

MARX, WEBER, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM

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Abstract The main object of this paper is to separate several strands in the relationship between the works of Marx and Max Weber. Max Weber has rightly been regarded as Marx's most profound intellectual critic. But there has been much confusion in subsequent literature over the nature and validity of Weber's critique of Marx. This perhaps stems, in part at least, from a failure to distinguish a number of different, although interrelated, themes in Weber's writings. Weber wrote not simply as a critic of Marx, but also in response to the writings and political involvements of the prominent Marxists of his day. Three partially separable aspects of Weber's views thus may be isolated: (a) His attitude towards Marxism in the shape of the main Marxist political agency in Germany, the Social Democratic Party. (b) His views upon the academic contributions of Marxist authors to history and sociology. (c) His views upon what he considered to be Marx's own original ideas. These three aspects of Weber's thought may in turn be distinguished from the analytic problem of how far Weber's own understanding of Marx's theory of historical materialism was in fact a valid one. Some of Marx's posthumously published writings, unavailable to Weber, allow us to form a clear judgement on this question. The historical changes in the social and political structure of Germany from the middle to the latter part of the nineteenth century form an essential background to the whole of the paper: Weber's attitudes toward Marx and Marxism cannot be understood out of this context. Weber's work was written not solely in response to a wraith-like "ghost of Marx", but also in response to a force—Marxism—which played a vital political and intellectual role in Imperial Germany.

THERE are few intellectual relationships in the literature of sociology which present as great an interpretative problem as that posed by the assessment of the connections between the writings of Karl Marx and those of Max Weber. It has been the view of many that Weber's writings—particularly *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*—provide a final 'refutation' of Marx's materialism; others have taken a completely opposite view, considering that much of Weber's sociology 'fits without difficulty into the Marxian scheme'.¹

One main problem which has helped to obscure the nature of the relationship between the views of the two thinkers is that it is only relatively recently—since something like a decade after Weber's death—that it has become possible to evaluate Marx's writings in the light of works which, while of fundamental importance to the assessment of Marx's thought, were not published until almost a century after they were first written.² These previously unpublished works have made two things clear. Firstly, that Marx's conception of 'historical materialism'³ is considerably more subtle, and much less dogmatic, than would appear from

certain of his oft-quoted statements in such sources as the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.⁴ Secondly, that Engels' contributions to Marxism⁵ have to be carefully distinguished from the underlying threads of Marx's own thought.⁶ In order, therefore, to assess the main points of similarity and divergence between Marx and Weber, it is necessary to reconsider the nature of historical materialism in general, and Marx's conception of the genesis and trend of movement of capitalism in particular. While one must, of course, respect Weber's own statements on the subject of his relationship to Marx, these cannot be used as a sufficient index of the true nature of the substantive connections between the writings of the two authors.

But the confusion in subsequent literature over the nature and validity of Weber's critique of Marx stems also from a failure to distinguish a number of different, although interrelated, themes in Weber's writings. Weber's insistence upon the absolute logical separation between factual knowledge and value-directed action must not be allowed to override his equally emphatic stress upon the relevance of historical and sociological analysis to practical participation in politics.⁷ Some of Weber's most important sociological ideas are, indeed, more clearly revealed in his directly political writings than in his academic publications.⁸ Weber wrote, therefore not simply as an intellectual critic of Marx, but also in response to the writings and political involvements of the prominent Marxist politicians and authors of his day. Three partially separable aspects of Weber's views may thus be isolated: (a) His attitude towards 'Marxism' in the shape of the main Marxist political agency in Germany, the Social Democratic Party. (b) His views upon the academic contributions of Marxist authors to history and sociology. (c) His views upon what he considered to be Marx's own original ideas. These three aspects of Weber's thought may in turn be distinguished from the analytic problem of how far Weber's understanding of Marx's theory of historical materialism was in fact valid.

In analysing these four dimensions of the relationship between Marx and Weber I shall concentrate mainly on that issue which was of primary interest to both: the interpretation of the development of modern capitalism in Europe. The sequence of changes which took place in the social and political structure of Germany from the middle up until the concluding years of the nineteenth century constitutes an essential background to the whole of the paper: Weber's attitudes towards Marx and Marxism cannot be adequately understood and analysed outside of this context. Weber's work was not written merely as a rejoinder to a wraith-like 'ghost of Marx', but also formed part of a debate involving a force—Marxism—which played a vital political and intellectual role in Imperial Germany. The paper thus falls into three parts: (1) The historical background of the development of German society over the latter half of the nineteenth century. (2) Weber's attitudes towards, and views upon, Marx and Marxism. (3) The analytic problem which faces the contemporary sociologist who attempts to assess the logical and empirical similarities

and divergences between the writings of Marx and Weber. These three parts are, however, linked together by a single underlying theme. This is that the series of changes described under (1)—the social and political development of Germany in the second part of the nineteenth century—help to elucidate key features in both the evolution of Marxism in that country⁹ and also in Weber's response to it as a political influence and an academic doctrine.

1. *The Historical Background*

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Germany consisted of thirty-nine competing principalities. The two leading German states, Prussia and Austria, were both major powers: their very rivalry was one factor hindering German unification. The hopes of German nationalism were, however, also obstructed by the ethnic composition of Austria and Prussia themselves. Austria, after 1815, had more non-Germans in her population than Germans; Prussia incorporated large numbers of Poles within her territories to the East. The nationalist doctrine could foreseeably entail, for Prussia, the return of these lands to a Polish state. Thus the Austrian government was flatly opposed to any movement towards an integral German state; and, in spite of a strong current of nationalism, the case with Prussia was not very different.

But of greater importance than these factors in retarding the political unification of Germany were more basic characteristics of the social and economic structure of the country. Germany was, compared to the most advanced capitalist country, Britain, still almost in the middle ages, both in terms of the level of her economic development, and in terms of the low degree of political liberalization within the the various German states. In Prussia, the landed aristocracy, the Junkers, whose power sprang from their ownership of the large ex-Slavic estates to the East of the Elbe, maintained a dominant position within the economy and government. The emergent German bourgeoisie, then, had virtually no access to the reins of government in the early part of the nineteenth century.

But Germany could hardly remain completely isolated from the sweeping currents of political change which had been set in motion in France by the events of 1789. Marx's early works were written in the anticipation of a German revolution. Indeed, it might be said that Marx's awareness of the very backwardness of Germany in its social and economic structure was at root of his original conception of the role of the proletariat in history. In France, Marx wrote in 1844, 'partial emancipation is the basis of complete emancipation'; but in Germany, so much less developed, a 'progressive emancipation' was impossible: the only possibility of advancement was through a radical revolution. In Germany, 'complete emancipation is the *conditio sine qua non* of any partial emancipation'. This can be accomplished, Marx wrote, only by the formation of the proletariat, 'a class which has *radical chains* . . . a class which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal . . .'¹⁰ The

proletariat at this time barely existed in Germany; a fact which, if Marx was not fully aware of it in 1844, he certainly recognized by 1847. By the latter date Marx was clear in his mind that the imminent revolution in Germany would be a bourgeois one;¹¹ but the peculiar characteristics of the social structure of Germany, so it still seemed to Marx, might make it possible for a bourgeois revolution to be followed closely by a proletarian one.¹²

Marx was, however, conscious of the weakness of the German bourgeoisie, and noted that, even before having made any direct claim to power, the bourgeoisie were prone to waste whatever strength they possessed in premature and unnecessary conflicts with the nascent working-class.¹³ The failure of the 1848 revolutions in Germany bore witness to this fact, and dispelled Marx's optimism about an immediate 'leap into the future' in Germany—or indeed in Britain or France.

The 1848 uprisings were nevertheless a salutary experience for the ruling circles in the German states, and especially in Prussia. Following this date, a number of social and political reforms were instituted which moved the country away from the traditional semi-feudal autocracy. The failure of 1848 to produce any more radical reforms, however, served as something of a death-knell to the hopes, not merely of the small groups of socialists, but also of the liberals. The maintenance of Junker economic power, of their dominance of the officer corps in the army, and in the civil service bureaucracy, led the German liberals perforce to acceptance of a series of compromise measures introducing nothing more than a semblance of parliamentary democracy.¹⁴

The events of 1848 mark a line of direct linkage between Marx and Weber. For Marx, the result was physical exile in England, and an intellectual recognition of the importance of showing in detail the 'laws of movement' of capitalism as an economic system. Within Germany, the failures of 1848 paved the way for the ineptness of liberalism which, as compared to the bold successes of Bismarck's hegemony, formed such an important background to the whole of Weber's thinking in his political sociology. Perhaps most important of all, the persistence of the traditional social and economic structure in Germany after 1848 drastically affected the role of the labour movement, placing it in quite a different position to that of either Britain or France.¹⁵

There is no space here to discuss in any detail the complicated issue of Marx's relationship to Lassalle and to the movement which Lassalle founded.¹⁶ Certain aspects of this relationship are, however, pertinent. There was from the beginning of the Social Democratic movement a built-in ambivalence towards Marx's doctrines which formed a permanent source of schism within the party. While on the one hand Lassalle was deeply indebted in his theoretical views to Marx's theory of capitalism, in his practical leadership of the new movement he constantly acted in a way opposed to Marx's own views on specific issues, and advocated policies contrary to the very theory which he professed to accept. Thus, in contrast to Marx, who held that the German working-class should throw in its

weight with the bourgeoisie, in order to secure the bourgeois revolution which would subsequently provide the conditions for the assumption of power by the proletariat, Lassalle led the working-class movement away from any sort of collaboration with the liberals. In doing so, Lassalle fostered the sort of separation between theory and practice which was heinous to Marx, and he also thereby sowed the first seeds of the debate between 'evolution' versus 'revolution' which later was really the *caput mortuum* of the Social Democratic party as an agent of radical social change.

Lassalle died the same year that Weber was born. By this time the future of Germany had already been set. The detachment of the labour movement from the liberals, in conjunction with other factors, set the scene for Bismarck's unification of Germany in which, as Bismarck said, 'Germany did not look to Prussia's liberalism, but to her power'. In 1875, when Marx's leading advocates in Germany—Liebnecht and Bebel—accepted union with the Lassallean wing of the labour movement, Germany was in both political and economic terms a very different nation from that which Marx originally wrote about in the 1840s. Political integration had been achieved, not through the rise of a revolutionary bourgeoisie, but as a result, largely, of a policy of *Realpolitik* founded essentially upon the bold use of *political* power 'from the top', and occurring within a social system which retained, in large degree, its traditional structure.

The difficult phases of initial political integration and the 'take-off' into industrialization, were accomplished in quite a different fashion in Germany from the typical process of development in Britain—and, in *Capital*, Marx accepted the latter country as providing the basic framework for his theory of capitalist development. In Germany, political centralization and rapid economic advancement took place without the formation of a fully liberalized bourgeois society. Thus neither the Marxists of the Social Democratic Party—even before Marx's death in 1883—nor the German liberals, possessed an adequate historical model within which they could comprehend the peculiarities of their own position within the German social structure. The Social Democrats clung tenaciously to a revolutionary catechism which became increasingly irrelevant to the real social and economic structure of an industrialized German state. Eventually, therefore, the inherent tension within the Social Democratic Party between Marxian views of the revolutionary transcendence of capitalism and the Lassallean emphasis upon the appropriation of the capitalist state *from within* through the achievement of a fully universal franchise, became forced out into the open. Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism* (1899),¹⁷ although itself based partly upon a British model, provided a coherent theoretical interpretation of the social forces which were driving the Social Democratic Party towards acceptance of the putative acquisition of power from within the existing order. *Evolutionary Socialism* made manifest the realization that the relationship between the political and economic development of capitalism could not be adequately comprehended in terms of the main theses of *Capital*: the

progressive formation of a two-class society, the 'pauperization' of the vast majority, and the imminent collapse of capitalism in a 'final' catastrophic crisis. These latter conceptions survived as Social Democratic orthodoxy in the face of Bernstein's challenge; but they assumed an increasingly deterministic form. What were for Marx tendential properties of capitalism thus became regarded by his followers as mechanically given inevitabilities. This perspective allowed the preservation of revolutionary phraseology without demanding a concomitant revolutionary activism; if capitalism was necessarily doomed, all that needed to be done, so it appeared, was to wait in the wings until the final disintegration of the capitalist economy occurred.

2. *Weber's attitude towards Marx and Marxism*

The German liberals faced comparable dilemmas. Liberalism also had its roots in an earlier period, and in forms of society considerably different from that of Imperial Germany. While maintaining an adherence to the liberal values of individual freedom and political participation, the liberals were heavily compromised by their enforced adaptation—and subordination—to the dominant autocratic order. Weber's own political writings and involvements constantly manifest his consciousness of this.

Weber's appreciation of the significance of political power, particularly as wielded by Bismarck in successfully promoting the rapid internal consolidation and economic development of Germany (and, more specifically his use of the bureaucracy to do so), is one key dimension of Weber's approach to politics, and of his sociology more generally.¹⁸ Weber's commitment to nationalism, and his life-long emphasis upon the primacy of the German state, also have to be understood in these terms.¹⁹ This determination to recognize the realities of the use of political power, however, was counterpointed in Weber's thought by an equally resolute adherence to the values of classical European liberalism. The pathos of Weber's thought, whereby he found himself compelled to recognize an increasing divergence between the main lines of development in modern societies, and the values which he himself recognized as representing the distinctive ethos of Western culture, was an expression—albeit in a highly subtle and ratiocinated form—of the peculiar dilemmas of German liberalism as a whole.

(a) *Weber's attitude towards the Social Democratic Party.* Weber's famous inaugural address at Freiburg in 1895 outlined his interpretation of the hopes of German liberalism in the face of Romantic conservatism on the one side, and the Marxist party on the other.²⁰ Weber specifically dissociated himself from the 'mystical' advocacy of the German state,²¹ but he also expressed the conviction that the working-class was politically incapable of leading the nation. While expressing agreement with some elements which constituted part of the programme of the Social Democrats, including that the working-class should enjoy full rights of political representation, Weber argued that the working-class 'is politically

immature'. Weber noted that much of the revolutionary fervour of the leaders of the working class movement was quite divergent from the real trend of development of the Social Democratic Party—which, as he perceived at an early date, would move towards accommodation to the prevailing German state rather than providing a realistic revolutionary alternative to it. As Weber expressed it, the German state would conquer the Social Democratic Party, and not vice versa.²²

Weber was scornful of the continuing claims of the Junkers to power, although he was forced to recognize that, in practice, their influence in the officer corps and, to a lesser degree, in the government bureaucracy was still considerable. The Junkers were, nevertheless, in Weber's eyes, obviously a declining class. The main source of hope, therefore, for a German state which would maintain its national integrity, but which would reach a level of political democracy compatible with an industrialized society, was through the strengthening of the liberal bourgeoisie as a group capable of providing national leadership. This meant, as Weber increasingly came to realize, developing a governmental system which would vest real political power in parliament. The result of Bismarck's domination, Weber believed, had left Germany without effective political leadership which could take control of the bureaucratic machine of government, and threatened Germany with 'uncontrolled bureaucratic domination'.²³

Weber's attitude towards the possibility of socialism in Germany was by and large simply a logical extension of this position. Should a socialist government, and a planned economy,²⁴ be set up, the result would be an even greater bureaucratic repression. Not only would there be no counterweight to the spread of bureaucracy in the political sphere, but this would inevitably be true of the economic sphere also. 'This would be socialism', Weber wrote, 'in about the same manner in which the ancient Egyptian "New Kingdom" was socialist'.²⁵

Weber's views on the Social Democratic Party remained fairly consistent over the course of his life; his evaluation of his own political position with regard to the policies of the Party did, however, change, together with the changing nature of the German social and political structure. Thus, towards the end of his life, having witnessed the occurrence of what he had previously foreseen—the increasing integration of the Social Democratic Party into the existing parliamentary order—Weber declared in 1918 that he was so close to the Social Democratic Party as to find it difficult to separate himself from it.²⁶ But Weber's consistent view of 'Marxism' as represented in the shape of the Social Democratic Party in Germany, was that its professed objectives—the revolutionary overthrow of the State, and the institution of a classless society—were entirely divergent from the real role which it was destined to play in German politics.

(b) *Weber's views on the academic contributions of Marxist authors.* Weber's position with respect to the theoretical notions which the main spokesmen for and 'interpreters' of Marxism expounded, cannot simply be deduced from his relationship to the Social Democratic Party, since the latter was determined in some

degree by his appreciation of the political realities of the German situation. Weber recognized that certain of the leading Marxist theoreticians of his time had made distinct and even brilliant contributions to history, economics and jurisprudence; and he maintained close academic contact with some scholars who were heavily influenced by Marx.²⁷ It is important to recognize that the bulk of Weber's writing on capitalism and religion was written within the context of the appearance of a spate of scholarly works which claimed Marxian ancestry, but many of which either employed what Weber regarded as a vulgarization of Marx's ideas, or which departed considerably from what Weber considered to be the main tenets of Marx's historical materialism.²⁸

Although Weber once spoke of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* as offering 'an empirical refutation of historical materialism', the essay had, in fact, a complicated genealogy. Weber was interested in religion as a social phenomenon from his early youth.²⁹ While his studies of law and economic history diverted him for some period from following this interest in his academic writings, the *Protestant Ethic* is clearly an expression of interests which had always been in the forefront of Weber's mind.³⁰ Weber undoubtedly wrote the essay in some part as a conscious polemic against the 'one-sided' conception of religion as portrayed by historical materialism. But 'historical materialism' here referred partly to the writings of Kautsky and others.³¹ Moreover, it was probably Weber's association with Sombart which provided the most direct source of stimulus to his attempt to analyze the role of ascetic Protestantism in the rise of capitalism.³²

Weber was sympathetic to the ideas of some of the prominent Marxist 'revisionists', although he regarded them as still being caught up, whatever their departures from Marx, within a metaphysical theory of history which was simply a handicap to their accurate perception of socio-economic reality. In general, Weber accepted, in common with Bernstein and others, that modern capitalism is not marked by a progressive differentiation between an increasingly wealthy minority and a 'pauperized' mass; that the white-collar middle class do not develop a consciousness of class identity with the manual working class; and that there is no sign of an imminent cataclysmic break-up of capitalism.³³ It can hardly be said, however, that Weber derived these views from any of the Marxist 'revisionists': Weber was clear in his own mind that capitalism could not be effectively transcended in the foreseeable future, and that the capitalist mode of production was not leading towards an open and irresistible class struggle between labour and capital. Weber's own references to the stratification structure of modern society show that he recognized the existence of multiple divisions of interest and of status which tend to obscure the Marxist class divisions. Thus Weber pointed out, for example, that the manual working-class, far from having become a homogeneous unskilled group, is cut across by differences of skill-level which create divisions of class interest within the working class as a whole.³⁴

Weber's relationship to the leading Marxist thinkers of his time was, therefore, a

complex one: necessarily so, in virtue of the variety of differing positions assumed by those who claimed to be following Marx.

(c) *Weber's views on Marx.* Weber, of course, considered that Marx had made fundamental contributions to historical and sociological analysis. But, to Weber, Marx's theories could never be regarded as anything more than sources of insight, or at most as ideal-typical concepts, which could be applied to illuminate particular, specific sequences of historical development. The radical neo-Kantian position which Weber adopted from Rickert and Windelband³⁵ effectively excluded any other possibility: in Weber's conception, Marx's attribution of overall 'direction' to the movement of history was as illegitimate as the Hegelian philosophy of history which helped to give it birth.³⁶ While Weber admitted, with strong reservations, the use of 'developmental stages' as a 'heuristic means' which could facilitate the explanatory interpretation of historical materials, he rejected totally the construction of 'deterministic schemes' based upon any sort of general theory of historical development.³⁷

The necessary corollary of this was the rejection of Marx's materialism as a key to the explanation of historical change. The thesis that economic factors in any sense 'finally' explain the course of history, Weber asserted, as a scientific theorem, is 'utterly finished'.³⁸ Weber recognized that Marx's writings varied in the degree of sophistication with which the materialist conception of history was presented—the *Communist Manifesto*, for example, set out Marx's views 'with the crude elements of genius of the early form'.³⁹ But even in its more thorough formulation in *Capital*, Weber pointed out, Marx nowhere defined precisely how the 'economic' is delimited from other spheres of society.

Weber's distinction between 'economic', 'economically relevant', and 'economically conditioned' phenomena was aimed at clarifying this problem. Economic action Weber defined as action which seeks by peaceful means to acquire control of desired utilities.⁴⁰ There are, however, many forms of human action—such as religious practices—which, while they are not 'economic' according to this definition, have relevance to economic phenomena in that they influence the needs or propensities which individuals have to acquire or make use of utilities. These are economically relevant forms of action. Phenomena which are economically relevant can in turn be separated from those which are economically conditioned: these are actions, which are again not 'economic' according to Weber's definition, are causally influenced by economic factors. As Weber pointed out: 'After what has been said, it is self-evident that: firstly, the boundary lines of 'economic' phenomena are vague and not easily defined; secondly, the 'economic' aspect of a phenomenon is by no means *only* 'economically conditioned' or *only* 'economically relevant . . .'⁴¹ Calvinism was in these terms both economically conditioned and economically relevant with regard to the early formation of rational capitalism in Western Europe.

Weber also pointed to another source of conceptual ambiguity in Marx's

'economic' interpretation of history: that Marx failed to distinguish in a clearly formulated way between the 'economic' and the 'technological'. Where Marx slipped into a more or less direct technological determinism, Weber showed, his argument is manifestly inadequate. Marx's famous assertion that 'the hand-mill gives us feudalism, the steam-mill, capitalism'⁴² was, according to Weber, 'a technological proposition, not an economic one, and it can be clearly proven that it is simply a false assertion. For the era of the hand-mill, which lasted up to the threshold of the modern period, showed the most varied kinds of cultural "super-structures" in all places'.⁴³ A given form of technology may be associated with varying types of social organization, and vice versa; this can be seen in the very fact that socialism, as Marx expected it to develop—although being a different social and economic system from capitalism—would involve essentially the same technological base as capitalism.

The positive influence of Marx's writings over Weber is most evident in Weber's insistence that values and ideas, while most definitely not being merely 'derivations' of material interests, nevertheless must always be analyzed in relation to such interests. Weber, of course, recognized the importance of class conflicts in history, while denying that their prevalence or significance is anything like as great as that postulated by Marx. For Weber, conflicts between status groups of various kinds, and between political associations—including nation-states—are at least equally important in the historical development of the major civilizations. The conception of sectional 'interest', therefore, cannot be limited to economic interests, but must be extended to other spheres of social life; political parties, for example, have interests which derive from their situation as aspirants to or as wielders of power, and which do not necessarily in any direct sense rest upon shared economic interests.⁴⁴

There has been some considerable debate over the degree to which Weber's methodological works,⁴⁵ written relatively early on in his career, accord with the substantive content of his later writings, particularly *Economy and Society*.⁴⁶ What is certain, however, is that Weber never abandoned his basic stand upon the complete logical separation of fact and value, nor his correlate assumption of the irreducibility of competing values. It was this epistemological position, Weber recognized, which spearated him most decisively from Marx. Marx's work, whatever its undoubted scientific merits, involved an 'ethic of ultimate ends', and therefore committed him who accepted it to a 'total' conception of history. For Weber, science cannot answer the question: '“Which of the warring gods should we serve”?'⁴⁷

3. *Weber and Marx: the Analytic Problem*

Weber's critique of Marx was highly sophisticated, and was not simply an abstract analysis of the 'logic' of Marx's theories, but was embodied in the very substance of Weber's studies of history and society. This very fact, however, means

that Weber's own explicit evaluations of Marx's views cannot be regarded as the sole source of evidence on the matter. That Weber's own remarks on *The Protestant Ethic*, for instance, are not completely unambiguous is indicated by the confusion over the objectives of the work in the large literature which has surrounded the subject since the first publication of Weber's essay.⁴⁸ Obviously, moreover, the evaluation of the differences between Marx's and Weber's sociology must depend upon an accurate evaluation of the characteristic views of the former. In order to make clear the substance of Marx's basic theoretical position, it is necessary to touch briefly upon some themes in Marx's writings which, thanks to the enormous body of secondary works written on Marx since the Second World War, have by now become very familiar.

Much of the post-war literature on Marx has centered upon the writings of the 'young Marx': that is, prior to the completion of *The German Ideology* (1846). The debate over the relevance of these early writings to Marx's mature works will certainly continue; but it cannot be doubted that, firstly, there are, at the very least, certain definite threads of continuity which run through the whole of Marx's work, and that, secondly, some of the early writings allow us to clarify what these continuities are.⁴⁹

Marx did not ever write a systematic exposition of his 'materialism'. But certain of his early writings make it absolutely clear that his conception of his materialistic approach to history is quite different not only from Hegelian idealistic philosophy but also from what Marx termed 'perceptual materialism'.⁵⁰ Marx, in common with the other 'Young Hegelians', began his intellectual development from the standpoint of the critique of religion, derived from a radicalization of Hegel, and based largely upon the thought of David Strauss and Feuerbach. Feuerbach's philosophy was founded upon a reversal of the major premise of Hegel's system. In place of Hegel's idealism, Feuerbach substituted his own version of materialism, stating bluntly that the starting-point of the study of man must be 'real man' living in the 'real material world'.⁵¹ Feuerbach's writing remained mainly confined to the examination of religion: by 'standing Hegel on his feet',⁵² Feuerbach tried to show that the divine is an illusory product of the real. God is an idealized projection of man himself; God is the mythical projection of man's most cherished values, man alienated from his own (potential) self-perfection.

The consequence of Feuerbach's position is that religion is a symbolic 'representation' of human aspirations, and that to eliminate human self-alienation all that needs to be done is for religion to be de-mystified, and placed on a rational level. Marx rapidly perceived what appeared to him as fundamental defects in this view. Feuerbach's errors were, firstly, to speak of 'man' in the abstract, and thus to fail to perceive that men only exist within the context of particular societies which change their structure in the course of historical development; and, secondly, to treat ideas or 'consciousness' as simply the 'consequence' of human activities in the 'material' world. In Marx's words: 'The chief defect of all previous materialism

(including Feuerbach's) is that the object, actuality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object or perception*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively*'.⁵³ The connotation of this must be made clear: it is that ideas do not simply 'reflect' material reality, but exist in a reciprocal relationship with it.

Marx referred to his materialism only as 'the guiding thread' in his studies: ideologies are 'rooted in the material conditions of life', but this does not entail that there is a universal or unilateral relationship between the 'real foundation' of society (the relations of production) and 'legal and political superstructures'.⁵⁴ On the contrary, the specific conclusion which Marx reached in criticizing Feuerbach was that ideas are social products, which cannot be explained by the philosopher who stands outside of history, but only by the analysis of particular forms of society.⁵⁵ We must reject, Marx insisted, any kind of 'recipe or scheme . . . for neatly trimming the epochs of history', and must 'set about the observation and arrangement—the real depiction—of our historical material . . .' ⁵⁶

Where Marx did generalize about the relationship between ideology and material 'substructure', this was in terms of the specification that the class system is the main mediating link between the two. The class structure of society exerts a determinate effect upon which ideas *assume prominence* in that society. This is the sense of Marx's proposition that the ruling ideas in any epoch are the ideas of the ruling class.⁵⁷ It should be pointed out that, even in Feuerbach's theory, religion is something more than merely a complete reflection of material reality: it also provides values and ideals towards which men should strive. God is man as he ought to be, and therefore the image of the deity holds out the hope of what man could *become*. Marx took over this notion from Feuerbach, but mated it with the dialectical conception that it is the reciprocal interaction of such religious ideas with the social actions of 'earthly men' which must be examined. This reciprocity can be understood in terms of analysing the historical development of societies; we cannot understand the relationship between ideology and society if we 'abstract from the historical process'.⁵⁸ There is no question, then, but that Marx recognized both that ideologies may have a partially 'internal' autonomous development, and that the degree to which this is so depends upon factors particular to specific societies, which in every case have to be studied in empirical detail. This is both consistent with his general conception of materialism, and is evidenced in his more detailed studies.⁵⁹ Marx's position, in other words, is not incompatible with recognition of the unique characteristics and influence of ascetic Protestantism in Europe.

All this is, by now, quite well-known; what has not been so generally appreciated is that even in matters of detail, Marx's discussion of the course of historical development in Europe is in several ways strikingly close to Weber's analysis: this is a fact which has only become fully apparent with the publication of the draft-notes (*Grundrisse*) which Marx wrote for *Capital* in 1857–8. Marx acknowledged the importance of the early forms of capitalism which developed in Rome,

and his explanation of why these led to a 'dead-end' is quite similar to that subsequently set out by Weber.⁶⁰ Marx pointed out that certain of the conditions—including the existence of a nascent capitalist class—which played an essential part in the development of capitalism in Western Europe at a later period, were already present in Rome. Among the factors he isolated as significant in inhibiting the emergence of full-scale capitalism in Rome is that there was strong ideological pressure against the accumulation of wealth for its own sake: 'Wealth does not appear as the aim of production . . . The enquiry is always about what kind of property creates the best citizens. Wealth as an end in itself appears only among a few trading peoples . . .'⁶¹ Wealth was valued, not intrinsically, but for the 'private enjoyment' it could bring; moreover, labour in general was regarded with contempt, and as not worthy of free men.

Marx recognized that there existed numerous prior forms of capitalism before the emergence of bourgeois society in post-Mediaeval Europe. Thus mercantile capital has often existed—as in Rome—in societies in which the dominant mode of production is not capitalist. Mercantile operations have usually been carried on by marginal groups, such as the Jews. Mercantile capital has existed 'in the most diverse forms of society, at the most diverse stages of the development of the productive forces'.⁶² There are cases of societies, other than Rome, where certain segments of the social structure have been quite highly evolved, but where the lack of development of other sectors has limited the ultimate level of economic advancement. Marx quoted the instance of ancient Peru, which in certain respects had a developed economy, but which was kept to a low level of development by the geographical isolation of the society, and by the lack of a monetary system.⁶³

Marx's views on the emergence and significance of Christianity in the development of the European societies have to be inferred from various oblique statements in his critiques of Hegel and the 'Young Hegelians'. As a close student of Hegel, Marx was obviously aware of the fundamental importance which historians and philosophers attributed to Christianity in the West. Marx did not question the validity of this. What he did attack was the idealistic standpoint within which the influence of Christianity was analysed. Thus he objected to Stirner's treatment of the rise of early Christianity in that it is conducted wholly upon the level of ideas.⁶⁴ Christianity arose, Marx stated, as a religion of wandering, uprooted vagrants, and the causes of its expansion have to be related to the internal decay of the Roman Empire: 'the Hellenic and Roman world perished, spiritually in Christianity and materially in the migration of the peoples'.⁶⁵ The Christian ethical outlook formed a vital new moral current, contrasting with the moral decadence of Rome. Christianity substituted for Roman pantheism the conception of a single universal God, whose authority is founded upon uniquely Christian notions of sin and salvation. In the later evolution of Christianity in Europe, the Reformation provided a similar moral regeneration in relation to an internally disintegrating feudal society. 'Luther . . . overcame bondage out of devotion by replacing it by bondage

out of conviction. He shattered faith in authority because he restored the authority of faith . . . He freed man from outer religiosity because he made religiosity the inner man'.⁶⁶

To suppose that Marx was unaware of the 'ascetic' and 'rational' character of modern European capitalism is to miss some of the most basic premises upon which his analysis and critique of bourgeois society is founded. The 'rationalizing' character of capitalism is manifest most directly, for Marx, in the utter dominance of money in human social relationships, and of the pursuit of money as an end in itself. Money is the epitome of human self-alienation under capitalism, since it reduces all human qualities to quantitative values of exchange.⁶⁷ Capitalism thus has a 'universalizing' character, which breaks down the particularities of traditional cultures: 'capital develops irresistibly beyond national barriers and prejudices . . . it destroys the self-satisfaction confined within narrow limits and based upon a traditional mode of life and reproduction'.⁶⁸ Capitalism is 'ascetic' in that the actions of capitalists are based upon self-renunciation and the continual re-investment of profits. This is manifest, Marx pointed out, in the theory of political economy: 'Political economy, the science of wealth, is, therefore, at the same time, the science of renunciation, of privation and saving . . . Its true ideal is the ascetic usurious miser and the ascetic but productive slave'.⁶⁹ The pursuit of wealth for its own sake is a phenomenon which is, as a general moral ethos, found only within modern capitalism. Marx was as specific on this matter as Weber: 'The passion for wealth as such is a distinctive development; that is to say, it is something other than the instinctive thirst for particular goods such as clothes, arms, jewelry, women, wine . . . The taste for possessions can exist without money; the thirst for self-enrichment is the product of a definite social development, it is not natural, but historical'.⁷⁰

The point to be stressed, however, is that in broad terms Marx's conception of, and empirical treatment of, the role of ideology in society is quite compatible with the more detailed studies undertaken by Weber of the sociology of religion. Marx did not study religion in any detail because, in breaking with the 'Young Hegelians' and with Feuerbach, and in perceiving the need to begin to analyse sociologically the relationships between economy, politics and ideology, Marx effectively overcame—in terms of his own objectives—the need to subject religion to detailed analysis. The Young Hegelians, as Marx made clear in *The Holy Family*, continued to devote most of their efforts to the critique of religion, and thus always remained imprisoned within a world-view which was, even if only negatively, a religious one.⁷¹

To emphasize the general theoretical congruity of much of what Marx and Weber wrote on the history and origins of capitalism is *obviously not* to argue that their views are wholly identical, either in relation to particular problems or in respect of more general issues of social and political theory. It is evident that Marx, while disavowing 'the *passé-partout* of a general historical-philosophical theory

whose main quality is that of being super-historical',⁷² sought to impose a pattern on historical development which Weber treated as utterly impermissible. The concept of charisma, and the basic role which it plays in Weber's sociology, expresses Weber's conviction that human history is not (as Marx believed it to be) rational. The attribution of a discoverable rationality to history is an essential element in the whole of Marx's thought, and is the main tie by which he always remained bound to Hegel. But charisma is specifically irrational; thus the revolutionary dynamic in history, which for Weber is constituted by the periodic emergence of charismatic movements, cannot be connected to any overall rational pattern in the historical development of man. Moreover, by stressing the importance of class, and thus of economic interests, in social development, Marx tended to assimilate economic and political power much more than Weber.⁷³ This is very definitely a difference of fundamental significance between the two authors. Nevertheless, the divergence here must not be over-exaggerated. To say, as Gerth and Mills have done, that Weber's work may be seen 'as an attempt to "round out" Marx's economic materialism by a political and military materialism',⁷⁴ is basically correct, but this tends to neglect the fact that Marx gave at least some degree of prominence to 'political and military materialism.' Marx anticipated Weber, for example, in recognizing a parallel between the organization of professional armies and the separation of the labourer from his product under modern capitalism. Thus Marx noted: 'In Rome there existed in the army a mass already quite distinct from the people, disciplined to labour . . . it sold to the State the whole of its labour-time for wages . . . as the worker does with the capitalist'.⁷⁵

Conclusion

My objective in this paper has been to separate out several basic strands in the relationship between the writings of Marx and Weber. I have tried to make it clear that the tendency to assimilate these together as forming a blanket 'critique of Marx' has led many commentators to oversimplify Weber's assessment of 'historical materialism'. It has become something of a truism to say that the 'founders' of modern sociology—Weber, Pareto, and Mosca in particular—developed their theories, at least in part, as 'refutations' of Marx. Each of these authors has at some time been called 'the bourgeois Marx'. This label, however, is inapt in the sense that it implies that their work represents nothing more than a bourgeois response to Marxism. It was this, but it was also much more. Thus Weber's relationship to Marx and to Marxist thought cannot be assessed along a single dimension of 'confirmation' or 'refutation'; Weber's historical studies both destroy some of the cruder Marxist interpretations of historical development, and at the same time, as I have tried to show in this article, *partly* vindicate Marx against his own professed disciples.

Weber wrote at a period when the structure of the leading Western European countries generally, and that of Germany more specifically, had changed

considerably from the time at which Marx formed his fundamental views. All of the economically advanced societies of the West, by the turn of the twentieth century, had reached a high degree of economic maturity without experiencing the revolutionary re-organization which Marx expected. In Weber's time, Marx's thought was carried, in Germany, by the Social Democratic Party. 'Historical materialism' came to be largely identified, in the eyes of Weber and other liberal critics of Marxism, as well as by Marxists themselves, with the systematic exposition of Engels in *Anti-Dühring* and, later, *The Dialectics of Nature*.⁷⁶ While some commentators have exaggerated the difference between the thought of Marx and Engels,⁷⁷ the implications of the position which Engels took in these works are quite definitely at variance with the conception central to most of Marx's writing. By transferring the dialectic to nature, Engels obscured the most essential element of Marx's work, which was 'the dialectical relationship of subject and object in the historical process'.⁷⁸ In doing so, Engels helped to stimulate the notion that ideas simply 'reflect' material reality.⁷⁹ The political quietism of the Social Democratic Party—which Weber accurately perceived behind its revolutionary phraseology—was bound up with the general adoption of such an outlook, which made possible the preservation of a revolutionary posture in a set of social circumstances which had diverged substantially from the pattern of development anticipated by Marx. The wheel thus in a way came almost full circle. At the risk of oversimplifying what is actuality a complicated question, it could be said that Weber's critique of Marxism, as regards the role of ideas in history, in fact came close to restating, in vast detail, certain elements of the original Marxian conception.

This went hand in hand, ironically, with a rejection of certain key aspects of Marx's analysis of contemporary capitalism, and of the latter's hopes for a future form of radically new society. Marx, writing a generation before Weber, believed that capitalism could, and would, be transcended by a new form of society. Weber wrote with the hindsight of having witnessed the formation of industrial capitalism in Germany in quite different circumstances from Britain or France. Weber's appreciation of this fact was one element in his thought allowing him, while drawing heavily from Marx, to escape from the straight-jacket which the followers of Marx in the Social Democratic Party sought to impose upon history in the name of historical materialism.

But it might be held that, in his analysis of the imminent trend of development of capitalism, Weber himself fell prey to a sort of materialistic determinism of his own. Weber perceived a primary irrationality within capitalism: the 'formal' rationality of bureaucracy, while it makes possible the technical implementation of large-scale administrative tasks, is 'substantively' irrational in that it contravenes some of the most distinctive values of Western civilization. But Weber foresaw no way of breaking through this irrationality: the future holds out only the likelihood of the increasing submergence of human autonomy and individuality within an ever-expanding bureaucratization of modern life.⁸⁰ For Marx, on the other hand,

the fundamental irrationality of capitalism—the contradiction between the alienative impoverishment of the individual and the immense potential opportunities for self-fulfilment offered by modern industry—creates the very conditions for the movement to a form of society in which this irrationality will be overcome. Undoubtedly there are problems of major significance for modern sociology and social philosophy which stem from the question of how far the alienative characteristic which Marx attributed to capitalism as a specific form of class society, in fact derive from a bureaucratic rationality which is a necessary concomitant of industrial society, whether it be ‘capitalist’ or ‘socialist’. Does the future promise only the progressive expansion of an order in which, as Weber wrote, ‘the technical and economic conditions of machine production . . . determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism . . . with irresistible force’?⁸¹ Or is there a realistic possibility that, as Marcuse has expressed it, ‘not “pure”, formal, technical reason but the reason of domination erects the “shell of bondage”, and that the consummation of technical reason can well become the instrument for the liberation of man’?⁸²

Notes

1. George Lichtheim: *Marxism, an Historical and Critical Study*. London, 1964, p. 385.
2. These include the ‘Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’; ‘Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts’; the complete text of *The German Ideology*; and other smaller articles, letters and fragments. These were all published for the first time between 1927–32, in *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*. A subsequent edition of Marx’s and Engels’ work has appeared: *Marx-Engels, Werke*, published in East Germany.
3. Marx did not, of course, use this term, which originated with Engels; but it has become conventional to use it also to refer to Marx’s writings on the interpretation of historical development.
4. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Chicago, 1904.
5. David Koigen’s *Ideen zur Philosophie der Kultur* (Munich and Leipzig, 1910) was one of the first attempts to stress the importance of the ‘young’ Marx. In common with most authors who have stressed the divergencies between Marx and Engels, Koigen laid emphasis upon the significance of Hegelian thought upon the whole of Marx’ works. But the most influential work along these lines published before MEGA was Georg Lukács’ *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*. Berlin, 1923. In this article I shall refer to the more accessible French edition; *Histoire et conscience de classe*. Paris, 1960. Lukács was among the first to understand the possibility of assimilating Weber’s studies within a truly dialectical Marxist standpoint cf. especially pp. 142ff and 267ff.
6. In this article I shall follow the terminological practice suggested by Rubel, calling those views which I attribute to Marx himself ‘Marxian’, terming ‘Marxist’ ideas adopted by professed followers of Marx. I shall similarly use ‘Marxism’ in a very broad sense to refer generically to the latter group.
7. cf. Karl Löwith: ‘Max Weber und Karl Marx’, *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Vol. 67, 1932, Part I, pp. 58ff.
8. See, for example, Weber’s discussion of bureaucracy and political power in ‘Parliament and government in a reconstructed Germany’, reprinted as an Appendix to the English edition of *Economy and Society*, New York, 1968, Vol. 3, pp. 1381–1469.

9. The best study of the development of the SPD available in English is Guenther Roth: *The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany*. New Jersey, 1963. cf. also Werner Sombart: *Der proletarische Sozialismus*. (2 vols.) Jena, 1924, esp. Vol. 1, pp. 333ff, and Vol. 2, pp. 9–95. Birnbaum's discussion of the views of Marx and Weber on the rise of capitalism is one of the most incisive analyses which has been made of these issues. But Birnbaum does not separate out the various dimensions which Weber's attack upon 'historical materialism' embraced; consequently, he tends to fluctuate between the conclusions that Weber's work 'made explicit what Marx left implicit' (p. 133), and that Weber considerably modified Marx's theoretical position by refuting the notion that 'ideas are simply reflections of social position and exercise no independent effects on historical development'. (p. 134) 'Conflicting interpretations of the rise of capitalism: Marx and Weber', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 4, 1953, pp. 125–141.
10. 'Contribution to the critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' (1844), in T. B. Bottomore (ed.): *Karl Marx, Early Writings*. New York, 1964, pp. 57–59; cf. also George Lichtheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–54.
11. cf. also Engels' views as set out in his 'Der Status quo in Deutschland', *Werke*, 4, pp. 40–57.
12. The *Communist Manifesto* announces: 'the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution'.
13. cf. Marx's article in the *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung* of the 18th Nov., 1847; *Werke*, 4, pp. 351ff. For a more extended analysis, see Engels: *Germany: Revolution and Counterrevolution*. London, 1933.
14. cf. Karl Demeter: 'Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Parlamentes seit 1848', *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Vol. 39, 1952, pp. 1–29. For the attitudes of liberals towards equal suffrage, cf. Walter Gagel: *Die Wahlrechtsfrage in der Geschichte der deutschen liberalen Parteien, 1848–1918*. Düsseldorf, 1958.
15. Particularly significant in separating the development of the labour movement in Germany from that in Britain was the fact that in Germany, until relatively late on, the working-class was without the franchise. cf. Roth, *op. cit.* pp. 32ff and *passim*.
16. cf. Hans Kelsen: *Marx oder Lassalle*. Darmstadt, 1967.
17. Edward Bernstein: *Evolutionary Socialism*, London, 1909. For a short description of Bernstein's role in relation to the Social Democratic Party, see Christian Gneuss: 'The precursor: Eduard Bernstein', in Leopold Labedz: *Revisionism*. London, 1962, pp. 31–41.
18. It might be pointed out here that the consequences of the German victory of 1870–1 were equally fraught with significance for the sociological perspective of Durkheim. cf. Melvin Richter: 'Durkheim's politics and political theory', in Kurt H. Wolff: *Emile Durkheim et al., Essays on Sociology and Philosophy*. New York, 1964, pp. 171ff. For a discussion in relation to German intellectual traditions, see Fritz K. Ringer: *The Decline of the German Mandarins*. Cambridge (Mass.), 1969 pp. 81ff.
19. cf. Wolfgang J. Mommsen: *Max Weber und die deutsche Politik: 1890–1920*. Tübingen, 1959, pp. 103ff; cf. also Raymond Aron: 'Max Weber und die Machtpolitik', *et seq.*, in *Max Weber und die Soziologie heute*. Tübingen, 1965.
20. 'Der Nationalstaat und die Volkswirtschaftspolitik', *Gesammelte politische Schriften*. Tübingen, 1958, pp. 1–25. See also Johannes Winckelmann: *Max Weber, Staatssoziologie*. Berlin, 1966.
21. cf. also Durkheim's analysis of Treitschke in *L'Allemagne au-dessus de tout*. Paris, 1915.
22. Weber made this remark at a meeting of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*. See 'Diskussionsreden auf den Tagungen des Vereins für Sozialpolitik', in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*, Tübingen, 1924, pp. 394ff, and especially pp. 408–409.
23. 'Parliament and Government in a reconstructed Germany', p. 1453.

24. Weber also offered a number of technical economic objections to the operation of a planned economy, in the form in which most socialists at that time conceived such an economy would function. cf. *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, pp. 65–68; and pp. 100–107.
25. ‘Parliament and government in a reconstructed Germany’, p. 1453. For Weber’s views on Russia, cf. ‘Russlands Übergang zur Scheindemokratie’ in *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, pp. 192–210.
26. cf. ‘Das neue Deutschland’, *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, p. 472–475. For an acute interpretation of some of the schisms splitting the Social Democrats during the First World War see J. P. Nettl: *Rosa Luxemburg*. London, 1966, Vol. 2.
27. E.g., Sombart. See, for example, his *Der moderne Capitalismus*, particularly Vol. 1; Sombart of course even early on in his career, was far from being an orthodox ‘Marxist’. On the relationship between Sombart, Marx, and Weber, cf. Talcott Parsons: ‘Capitalism in recent German Literature: Sombart and Weber’, *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 36, 1928, pp. 641–661; and Vol. 37, 1929, pp. 31–51. On Weber and Michels, cf. Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 249–257.
28. cf. Weber’s discussion of Stammer’s book on historical materialism and law; ‘R. Stammers “Überwindung” der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung’, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. Tübingen, 1951, pp. 291–359.
29. cf. Weber’s letter to his mother of the 8th July 1884, in *Jugendbriefe*. Tübingen, N.D., pp. 121–122. It is worth noting that Weber was impressed by his reading David Strauss’ *Das Leben Jesu* (1835) at an early age; the same work had played a prominent part in the development of Marx’s views as a member of the ‘Young Hegelians’. For a recent study cf. David McLellan: *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx*. London, 1969, pp. 2–9, and *passim*.
30. cf. Roth: ‘Introduction’ to *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, pp. LXX–LXXI.
31. See Karl Kautsky: *Karl Marx’ ökonomische Lehren*. Stuttgart, 1887; and, subsequently, his *Der Ursprung des Christentums*. Stuttgart, 1908.
32. cf. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York, 1958, especially pp. 194–198. For an account of the background to Weber’s views on religion, see Paul Honigsheim: ‘Max Weber: his religious and ethical background and development’, *Church History*, Vol. 19, 1950, pp. 2–23.
33. cf. Weber: ‘Der Sozialismus’, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*, pp. 504ff.
34. cf. Weber’s outline of *Erwerbsklassen*, in *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, p. 304.
35. Although this is set out in most detail in his more technical essays on method, Weber’s basic epistemological position is formulated in a brilliantly concise fashion in ‘Science as a vocation’, in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills: *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York, 1958, pp. 129–156.
36. See Weber’s remarks on Marx’s concepts in “‘Objectivity” in social science and social policy’, in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p. 103 and *passim*.
37. Weber discussed the notion of evolutionary ‘stages’ in some detail in relation to a problem which also preoccupied Marx, and more particularly, Engels: the question of the development of Germanic tribal society in relation to the decline of Rome and the structure of mediaeval feudalism. cf. Weber: ‘Der Streit um den Charakter der altgermanischen Sozialverfassung in der deutschen Literatur des letzten Jahrzehnts’, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*. Tübingen, 1924, pp. 508–556.
38. The phrase comes from Weber’s contribution to a meeting of the German Sociological Association, reported in ‘Geschäftsbericht und Diskussionsreden auf den deutschen soziologischen Tagungen’, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik*, p. 456.
39. ‘Objectivity in social science and social policy’, p. 68. Weber nevertheless spoke of the

- Communist Manifesto* as 'a scientific achievement of the first rank'. 'Der Sozialismus', pp. 504–5.
40. *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, p. 63. For Weber's earlier formulation of the concept of the 'economic', see 'Objectivity in social science and social policy', p. 64.
 41. 'Objectivity in social science and social policy', p. 65.
 42. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Moscow, N.D., p. 92. (The quotation in the text is Weber's version of the Marxian original.) For Weber's distinction between 'economy' and 'technology' see *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, pp. 65–67.
 43. 'Geschäftsbericht und Diskussionsreden auf den deutschen soziologischen Tagungen', p. 450
 44. *Economy and Society*, Vol. 2, pp. 928ff.
 45. Collected together as *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. Tübingen, 1968 (third ed.).
 46. cf. Shils' 'Forward' to *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, pp. vii–viii.
 47. 'Science as a vocation', p. 153.
 48. Much of the dispute over Weber's objectives in the book stems from neglect of Weber's published replies to his early critics cf. his 'Antikritisches zum Geist des Kapitalismus', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Vol. 20, 1910; and his 'Antikritisches Schlusswort', *Ibid.*, Vol. 31.
 49. The most definite evidence for the continuity of Marx's thought is the draft version of *Capital*. This was published in 1939, but did not become generally available until 1953. It is published as *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*. Berlin, 1953. For an analysis of some of the phases in the development of differing 'interpretations' of Marx since the turn of the century, see Erich Thier: 'Etappen der Marxinterpretation', *Marxismusstudien*, 1954, pp. 1–38.
 50. 'Theses on Feuerbach', in Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat: *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*. New York, 1967, p. 402 (Thesis 9).
 51. Ludwig Feuerbach: *The Essence of Christianity*. London, 1853.
 52. This phrase was, of course, originally used by Engels to refer to Marx's relation to Hegel. cf. Engels: 'Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of classical German Philosophy', *Selected Works*, London, 1950, Vol. 2, p. 350.
 53. 'Theses on Feuerbach', *loc. cit.*, p. 400 (Thesis 1).
 54. 'Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*', in Marx and Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I., pp. 328–329.
 55. cf. Thesis 7 in 'Theses on Feuerbach', *loc. cit.*, p. 402.
 56. *The German Ideology*. Moscow, 1968, pp. 38–39.
 57. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
 58. 'Theses on Feuerbach', *loc. cit.*, p. 402 (Thesis 6).
 59. cf. for example, 'The Civil War in France', in *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 429–440.
 60. *Grundrisse*, pp. 375–413; the relevant sections are mostly included in an English translation of a small section from the work—E. J. Hobsbawm: *Pre-capitalist Economic Formations*. London, 1964; Weber's discussion of Rome is to be found in 'Die sozialen Gründe des Untergangs der antiken Kultur', in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 289–311. In the subsequent part of this paper I do not deal with the discrepancies between Marx's discussion of 'the Asiatic mode of production', and Weber's analysis of China and India. It has often been stated that Weber's views upon the emergence of rational capitalism in the West can only be fully understood in the light of his writings on the various 'world religions'. This is undeniably true. It is, however, quite misleading to regard these writings, as many have, as a form of *ex post facto* experiment which 'tests' the 'independent' influence of ideology upon social development. What Weber shows is that *both* the content of the religious ethics he discusses *and* the specific combination of 'material' circumstances found in Europe, China and India differ. (Thus, for example, Weber laid

stress upon the ease of communications in Europe, the peculiar economic and political independence of the European city, plus various other 'material' conditions in terms of which Europe differed from China and India.) These material and ideological factors form a definite, interrelated 'cluster' in each case: the material conditions cannot therefore simply be treated as a 'constant' against which the 'inhibiting' or 'facilitating' influence of religious ideology as a 'variable' can be determined.

61. *Pre-capitalist Economic Formations*, p. 84.
62. *Grundrisse*, p. 740.
63. Marx pointed out also that while the use of money was widespread in Antiquity, only in certain trading nations did it become essential to the economy; in Rome, the monetary system came to be fully developed only during the period of the disintegration of the economy. *Grundrisse*, pp. 23–24. Compare Engels' discussion of Rome, in his 'The origin of the family, private property and the state', in *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 270–278.
64. See the discussion of Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* in *The German Ideology*, pp. 143ff.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 151. Weber, on the other hand, stressed that Christianity has always been primarily a religion of the urban artisanate. See *Economy and Society*, Vol. 2, pp. 481ff.
66. 'Contribution to the critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right', in *On Religion*, p. 50. Marx only briefly alluded to the significance of the ideological content of Calvinism. (See, for example, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 79). Engels, on various occasions, discussed Calvinism at greater length.
67. 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', in Bottomore, *op. cit.*, pp. 168ff; see also Löwith, *op. cit.*, pp. 77ff.
68. *Grundrisse*, p. 313. cf., on the 'universalizing' character of money, Georg Simmel: *Philosophie des Geldes*. Leipzig, 1900. Weber remarked of Simmel's book, that 'money economy and capitalism are too closely identified, to the detriment of his concrete analysis'. *Protestant Ethic*, p. 185. Marx also noted the significance of a phenomenon which Weber later discussed at great length—the fact that Roman law played an important role in the formation of bourgeois society. cf. *Grundrisse*, p. 30; and p. 916.
69. 'Economic and philosophical manuscripts', p. 171; cf. Avineri, *op. cit.*, pp. 110–111.
70. *Grundrisse*, pp. 133–134.
71. Marx and Engels: *The Holy Family*. Moscow, 1956.
72. Letter to the Editor of *Otycestvenniye Zapisky*, 1877, *Selected Correspondence*. London, 1934, p. 355. (I have modified the translation.)
73. Marx, of course, realized that political structures could vary to a considerable degree independently of class interests. (See, for example, his letter in *Letters to Kugelmann*, London, N.D., p. 23.) Marx saw that the most developed society in economic terms, England, has a less complex state than Germany or France. The English state, Marx wrote in 1885, was 'an archaic, time-worn and antiquated compromise between the bourgeoisie, which rules over all the various spheres of civil society in reality, but *not officially*, and the landed aristocracy which *rules officially*'. "Die britische Konstitution", *Werke*, II, p. 95.
74. Gerth and Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 47. The degree to which Weber's differentiation of 'class', 'status' and 'party' makes a departure from Marx's conception of 'class' has often been exaggerated in subsequent literature on the subject. (For a typical exposition, see Joseph A. Kahl: *The American Class Structure*. New York, 1961, pp. 2–8.) Secondary interpreters seem to forget that Weber insisted that property relations form the basic dimension of all class situations; and that, while 'status' is an analytically independent dimension of stratification from class, the former is normally empirically dependent on the latter. ('Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity.') Moreover, as Marx pointed out in *Capital* (Kerr ed., 1909, Vol. 3,

- pp. 1031–2), the identification of class with ‘market position’, such as later defined by Weber, leads to the recognition of an almost infinite plurality of ‘classes’: Weber himself came to recognize this, and moved back towards a more unitary conception of the major forms of class group. (See Weber’s later exposition of class and status, *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, pp. 302ff.)
75. *Grundrisse*, p. 428. Marx, however, noted that the case of the army and that of the capitalist organization differed in that the professional soldier was not hired in order to produce surplus value.
 76. *Anti-Dühring*. Moscow, 1962; *Dialectics of Nature*. Moscow, 1954.
 77. It would perhaps be nearest to the truth to say, in Laski’s words, ‘that the two men had, as it were, evolved in common a joint stock ideas which they regarded as a kind of intellectual bank account upon which either could draw freely’. Harold J. Laski: ‘Introduction’ to *The Communist Manifesto*. New York, 1967, p. 20.
 78. The phrase is Lukács’, *op. cit.*, p. 20. cf. Macintyre’s remarks on Kautsky, Bernstein and Lukács, in Alasdair Macintyre: *Marxism and Christianity*. London, 1969, pp. 95ff.
 79. Engels, in fact, disclaimed the writings of some of his intellectual disciples who were actually only drawing the logical implication of the main themes of *Anti-Dühring*. His attempt to escape the theoretical impasse to which his views led is given in his statement that ‘According to the materialist conception of history, the determining element in history is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted’. Engels to Bloch, 21st September 1890, in *Selected Correspondence*, p. 475. Marx had earlier, of course, also felt compelled to comment ironically that he ‘was not a Marxist’.
 80. On Marx’s theory of bureaucracy, see Avineri, *op. cit.*, pp. 48ff.
 81. *Protestant Ethic*, p. 181.
 82. Herbert Marcuse: ‘Industrialization and capitalism in the work of Max Weber’, in *Negations, Essays in Critical Theory*. London, 1968, p. 223.

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