

of political and ideological conditions necessary for the development of anti-capitalist postures by managers and state bureaucrats are more likely under conditions of chronic stagnation and decline than under conditions of capitalist expansion and growth.

45. For a fuller discussion of the implications of the arguments presented here for the Marxist theory of history, see chapter four below.

46. For a detailed analysis of the differences between incomes of managers and workers, see Erik Olin Wright, *Class Structure and Income Determination*, especially pp. 134–138. In that study, managers earned on average \$7,000 more per year than did workers (1970 data). When the income figures were adjusted for differences between managers and workers in education, age, seniority, occupational status and several other variables, the average manager still earned over \$3200 more per year than the average worker.

47. I would like to thank Robert van der Veen for bringing this specific issue to my attention.

48. This is not the place to enter the debates on the theory of history in general, or the role of the productive forces in such a theory in particular. For a discussion of these problems, see Andrew Levine and Erik Olin Wright, 'Rationality and Class Struggle', *New Left Review*, 123, 1980, and Erik Olin Wright, 'Giddens's Critique of Marxism', *New Left Review*, 139, 1983.

49. The argument is basically that technical change creates a kind of 'ratchet' in which movement 'backward' (regressions) become less likely than either stasis or movement 'forward'. Even if the occurrence of technical change is random and sporadic, therefore, it will generate weak tendencies for historical change to have direction.

Implications and Elaborations of the General Framework

Chapter three proposed a general strategy for systematically rethinking the concept of class structure in terms of exploitation relations. In my earlier work and in the work of many other Marxists, the concept of class had effectively shifted from an exploitation-centred concept to a domination-centred concept. Although exploitation remained part of the background context for the discussion of class, it did not enter into the elaboration of actual class maps in any systematic way. That shift undermined the coherence and power of the concept of class and should now be replaced by a rigorous, exploitation-centred conceptualization.

The task of this chapter is to explore in greater detail the theoretical implications of the reconceptualization which was summarized schematically in table 3.2. In particular, we will examine the following problems:

- (1) The relationship between Marxist and various non-Marxist class theories;
- (2) Mode of production and social formation;
- (3) The traditional Marxist theory of history: historical materialism;
- (4) The problem of legitimation and incentives;
- (5) Class structure and the form of the state;
- (6) The relation of class structure to class formation;
- (7) The problem of class alliances;
- (8) Women and class structure.

In each case my comments will be suggestive rather than exhaustive, indicating the basic lines of inquiry that can be followed from this starting point.

Alternative Class Theories

Certain parallels can be drawn between some of the elements in the concept of class structure elaborated here and other sociological concepts of class, particularly those found in the Weberian tradition. For example, the thesis that exploitation is rooted in the monopolization of crucial productive assets is similar to Frank Parkin's characterization of Weber's concept of social closure as 'the process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles'.¹ Although Parkin's central concern is with the kinds of attributes which serve as the basis for closure—race, religion, language, etc.—rather than with the nature of the resources (productive assets) over which closure is organized, and although his theoretical agenda aims to displace class analysis from the central stage of sociological theory, it is nevertheless true that both he and I emphasize effective control over resources as the material basis for class relations.

The conceptualization proposed here of the relationship between class and exploitation is also similar in certain respects to Alvin Gouldner's conception of cultural capital and the 'new class'. Gouldner defines the 'new class' as a *cultural* bourgeoisie defined by its control over 'cultural capital', where 'capital' is defined as 'any produced object used to make saleable utilities, thus providing its possessor with *incomes*, or claims to incomes defined as legitimate because of their imputed contribution to economic productivity'. These claims to income, Gouldner argues, are enforced 'by modifying others' access to the capital-object or threatening to do so'.²

Perhaps most obviously, there is an important relationship between the arguments I have laid out and the familiar three-class model proposed by Max Weber and further elaborated in the work of Anthony Giddens and others. Giddens writes:

There are three sorts of market capacity which can be said to be normally of importance [in structuring classes]: ownership of property in the means of production; possession of educational or technical qualification; and possession of manual labour power. In so far as these tend to be tied to closed patterns of inter- and intragenerational mobility, this yields the foundation of a basic three-class system in capitalist society: an 'upper', 'middle', and 'lower' or 'working' class.³

Effective control over productive resources is the material basis for class relations, and different classes are defined with respect to different resources.

These similarities between the concept of class structure elaborated in this chapter and the Weberian one call into question the usual way Marxists (including myself) have characterized the distinction between the rival class concepts. The typical characterization is that Weber adopts a definition of classes based on *market* or *exchange* relations, whereas Marx adopts a *production* relations definition.⁴ The real difference is more subtle. Both Marx and Weber adopt production-based definitions in that they define classes with respect to the effective ownership of production assets: capital, raw labour power and skills in Weber; capital and labour power (for the analysis of capitalism) in Marx. The difference between them is that Weber views production from the vantage point of the market exchanges in which these assets are traded, whereas Marx views production from the vantage point of the exploitation it generates, and this in turn, as I will argue below, reflects the fundamental difference between a culturalist and a materialist theory of society.

The difference between viewing production from the vantage point of exchange or exploitation has significant implications for the kind of class theory that is built upon this foundation. For Weber, owners of capital, raw labour power and skills all meet in the market and are all part of a single class system or class logic because the exchanges take place within the same institutional context. Marx, on the other hand, regards the distinctively capitalist class structure as only involving the exchange between capital and labour power because it is this exchange which generates the distinctively capitalist form of exploitation. Skill ownership is irrelevant to the specification of *capitalist* class relations. Of course, real-world capitalist societies involve more than just capitalist exploitation, and it would be at this more concrete level of analysis that the problem of skills would enter the analysis. The Marxist critique of Weber's analysis, therefore, is that Weber collapses together two quite distinct levels of abstraction in the analysis of classes: the levels of abstraction of *mode of production* and *social formation*.⁵

Why should this matter? The conflation of these two levels of abstraction underwrites Weber's treatment of classes as limited to market systems, and thus his unwillingness to treat historical

development as a trajectory of qualitatively distinct forms of class structure. For Weber, therefore, the social structures of pre-capitalist feudal societies are not based on class antagonisms rooted in a distinctive form of exploitation, but rather on status orders and, although Weber himself did not systematically analyse post-capitalist society, the typical Weberian treatment would insist that these societies as well were not structured by class and exploitation in any fundamental way, but rather by political-bureaucratic relations. Class is a central feature of social structure only in capitalism; other types of societies are structured by other kinds of social relations.

Underlying this apparent shift in explanatory principle from feudalism to capitalism to post-capitalism in the Weberian perspective is a common fundamental principle: namely, that what really explains the logic of a social order and its development is the meaning systems that shape social action. For Weber, the shift from status to market is, above all, a shift in the meaning systems implicated in action. In feudal societies, status orders provide the central principles of collective identity and meaning. The transformation of traditional into modern societies is above all a process of rationalization, in which rational calculation replaces traditional norms as the central orientation to action. Class becomes the central principle of social stratification and collective identity corresponding to this emergent rationalization of systems of meaning.

What this implies is that although the formal *criteria* for classes in capitalist society are closely related in Weberian and Marxist analysis, the logic for the use of those criteria are quite distinct. The framework elaborated in table 3.2 defends the choice of criteria on the grounds that they determine a system of material exploitation and associated class relations; the use of some of those same criteria by Weber is based on their salience for the meaning systems of actors under given historical conditions. In the Marxist framework, the material interests embedded in these processes of exploitation have an objective character regardless of the subjective states of the actors; in the Weberian perspective, it is only because rationalization implies a particular kind of subjective understanding of material interests by actors that one is justified in describing these relations as class relations at all. At the heart of the distinction between Weberian and Marxist concepts of class, therefore, is the contrast between an essentially culturalist theory of society and history and a materialist theory.

Mode of Production and Social Formation

The formal typology of exploitation relations and corresponding class structures in Table 3.2 is essentially a typology of modes of production. Actual societies, as I have argued, can never be characterized as having only one type of exploitation; they are always complex combinations of modes of production. This is what it means to analyse societies as social formations.

'Combination' is obviously a vague word. If we are to give theoretical specificity to the use of these concepts in the analysis of concrete societies, much more precise content must be given to it. This means, above all, specifying the salient ways in which these combinations vary. Three axes of variability seem especially important: 1) the *relative weight* of different types of exploitation in a given society; 2) the extent to which these diverse exploitations are linked through *internal* or *external* relations; 3) for the internal relations, the extent to which the exploitation relations are *overlapping* or *distinct*. A full-fledged map of the class structure of a given society requires attention to all of these. Let us look at each briefly.

RELATIVE WEIGHT

When we say that a *society* is feudal, or capitalist, or statist, or socialist, we are claiming that one specific form of exploitation is *primary* in the society. Primacy is one particular kind of claim about relative weight of different modes of production. But relative weight is not just a question of primacy. It may matter a great deal for the political conflicts in a society what forms of exploitation are secondary, and how important they are relative to the primary form of exploitation. It is even possible that no one relation of exploitation is primary. While Marxists have tended to argue that one mode of production or another must be dominant, this is generally an unargued assertion. Depending upon precisely how these multiple forms of exploitation are linked together, there is no *a priori* reason to exclude the possibility of relatively equal importance for distinct forms of exploitation. What we need, therefore, is some way of identifying the full range of possible mixes of forms of exploitation within a specific society.

There are several options for defining the relative weight of forms of exploitation in a society, none of which is easy to operationalize. First, relative weight can be a claim about destina-

tions of the social surplus. Owners of different exploitation-generating assets appropriate parts of the surplus based on their property rights; relative weight is a description of the relative, aggregate magnitudes of those appropriations. A society is feudal if the largest proportion of the surplus goes to holders of feudal assets.

Second, relative weight can be a claim about the class power of the actors who obtain surplus through different mechanisms. A feudal society is one in which feudal lords—people who appropriate surplus by virtue of their ownership of distinctively feudal assets—are the ‘ruling class’, even if as a proportion of total surplus, some other class should receive a greater share. The power of a class, after all, is not just a function of the total amount of surplus controlled in the aggregate by its members; it also depends on the ability of those members to translate their individual class capacity, rooted in their individual appropriation of parts of the surplus, into a collective capacity. It could in principle be the case that the total amount of surplus appropriated by owners of skills in the United States is larger than the total amount of surplus appropriated by capital. But since the numbers of people involved are so large, and, in general, the level of their individual exploitation so small, they are much less able to translate this into collective class power.

Third, relative weight could be interpreted in a functionalist manner as is characteristic of certain treatments in the Althusserian tradition. In this strategy, the dominant mode of production is said to ‘assign’ specific functions or roles to the subordinate modes of production within the gestalt of the ‘structured totality’ of society. Much of the discussion of the persistence of peasant subsistence production in third-world capitalist societies has this character: the persistence of such smallholder production is explained by virtue of its functional role for capitalism (for example, by lowering the average wages of workers). Claims for the primacy of a mode of production, then, would be established by demonstrating the ways in which subordinate modes of production systematically fulfil functions for the reproduction of the dominant mode.

Finally, the relative weight of different forms of exploitation could be defined by the dynamic effects of different exploitations. A society, in these terms, would be characterized as capitalist if the logic of development of the society were most pervasively structured by the properties of capitalist exploitation. When Marxists

claim that the societies of Western Europe are capitalist, even in cases like Sweden with over 40 per cent of the labour force employed by the state or cases like France with large nationalized sectors of production, they are generally arguing that the essential dynamics of these societies remain governed by the logic of capitalist exploitation and accumulation. This does not imply that all subordinate forms of exploitation need be functional for the dominant form, but simply that the overall trajectory of social change in the society is fundamentally limited by the dynamics of the dominant mode of production.

Given the overall explanatory objectives of Marxist theory, dynamic primacy is in many respects the most fundamental sense in which one can talk about the relative weight of different modes of production and their associated forms of exploitation within the gestalt of a social formation. Unfortunately, given the theoretical underdevelopment of our understanding of the dynamics rooted in each of the forms of exploitation other than capitalism, let alone the possibility of distinctive ‘laws of motion’ forged by distinctive combinations of these forms of exploitation, it is exceedingly difficult to use this way of assessing the relative weight of different forms of exploitation in a nuanced way.

INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL RELATIONS

There are two principal ways that different forms of exploitation can be linked concretely. By an ‘external’ link I mean that the two forms of exploitation each exist within distinct production processes, but interact with each other. Trade between capitalist societies and largely feudal or statist societies would be historically important instances of this. But external relations between forms of exploitation can exist within a given society as well. The interaction between simple-commodity producers and capitalist firms, or the relation between state productive apparatuses and capitalist firms would be examples.

‘Internal’ relations, on the other hand, imply the simultaneous operation of different forms of exploitation within a single production process. The role of organization asset exploitation in the modern corporation is a prime example. Sharecropping, under certain historical conditions, could be regarded as an internal combination of feudal and capitalist relations. Such instances can be considered cases of the ‘interpenetration’ of modes of produc-

tion, in contrast to the simpler 'articulation' of modes of production that occurs with external relations.⁶

The forms of conflict and patterns of class formation are likely to be quite different under conditions of interpenetration or articulation of exploitation relations. Where different forms of exploitation are articulated, they are more likely to be seen as having distinct logics generating distinct interests for their respective exploiting and exploited classes than where they are interpenetrated. Managers, for example, are more likely to perceive their interests at odds with the interests of the bourgeoisie when they are located within the state than when they are located within capitalist firms.

OVERLAPPING VS DISTINCT RELATIONS

Finally, societies will differ in the way a given set of exploitation relations combines to create actual positions filled by individuals and families. Skill exploitation and organization exploitation, for example, may correspond closely where most people with skills are recruited into positions involving organization exploitation; or they may be quite distinct if there are large numbers of non-managerial technical and professional jobs. One of the important differences between Sweden and the United States, for example, is precisely this: Sweden has a higher proportion of non-managerial experts in its class structure than does the United States, even though the two countries have approximately the same proportions of managers and experts taken separately.

The extent of overlap of exploitation relations determines in part the extent to which the problem of class formation is a problem of class alliances. Where there is little overlap alliances become much more important, because contradictory locations within exploitation relations—the 'middle classes'—are likely to be more important. Where the different mechanisms of exploitation largely coincide with one another, the concrete class structure will have a much more polarized character to it.

Taken together, these three dimensions of variability provide a basis for elaborating a much more nuanced typology of forms of society than is possible by simply identifying a society with a single mode of production. Treating the problem of combinations of modes of production in this way can be considered analogous to the treatment of chemical compounds as combinations of ele-

ments, where modes of production are the elements and social formations the compounds. Relative weight refers to the proportions of different elements in a compound; internal/external relations to the distinction between a suspension and a solution; and overlap to the precise patterns of chemical bonding that link the elements together.

In chemistry, of course, not every combination of elements is possible. Some cannot even be forged; others are unstable. Some can only be produced in the laboratory under peculiar conditions; others exist 'naturally' in the world. Similarly, for social formations: not every combination of these three dimensions may be socially possible, and certainly not every combination has occurred historically.

The future theorization of the compounds of elemental forms of exploitation may enable us to resolve a number of theoretical problems that have confronted contemporary Marxism. Let me briefly discuss two examples: the perennial problem of the 'Asiatic mode of production', and the problem of varieties of capitalisms.

The 'Asiatic mode of production' (or oriental despotism) is a concept employed by Marx in an attempt to theorize the specificity of the class structure and social dynamics of the classic civilizations of China, Egypt, and elsewhere.⁷ The central idea is that these civilizations combined powerful, centralized state apparatuses engaged in the construction and supervision of large scale irrigation projects (hence the expression 'hydraulic civilization') with largely autarchic peasant communities. The result of this particular combination was that no dynamic social forces capable of producing qualitative transformations could be generated endogenous to the social structure. As a result, these societies were doomed to perpetual stagnation, to a continual, if not necessarily always peaceful, reproduction of their essential class structure.

In terms of the analysis presented here, the 'Asiatic mode of production' could possibly be understood as a particular compound of basic forms of exploitation, combining feudal and organizational exploitation and class relations, perhaps even in relatively equal proportions. The term, therefore, refers to a particular kind of social formation, not mode of production. The predominant characteristic of Western European feudalism was absolute pre-eminence of feudal exploitation for a long period of time with the gradual rise of capitalist exploitation as a secondary form. Organization exploitation was virtually absent. Because of the large-scale water-works in the hydraulic civilizations, organization exploitation played a much more important role. One might even want to

suggest that the centrality of such organization asset exploitation in these societies, linked to the development of relatively strong, centralized states, may help to explain why there were such weak tendencies for proper capitalist relations to emerge endogenously within these societies, unlike in Western European feudalism.

The analysis of the combinations of forms of exploitation may also provide a strategy for specifying more rigorously the variability in class structures in different types of capitalism.⁸ Capitalist societies clearly differ in the ways these different types of exploitations are combined. The expansion of the large corporation and the state, for example, can be viewed as increases in the role of organization asset exploitation, and may define the distinctive difference between advanced capitalist societies and competitive capitalism. The co-existence of a dominant highly exploitative capitalist form of exploitation with a sizeable proportion of the population having their 'per capita' share of capital assets (i.e. subsistence peasants) and a significant presence of secondary feudal elements may characterize the 'compound' of many third world capitalisms. The addition of a relatively strong presence of organization asset exploitation in certain of these societies may be the characteristic 'compound' of those post-colonial societies that are sometimes described as having an 'overdeveloped state'.

The analysis of modes of production and social formations has obviously not even begun the serious theoretical decoding of compounds. Indeed, our knowledge of the elements is still rather crude. If Marxist class analysis is to develop into a more powerful and nuanced theory, the investigation of these 'compounds' is essential. It is in terms of them that practical revolutions are waged, that possibilities for social change are opened up or closed off.

The Theory of History

At the heart of classical Marxism is not only a sociology of class, but a theory of history. Much of the theoretical motivation for the analysis of classes comes precisely from the role of class structures and class struggles in understanding the overall trajectory of historical development.

This is not the place to discuss the general theoretical strengths and weaknesses of historical materialism.⁹ What I would like to do

TABLE 4.1
Typology of class structures, exploitation and historical transitions

Type of social formation	Exploitation-generating asset inequality				Historic task of revolutionary transformation
	Labour power	Means of production	Organization	Skills	
Feudalism	+	+	+	+	individual liberty
Capitalism	-	+	+	+	socializing means of prod.
Statism	-	-	+	+	democratization of organizational control
Socialism	-	-	-	+	substantive equality
Communism	-	-	-	-	self-actualization

is explore the implications of the class framework in table 3.2 for the way the overall trajectory of historical development might be characterized.

Table 4.1 presents a typology of class structures, forms of exploitation and historical transitions. The rows in this table are not 'modes of production' but types of societies (at the 'social formation' level of abstraction) which combine in different ways a plurality of exploitation relations. In each successive row in this table, one form of asset inequality has been eliminated, and along with it the associated form of class relations and exploitation.

In what sense can we say that the above set of historical transitions constitutes a meaningful *sequence* of transitions? How can it be argued that this constitutes a trajectory of some sort? The basic argument is that the probability of *successfully* accomplishing these transitions monotonically increases with the level of development of social productivity. It takes a higher level of productivity to successfully socialize the means of production than to equalize ownership in labor power assets; it takes an even higher level successfully to democratize (equalize) control over organization assets, and a still higher level to successfully equalize control over skill assets. The word 'successful' is important: the claim is not that *attempts* at creating bourgeois freedoms, or socializing the means of production, or democratizing organization or socializing

skills cannot occur before a certain level of productivity has been obtained, but simply that the probability of such attempts actually accomplishing their objectives depends upon the level of development of the forces of production. For example, the attempt at creating stable, democratic control over organization assets in a situation where workers must work long hours to produce the basic subsistence needs of a society is much less likely to succeed than in a society in which there are high levels of automation, workers have the time to participate in managerial decision-making and democratic economic planning, managerial tasks can be rotated in a reasonable manner, and so forth.

It must be stressed that the claim being made here is a probabilistic one, not an 'iron law'. Another way of stating it is to say that in order for a transition in table 4.1 to occur successfully when the level of development of the forces of production is inadequate, there would have to be some other kind of facilitating mechanism which could compensate for the unfavourable material conditions. One such possibility that revolutionary Marxists have often appealed to is ideological commitment. If there exists a sufficiently high level of ideological commitment on the part of the actors attempting such a transformation (or, at least, on the part of some critical set of actors), then they may be motivated to endure the kinds of sacrifices needed to overcome these relatively unfavourable material conditions. However, since it is difficult to sustain ideological fervour over long periods of time, there would be tendencies for revolutionary transformations occurring under these conditions to restore at least some forms of exploitation and domination. The higher the level of initial development of productive forces, the more flexible would be the other conditions for transition to occur. To the extent that the probability of success of a revolutionary transformation will affect the probability of attempting a transformation—since conscious, rational human actors are more likely to attempt projects that they believe are likely to succeed—then the development of the productive forces will also, if only weakly, increase the probabilities of the attempts as well.¹⁰

The claim that these forms of class relations constitute a sequence—a trajectory of forms—does not imply that it is inevitable that societies will in fact pass through these stages. The trajectory is a sequence of historical *possibilities*, forms of society that become possible once certain pre-conditions are met. The actual transition from one form to another, however, may depend upon a whole range of contingent factors that are exogenous to the theory

as so far elaborated. This is one of the central problems with traditional historical materialism. Traditional historical materialism argues, in effect, that whenever a transition from one form of class relations to another becomes historically possible, forms of class struggle will develop that guarantee that such transitions will occur. It is asserted, but not systematically argued, that the capacity for struggle will always be forthcoming when the 'historic task' of struggle is on the horizon. Class interests beget class capacities. While classical historical materialism may provide a compelling account of the possibilities, it does not elaborate a coherent theory of the necessity of the transitions to actualize those possibilities.

The treatment of these forms as a sequence also does not imply that it is impossible for particular societies to skip stages. The argument about the development of the forces of production specifies the minimum conditions necessary for a transition to have reasonable likelihood of success, but it is entirely possible that a given society has developed far beyond that minimum before a transition (revolutionary transformation) is attempted. It is possible, for example, that contemporary advanced capitalist societies are sufficiently developed to be able simultaneously to socialize the means of production and to democratize the control over organization assets. Political stances in the developed capitalist countries that call for the extension of democracy in all spheres of life as the central demand of the transition to socialism are, in effect, calling for the simultaneous redistribution of rights in means of production and organization assets, that is, for skipping statism as a consolidated mode of production.¹¹

This way of reconceptualizing historical materialism will undoubtedly be objectionable to many Marxists since it runs against a number of traditional Marxist claims. In particular, three traditional theses are being challenged. First, the view that socialism is the immediate immanent future to capitalism is brought into question. The transition from capitalism to socialism involves equalizing two kinds of exploitation-assets—means of production and organization—and there is no logical necessity for these to occur at the same time. There are thus at least two futures inherent to capitalism—statism and socialism—and therefore the fate of capitalism is much less determinate than is often allowed.¹² Second, the relative openness of capitalism's futures implies that the proletariat can no longer be assumed to be the only bearer of a revolutionary mission within capitalism. Other classes, as we noted in our discussion of the 'middle classes' in chapter three, have the

potential to displace the working class from this role. Third, the characterization of socialism as a form of society with its own distinctive form of exploitation runs counter to the traditional Marxist view of socialism as simply the period of transition to communism. Socialism, in traditional Marxist theory, is decisively *not* a mode of production in its own right. To be sure, Marx acknowledged that classes would continue to exist in a socialist society, but these were seen basically as vestiges of capitalism, not as rooted in the internal relations of socialism as such.

It might be asked: does this reconstruction of the stages of historical development undermine the traditional Marxist idea of history as having a *progressive* character to it? I think not. The sequence of stages are marked by successive eliminations of forms of exploitation. In this sense capitalism is progressive relative to feudalism, statism relative to capitalism, socialism relative to statism. Capitalism may no longer be thought of as the last antagonistic form of society in the trajectory of human development, but the progressive character to the trajectory is retained.¹³

Legitimation and Motivation

While exploitation can be based on the direct and continual coercion of exploited producers, class systems will in general be more stable and reproducible to the extent that some sort of consensus over the legitimacy of the class structure is established. Particularly since one of the hallmarks of exploitation is that the welfare of the exploiter depends upon the *effort* of the exploited, it would normally be expected that such effort would be more readily forthcoming to the extent that there was some minimal level of consensus over the legitimacy, or at least the necessity, of the existing class system. Each system of exploitation thus brings with it particular ideologies which attempt to defend the income returns to specific asset inequalities as natural or just. And, in each transition, the previous system's ideology is taken to be fraudulent and subjected to sustained criticism.¹⁴

Class systems tend to be legitimized by two different sorts of ideologies: one which makes appeals, explicitly or implicitly, to various kinds of *rights* in order to defend privilege and another which appeals to the general *welfare* in order to defend privilege. The formal language of rights probably does not pre-date the seventeenth century, but rights-like legitimations have an ancient

pedigree. Ideological defences of feudalism in terms of the divinely ordained status of kings are as much rights defences as the more explicit claims typical of capitalist societies for the 'natural right' of people to the fruits of their property so long as the property was obtained without force or fraud. Here I want to focus on the welfare arguments. The rights defences of privilege may be important under certain historical circumstances, but the durability of class systems over long periods of time depends more pervasively, I believe, on the cogency of the welfare ideologies. Where claims to privilege based on welfare lack any credibility, their defence in terms of rights will tend to erode over time.¹⁵

By welfare arguments I mean those defences of a system of inequality—in our terms a class system—which claim that the underprivileged would in fact be worse off in the absence of the greater benefits enjoyed by the privileged.¹⁶ In feudalism, it could be argued, serfs would be worse off in the absence of military protection from their lords, and such protection would not be forthcoming without feudal privileges. In capitalism, workers would be worse off without the investments and risk-taking of the bourgeoisie, and those investments would not be forthcoming unless capitalists derived some advantage from their position. In a statist society, non-managers would be worse off in the absence of responsible, loyal execution of planning decisions by bureaucrats, and such performance would not be forthcoming in the absence of bureaucratic privilege. And under socialism, non-experts would be worse off in the absence of the knowledge of experts, and that knowledge would not be acquired or efficiently deployed in the absence of expert privileges. In each case it is argued that the specific form of inequality is necessary for production to efficiently proceed for the general welfare. In effect, the status of these inequalities as exploitative is denied ideologically by virtue of the alleged general welfare which they promote.

These kinds of welfare defences of exploitative relations are not fabricated out of thin air. Each ideology has a material basis which gives it credibility. For example, in capitalism, what would happen if all capitalist profits were taxed (thus eliminating the exploitation transfer from the asset), but capitalists retained control over the use and disposition of the assets themselves? In all probability they would simply begin to consume their assets, i.e. disinvest. Capitalist exploitation is therefore the necessary *incentive* for investment *given the existence of capitalist property relations*. If those property relations are viewed as unchangeable or natural, then such welfare

arguments defending income returns to the sheer ownership of property (i.e. capitalist exploitation) become quite compelling. Similar arguments can be constructed for other forms of exploitation as well.

In all of these cases there is in fact an objective, motivational basis for the ideological system which legitimates exploitation. In each case, it is in fact true that in the absence of exploitation, the productive asset in question will either be withdrawn from production or used less productively.¹⁷ But legitimation depends upon the view that either the asset inequality in question or the motivations associated with that inequality are unchangeable, and that as a result, all incentive questions must take these property relations as fixed.

The critical issue then becomes the extent to which these asset inequalities and the motivations associated with them are in fact alterable. Marxists frequently argue that claims of the 'natural' or inevitable character of such inequalities are pure mystifications. While I do believe that property rights in these various productive assets are radically changeable, the belief in their inevitability and unchangeability is not a completely irrational mystification. There are two principal reasons why it may be rational for people to believe that the existing class structure is inevitable, the first having to do with the real costs of attempting to transform that structure, and the second having to do with the real probabilities of a success in that attempt.

The actual historical process by which a given kind of exploitation is eliminated involves tremendous costs since exploiting classes vigorously resist, often violently, attempts at the redistribution of their strategic assets. This means that it may well be the case in practice that the exploited would be worse off if they *attempt* to eliminate a given form of exploitation, even though counterfactually they would be better off in the absence of such exploitation. If these 'transition costs', to use Adam Przeworski's expression, are sufficiently high and prolonged, then it may well be reasonable for actors to treat the existing form of property relations as inevitable for all practical intents and purposes.¹⁸ This may, to some extent, become a self-fulfilling prophecy, since belief in the unacceptability of the costs of changing a class structure will itself raise the costs of attempts at changing the structure. In such cases, given the practical impossibility of transforming the class structure, the legitimizing ideologies do reflect the necessary motivations and incentives for social production to occur.

Quite apart from the transition costs imposed by threatened exploiting classes, it can be the case that attempts at eliminating certain forms of exploitation may have a very low probability of succeeding. It may be, for example, that while it was possible for the Russian Revolution to destroy capitalist property relations, it would have been impossible to eliminate organization exploitation and skill exploitation given the very low level of development of the forces of production. Organization exploitation may have been an example of what Roemer has called 'socially necessary exploitation', under the specific historical conditions of the Russian Revolution. Accordingly, the ideologies which emerged to justify the inequalities generated by that exploitation reflected unavoidable incentive constraints.¹⁹

Even if the transition costs for eliminating a given asset inequality are not prohibitively high and the historical conditions structurally allow for such an equalization, it remains to be seen how far the motivational correlates of a given kind of inequality can themselves be radically transformed. If they cannot, then significant incentive problems are likely to emerge in the absence of exploitation, and such incentive problems could conceivably result in a decline in general welfare. The prospects of such a long term decline would themselves constitute a basis for legitimating the system of exploitation itself.

Typically, two contrary positions are taken on this issue. Many Marxists argue that the motivations associated with a given system of exploitation are directly caused by the system of exploitation itself. Capitalism engenders the kinds of motivations necessary to make capitalism work.²⁰ If capitalism were to be destroyed, then it might be possible to make a fundamental change in those motivations. Non-Marxist theorists, particularly neoclassical economists, on the other hand, tend to regard the distinctive motivational patterns of capitalism as basically trans-historical, as fundamental attributes of human nature. In the absence of exploitation (or, what they would characterize as differential income returns to capital, skills and responsibility) productivity would at least stagnate and probably decline.²¹

It is difficult, of course, rigorously to adjudicate between these contending claims. The historical evidence on either side is at best inadequate. While there are isolated instances of production organized along egalitarian principles without pervasive exploitation, there have never been entire complex economies so organized. What can be said is that the historical condition necessary to

gain systematic knowledge of this problem is socialism, for only in a socialist society could alternative 'experiments' in incentive structures and various kinds of inequalities be explored in a serious way. The verdict of such experiments could conceivably be that some degree of what we have been calling capitalist exploitation is desirable, but such a verdict could itself only be reached under socialist property relations.

Class Structure and Form of the State

The different logics of class exploitation presented in table 3.2 have certain systematic implications for the nature of the political institutions likely to be associated with those class relations.²²

In feudalism, given that the exploitative relation is based on differential ownership rights in people, it is likely that the exploiting class will need to have direct access to the means of repression in order to exercise those ownership rights. There will thus tend to be fusion of state institutions with the distinctively feudal property relation.

In capitalism, in contrast, the elimination of ownership rights in people means that the capitalist class no longer needs to exercise direct political control over the labour force. Domination is needed to protect the property relations as such, but not directly to appropriate the surplus. The institutional separation of the state apparatuses from private property thus becomes much more *possible*. Furthermore, the nature of the competition among owners of the means of production will tend to give each capitalist an active interest in having a state apparatus that enforces the rules of the game without being captured directly by any specific capitalist or group of capitalists. The institutional separation of state and property thus becomes not only possible, but *desirable* from the point of view of capitalists.

In statism, as I have argued, the pivotal exploitation-asset is organization. The state, in this context, becomes the central arena for organizing the organizations, for managing the organization assets for the whole society. *If* the organization assets are to remain unequally distributed and hierarchically controlled, then this makes centralized, authoritarian forms of the state extremely likely. Without the impersonality of the capitalist market to mediate the exploitation relations, any real democratization of the state in such a society would be likely to lead inexorably to a democrat-

ization of the control over organization assets, i.e. to a serious challenge to the class power of organization-asset exploiters.²³

Finally, in socialism, the state is likely to take the form of some variety of participatory democracy (undoubtedly combined in some way with institutions of representative democracy). The elimination of inequalities of organization assets implies a democratization of decision making over planning and co-ordination of production, and it is difficult to see how that could be sustained on a societal level without pervasive democratization of the state's political apparatuses in ways which would include forms of direct participation.

Class Structure and Class Formation

In classical Marxism, the relationship between class structure and class formation was generally treated as relatively unproblematic. In particular, in the analysis of the working class it was usually assumed that there was a one-to-one relationship between the proletariat as structurally defined and the proletariat as a collective actor engaged in struggle. The transformation of the working class from a class-in-itself (a class determined structurally) into a class-for-itself (a class consciously engaged in collective struggle over its class interests) may not have been understood as a smooth and untroubled process, but it was seen as inevitable.

Most neo-Marxist class theorists have questioned the claim that there is a simple relationship between class structure and class formation. It has been widely argued that there is a much less determinate relationship between the two levels of class analysis. As Adam Przeworski has argued, class struggle is in the first instance a struggle *over* class before it is a struggle *between* classes.²⁴ It is always problematic whether workers will be formed into a class or into some other sort of collectivity based on religion, ethnicity, region, language, nationality, trade, etc. The class structure may define the terrain of material interests upon which attempts at class formation occur, but it does not uniquely determine the outcomes of those attempts.

The conceptual framework proposed in this book highlights the nature of the relative indeterminacy of the class structure-class formation relationship. If the arguments are sound, then class structure should be viewed as a structure of social relations that generates a matrix of exploitation-based interests. But because

many locations within the class structure have complex bundles of such exploitation interests, these interests should be viewed as constituting the material basis for a variety of *potential* class formations. The class structure itself does not generate a unique pattern of class formation; rather it determines the underlying probabilities of different kinds of class formations. Which of these alternatives actually occurs will depend upon a range of factors that are structurally contingent to the class structure itself. Class structure thus remains the structural foundation for class formations, but it is only through the specific historical analysis of given societies that it is possible to explain what kind of actual formation is built upon that foundation.

Class Alliances

Once class analysis moves away from a simple polarized view of the class structure, the problem of class alliances looms large in the analysis of class formations. Rarely, if ever, does organized class struggle take the form of a conflict between two homogeneously organized camps. The typical situation is one in which alliances are forged between classes, segments of classes and, above all, between contradictory class locations.

Individuals in contradictory locations within class relations face a choice among three broad strategies in their relationship to class struggle: first, they can try to use their position as exploiters to gain entry as individuals into the dominant exploiting class itself; second, they can attempt to forge an alliance with the dominant exploiting class; third, they can form some kind of alliance with the principal exploited class.

The immediate class aspiration of people in contradictory locations is usually to enter the dominant exploiting class by 'cashing in' the fruits of their exploitation location into the dominant asset. Thus, in feudalism, the rising bourgeoisie frequently used part of the surplus acquired through capitalist exploitation to buy land and feudal titles, i.e. to obtain 'feudal assets'.²⁵ Similarly, in capitalism, the exploitative transfers personally available to managers and professionals are often used to buy capital, property, stocks, etc., in order to obtain the 'unearned' income from capital ownership. Finally, in statism, experts try to use their control over knowledge as a vehicle for entering the bureaucratic apparatus and acquiring control over organization assets.

Dominant exploiting classes generally pursue class alliances with contradictory locations, at least when they are financially capable of doing so. Such a strategy attempts to neutralize the potential threat from contradictory locations by tying their interests directly to those of the dominant exploiting class. When such 'hegemonic strategies' are effective, they help to create a stable basis for all exploiting classes to contain struggles by exploited classes. One of the elements of such a strategy is to make it relatively easy for individuals in contradictory locations to enter the dominant class; a second is reducing the exploitation of contradictory locations by the dominant exploiting class to the point that such positions involve 'net' exploitation. The extremely high salaries paid to upper level managers in large corporations certainly mean that they are net exploiters. This can have the effect of minimizing any possible conflicts of interests between such positions and those of the dominant exploiting class itself.

Such strategies, however, are expensive. They require allowing large segments of contradictory locations access to significant portions of the social surplus. It has been argued by some economists that this corporate hegemonic strategy may be one of the central causes for the general tendency towards stagnation in advanced capitalist economies, and that this in turn may be undermining the viability of the strategy itself.²⁶ The erosion of the economic foundations of this alliance may generate the emergence of more anti-capitalist tendencies among experts and even among managers. Particularly in the state sector where the careers of experts and bureaucrats are less directly tied to the welfare of corporate capital it would be expected that more 'statist' views of how the economy should be managed would gain credence.

The potential class alliances of contradictory locations are not simply with the bourgeoisie. There is, under certain historical situations, the potential for alliances with the 'popular' exploited classes—classes which are not also exploiters (i.e. they are not in contradictory locations within exploitation relations). Such subordinate classes, however, generally face a more difficult task than does the bourgeoisie in trying to forge an alliance with contradictory locations, since they generally lack the capacity to offer significant bribes to people in those positions. This does not mean, however, that class alliances between workers and some segments of contradictory locations are impossible. Particularly under conditions where contradictory locations are being subjected to a process of 'degradation'—deskilling, proletarianization, routinization

of authority, etc.—it may be quite possible for people in those contradictory locations which are clearly net-exploited to see the balance of their interests as being more in line with the working class than with the capitalist class.

Where class alliances between workers and various categories of managers and experts occur, the critical question for the working class becomes that of defining the political and ideological direction of the alliance. As I have argued, these contradictory locations are the 'bearers' of certain possible futures to capitalism, futures within which the working class would remain an exploited and dominated class. Should workers support such alliances? Is it in their interests to struggle for a society within which they remain exploited, albeit in non-capitalist ways? I do not think that there are general, universal answers to these questions. There are certainly circumstances in which a revolutionary state bureaucratic socialism may be in the real interests of the working class, even though workers remain exploited in such a society. This is the case, I believe, in many third world societies today. In the advanced capitalist countries, on the other hand, radical democratic socialism, involving the simultaneous socialization of capital and democratization of organization assets, is a viable, if long-term, political possibility. The issue is: what are the real historical possibilities facing the working class and other classes in a given society? It is only in terms of such real possibilities that the concrete political problem of class alliances can be resolved.

Women in the Class Structure

So far I have had little to say about forms of oppression other than class. Much of the recent debate in radical theory has revolved precisely around the issue of such oppressions, particularly around the relationship between gender domination and class.²⁷ I will not attempt here to present a sustained discussion of the general relationship between class structure and gender relations. Rather, I want to focus on a much narrower issue: the direct implications of the asset-exploitation approach to class for understanding the location of women in the class structure. In particular, I will address three issues: first, the problem of the acquisition and distribution of assets between men and women; second, the problem of the class location of women outside of the labour force (especially housewives); and third, the problem of whether or not women as such should be treated as a 'class'.

ACQUISITION AND DISTRIBUTION ASSETS

It has often been noted that the average wage of women wage-earners is much lower than that of men—about 60 per cent of the male wage in the United States and 85 per cent in Sweden. How might we approach these wage differentials within the framework developed in this book? There are three main possibilities, not necessarily mutually exclusive.

First of all, some or all of the wage differentials between men and women could be attributable directly to the distribution of skill and organization assets between men and women. Gender relations constitute one mechanism among many that helps explain the distribution of exploitation assets among people. Throughout our analysis, the focus has been on the consequences of ownership of productive assets; the *acquisition* of productive assets has been largely ignored. In some societies women are systematically excluded from any possibility of owning the key exploitation assets; in others they are not legally prohibited from such ownership, but gender relations impose serious obstacles through inheritance patterns, processes for obtaining credentials, managerial promotion practices, and so on. The result of the operation of such mechanisms is that the class distribution among women will be very different from the distribution among men.²⁸

Second, gender itself could be conceived as a special kind of 'credential' in skill/credential exploitation. Recall the mechanism by which credentialing generates exploitation: credentials reduce the supply of labour in such a way that the wage is kept above the cost of producing the skills. Credentials need not constitute real qualifications for a job; they simply need to restrict the supply of a particular kind of labour power. Sex-segregation of occupations may function in a quite parallel way, by 'overcrowding' women into a few categories of jobs and reducing the competition in certain jobs held by men.

Finally, gender discrimination could be conceptualized as a truncated form of what we have called 'feudal' exploitation. In effect, there is not equal ownership of one's labour power if one lacks the capacity to use it as one pleases equally with other agents. The common observation by both Marxists and liberals that discrimination is a violation of 'bourgeois freedoms' reflects this 'feudal' character of patriarchy (and, similarly, of racism). The fact that both feudalism and patriarchy are often described as paternalistic—personalistic forms of domination reflects this common

structure of the relation. This feudal character is truncated, at least in contemporary capitalist societies, because while women may effectively lack full rights in their own labour power by virtue of discrimination, it is no longer the case that these rights are formally vested in men.²⁹

HOUSEWIVES AND THE CLASS STRUCTURE

The class location of housewives who are not part of the labour force has always been a vexing problem for Marxist theory. A variety of solutions have been proposed: some theorists have suggested that housewives of workers are in the working class because they are indirectly exploited by capital in that they contribute to the subsistence of their husbands and thus lower the costs faced by capitalists; others have argued that housewives occupy positions within a domestic or subsistence mode of production and are exploited by their husbands within that subsidiary class relation; still others have argued that the concept of class simply does not pertain to anyone outside of the labour-force, and thus housewives are not in any class at all.

The approach to class and exploitation elaborated in this book suggests that to ask this question we must define the pertinent assets effectively controlled by housewives, the counterfactual games in which they would be better or worse off, and the social relations into which they enter by virtue of their ownership of those assets. In these terms I think we can say the following: first, working-class housewives have no organization assets or credential assets, and at most extremely limited assets in means of production (household appliances). Secondly, like workers, they would be better off and capitalists worse off if they withdrew along with their husbands from the capitalist game with their per capita share of capital assets. Their exploitation-interests *with respect to capitalism*, therefore, do not differ from those of their spouses.³⁰

But what about the social relations of production? This is of course the difficult issue. Housewives of workers are embedded in two production relations: first, they are in a social relation with their husbands within the subsistence production in the household; and second, since their family receives its income through wages, as members of a family they are in a social relation with capital. Their class location, *and that of their husbands*, therefore, must be assessed in terms of the relationship between these two relations. To the extent that male workers exploit and dominate

their wives within household relations of production, they occupy a kind of contradictory class location: they are exploiters within one relation (household relations) and exploited within another (capitalist relations).

I do not think that it is transparently true that husbands universally exploit their wives within domestic production, and the case has certainly not been rigorously established. From a labour-transfer point of view it is not clear that there is a net transfer of surplus labour from housewives to their working husbands.³¹ From the game-theoretic perspective it is even less clear that working class men would be worse off and women better off *within given families* if there was a completely egalitarian division of tasks in both the home and the workforce. This would depend upon how the total wages obtained by a family with two workers is allocated within the family and how the total amount of labour performed by the two would change under the counterfactual conditions. It is entirely possible that both spouses would be materially worse off under the counterfactual conditions, given the existence of gender discrimination in the labour market.³²

My conclusion, then, is this: the housewives of workers are in the working class in their relation to capital and in a variety of possible classes with respect to their husbands. An assessment of the latter depends upon the real relations of control over assets, income and labour time within the family.

ARE WOMEN AS SUCH A CLASS

It is certainly possible, under particular historical conditions, for women as such to constitute a class. Where women are the chattles of their husbands and, simply by virtue of being women, are placed in a specific location within the social relations of production, then they constitute a class.

However, when certain radical feminists make the claim that women are a class, they are not simply claiming that under special historical conditions this may happen. The claim is that this is the universal condition of women in 'patriarchal' societies. If the term 'class' is to be used in the context of the theoretical arguments elaborated here, then this more universal claim cannot be sustained. 'Class' is not equivalent to 'oppression', and so long as different categories of women own different types and amounts of productive assets, and by virtue of that ownership enter into different positions within the social relations of production, then

women *qua* women cannot be considered a 'class'. A capitalist woman is a capitalist and exploits workers (and others), both men and women, by virtue of being a capitalist. She may also be oppressed as a woman in various ways and this may generate certain common non-class interests with the women she exploits, but it does not place her and her female employees in a common gender 'class'.

The reason, I believe, that radical feminists have sometimes felt a need to amalgamate the concepts of class and oppression and thus to treat women as a class, is because of the historical salience of Marxism within radical social theory. Many Marxists have insisted, at least implicitly, that 'class' was the only important kind of oppression and that class struggle was the only kind of struggle with genuine transformative potential. Under the terms of this particular discourse, the only way to legitimate the struggle for women's liberation was to treat it as a type of class struggle. This assimilation of women's oppression to class, however, has had the effect both of obscuring the specificity of the oppression of women, and of reducing the theoretical coherence of the concept of class. A more constructive strategy is to examine the relationship between class and gender mechanisms of oppression, to try to elaborate a dynamic theory of their interaction and the conditions for the transformation of each of them.

Conclusion

If the arguments in these last two chapters have been persuasive, the particular exploitation-centred class concept which I have elaborated has several significant advantages over alternative approaches to class. First, the exploitation-centred concept provides a much more coherent way of describing the qualitative differences among types of class structures than has been possible with alternative concepts. The abstract criteria for assessing the class relations of a given society are consistent across qualitatively distinct societies, and yet allow for the specificity of any given society's class structures to be investigated. The potential for generating a nuanced and powerful set of concepts to distinguish among social formations is also enhanced by the exploitation-centred concept of class. The concept thus avoids having the ad hoc quality that plagues most other class concepts as they are applied to historically distinct types of societies.

Second, the exploitation-centred concept provides a much more coherent strategy for analysing the class character of the 'middle classes' in contemporary capitalism. The contradictory nature of contradictory locations is much clearer than it was and the relationship between such locations and the polarized classes in a given class structure is specified much more precisely. This is accomplished in a way that remains consistent with the six theoretical constraints on the concept of class elaborated in chapter two.

Third, the exploitation-centred concept provides a much clearer link with the problem of interests than do domination-based concepts. This in turn provides the basis for a more systematic analysis of the relationship between the objective properties of class structures and the problems of class formation, class alliances and class struggle.

Fourth, the new concept is more systematically *materialist* than domination concepts. Classes are derived from the patterns of effective ownership over aspects of the forces of production. The different kinds of exploitation relations which define different kinds of classes are all linked to the qualitative properties of these different aspects of forces of production.

Fifth, the new concept is more *historically* coherent than the alternatives. It is the development of the forces of production which imparts to epochal social change whatever sense of direction exists.³³ Since the class-exploitation nexus is here defined with respect to specific kinds of forces of production, the development of those forces of production is what gives a historical trajectory to systems of class relations. The order given to the forms of society presented in Table 3.2 and Table 4.1, therefore, is not arbitrary, but defines a developmental tendency in class structures.

Finally, the concept of class elaborated in this chapter has a particularly sustained *critical* character. The very definition of exploitation as developed by Roemer contains within itself the notion of alternative forms of society that are immanent within an existing social structure. And the historical character of the analysis of the possible social forms implies that this critical character of the class concept will not have a purely moral or utopian basis. Class, when defined in terms of qualitatively distinct asset based forms of exploitation, both provides a way of describing the nature of class relations in a given society and of the immanent possibilities for transformation posed by those relations.

Concepts are peculiar kinds of hypotheses: hypotheses about the

boundary criteria of real mechanisms and their consequences. As such they are provisional in the way that all hypotheses are. To the extent that a particular concept is more coherent than its rivals, meshes better with the overall theory of which it is a part and provides greater explanatory leverage in empirical investigations, it is to be preferred.

In such terms the apparatus presented here for analysing class structures in capitalist and other societies is conceptually valid. This hardly means that it is without problems, some of which may ultimately lead to its demise. But for the moment it fares well against its rivals.

So far we have only explored the theoretical origins and development of the new conceptualization and its theoretical merits compared to the main alternatives. In the next chapter we will attempt what is probably an even more contentious undertaking: the empirical adjudication of contending definitions.

Notes

1. Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*, New York 1979, p. 44.
2. Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*, New York 1979, p. 21.
3. Anthony Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*, New York 1973, p. 107.
4. For examples of this way of describing the differences between Weber and Marx, see Erik Olin Wright, *Class Structure and Income Determination*, chapter one; Rosemary Crompton and John Gubbay, *Economy and Class Structure*, New York 1978, chapter two.
5. See chapter one for an elaboration of this distinction.
6. For an elaboration of the distinction between interpenetration and articulation, see Erik Olin Wright, 'Capitalism's Futures'.
7. Recent discussions have largely discredited the idea that what is called the Asiatic mode of production is indeed a proper 'mode' of production. Nevertheless, it is still generally acknowledged that there is a distinctive gestalt in the social structures of these societies which gives their class structures and class conflicts a particular character. For critiques of the concept, see in particular, Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London 1974, and Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production*, London 1975. For a general collection of essays exploring the problem, see Ann M. Bailey and Josep R. Llobera, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science and Politics*, London 1981. For an interesting and important discussion of Marx's view on the problem, see Theodor Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, New York 1984.
8. Capitalist societies obviously vary in ways other than their class structures, and the comments here are not meant to suggest that elaborating the logic of variability in class structures is sufficient to construct a map of the variability of capitalist societies.

9. I have addressed these issues at some length in my essay 'Capitalism's Futures', and in a co-authored paper with Andrew Levine, 'Rationality and Class Struggle'. For the most sustained a vigorous defence of historical materialism, see G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*

10. It is important to be clear about the sense in which the thesis stated above is a kind of 'primacy of the forces of production' argument. The primacy being claimed is not based on functional explanations as in G. A. Cohen's argument in *Karl Marx's Theory of History*. . . . All that is being claimed is that the level of development of the forces of production determines the likelihood of successful transitions from one class structure to another, but not that there is any necessity of such transition. The directionality of the development of the productive forces therefore imparts a potential directionality to history, but neither a necessary destination nor an inexorable movement.

11. For two interesting, and important, elaborations of the democratic theory of socialism in the context of American society, see Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy*, New York 1983, and Sam Bowles, David Gordon and Thomas Weiskopf, *Beyond the Wasteland*, New York 1984.

12. Of course, it is always possible to label a society with organization-asset exploitation 'socialist' and to retain therefore the formal appearance that socialism directly replaces capitalism, but the logic of this transition no longer has much similarity to the transition posited by Marx since it involves genuine class-based exploitation, and since it implies that there are two qualitatively distinct kinds of socialisms whose differences are of the same theoretical status as the distinction between capitalism and socialism.

13. To say that the trajectory is 'progressive' is not to claim that people are necessarily less oppressed in a simple, monotonic way as we move from one stage to another. Workers in early capitalism may well have been more oppressed and exploited than serfs at certain stages of feudalism, and workers at certain times in the development of statism have been more oppressed than workers in certain capitalist societies. The progressive nature of the trajectory comes from the potentials for emancipation, not from the empirical record of actual oppression of every society.

14. Roemer has an interesting discussion of the issue of legitimating ideologies of feudal and capitalist exploitation. GTEC, p. 205-208.

15. This need not imply that the privileges themselves will erode over time, since exploitation is reproduced by force as much as by ideology.

16. By 'welfare' defences in this context, I do not mean to refer only to what has come to be known as 'welfarism' in philosophical debates, but rather to any defence of a given structure of inequality in terms of its real consequences for the wellbeing of actors. In these terms, I would describe Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, New York 1974, as a clear statement of a rights perspective, and John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1971, as an example of the welfare perspective on inequality.

17. As Gouldner argues, 'these claims to income (by owners of various kinds of capital) are enforced normally by withholding, or threatening to withhold the capital object', *Future of Intellectuals*, p. 21.

18. Adam Przeworski, 'Material Interests, Class Compromise and the Transition to Socialism', *Politics & Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1981.

19. For Roemer's discussion of 'socially necessary exploitation' see GTEC, p. 248.

20. Göran Therborn forcefully argues this position in his analysis of ideology and the ways human subjectivity is formed through patterns of 'subjection' and 'qualification'. See Göran Therborn, *The Power of Ideology and the Ideology of*

Power, London 1982. Of course, contradictions may emerge between the motivational requirements of capitalism and the actual motivations of the actors. Such contradictions, or what is sometimes called a 'motivational crisis', may be one of the signals of the likely demise of a class order. The important point here is that motivations are closely tied to the forms of exploitation and are viewed as highly changeable as those class relations change.

21. It should be noted that even if these conservative motivational assumptions were correct, it would not follow that the general welfare would necessarily decline in the absence of exploitation. Productivity could decline and welfare could increase if, for example, wasteful production were reduced (eg. by radically reducing military spending, advertising, etc.) and investments were directed more consistently to satisfying human needs. The productivity argument translates into a welfare argument only if it is assumed that an identical bundle of things is produced. In many ways the real force of the appeal of socialism in terms of general welfare is not that it will achieve greater technical efficiency than capitalism, but that it will achieve greater social efficiency.

22. I am using the term 'likely' deliberately in this discussion to avoid any implication of strict 'derivation' of forms of the state from the 'functional requirements' of a form of class relations in the manner of the 'capital logic' approach to the state (see John Holloway and Sol Picciotto, eds, *State and Capital*, Austin, Texas 1978). I do believe that it is reasonable to talk about such functional requirements, and that they imply a set of pressures and chains of consequences that will tend to generate appropriate forms of political institutions. But these are just strong tendencies, not necessities. Since I will not explore the problem of these pressures, mechanisms and chains of consequences here, I will treat the relation as simply one of expected association of forms of the state with forms of class relations.

23. This implies that in a statist society it is still possible to distinguish the political apparatuses of the state from the economic apparatuses. The claim being made is that if the political apparatuses were radically democratized in a society with a dominant statist mode of production, it would be difficult to reproduce centralized authoritarian class relations within the state economic apparatuses. What would happen, it is predicted, would be either a restoration of essentially capitalist relations or a transformation into socialist relations.

24. 'From Proletariat into Class', Kautsky, 7:4.

25. In these terms, Max Weber's famous analysis of the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism can be viewed as an explanation of the way a particular ideological form—Calvinism—acted as a mechanism to prevent the feudalization of capitalist exploitation, thus facilitating the growth of capital accumulation. What Calvinism accomplished ideologically, the bourgeois revolutions accomplished politically by legally prohibiting the feudalization of capitalist accumulation.

26. See Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf, pp. 166–167. The argument is that the growth of managerial costs associated with the growth of the megacorporation is one of the key factors undermining productivity growth in certain capitalist countries.

27. The issue of race and class poses some of the same problems, but has not received the concentrated theoretical attention given to the question of gender and class. While I do believe that the question of race is of great importance, particularly in the political context of the United States, and that it deserves sustained treatment, I have not engaged the debates over race and class sufficiently to discuss the relevance of the class framework proposed here for the problem of race.

28. See chapter six below for an empirical investigation of the class distributions of men and women in the United States and Sweden.

29. In the nineteenth century when men in fact had the legal power to control the labour power of their spouses in various ways, the relation was much more fully feudal in character.

30. Technically, in terms of the discussion in chapter three, all that I have shown is that the housewives of workers are economically oppressed by capital in the same way as their husbands, not that they are exploited by capital. Some Marxists have argued that surplus labour is indirectly appropriated by capital from housewives via the unpaid housework they perform which reduces the monetary costs of reproducing the labour power of their husbands. I do not think that this claim has been adequately demonstrated. In any event, in the present context, I do not think that the distinction between economic oppression and exploitation matters a great deal.

31. The research data indicates that while it is the case that wives who work in the labour force do a 'second shift' at home and therefore work many more hours per week than their husbands, this is not true for non-labour force housewives. They work on average fewer total hours per week than their spouses. See Heidi Hartman, 'The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework', *Signs*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1981, p. 380, fig. 1.

32. For a forceful defence of this point for the historical conditions of the industrial revolution, see Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas, 'Rethinking Women's Oppression', *New Left Review*, 144, March-April, 1984, pp. 33–71.

33. See my essay, 'Giddens's Critique of Marxism', for a discussion of why the forces of production can plausibly be viewed as giving history a directionality.