

MARXIST SOCIOLOGY AND MARXIST IDEOLOGY

I. MARXIAN IDEAS OR A MARXIST SYSTEM?

We readily use the term Marxism. The assumption underlying the use of this term is that a whole coherent well-knit body of ideas exists forming a system whose guiding principles, at least, were discovered by Karl Marx. This system would embrace, by right if not in fact, the whole body of intellectual, moral and even aesthetic problems that beset mankind. It would introduce a method by which to resolve them, at least to a great extent. Marxist protestations of fidelity to an open concept, according to which much is still to be discovered and even revised, are often contradicted by their opposition in matters of fact to continuation and revision. Consequently, one cannot see what fundamental distinction exists between Marxism and the classic philosophical systems, despite anything Marx and the Marxists may have said against the pretensions of the previous systems of this kind.

Translated by Jenny Greenleaves.

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Marx's exclamation in 1882 is well known: "I am not a Marxist!" A witty crack no doubt, and aimed at first at the political leanings of the French "Marxists." But it contains a large amount of truth. Marx did not wish to establish a system. He expressed ideas on different spheres of thought, some of great significance, some suited to the occasion and of limited interest. In certain spheres they form a coherent sheaf, constituting a system of methodological propositions or even a complete "regional" theory. In others they are scattered.

Naturally, a link does exist between these theses, ideas and various opinions. In one sense they involve one another. They form a system, of course, in the sense that the thought and attitudes of any man form a system, in which each idea and each attitude can, with each of us, be explained (ideally) in function of the others. Firstly, however, this does not necessarily mean that each element in this system is without any possible, conceivable alternative (doubtless one is faced with the whole question of determinism here). Secondly, and most important, this does not mean that these elements are linked by the requirements of the object of thought. Their presence in the system, the way in which the thinker chooses them and the way in which they are linked with other elements whether in terms of each individual's personality, or his pre-established ideas, his psychological tendencies, the ideas of his environment, his relations with other people, the requirements of his act, etc. Even if the system in question is necessary in relation to Marx's brain (in this particular case), it does not follow that its elements are necessarily linked with a regard to the ulterior requirements of a "philosophical" body of problems in a modified social, cultural and intellectual context.

This naturally applies to all thinkers. Let us take Aristotle's system, whose coherence is unquestionable. Aristotelian logic is still valid almost in its entirety, at a certain level, his politics and ethics still contain much useful information, his cosmology has only an historical interest.

As this last example shows, the coherence of a man's thought can be evaluated with regard to the totality of his thought or to certain "regions." In ordinary men, since there is always coherence in relation to the individual personality, there is often great

incoherence with regard to the logical compatibility of the ideas, even when these belong to the same sphere. Thinkers and learned men are usually able to construct regional systems of thought in which a relative coherence prevails. But a system of thought must possess great breadth to exceed this level. Marx's thought was far-reaching. But he was not a superman. His thought reached an exceptional degree of coherence. But this coherence is not perfect. The sub-systems of his thought reveal a large percentage of objective inner coherence (to distinguish it from a subjective coherence in relation to the personality of the thinker as a whole). They possess very different degrees of validity. The global validity of one does not imply the total or partial validity of the other sub-systems. Therefore, to "read" Marx cannot suffice to reveal, by exegesis, the essence of things or even of human society.

We know that Marx's essential work deals with political economy, or in practical terms with the analysis of capitalistic economic structure. In this sub-system a high degree of inner coherence prevails, even though some element can be dissociated and the validity of some (even the validity of the guiding principles) does not imply the validity of all. But the choice of the field of study itself came from a system of theses on the relations between economic phenomena and other social phenomena that bestowed upon the former a particular importance in the dynamic of history. This system of theses, which we may call sociological (I will come back later to this term), also had great inner coherence. It implied a global conception, at a very general level (studied far less thoroughly, and in less detail than the economic system), of the inner mechanism of societies, seen not only in their static structure, but in their dynamic evolution. If this sociological system lighted the way for economic study, it is not certain that the coherence between sociology and economics is perfect. Economic study and the political action that accompanied it have led to partial revisions of those sociological theses that had previously been adopted.

On the other hand, sociological thought itself was born not only of an inextinguishable scientific curiosity, but of an ethical exigency, founded on an indignation against capitalistic society and directed towards a beneficial transformation of social re-

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lations by revolutionary means. This concern had its beginning in a preliminary ideology, partly implicit, and that was to lead to an ideology more or less transformed, assimilated and moulded by the result of Marx's studies, his political action, and historical circumstances.

Both Marx's reflections and studies, which he directed towards decyphering reality, and his ideological orientation, which he directed towards transforming reality, fitted in with, and were justified by, his philosophical opinions on the nature of the world, on the possibility and means of understanding and transforming it. A Marxian philosophy therefore exists in a maximum dependence on his ideology. It is "idealistic" (in the traditional Marxist meaning) to lay down, as many Marxists do, that on the contrary his ideology depended upon his philosophical opinions. Marx expressed his philosophical opinions only during a period when he had not yet started on the work of his maturity. Their ulterior modifications are known to us only through certain allusive remarks or by the analysis of the implicit assumptions of one or another of the steps in his thought.

Historically speaking, it is his philosophical opinions, formed during his youth under the influence of the implicit ideology which he first held and of the education he had received, that led Marx to take up the study of social mechanisms. Enlightened equally by the education he had received, by his numerous historical readings (which however covered a limited field), by his own experience and that of Engels, he formed a certain concept of social mechanisms, a certain kind of sociological doctrine. It is this doctrine that led him to the study of political economy and influenced the results thereof. This whole evolution had its roots in an initial ideology to be more or less transformed subsequently as he went along.

It is therefore possible to discern in Marx's theses and opinions a certain number of "regional" systems: philosophy, sociology, economy, ideology. I shall now suggest that from a methodological point of view neither their inner coherence nor an objective compatibility between them were assumed at the start. The expositor must demonstrate both these facts if he assumes them to be true. On the other hand I propose to leave philosophy and economics on one side, except for some allusive

remarks. My aim is to examine in broad outline the relations that exist between the system of sociological theses of Marx and Marxism on the one hand, and the ideological tendencies of the Marxist ideological movement (including those whose presence can already be felt in Marx) on the other hand.

II. THE FOUNDATIONS OF MARXIAN SOCIOLOGY

As we have already said, Marx, especially in his *Deutsche Ideologie* in 1845, advanced a series of theses which he doubtless revised in part later on (but on the whole he did this implicitly), on the structure and the dynamics of human society. These theses can be adopted—and to a great extent they are—by researchers who do not share the philosophical and ideological opinions of Marx. They are dissociable at least by right. One should therefore grant them the status of a scientific type system, without necessarily adopting a positivist conception of science. In as much as they are directed in a privileged way towards formulating laws or dynamic constants, one could call this system a theory of human history, as certain people (on purely ideological grounds) dislike the term sociology. But in it the ideas on historical dynamics appear to be the consequences of a conception of the whole structure of every human society possible. The history with which Marx deals—in his non-philosophical writing—is not the history of just anything, but the history of human society (or better the history of the human societies); it is founded on the first outlines of a science of society. We are therefore obliged to use the term sociology invented by Auguste Comte. And as for giving this system of propositions the name of “historical materialism,” as an important section of the Marxist ideological movement have been in the habit of doing for strictly ideological reasons and as suggested by the Althusserian school, this is manifestly absurd. This means that the name of a science is confused with that of a particular thesis, and sides are taken on the way in which the method of this science, or its specific object, should be conceived. In this case couldn’t an idealistic conception of society or history, even though proved to be radically false, be one form of sociology or a theory of history? The practice has always prevailed of designating a science by

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a term which refers to its specific object quite independently of the theses that are involved. No one talks of developing heliocentrism (and still less Copernicism), but astronomy and the theory of the solar system.

Marxist sociology has its starting point in certain basic and quite elementary principles that are really obvious truisms. These were accepted as such, long before Marx, by all political realists and even by all realistic thinkers on historical or political subjects. Marx considers them to be “a synthesis of the most general results that can be obtained from the observation of historical development.”¹ It is necessary to insist on these principles above all because they are, despite their evident truth, denied in practice and/or in theory by ideologists (“almost all ideologies can be reduced to an absurd [*verdrehte*] conception of history or to an abstraction of history altogether”² he observes in a rough draft) and also because, in order to construct a valid theory of society and history, one must start from these premises and keep them constantly in mind. Let us note that it is permissible, necessary and even very important to search through the implicit assumptions of the development of *Das Kapital* more than any other work, in order to discover how the Marxian doctrine developed later on; but this enriched and developed doctrine does not at any moment contradict the general sociological premises set out in *Deutsche Ideologie*, whatever the relations between Marx’s philosophical position in this work and his earlier and later ideas.

One might express the foundations of this sociological position in the following way.³ A society is built round certain essential tasks without which it could not subsist. Like each individual, society strives first to survive, to perpetuate its existence (rather than its essence), and therefore to produce its own means of existence, and to reproduce them as they are destroyed by consumption, and to reproduce itself. The relations organized round and about these tasks (not conscience or the theorization

¹ *Deutsche Ideologie* from K. Marx, *Die Frühschriften*, hrsgb. v. Landshut, Stuttgart, Kröner, 1953, p. 350.

² *Ibidem.*, p. 346. The italic is my own.

³ Here I develop a little further the analyses in my book *Islam et Capitalisme*, Seuil, 1966, from p. 200.

of these relations) produce repercussions throughout all forms of life in society. All other forms of intercourse and conscience must be adapted to these relations, though the contrary is not true. The organization and conscience of society should at least not hinder these tasks. A process that is in no way abstract, that is that can be analyzed in terms of multiple pressures (of which we are often unaware) of the "nature of things" *tends* to eliminate those forms of organization and conscience that through their own evolution may have become a hinderance to the accomplishment of these tasks. It will also *tend* to have those forms of organization or of conscience that are favourable to these essential tasks, not without encountering difficulties, tensions, struggles and "acts of daring."

Another law underlying the Marxist doctrine in sociology, but defined far less explicitly by Marx, may be formulated as follows. As well as those essential tasks, which I have just mentioned as being forced upon itself by every society and which might be called essential primary tasks, societies and individuals and any kind of group tend at least latently to reveal aspirations that could lead to what one might call essential secondary tasks. These are the aspirations to defend and eventually to maximize (by competition and eventually by strife) the material advantages and advantages of prestige which they enjoy collectively. These aspirations, given certain conditions, also become over-whelming, and only slightly less strong than the elementary impetuses that drive people to pursue essential primary tasks. They too make themselves felt by faint and often unconscious pressures, at all levels of the social structure. However a society may be divided into functional groups, possessing a hierarchy and in opposition with one another, that Marx calls classes (and this division would always come about beyond a certain point in the development of the society) for whom these secondary tasks are conceived at their own level, not on a level with universal society. In these societies with a hierarchy, the aspirations of the dominant class have a tendency to be conceived as those of universal society. Also in these cases, though in a less constraining way, the other forms of intercourse and conscience tend to adapt to the relations formed around these aspirations, whereas the contrary is not true. The organization and conscience of the society should at least not

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hinder the pursuit of those tasks conceived in relation to these aspirations.

Marx expressed this law or this constant only in enigmatic, philosophical formulae, borrowed from Hegelian language. "It is the evil section that produces the movement that makes history by constituting the strife..."⁴ A class becomes revolutionary, he explains in the course of his controversy with Proudhon, when a change in the forces of production produces a certain disharmony in the relations of production, by accumulating the disadvantages for the under-privileged and subject class ("*le mauvais côté, l'inconvénient de la société*") and for universal society. "As it is important above all not to be deprived of the fruits of civilization, of the forces of production acquired, it is necessary to shatter the traditional forms in which they were acquired."⁵ He claims the law as an axiom: "Are we to be surprised that a society founded on the *opposition* of classes should lead to a brutal *contradiction*, to hand-to-hand fighting as the final outcome."⁶ And, very significantly, he borrows his conclusion not from just any theoretician, but from a writer who is thought to have discovered it intuitively from the common experience of mankind as known through history, from George Sand. (So long as classes and class antagonisms exist), "just before each general modification of society, the last word of social science will ever be: 'To fight or to die: a bloody struggle or annihilation. Thus is the question invincibly posed' (George Sand)."⁷ All the classes that in the past seized power tried to consolidate the status they had acquired by subjugating the whole of society to the conditions of their acquisition of revenue ("*den Bedingungen ihres Erwerbes*").⁸

In this way the foundations of the famous generalizing sentence, written in lyrical tone, of the *Manifesto* are revealed: "The history of every society up to our times is the history of class

⁴ *Misère de la philosophie*, in K. Marx, *Œuvres, Economie*, I, éd. M. Rubel, Paris, Gallimard, 1963 (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), p. 89.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁸ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Das Kommunistische Manifest*, Moskva, Leningrad, Verlagsgenossenschaft ausländischer Arbeiter in der UdSSR, 1935.

struggle.” A sentence whose validity Engels at once tried to restrict and which in any case merely expressed an opinion commonly held at that time. But Marx never undertook to seek out the implications that really transcend this formulation; a passivity that springs from certain ideological sources I will now attempt to extract. The way in which I formulate the underlying law seems to me to be implied by a series of steps in Marxian and Marxist thought, and at the same time is justifiable as a generalization of historical experience.

As a corollary confirmed by empirical observation (including the quasi-experimental observation of the man of action), one may say that a structure, a phenomenon, a conjecture, an event in social life can rarely be explained by a perfectly autonomous evolution that takes place within the enclosed sphere of organization or of conscience—contrary to the naïve assumptions of the current, commonly held, “idealistic” conception of history. It seems impossible that they should never call into play, at any stage in the sequence of causes, those relations formed around the accomplishment of the essential tasks (primary or secondary) to which they tend to adapt. The conscience in particular—which plays an active functional role of coordination and mobilization in social life—adapts itself to it by building secondary explanations which fit into a general apologetic scheme, justifications, idealizations, which proceed either towards ideologization, *strictu sensu* in defense, or towards utopia in offence (to use Mannheim’s categories). Any study of the explanations (implicit even under the form of facts of organization) given by social conscience, of the contents of conscience in general, implies necessarily the study of their conscious and unconscious conditioning, and also the necessity of not misjudging them for what they often pretend to be: the result of a fully conscious autonomous activity, the faithful reflection of objective reality.

Any sociology that neglects these principles, in theory and/or in practice, may be qualified as non-Marxist and one is justified in qualifying as Marxist all those that place them in the foreground. Thus one could speak of a Copernican astronomy or an evolutionary biology so long as the fundamental discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin had not been recognized as universally valid. It is quite probable that resistance to a universal reco-

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gnition of Marx's discoveries will last much longer (perhaps always) because they have strong ideological motivations.

III. MARXIAN IDEOLOGY AS THE ORIGIN OF MARXIAN SOCIOLOGY

Marx was not only a mighty thinker, a discoverer of sociological and economic laws, he was the founder of an ideology and of an ideological movement guided by this ideology.

An ideology has the function of laying down the general rules for individual and collective action. Its starting point is a valorized conception of the world whose different elements are affected by different coefficients. It chooses one or more supreme values, wishing to make these triumph over certain subjects (or, if one prefers, certain objects) in which or for which these values will have to be carried into effect: the *ego* itself, the group which will be variously defined but which will often be the ethnic group or nation, man without any distinction of group, and finally God. Around these values and the objects or subjects of these values is formed or crystallized an ideology that still requires that choices be made if a certain consistency is to be maintained.

As has already been said, Marx starts from a preliminary ideological choice belonging to a certain tradition, that of the 18th century. The values for which he opted are Liberty, Equality and Fraternity for all men. It is this initial option that inspired his choice of field of study and that bears heavily on his scientific conclusions, making him loath to accept certain conclusions which seemed to him to be with difficulty reconcilable with these values or made him state problems that were too complex and which he did not find time or the desire to examine.

His option is not peculiar to him. His initial ideological problems are those of the whole European left at that time. The important question is to draw one's conclusions from the defeat or rather the ambiguous success of the French Revolution. The atmosphere was strongly reminiscent of that of the left-wing intelligentsia in Europe after de-Stalinisation. Should one accept defeat or pursue the dream of a society that is consistent with Reason and Justice and in this case, how and on what bases?

Marx is Voltairian by education, not drawn to nationalism

by family tradition, and ever since his school-days attracted by the human model of he who “serves mankind the best,” an “idealist,” as he often remarks in his letter to his father of 10 November, 1837,⁹ that is he rejects individualism. The object of his idealism will be man.

His taste for militancy (“your idea of happiness? strife,” he replies to his daughters in his “confession” of the 1860’s), his ambition (of the noble kind), the breadth of his views, draw him from an existential vocation to serve mankind as a man of learning, a professor, a person who is limited to accomplishing a modest task in a given place. They prevent him (as does his sense of realism) from placing too much trust in a slow road to the improvement of man, through education, moral teaching, technical progress, etc. These traits of his character are responsible for his joining the optimistic tradition that justifies its own political and social activism by an act of faith in the possibility of a radical improvement of society and, by this means and this means only, of man. He was to be confirmed in this option by the influence of French and English 18th century sensualistic materialism, according to which man is moulded by his condition and by circumstance.

It is the breadth of his views and his ambition that make him, though still a young man, try to intergrate his opinions and knowledge in a total system and in this way to justify them. Though attracted to Hegelian gnosis, which fascinated him all his life, he is repulsed by the Hegelian (or pseudo-Hegelian) tendency to reconcile reality and idea on the basis of an acceptance of what is real. From the very start, and not only after his theses on Feuerbach, he does not wish to accept philosophy except in so far as its “application” implies a transformation of the world.¹¹ At 19, his attempt to construct a metaphysical synthesis having led him “like a perfidious siren into the arms of the enemy,”¹² it served as a lesson. And although he was filled with enthusiasm for Feuerbach’s radical humanism as well as his

⁹ End of High School essay, MEGA, I 1/2, pp. 164-167.

¹⁰ *Die Frühschriften*, pp. 2, 6; see also for example *Kritik der Hegelschen Staatsphilosophie* cit., p. 93.

¹¹ Doctorate thesis in *Frühschriften*, p. 12.

¹² *Der Brief an den Vater* in *Frühschriften*, p. 8, cf. p. xv.

critique of Hegel, he was soon to discover in his anthropology another “perfidious siren.” What he needed was another body of doctrine with which to justify his optimistic militancy, laid down as a principle. If all philosophies lead away from this postulate, it is imperative, as he declares in his doctorate thesis, like Themistocles “to found a new Athens on a new element.”¹³ This is the focal point of his criticism of Bruno Bauer.

It is because of these ideological assumptions, which imply the necessity of a revolution, that he rejects at once the idea that the revolution has already been accomplished, and then looks for the basis, the solid ground from which to launch the true Revolution, botched by Robespierre and betrayed by Napoleon. The ethical exigences, which did not provoke the French Revolution but which drew people to support it, could not be put into effect because the democratic Republic did not lead to the transformation of human nature which Rousseau rightly demanded,¹⁴ or rather to its renewal, to its return to that primitive state in which social and individual man coincided perfectly. It merely gave him rights. Man’s detestable egoism, an egoism that must be overcome, is not defeated by the fact that equality has been obtained at State level, theoretically, in the form of conceded “rights,” and not at the practical level of civilian society. Political emancipation is not the emancipation of man.¹⁵ The three “Estates” have been abolished, but for all that the Revolution is not over, as Hegel and the bourgeois declare. Other differentiations, “at the very center of society,... within spheres in constant movement, whose principle is the arbitrary”¹⁶ founded on the criteria of money and education, evolve. The middle class emancipates society as a whole, but only in the hypothesis that society as a whole is in the same state as this class, that is, for example, that it possess or be able to acquire at leisure both money and culture. The Revolution is still to be accomplished.

Was the class war, which all bourgeois writers admitted as

¹³ Doctorate thesis in *Frühschriften*, p. 14.

¹⁴ *Zur Judenfrage*, in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 1, Berlin, Dietz, 1961, p. 370.

¹⁵ Cf. M. Rubel, *Karl Marx, essai de biographie intellectuelle*, Paris, Rivière, 1957, p. 84.

¹⁶ *Kritik der Hegelschen Staatsphilosophie*, in *Frühschriften*, p. 97.

the principle by which the past could be explained, still valid for the future? The war of classes with a statute, of the Estates (*Stände*), may well be over; but the victory of the Third Estate is not the victory of man. Man the egoist is still here, the rights of man are formal rights, "the State oppresses and the law cheats," the *Stände* give way to classes founded on money.

We know that at this stage Marx still hesitated over the option he should take. If the final Revolution has not yet been accomplished, how should it, on what bases and with whom? His sense of realism made him reject the idea of a revolution by means of theoretical criticism. His far-sightedness, his ethical exigencies and his militancy made him reject the idea that the revolution was already over. But the then current doctrines of the revolution "yet to be accomplished:" utopian communism and socialism, are incapable of attracting his theoretical intellect. In Paris he met the proletariat and its utopian theorists. His first-hand experience was reinforced by the experience and articles of Engels. He discovers the reality of the proletariat, of the fourth Estate, the only class, so he thought, capable of carrying through a revolution for integral man. He learns from Engels that political economy can provide him with a concrete, scientific analysis of this society and this class struggle. He criticizes the doctrines of social revolution without political action and the doctrines that find a sufficient objective in a political revolution with no social spirit. To change the State is not enough, private property and the State must be abolished.

It was on these bases, inspired by ideology, that Marx constructed his sociology, and from these that he was to launch into the study of economics. The emphasis given to the role of production and reproduction was inspired by the need he felt to reject the theories of revolution through purely theoretical activity, of a purely political revolution, which consider that the democratic bourgeois state satisfies all revolutionary requirements, which consider that ethical or religious exigencies must suffice to guide the revolution.

His insistence on the tendency of social groups to maximize their advantages has no other ideological source than a negative one. It is the absence of idealization in bourgeois society—therefore the idea from the very beginning that the French Revolution

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was not over—that led Marx to introduce, on a theoretical plane, that view of intra-social and inter-social struggles which lucid and realistic politicians had always put into practice. He merely abandons naivety (whether sincere or pretended)... at least so far as bourgeois society and the class societies that preceded it are concerned.

The ideological origin of these theses does not in any way imply that they are scientifically non-valid. An ideology can enlighten as well as blind. It is founded on a perception of reality through a prism. Under certain conditions the prism can transmit a relatively faithful image. Many scientific ideas have an ideological origin. It is only important that they be elaborated according to the requirements of scientific method, whatever their origin.

His initial ideological vision led Marx to valid generalizations of a scientific kind (that at least is my opinion) that should form the basis for any study of human society at a certain level. This does not mean that the way in which he formulates human society, often allusive and even implicit, couched in a language laden with philosophical rubbish, is always satisfactory. They still have to be elaborated and developed in detail.

IV. CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN MARXIAN SOCIOLOGY AND IDEOLOGY

Marxian ideology is not limited to the fertile role of founder. As it evolved and became more explicit, Marx was carried towards conclusions that were not guaranteed by his sociological principles and that even contradicted them. Having first enlightened Marx as to the basis for his scientific research, it also, and on several occasions, blinded him.

Marxian ideology is a “utopic” ideology in the Mannheim sense, that is it is orientated towards a future state; it is an active ideology, a combative ideology, one that calls upon men to work in order to bring about this future state. There are immanent laws in every ideology of this kind. They have hardly been studied at all. I propose now to try to discover some of these only on the basis of generalizations (summary ones I must admit) on historical experience.

One of these laws seems to be the maximum valorization, the

idealization of the subject, of the agent of the struggle and also of the objective of the struggle. This can be seen at work, even in the case of struggles with as limited an objective as national struggles.

The future victory of the proletariat is identified with the final redemption of mankind, with the return of Rousseau's primitive man, with Hegelian synthesis, with the birth of Feuerbach's generic man. It is indeed, to borrow a phrase from the *Internationale*, "the final struggle" (in this phrase, as in many others, popular ideology expresses explicitly and in a brutal and naïve way what theoreticians express implicitly, masked by the modesty of the scientist or the philosopher). Implicitly and unconsciously Marx shies away from the prospect of "driving Billancourt to despair" to use an illuminating expression of Sartre's, that is to dampen the ardour of the proletariat by a vision of its triumph in other terms than that of total victory without problems.

Another law of combative ideologies seems to be the devaluation of all struggles other than that in which one is engaged. Thus struggles between universal societies, between nations for instance, are rejected from the sphere of theorization, from the realm of what is essential and important. The same may be said of the struggles that are not waged around the ownership of the means of production, between owners and non-owners. This eliminates from the field of theorization the struggles between various categories of owners, the struggles between groups of owners, distinguished qualitatively and quantitatively. The same goes for struggles for political power not founded on social cleavage. The efficacy of the politician is disregarded. The opportunities for oppression and exploitation that are not linked to the ownership of the means of production are, to all intents and purposes, left on one side. Once again one would run the risk of "driving Billancourt to despair." Hence Marx's well-known hesitations over the "Asiatic means of production" and the role of bureaucracy as a class in this type of society. It is quite unnecessary to attribute, as Wittfogel does, these hesitations to intellectual dishonesty. The ascendancy of his ideology is a quite sufficient explanation.

But Marx was also a man of science. He knows the facts and

these are often blinding. The sociological laws that he revealed are ever present in his mind. Hence certain affirmations, analyses of situation, sometimes even rough sketches of theorization, that contradict his main theses, formulated under the influence of his ideology, but which however are faithful to his sociological premises. In his historical analyses he gives great importance to the struggles of nations. In Roman history he notes that the most important struggles were, during the Roman republic, between different strata of owners (patricians and plebeians), not between a class of owners and a class of non-owners.¹⁷ One might see in this the origin of the ambiguities in his conception of class, which he never defines. Furthermore, he admits, for a certain period and to a certain extent, the Asiatic mode of production, and tries to attenuate the implications of this conception by transforming, for example, the ancient Egyptian clergy into a caste of technocrats of agriculture, a species of "industrialists" à la Saint Simon (K. Papaioannou).¹⁸

Another law of combative ideologies is apparently the tendency to a Manichean vision of reality. The positive agent of the struggle, the proletariat, is idealized to the highest degree. This is all the easier for Marx because, from the beginning, he is dealing only with an *élite* of proletarians (and above all semi proletarians) who are impressed by his culture and the power of his theories and who follow him faithfully. The mass of proletarians is silent, those who oppose Marx and his ideas (such as Weitling, whom he had first admired) can easily be discounted as having been influenced by bourgeois ideology. Marx totally ignores, as far as the proletarian struggle is concerned, the different stages of organization and ideology. He is prevented from admitting their existence by his repugnance to the obvious implication: the possible contradiction between these stages and the basic proletarian aspirations, the possibility therefore of struggles within the proletariat and proletarian society, the possible infidelity (total or

¹⁷ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Briefwechsel*, II, Berlin, Dietz, 1949, No. 349, p. 105; *Correspondance K. Marx-F. Engels*, transl. J. Molitor, IV, Paris, Costes, 1932, No. 308, p. 110; cf. E. Ch. Welskopf, *Die Produktionsverhältnisse im Alten Orient und in der Griechisch-Römischen Antike, ein Diskussionsbeitrag*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1957, p. 197.

¹⁸ K. Papaioannou, "Marx et le despotisme" (taken from *Contrat social*, vol. 4, No. 1, Jan. 1960), p. 5.

partial) of the proletariat to the role that has been assigned to it. He violently contradicts Bakunin who foresees the possibility of a dictatorship over the proletariat in the name of the proletariat, and therefore admits the stage of organization (which he deduces from "human nature"). Marx retorts with the example of a worker's cooperative, rather weak for so far-sighted a mind.¹⁹ But he wishes to admit that social struggle leads directly and obviously, without internal problems, to a beneficent revolution. Hence the repugnance of Marx and Engels to the concept of an organized party, and their support for syndicalism, which must in no way be tied to any political party.²⁰ In this perhaps there is a personal factor, their dislike for being associated with all "the asses" (to use their own words) who might join the party. Doubtless, internal problems became inevitable towards the end of their lives with the appearance of Marxist and pseudo-Marxist parties, whose vitality gives rise to many difficulties for the two founders. But they in turn consider them to be minor problems connected to psychological factors: the lack of understanding of dull-witted disciples.

The opposition, in accordance with the principles of symmetry, is diabolized to the maximum. Marx certainly has a boundless admiration for the historical role of the middle class, in whose honour he occasionally entones real paens of praise. But, on the other hand, he denounces with virulent moral indignation the horrors of capitalistic exploitations. What is far more important is that this "diabolization" tends (could this be another law?) to become a mythicization as well. The struggle between middle class and proletariat before 1871 is not transformed into important confrontations of events, but is confined to a slow modification of the power ratio. In fact the external conditions of this struggle bring about certain political events beneath the aspects of a confrontation of several bourgeois or "feudal" States. The scene of class struggle was to be especially influenced by those political struggles. Marx and Engels were thus forced to take sides in these struggles. Russia was justly denounced as the

¹⁹ K. Marx, "Marginal notes on Bakunin's *Statism and Anarchy*" (in *Etudes de marxologie 2: Cahiers de l'I.S.E.A.*, No. 91, Oct. 1959, p. 107-117), p. 113.

²⁰ Cf. K. Papaioannou, "Classe et parti" (taken from *Contrat social*, vol. 7, No. 5).

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bastion, the principal reactionary power. But the main opponent was thoroughly discredited and painted in the most somber colors. An inclination for the most odious and most shady maneuvers are attributed to him. Russian operations tend to be considered as particularly “diabolical” and ahrimanic. The whole reactionary faction is supposed to be endowed with unity of purpose and direction. Hence the fascination Marx and Engels felt for the “monomaniac” ideas of David Urquhart, a fanatical turcophile and russophobe, their friendship for him and their collaboration with his newspapers. Marx believed in the profound truth of his theses and of Palmerston’s allegiance to Russia. In his russophobia, which tended to become generalized, he followed a very “anti-Marxist” train of thought of the old-fashioned politics of international relations (W. Blumenberg).²¹ What is more, following a mode of ideological thought that was to be resumed on a far larger scale by his remote Russian disciples, he projected into the past that constellation he thought he could observe in the present. The connivance of London and Saint Petersburg went back at least to Peter the Great. History—short-term history at least—tends to become the scene of conspiracies, occult machinations hatched out without the knowledge of the masses. On one side the suppression of political instancy when it is a question of the positive agent, the proletariat, on the other its excessive valorization in the case of the enemy.

On the same ideological lines, all the objective factors that are supposed to help towards the victory of the proletariat are maximized. It is this tendency, more than any other, that directs the analyses of *Das Kapital* on the dynamic of the capitalist system. Despite his precaution and his scientific scruples, which he expresses in numerous prudent reservations, Marx is led to see his analysis open out into eschatological perspectives, and to minimize the factors that could contradict these perspectives, etc.

Lastly his efforts at theorization avoid those spheres that do not seem pertinent to the struggle which, once taken into consideration, could lead to the struggle being questioned or even limited or made subject to conditions. Hence, in terms of philosophy, general problems such as epistemology and ethics are

²¹ W. Blumenberg, *K. Marx in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*, Reinbeck bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1962, p. 122.

left on one side. They are supposed to be easily *settled*. L. Althusser goes so far as to dismiss them as non-problematical. For example, the implicit ethical foundation of Marxian thought that must not be put into question again leads to a radical devalorization of the analysis of the problem. Marx and Engels are exasperated when the ultimate values of human action are conjured up. They do not wish them to be followed in the cause of justice, but simply in the cause of the proletariat, leaving unsaid that one must adhere to the cause of the proletariat because its triumph represents the triumph of Justice. Wherefore this exasperation and this determination to escape obvious implications? On one hand to serve the proletariat out of fidelity to the cause of justice would allow one to think that justice were not always and in every case on the side of the proletariat, and that, should this befall, it would be necessary to repudiate the proletariat in the name of Justice. But above all this option could give rise (and has in fact done so) to the incompetent digressions of dreamers, demagogues, scatter-brains, etc., who would unconsciously reason on the basis of suspect ideological conceptions, and constantly fall into facile chatter that would throw new doubt upon the initial options. It was important from a very practical point of view—and all militantism is just as much proof of this today—to make the initial basis of the movement invulnerable so as to avoid being accused of ineffectualness. Hence their refusal to start a moral discussion that could question their choice of the proletarian agent posed as a principle.

Numerous contradictions exist therefore between Marxian ideology on one hand and not only Marx's sociological principles, but also some of his general ideas. From the point of view of the validity and the pertinence of the former and the latter, it is quite legitimate to separate these from the Marxian system as a whole and to consider them one at a time, attributing different coefficients to each. However, their integration into a total system is also in accordance with a certain facet of reality. Not only are they linked logically in relation to the unity of Marx's thought, dominated by his whole personality and the numerous factors that went to make it up, but as a whole they only achieved such success and received such support because this was the best possible answer to the needs of that time (though this

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is in no way a guarantee of the scientific validity of all the elements that make it up, which are open to an assessment at this level). For this very reason the system inspired such a powerful ideological movement and partially inspires other scattered movements, including certain movements with a nationalist ideology, despite Marx's repugnance for this kind of ideology.

If "Marxism" has had such success it is because Marx lent sociological and philosophical dignity to any militant ideology of an active humanistic kind. He gave a theoretical form to the militant enthusiasm that in many people in European society was inspired by the social and economic and political conditions together with those existential factors that have always nudged groups towards choices of this kind. He directed the ideology which he supplied to them towards a certain kind of struggle, a social struggle, and at the same time he armed them with an economic doctrine with a scientific basis, endowed with all the prestige of present-day science. "Marxism" is a theorization of active optimism severed from any reference to the supernatural, as well as a theorization of the social struggle in capitalist society as the supremely important object of this active optimism.

The coincidence of judgements of value and judgements of reality is a constant of all the ideological movements based on an active optimism whether religious or atheistic, universal or ethno-national. The militant members of all these movements could always have adhered to the proclamation the Marxist chant, the *Varsoviennne*, addresse to the proletariat: "Your cause is just and your inspiration powerful," with only one addition on behalf of the religious movements: your inspiration is powerful because it is helped and inspired by God.

All active utopic ideologies devalorize, as Marx has done (despite some very important observations within the body of his sociological principles and even his ideas on economics), the problems of stability and of the social order in favour of problems of revolution and the dynamic of revolutions.

It is easy to understand the fascination of "Marxism" even for those who reject the idea of the prime importance of the social struggle. The theorized active irreligious optimism provides them with an ideological model. Out of fidelity to this model they may try to assimilate those national objectives they pursue

to the social ones that Marxism holds to be of prime importance. But this is not indispensable. On the other hand, those who belong to a religious ideology but who are also fascinated by an optimistic militancy, on the level of terrestrial struggles, can easily adopt a large part of Marxian and Marxist ideology by simply redirecting the objective of this ideology towards divine will.

V. FROM MARXIAN IDEOLOGY TO IDEOLOGICAL MARXIST SOCIOLOGIES

Marx not only intended to broadcast his ideology (which integrated sociological elements of a scientific kind), but he also intended to arm the proletariat with it so that it could better fulfill its role as the transformer of the world. As we know, he belonged to certain organizations that were destined to serve as guides to the proletariat but whose necessity was not always obvious to him.²² Instead his immediate disciples felt the vital necessity of these organizations, which were to canalize the revolutionary activity of the proletariat into channels that conformed with the exigencies of the ideology. They therefore took over this ideology for what I suggested might be called an ideological movement with a temporal socio-political program and with totalitarian ambitions. I feel it is necessary here to reproduce my definition of the characteristics of movements of the type as I understand them:²³

1) An ideology (in the broad sense of the term) of the "utopic" kind (in a Mannheimian sense) to which the members of the movement adhere explicitly; it offers the solution to a certain number of fundamental questions on the place and role of man in the world, on the nature of the world and of society; these "ideological principles" are fundamental to prescribed or recommended rules of conduct for individual man in private and public life; they are not "pure" (as indeed they may be), but

²² Cf. K. Papaioannou, "Classe et parti," *art. cit.*

²³ M. Rodinson, "Problématique de l'étude des rapports entre Islam et Communisme" (in *Colloque sur la sociologie musulmane, Actes*, 11-14 Sept. 1961, Bruxelles, Centre pour l'étude des problèmes du monde musulman contemporain, 1962; *Correspondance d'Orient*, No. 5, pp. 119-149), p. 126 f.

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are cherished as part of a dynamic system in which some non-intellectual elements are equally involved; in other respects this ideology tends to be totalitarian, that is it has a tendency to extend its rules of conduct and its judgements to all domains of social and private life; it often finds expression in a body of texts of reference (made public or not according to the case) of a scared or quasi sacred nature; it totally or partially transforms its "utopic" aspect into an "ideological" aspect (in the Mannheimian sense) should the movement triumph;

2) A temporal program conceived as aiming at the practical application of ideological principles by laying down imperatively, over as wide a territory as possible, rules of social conduct as recommended or required by these principles, and therefore by setting up a State controlled by the movement; it therefore possesses the strategy and tactics to attain this objective and, once attained, to defend, stabilize and if necessary to extend the State in question, to struggle within the State against forces hostile to the movement and to apply in the most thorough way possible all the principles in question;

3) A structured organization that usually comprizes a headquarters (often with only a charismatic leader), a hierarchical stratum of civil servants and a stratum of ideologists;

4) Practices, rites and symbols with which to proclaim adherence to the movement and to manifest the unity of the movement.

From a certain period onwards, the establishment of a movement of this kind (with variants that may be important) seems to be the necessary condition for the enrollment of gigantic masses to achieve a "utopic" transformation of certain social, political and ideological conditions. That social basis provided by dissatisfied revengeful masses is therefore needed. The protest of these masses may come about on the social plane (this partially occurred in the case of the first centuries of Christianity and indubitably in the case of Communism) or on a national plane (in the case of Islam at the moment of the conquests during the Ist century of the Hegira). It is therefore easy to see that the definition of this type of movement does not contradict the fundamental Marxist theses that to me seem to be the durable acquisitions of sociology. Indeed the fundamental core of these

theses seems, to me, to condense what has just been said, to be the primacy in history of the struggle between social strata and between ethnic groups for the maximum control of people and riches. I would merely suggest that the success of these struggles in certain cases is dependent on the constitution of a movement of the kind defined above. These are successful only in so far as they attract an important clientele from the masses, filled with conviction and determination, and this they cannot do unless they respond to the aspirations and demands of these masses, whether social "classes" or ethnic groups, by translating them into their program and into their principles.

The ideology of the Marxist ideological movement had been supplied from the start and was, in time, to be enriched. The temporal program had also been specified in general terms: the setting up of a socialist economic regime with a collectivization of the means of production. Strategy and tactics had only been described in terms of rather vague principles. The organization, practices, rites and symbols were to be created under the influence of the social laws that govern this kind of movement when the foundations have been laid and when the movement corresponds to the vital aspirations of vast social strata.

I do not wish here to study the development of Marxist ideology. I shall merely consider how its incarnation in an ideological movement could lead Marxists to a more thorough study, or a perversion, of the sociological laws and data laid down by Marx.

Two stages neglected by Marx in his study of the social dynamic of the proletarian movement were discovered in practice under pressure from the exigencies for action. I refer to the stage of organization and that of ideology. But at the same time, the requirements of the ideology enforced a total or partial negation of its efficacy and tended to a maximum reduction of its autonomy.

The stage of organization in the proletarian movement had been acknowledged, albeit with reticence, by Marx and Engels. But in practice it was to be forced into the foreground by the social-democratic parties, and in particular by German social-democracy. At the same time it would have been a sacrilegious affirmation, and would have hit at the mobilizing influence of

the movement, to admit any infidelity whatsoever in the way in which the organization interpreted the spontaneous proletarian aspirations. Some were certainly conscious of this. But they desisted from saying so and above all from theorizing it. The democratic structure of the Party was considered a guarantee of the fidelity of the interpretation.

It is well known that Lenin, instead, gave great importance to the theory of the party. He was egged on by the state of things in Russia, and by his great sense of realism, such as is found in many political organizers and which S. Schram, talking of Mao Tse-tung, calls "natural Leninism." The relative inability of the Russian masses to translate their aspirations into an action that he considered effective and even into an adherence to an ideology he considered just, made him distinguish between the apparent, confused aspirations of the proletariat in general and the interpretation of these aspirations by an *élite* of political activists, intellectuals in fact, an interpretation that was supposed to bring out the latent implications in the confused aspirations. This interpretation could only be accomplished by minds initiated by Marxist scientific theory to an understanding of the "real" ways in which these aspirations should be achieved.

This theory of the party could have been a sociological discovery. But, in the case of Lenin and the Leninists, their ideology prevented it from becoming one. The party was recognized as indispensable, but the interpretation it gave to the aspirations of the masses was the only valid one. Thanks to Marxist science this interpretation was faithful. Without its being stated explicitly, the fidelity of this interpretation by the Marxist *élite* was supposed to sweep along the great mass of the party, who vaguely recognized in it its own latent tendencies, and this process was supposed to operate a second time between the Party as a whole and the working classes. The organizational technique of democratic centralism was supposed to be a guarantee against the uncontrolled enthusiasm of the mass of adherents to the Party whose spontaneity could sometimes contradict or betray the "correct" interpretation of its own aspirations with ideas and above all with precipitous action. In short, on entering the Party, they undertook to admit that only the ruling *élite* (not strictly rigid) possessed the key to this correct interpretation. As for

the errors in interpretation by the proletarian masses outside the Party, these would be cured by the practical realization of the happy effects of the right line. Lenin was prepared to exercise great patience towards wasted time and energy caused by the errors of the proletariat in relation to its "real" interests, and even towards those caused by the far more dramatic errors that were to be expected from the non-proletarian masses in alliance with the proletariat. The brutal pessimistic realism of Stalin, and from the very beginning of many other *apparatchiki*, led them more and more to force the proletariat and the masses to adhere to the right line in their own interest. Not only would time and energy be wasted while waiting for them to be convinced of the rightness of this line, but propitious strategic opportunities could be lost forever, and the Party could be led irrevocably in a disastrous direction. The dilemma they had to face was in fact in no way peculiar to the Communist movement. All those who had ever wished to work for the good of the people or of a people had had to face it, as for example the French Jacobins.

For ideological reasons of necessity the adherence of the masses to the right line was treated as a fact, thus, it was thought, they were merely anticipating events, for Marx had declared, as early as 1843, that the world was to be shown why in fact it had to struggle, and that conscience was something it had to acquire even if it did not wish to do so.²⁴ Any difference of opinion, considered in any case to be transitory, was denied so as not to give the enemy an advantage by revealing the strength of internal discord, and not to discourage other contingents of the same army. Strategy called for an ideological distortion of reality.

However the rifts that followed the proclamation of Leninist theory by the most advanced section of the Party, made each tendency relatively lucid towards the others. Rosa Luxembour and Trotsky for example could foresee quite clearly, within the Leninist party, the danger of a disagreement between the interests and aspirations of the governing *élite* and those of the masses, both within and without the proletariat, that would lead to a

²⁴ K. Marx, letter to Ruge, Sept. 1843, in *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von K. Marx u. Fr. Engels*, hrsgb. v. Fr. Mehring, I, Berlin u. Stuttgart, Dietz, 1923, p. 382.

dictatorship by the former over the proletariat and the nation. But they did not understand (as Trotsky was to understand later) that this was the other facet of a desperate and voluntaristic lucidity, that since their conception of a democratic Party interpreted by its own merit the supposedly just aspirations of the masses that were included and swept along in its ranks, it created the economy of an instance whose very efficacy was inevitable. At the same time Lenin was led by the events of 1914 to denounce, among other things, the social-democratic Parties as the betrayers of the "real" interests of the workers. Though prevented from carrying further his analysis of his ideological confidence in the virtues of the proletariat, he explained this betrayal as fidelity to the aspirations and interests of only one of its strata, the working-class aristocracy. This could have been the starting point for a fruitful sociological analysis of the various strata of workers and the theoretical, ideological and strategic transposition of their interests and aspirations. But once again the strategic and ideological experiences of action prevent this analysis from being pursued any further. It might have toppled the sacred image of the working class as a whole and shown that the discord was not a question of retarded conscience or the effect of a rift between a thin stratum and a large mass in which the mass would finally and inevitably carry the day, but an impassable chasm. It might have led to a dilemma between the party of the *élite* that sweeps the masses along with it, in spite of themselves, towards an issue they did not desire, and the capitulation of the party faced with the wishes of the masses, who are reluctant to follow the fundamental ideology of the movement. If it is wrong to drive Billancourt to despair, it is also wrong to reveal that Billancourt's hopes are detestable in the light of accepted criteria. It is a short step from the concealment of the real situation for strategic reasons and a volutary, ever more sincere, blindness to the real situation. Only cynicism could help to avoid this. But cynicism itself is partially blind.

The stage of organization happens when the Party is in opposition and, after victory, at State level (which tends to be identified with the Party). Mao Tse-tung has been led by the circumstances of the struggle of the Chinese Communist Party, influenced perhaps by a pan-dialectic conception of reality that

proceeds as much from the old Chinese theory of *yin* and *yang* as from Hegelian gnosis, and by his determination to possess autonomy and power, to discover the relatively autonomous efficacy of the bureaucracy of State and Party, as much in the Soviet Union as in China itself. He has understood (and says so clearly, which is much more original) that the aspirations and interests of bureaucracy can contradict those of the people, that State and Party interpret these sectarian interests and aspirations by ideologizing them as belonging to the whole nation. This is certainly what Trotsky had already understood and declared. Once again this is another starting point for fruitful sociological analysis. But here again it is pulled up short by ideology. Mao cannot say out loud (even though he may think so, and this not at all certain) that the orientation of the Soviet State and Party can interpret not only the interests and aspirations of Soviet bureaucracy, but to a certain extent those of the Soviet Union. Obviously he cannot imagine a State without a bureaucracy nor can he admit that bureaucracy will always tend to maximize its advantages in accordance with Marx's sociological vision and contrary to his ideology. He avoids the issue first, before having defined the exact limits of the scope of contradictions within the socialist State, by advancing the thesis that these contradictions will remain non-antagonistic and will not lead to armed strife; but this is no more than a pious wish and he supports it with no demonstrations. Later on, with that indomitable optimism that keeps him from adopting Stalin's solution of cynicism and Machiavellism, he plans apparently to combat the pernicious influence of the bureaucracy of Party and State by allowing free expression, be it violent (here he implicitly abandons the thesis of non-antagonism, a notable step forward), to the aspirations of non-bureaucratic strata: this is the cultural revolution. His final vision is in conformity with the sociology, but not with the ideology, of Marx that refers to a continuation of internal strife within socialist society. However he cannot (any more than Trotsky) abandon the vision of a reconciled society in which "good" bureaucrats, small in number and in power, would faithfully interpret the aspirations and interests of a people that is supposed to be lucid. Ideology, together with an intense desire not to drive the Chinese Billancourt to despair, prevented him from admitting

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an indefinite perpetuation of the tendencies to exploit and oppress, and of the internal strife against these tendencies. The ideological solution is bound to be naïve, to accept a form of moralism that Marx had denounced pitilessly in the case of bourgeois society, the end product of the French Revolution. It is now a question of fighting bad bureaucrats and creating good ones, just as the “good” bourgeois were to replace the bad deputies by representatives of the people who were honest and loyal and concerned above all else with the general interest.

Mao Tse-tung has also discovered, within the Marxist movement, the importance of struggles between nations. But once again his ideology prevents him from demythifying the peoples of the world, with their contradictory aspirations, to maximize those advantages they each enjoy. The internal economic form of government encourages capitalist nations to want to dominate and exploit the others. Everything is reducible to this. Conflicts between nations dominated and exploited by the imperialists are the effects of the maneuvers of imperialism. Conflicts between socialist nations are due to the pernicious influence of a revisionist bureaucracy that perverts the aspirations of the people. He cannot abandon—any more than Engels or Lenin, who were often clear-sighted on the clashes of national interest that might follow the Revolution, but who were inclined to limit these to a period of transition—a utopic vision of the world at peace on a world-wide scale because of the beneficent effect of the socialist economic structures adopted by all nations.

It is clear how ideology has prevented the general extension of the principles of Marxist sociology to a study of the mechanism of organization and ideology (the former being roughly parallel to the latter, which is why I have alluded to them only occasionally) in the Marxist Party of opposition and in the socialist State. One might develop these reflections indefinitely; the scientific study on which they depend is still in its infancy. I would like to conclude by discussing another aspect of these effects of ideology on Marxist thought that hinders the possibility and the pertinence of an eventual sociological analysis.

Every struggle must take careful note of the tricks and steps of the enemy. Every combative ideology must warn its partizans

against these steps and tricks. It must become more simplified and schematic to make this vigilance easier and its denunciations more accessible. It is also possible that the militant spirit of the man engaged in the struggle should spontaneously think of the enemy in simplified terms and see underhand actions and tricks of the enemy everywhere because this is what he fears. In scholastic terms, the passage from potential to action is supposed to be always on the point of happening and is supposed often to have happened. Under every pernicious action a pernicious intention is unearthed as its cause. *Is fecit cui prodest*. Hence a tendency to transform the enemy into schema and myth, a tendency to remove from the field of vision those phenomena that are not involved in the struggle, either by omitting them or by reducing them to combative phenomena. No phenomenon or event is uninvolved in the struggle. Under each individual catastrophe the multiform diabolical activities of the enemy are perceived. This is an analogous process on the social plane to that which happens in the various more or less paranoid deliriums in the case of the psychology of the individual.

The process of introducing myth and schema is made easier by several sociological factors inherent to the dynamic of ideological movement, at least in many cases. One notes a dull but constant pressure from the mass of adherents for formulations that are simple, clear, schematic, with a strong ethical valorization of the aims and objectives of the movement, both short term and long term. They demand catechisms, or rather handbooks, and, from time to time, infallible rules of conduct. The organizers and strategists are forced in the same direction by the exigencies of action, unless they make a far more subtle analysis on the tactical level, but without wishing at all, for obvious reasons, that the results of this analysis be broadcast. There is therefore a tendency for the mass to form an objective alliance with the stratum of organizers and responsible politicians against the intellectuals who would like to make a more thorough analysis, no longer conjectural but theoretical, and this is all the more true since the lengthy processes of rational research are ill-suited to quick mobilizing ideologizations. In the same way churches have been known to form an alliance against the theologians with the help of popular piety and the strategic and

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practical prudence of the organizers,²⁵ careful not to demobilize the masses. This alliance has the support of a third ally, part of those theoreticians and intellectuals, the treacherous element of the clerks. These are also militant and loyal supporters and often have a tendency to accuse themselves of not sharing the pure and flawless faith of the non-intellectual militant element, and of looking for problems where there are none or where they are not pertinent, thus exposing themselves to the infinite snares of Satan or the class enemy. The stratum of organizers can easily denounce them to the people as tending to be detached from their elementary aspirations and accusing them of being responsible for those tensions that exist between these aspirations and the governing body itself. This whole range of tensions, competitions and veiled struggles that often reaches an antagonistic stage and is a potential field for fascinating sociological research, thus escapes the attention of those who are perhaps best equipped, potentially, to study it. The enemy on the other hand tends to minimize these tensions and to consider the whole movement as a diabolical whole, naturally smitten by congenital distortions of judgement that may be explained by its propensity to pernicious maneuvers.

The movement itself is thus forced to admit that it escapes ordinary sociological laws. To anyone who asks where is the truth, the answer is, in the words of Jesus of Nazareth: I am the Truth and the Life. Any insinuation that the laws that may be observed elsewhere could be applicable to the movement is answered with anger.

These processes may be easily seen in action not only in the Marxist movement but in the pseudo-Marxist movements of the present Third World as well. Here imperialism is cloaked in myth to a degree never equalled before. Yet there is a basis of very real fact. The tendency of a developed economy to turn to account its own superiority over less developed economies is unquestionable. Links certainly exist between the economic pressure groups and the political power. But an exact sociological and economic analysis of the ways and means by which the pressure groups in question tend to maximize their own advantages, the way in

²⁵ Cf. M. Rodinson, "Richard Simon et la dédogmatisation," *Les Temps modernes*, No. 202, March 1963, pp. 1700-1709.

which they influence the political power and the way in which the latter reacts, is implicitly or explicitly rejected with impatience. The process of mythicization has now reduced all forms of imperialism to only one, that of the United States, and any activity of American economic pressure groups, in fact all forms of American pressure, whether economic or political, on other countries, to direct orders that are obeyed automatically. This leads to a mythical picture of "imperialism," a diabolical monster, with its unique brain situated somewhere between Wall Street and the Pentagon, and with numerous tentacles of which not one shows any sign of having a will of its own. The credibility of this picture is adopted wholeheartedly by the more disengaged elements of the *real* struggle that is going on in the Third World: the European intellectuals and the European masses. In the end this myth makes them sceptical about the *real* facts contained in it. But this drawback seems less important compared to the mobilizing force of the picture in question with the great mass of the Third World and with those elements most willing to fight on their side, the thin stratum of revolutionaries of the capitalist world, disappointed by the inferior emotional value of the causes that are set before them in their own societies. Once again ideology opposes any effort at pursuing a sociological analysis for which the principles of Marxist sociology would provide a fruitful starting point.

VI. THE VALIDITY AND COHERENCE OF "MARXISM"

I have attempted above all to show that Marxist ideology has to a large extent hindered the possible advances in a more penetrating Marxist sociology.

This does not mean that the development of such a sociology is not possible. Marx has advanced some important generalizations which, as I have said, have been accepted outside "Marxism" by numerous groups of researchers in all branches of human science. If however the fecundity of these generalizations has been prevented from bearing all its fruits within the Marxist ideological movement, it has also been hindered without the movement by implicit ideologies, grouped summarily together under the name of bourgeois, that also at various levels, secrete an increasing

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supply of orientations pernicious to a fruitful pursuit of research. That is why it can still be useful to announce that one is a Marxist in sociology.

On the other hand, the fundamental values that form the basis of Marxist ideology can be adopted (and are so) by many individuals and groups who accept or do not accept the theses of Marxist sociology. These theses, as is true of any element of a scientific vision of reality, are only capable of shedding light on the efforts of these individuals and groups to incorporate these values into reality. The development of Marxist sociology has been hindered not so much by the adherence to these values in itself, as in that they are based on the creed of an ideological movement in the sense I have already defined. They are also sociological laws inherent to the action of any ideological movement whatsoever. This can easily be seen in the Third World, in which the progress of sociological thought has been slowed down by the dynamic of ideological movements that have only partially adopted Marxist values and Marxist sociological principles.

In other words it is always possible and valid to adopt both the main theses of Marxist sociology and to remain faithful to the fundamental values of Marxist ideology. I will merely make one remark about Marxist philosophy, which I consider may be dissociated from these two points of view. The term "Marxist philosophy" is however unsuitable. Under this ambiguous term are grouped both Marxian opinions on philosophical matters, and the totalitarian neo-Marxist systems (and most important the Soviet *diamat*) that intergrate, more or less well, Marxist sociological theses, the foundations of Marxist ideology and other elements in ambitious syntheses. It seems to me that in fact these theses and these fundamental values may be suited to very different philosophies, provided the latter allow them a minimum field of validity.

One is left with a fundamental contradiction. The effort to put into practice the values of Marxist ideology cannot be considered effective—by virtue of the theses of Marxist sociology—except when integrated in an ideological movement. However all ideological movements entail consequences of the kind whose pernicious effects on the development of Marxist sociology I have

tried to demonstrate. Is it possible to avoid this danger? Not completely. But perhaps it is possible to conceive of a series of efforts at making it adequate that tend, in an asymptotical way, to reduce the differences between the aspirations of the masses to which the ideology gave great importance, their interpretation by the organizers and the ideologies of the Marxist movement or movements, and at last, the supreme values of the ideology which organizations and militant ideologies always betray, to a greater or lesser degree. One should however—by virtue of the Marxist sociological theses themselves—abandon the idea that this process of adequation will come about automatically, under the unique pressure of a fidelity to the values, or by virtue of the thrust of the aspirations of the masses. The relative, though real, autonomy of these organizations and of ideologies will always make this process difficult, painful, and doubtless violent as well.

Marxism is the only universal humanistic ideological movement that we know, under the most varied forms, it is true. Religious ideological movements have the same problems.²⁶ The Catholic Church has also had to recognize the chasm that has split on one hand the fundamental values that it had hoped to serve, the bases of theology founded on these, of the modified situation of the masses whom it addresses and, on the other hand, the ideology shaped partly by the dynamic of the movement the Church embodies. The Church has had to resort—very late and under the pressure of a landslide that was becoming catastrophic—to an *aggiornamento* which alone was capable of saving its essential values and of remoulding its organization and ideology according to a view that took into account the modifications of the human foundations on which it rested.

While waiting for the necessary *aggiornamenti* of the Marxist movement, the clear-sighted intellectual, the sociologist who remains faithful to the ultimate values of this movement and who wants to go on using the scientific data which he has integrated into it and to develop them further, cannot but denounce the betrayals that have been committed against these values,

²⁶ I dealt with this subject, with reference to Islam, in my books *Mahomet*, Paris, Club français du livre, 1961; 2nd edition, Paris, Seuil, 1968, and *Islam et Capitalisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1966.

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principally by this very movement. He must stand firm under the weight of accusations of treason that will be hurled at him. He will answer with an adaptation of the immortal words of Epicurus, quoted by Marx in the preface to his doctorate thesis. The ungodly man is not he who refuses to worship the idols of the movement, but he who holds the idolotrous conception that the movement has created of its gods.