Introduction

For a very long time in much of the world, Marxism provided the theoretical coordinates for work by left-wing intellectuals and the ideological coordinates for popular struggles against capitalism. While there were always intense, and sometimes bitter, debates among people who shared these coordinates, Marxism provided a common language and set of basic understandings within which these debates could take place.

That common set of theoretical understandings has been seriously eroded in recent years and this has led to what many commentators, on both the left and the right, call the "crisis of Marxism." The evidence for this is simple enough to find.

First, there are the extraordinary changes in societies formerly ruled by communist parties under the ideological banner of Marxism. A decade ago it seemed that Marxist orthodoxy in one form or another was firmly in place as the ruling ideology of these societies. Now, with the complete collapse of those regimes and parties in Eastern Europe and the former USSR, and the emergence of widespread private enterprise in China, it is no longer clear what set of ideological principles actually guides the development of these societies.

Second, when we look at the policies and practices of communist, socialist and social democratic parties in the advanced capitalist world, it is often difficult to discern coherent programs for progressive social reform, let alone for revolutionary transformation. And it is certainly unclear whether or not the politics of most of these parties have even vestigial linkages to Marxism as a social theory.

Finally, when one looks more narrowly at Marxist theory itself, one is struck both by the rapid exit of many radical intellectuals from Marxism in recent years towards something that is often called post-Marxism, as well as by the decline in consensus among the remaining Marxist intellectuals over the core theoretical postulates of Marxism itself.

The four chapters in this section are all attempts to contribute to this

reconstruction of Marxism as a theoretical framework for radical social science. Chapter 8, "What is Analytical Marxism?," lays out the core principles of one general strategy for this task of reconstruction. Analytical Marxism is based on a rejection of claims that Marxism should try to have distinctive methodological and epistemological foundations. Instead, Analytical Marxists argue that any effective emancipatory social theory must embrace many of the principles of what Marxists often call "bourgeois social science." Just as a socialist society should embrace the "bourgeois" values of civil liberties and enhance their meaning by a redistribution of power and wealth, so socialist theory should embrace the analytical tools of "bourgeois" social science and philosophy and enhance their relevance by using them to answer emancipatory questions.

Chapter 9, "Marxism as Social Science," defends the idea that Marxism should be seen as a social science against two kinds of criticisms. First, it defends the project of a Marxist *social science* against those who feel that science is inevitably an ideology of oppression. While it is true that historically what went under the name of "scientific Marxism" was often guilty of the worst violations of free exchange of ideas, this was not due to the adherence of "scientific" Marxism to the canons of science, but rather to its subordination to political and ideological authority. Second, the chapter defends the project of a social science that is distinctively *Marxist* against critics who would like to see Marxism dissolve into a more eclectic intellectual field.

Chapter 10, "Explanation and Emancipation in Marxism and Feminism," explores the relationship between the distinctive emancipatory projects of the Marxist and feminist traditions and the kinds of social theory that have tended to develop within each. In a perhaps oversimplified way, the emancipatory project of Marxism is taken to be an end to class inequality and domination, and the emancipatory project of feminism, the end of gender inequality and domination. The chapter then makes the observation that Marxists have spent a considerable amount of time and energy worrying about the feasibility of a society that would embody these emancipatory goals, whereas feminists do not spend much time discussing the feasibility of a society without gender domination and inequality. Marxists debate the feasibility of socialism and communism and discuss a range of institutional designs that would make socialism work; a parallel set of debates among feminists about gender emancipation has not really occurred. The basic objective of the chapter is to explain this contrast between Marxism and feminism and explore some of its ramifications for the kinds of theories that characterize these two traditions of thought.

Finally, chapter 11, "Marxism After Communism," attempts to chart

out the broad contours of the overall task of reconstructing Marxism. I argue that Marxist theory can be seen as built around three conceptual "nodes" – Marxism as class analysis, Marxism as a theory of historical trajectory, and Marxism as a theory of class emancipation. The problem of reconstructing Marxism, then, can be broken down into the tasks of reconstructing each of these nodes and their interconnections. After briefly describing some of the possible directions for such reconstruction for the theory of class emancipation and the theory of historical trajectory, the chapter turns to a somewhat more extended discussion of the reconstruction of class analysis, thus bringing us back to the themes outlined at the beginning of the book.