers and party schools as well as full-time political representatives. It had acquired the material base to support its own intellectuals. Thus it was in Germany that Marxism (maybe really Engelsism) moved above ground and broke into the attention of the academic and intellectual world.

Weber was very much aware of these developments. His father was a member of another political party in the Reichstag at Berlin, a bourgeois party representing the large manufacturers. Prominent politicians, lawyers, and academics met at their home, and Max Weber early became privy to the maneuvers of backstage power politics. Another influence came from his mother, who was devoutly religious in a Protestant denomination. She urged him to take part in a Christian social welfare

movement, which was something of a religious response to workers' socialism: instead of the workers gaining reforms for themselves by class warfare, the charitable upper classes proposed to give it to them out of religious duty. Weber, thus, was politically involved from an early age and in contact with two different political forces, each of which was in its own way concerned with the growing power of socialism. Weber himself was no socialist, though he was rather opposed to existing policies of the conservative government. As already mentioned, he married a young woman, Marianne Schnitger (Weber), who became one of the leaders of the feminist movement in Germany. He opposed the persecution of the supporters of socialism, especially in the academic-freedom fights that arose in the universities of the time; Weber even considered joining the socialist party to show his solidarity. But he concluded that it would be dishonest of him to do so because he truly did believe that capitalism was a superior social system for enhancing human freedom and economic productivity. For all his opposition to socialism as a political program, Weber nevertheless learned a great deal of substantive sociology from Marx and Engels. He took up their questions, even if he gave them different and more complicated answers.

Of course there were other intellectual strands in his makeup. Weber was an economist in the German style. That is, he did not use the abstract general theory of the market, either in the marginal utility form recently developed by Carl Menger in Austria, Léon Walras in France, Vilfredo Pareto in Italy, and William Jevons and Alfred Marshall in England; nor in the classical form that Marx had used for his economic system. The German school of economics was what might be called "institutional" and "historical." It did not accept any universal laws of economic processes (such as supply and demand, the movement of prices, etc.), but, instead, attempted to show the various historical periods of development of different types of economies. Such theories focused on such possible stages as the household or manor economy, the putting-out system, local markets, the world market, and so forth. Weber in a sense was simply the latest of a series of historical economists who attempted to show what kinds of economic systems had pre-

ceded capitalism and by what processes the rise of capitalism had come about. Weber also had studied and practiced law; he knew a great deal of the history of all parts of the world—indeed far more than Marx and Engels could have known because the discipline of history was only getting underway in their lifetimes. Although Weber was not personally religious, he was extremely aware of the religious motivations of people around him and of religion as a force in past history.

One might sum up Weber's main theme as the problem of capitalism, the same as Marx's central concern. But where Marx was primarily concerned with the economic laws of capitalism and with its crises and future breakdown, Weber was concerned with the background of capitalism, the puzzle of how it came into existence in the first place. Weber approached this not by looking for a sequence of stages, but by a world comparison: Why did modern capitalism emerge in Western Europe rather than in one of the other great civilizations—China, India, Rome, the Islamic world? Weber's sociology was an offshoot of this question. His sociological theories were an attempt to create the tools with which to analyze the institutional underpinnings of the economy, to show what forces fostered or hindered it in various societies. One might say that economics was what Weber wanted to explain, but his explanations took him into the world of sociology, especially into an appreciation of the role of political and religious factors.

This is not the only possible interpretation of Weber. Some commentators (such as Talcott Parsons), set him up as a kind of idealist in opposition to the materialism of Marx. Weber was seen as the defender of the role of ideas in history. This school of thought focuses on Weber's earliest important work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), which seems to turn Marx on his head. Whereas Marx regarded religion as an ideology reflecting economic classes, Weber seemed to be showing that capitalism itself was produced not by economic forces but by the influence of religious ideas: the drive of Puritans to work out their anxiety over their salvation or damnation, which was left in doubt by the theological doctrine of predestination. At about the same time Weber also wrote an essay in which he argued that the basic method of the "human