

Toward Class Consciousness Next Time: Marx and the Working Class

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I.

Why haven't the workers in the advanced capitalist countries become class-conscious? Marx was wont to blame leadership, short memories, temporary bursts of prosperity, and, in the case of the English and German workers, national characteristics.¹ In the last fifteen years of his life he often singled out the enmity between English and Irish workers as the chief hindrance to a revolutionary class consciousness developing in the country that was most ripe for it.² The success of this explanation can be judged from the fact that it was never given the same prominence by any of Marx's followers. Engels, too, remained unsatisfied. After Marx's death, he generally accounted for the disappointing performance of the working class, particularly in England, by claiming that they had been bought off with a share of their country's colonial spoils.³ The same reasoning is found in Lenin's theory of imperialism, and in this form it still aids countless Marxists in understanding why the revolution Marx predicted never came to pass in the advanced capitalist countries.

Despite these varied explanations (or, perhaps, because of them), most socialists from Marx onward have approached each crisis in capitalism with the certainty that this time the proletariat will become class-conscious. A half-dozen major crises have come and gone, and the proletariat at least in the United States, England, and Germany are as far away from such a consciousness as ever. What has gone "wrong"? Until socialists begin to examine the failure of the proletariat to perform its historically appointed task in light of their own excessive optimism, there is little reason to believe that on this matter at least the future will cease to resemble the past. It is the purpose of this essay to effect such an examination.

II.

"Men make their own history," Marx said, "but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."⁴ In his writings, Marx was primarily concerned with the circumstances of social and economic life under capitalism, with how they developed and are developing. His followers have likewise stressed social and economic processes. As is apparent from the above quotation, however, the necessary conditions for a proletarian revolution were never mistaken for sufficient conditions: real, living human beings had to react to their oppressive circumstances in ways that would bring needed change. The theoretical link in Marxism between determining conditions and determined response is the class consciousness of the actors.

The mediating role of consciousness is sometimes hidden behind such statements as: "The question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment considers its aim. The question is what the proletariat is, and what, consequent on that being, it

will be compelled to do.⁵ But compelled by what? Marx responds by "what the proletariat is." However, what the proletariat is is a class of people whose conditions of life, whose experiences at work and elsewhere, whose common struggles and discussions will sooner or later bring them to a consciousness of their state and of what must be done to transform it.⁶ Though industrial wage earners are in the forefront of Marx's mind when he speaks of proletariat, most of what he says holds for all wage earners, and he generally intends the designations "proletariat" and "working class" to apply to them as well.

Class consciousness is essentially the interests of a class becoming its recognized goals. These interests, for those who accept Marx's analysis, are objective; they accrue to a class because of its real situation and can be found there by all who seriously look. Rather than indicating simply what people want, "interest" refers to those generalized means which increase their ability to get what they want, and includes such things as money, power, ease, and structural reform or its absence. Whether they know it or not, the higher wages, improved working conditions, job security, inexpensive consumer goods, etc., that most workers say they want are only to be had through such mediation. Moreover, the reference is not only to the present, but to what people will come to want under other and better conditions. Hence, the aptness of C. Wright Mill's description of Marxian interests as "long run, general, and rational interests."⁷ The most long run, general, and rational interest of the working class lies in overturning the exploitative relations which keep them, individually and collectively, from getting what they want.

Becoming class-conscious in this sense is obviously based on the recognition of belonging to a group which has similar grievances and aspirations, and a correct appreciation of the group's relevant life conditions. For workers this involves divesting themselves of many current delusions-the list is as long as the program of the Democratic party-and acquiring a class analysis of capitalism akin to Marx's own. Such class consciousness also includes an *esprit de corps* that binds members of the class together in opposition to the common enemy.

As a social relation, class consciousness can also be seen to include the social and economic conditions in which recognition of class interests occurs (or can occur). Consequently, any large-scale exposition of this theory would have to involve an analysis of the major developments in capitalism-ranging from the factory floor to the world market-from Marx's time to our own. In providing the beginnings of such an analysis, Marxist writers have tended to underplay the psychological dimensions of the problem. Rather than denying their important contribution, my own focus on the individual worker is best seen as an attempt to redress the imbalance.

Finally, the step from being class-conscious to engaging in action aimed at attaining class interests is an automatic one; the latter is already contained in the former as its practical side. It makes no sense in Marx's schema to speak of a class-conscious proletariat which is not engaged in the activity of overturning capitalism. Workers bursting with revolt stage revolts, or at least prepare for them by participating in the work of a revolutionary party or movement. The revolution takes place when "enough" workers have become class-conscious, and, given the place and number of the proletariat in modern society, its success is assured. The essential step, therefore, is the first one. If class consciousness is to play the role Marx gave it of mediating between determining conditions and determined response it must be taken in a broad enough sense to include this action component.

Another approach to class consciousness is offered by Lukacs who defines it as "the sense become conscious of the historical situation of the class."⁸ By conceptualizing consciousness as a part of a class's objective conditions and interests, Lukacs can treat theoretically what is only

possible as if it were actual. However, if workers always possess class consciousness because they are members of a class to which such consciousness attaches, then we are not talking about real workers or, alternatively, "consciousness" applies to something other than that of which real workers are conscious. In any case, if all workers are class-conscious, in any sense of this term, we can no longer distinguish between those who are and those who are not, so that nothing concrete in the way of revolutionary activity follows from being class-conscious. Lukacs only succeeds in avoiding our problem by begging the question.

A similar misconception, and one widespread in Marxist circles, has "class consciousness" referring to the workers' general resentment and feeling of being systematically cheated by the boss, where any aggressive action from complaining to industrial sabotage is viewed as evidence. Here, too, all workers are seen to be more or less class-conscious, and, as with Lukacs, such consciousness leads nowhere in particular. Though obviously components of class consciousness, resenting the boss and the insight that he is taking unfair advantage are not by themselves sufficiently important to justify the use of this concept.

Nor is "class consciousness" a synonym for "trade union consciousness" as Lenin seems to suggest in *What Is To Be Done*, where he ties together the "awakening of class consciousness" and the "beginning of trade union struggle."⁹ Despite this suggestion, an important distinction is made in this work between "trade union consciousness," or recognition of the need for unions and for struggle over union demands, and "socialist (or Social Democratic) consciousness," which is an awareness on the part of workers of the "irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system."¹⁰ Class consciousness, as I have explained it, has more in common with Lenin's notion of socialist consciousness, and Lenin, on one occasion, even speaks of "genuine class consciousness" with this advanced state of understanding in mind.¹¹

III.

For Marx, life itself is the hard school in which the workers learn to be class-conscious, and he clearly believes they possess the qualities requisite to learning this lesson.¹² In so far as people share the same circumstances, work in identical factories, live in similar neighborhoods, etc., they are inclined to see things-the most important ones at least-in the same way. They cannot know more than what their life presents them with nor differently from what their life permits. However, the less obvious aspects of their situation, such as their own objective interests, often take some time before they are grasped. What insures eventual success is the ability Marx attributes to people to figure out, in the long run, what is good for them, given their particular circumstances. For Marx, no matter how dehumanizing his conditions, an individual is capable of seeing where his fundamental interests lie, of comprehending and agreeing to arguments which purport to defend these interests, and of coming to the conclusions dictated by them. It is such an ability that Thorstein Veblen labels the "calculus of advantage"¹³

Rather than the proletariat's conditions serving as a barrier to such rational thinking, Marx believes the reverse is the case. The very extremity of their situation, the very extent of their suffering and deprivation, makes the task of calculating advantages relatively an easy one. As part of this, the one-sided struggle of the working class-according to Engels, "the defeats even more than the victories"-further exposes the true nature of the system.¹⁴ The reality to be understood stands out in harsh relief, rendering errors of judgment increasingly difficult to make.

The workers' much discussed alienation simply does not extend to their ability to calculate

advantages, or, when it does-as in the matter of reification-it is regarded as a passing and essentially superficial phenomenon. Marx maintained that "the abstraction of all humanity, even the semblance of humanity" is "*practically* complete in the full blown proletariat."¹⁵ A loophole is reserved for purposive activity, which is the individual's ability to grasp the nature of what he wants to transform and to direct his energies accordingly. Marx held that productive activity is always purposive, and that this is one of the main features which distinguishes human beings from animals.¹⁶ Class consciousness is the result of such purposive activity with the self as object, of workers using their reasoning powers on themselves and their life conditions. It follows necessarily from what they are, both as calculating human beings and as workers caught up in an inhuman situation.

The workers are also prompted in their search for socialist meaning by their needs as individuals. For Marx, society produces people who have needs for whatever, broadly speaking, fulfills their powers in the state in which these latter have been fashioned by society. These needs are invariably felt as wants, and since that which fulfills an individual's powers includes by extension the conditions for such fulfillment, he soon comes to want the means of his own transformation; for capitalist conditions alone cannot secure for workers, even extremely alienated workers, what they want. Job security, social equality, and uninterrupted improvement in living conditions, for example, are simply impossibilities within the capitalist framework. Hence, even before they recognize their class interests, workers are driven by their needs in ways which serve to satisfy these interests. And, as planned action-based on a full appreciation of what these interests are-is the most effective means of proceeding, needs provide what is possibly the greatest boost to becoming class-conscious.

Though rooted in people's everyday lives, class consciousness is never taken wholly for granted. The main effort of socialists from Marx to our own time has been directed toward helping workers draw socialist lessons from their conditions. Marx's activity as both a scholar and as a man of action had this objective. Viewed in this light, too, the debate initiated by Lenin regarding the character of a socialist party has not been over *what* to do, but rather over *how* to do it. Essential, here, is that among socialists the conviction has always existed that sooner or later, in one crisis or another (with the help of this form of organization or that), the proletariat would finally become class-conscious.

Both critics and defenders of Marx alike have sought to explain the failure of the working class to assume its historic role by tampering with his account of capitalist conditions. Thus, his critics assert that the lot of the workers has improved, that the middle class has not disappeared, etc., and, at the extreme, that these conditions were never really as bad as Marx claimed. His defenders have tried to show that it was relative pauperization he predicted, that big businesses are getting larger, etc., and, after Lenin, that imperialist expansion permitted capitalists to buy off their workers. Such rejoinders, however, whether in criticism or defense, miss the essential point that for the whole of Marx's lifetime the situation in the capitalist world was adequate, by his own standards, for the revolution he expected to take place.

Martin Nicholaus, in his widely read article, "The Unknown Marx," has argued that the mature Marx (Marx of the *Grundrisse*, 1858) put the socialist revolution far into the future, in effect after capitalism was thoroughly beset by problems of automation.¹⁷ Though Marx does speak of such a possibility, this is not his first projection. Marx was dealing after all with trends in the capitalist economy, and particularly, though not exclusively, with their *probable* outcome. On the basis of his research, he not only hoped for but expected revolutions on each downturn of the economic cycle. In 1858, the year of the *Grundrisse*, he wrote to Engels, "On the continent

the revolution is immanent."¹⁸ And twelve years later he declared: "The English have all the material requisites necessary for a social revolution. What they lack is the spirit of generalization and revolutionary ardor."¹⁹ Does this sound like a man who thought capitalist conditions were not sufficiently ripe for the workers to make a revolution? Though it is true that Marx became progressively less optimistic (and always took account of other possibilities) he never really believed he was writing for a century other than his own.

If it was not conditions which failed Marx, it could only have been the workers. More precisely, the great majority of workers were not able to attain class consciousness in conditions that were more or less ideal for them to do so. Marx's error, an error which has had a far-ranging effect on the history of socialist thought and practice, is that he advances from the workers' conditions of life to class consciousness in a single bound; the various psychological mediations united in class consciousness are treated as one. The severity of these conditions, the pressures he saw coming from material needs, and his belief that workers never lose their ability to calculate advantages made the eventual result certain and a detailed analysis of the steps involved unnecessary.

IV.

Class consciousness is a more complex phenomenon-and, hence, more fraught with possibilities for failure-than Marx and most other socialists have believed. With the extra hundred years of hindsight, one can see that what Marx treated as a relatively direct, if not easy, transition is neither. Progress from the workers' conditions to class consciousness involves not one but many steps, each of which constitutes a real problem of achievement for some section of the working class.

First, workers must recognize that they have interests. Second, they must be able to see their interests as individuals in their interests as members of a class. Third, they must be able to distinguish what Marx considers their main interests as workers from other less important economic interests. Fourth, they must believe that their class interests come prior to their interests as members of a particular nation, religion, race, etc. Fifth, they must truly hate their capitalist exploiters. Sixth, they must have an idea, however vague, that their situation could be qualitatively improved. Seventh, they must believe that they themselves, through some means or other, can help bring about this improvement. Eighth, they must believe that Marx's strategy, or that advocated by Marxist leaders, offers the best means for achieving their aims. And, ninth, having arrived at all the foregoing, they must not be afraid to act when the time comes.

These steps are not only conceptually distinct, but they constitute the real difficulties which have kept the mass of the proletariat in all capitalist countries and in all periods from becoming class-conscious. Though these difficulties can and do appear in other combinations, I believe the order in which they are given here corresponds to the inherent logic of the situation and correctly describes the trajectory most often followed. What we find then is that most workers have climbed a few of these steps (enough to complain), that some have scaled most of them (enough to vote for working-class candidates), but that relatively few have managed to ascend to the top.

To begin with, if we accept Marx's portrayal of the proletariat's dehumanization as more or less accurate, it is clear that there are workers who simply cannot recognize that they have interests of any sort. They have been rendered into unthinking brutes ("idiocy" and "cretinism" are Marx's terms), whose attention does not extend beyond their immediate task.²⁰ Given the conditions which prevailed in Marx's time, many workers must have suffered from this extreme

degradation. And, when treated like animals, they reacted like animals, tame ones. Marx, himself, offers evidence for such a conclusion in telling of occasions when the workers' already impossible lot worsened without raising any protest from them.

In 1862, during a depression in the English cotton trade, a factory inspector is quoted as saying, "The sufferings of the operatives since the date of my last report have greatly increased; but at no period in the history of manufacturers, have sufferings so sudden and so severe been borne with so much silent resignation and so much patient self-respect."²¹ Even a member of Parliament from one of the worst affected areas cannot refrain from commenting, nor Marx from quoting, that in this crisis, "the laborers of Lancashire have behaved like the ancient philosophers (Stoics)." Marx adds, "Not like sheep?"²²

What conclusion did Marx draw from these events, events which were by no means that unusual? None at all. Despite his angry retort, his purpose in relating this incident was to show the conditions in which the workers were forced to live and work, and not how uncomplainingly they had submitted to these conditions. So bludgeoned by life that they cannot conceive they have any interests, many workers are condemned to submit to their earthy travail with as much thought as an ox before the plow. Admittedly, this malaise was more prevalent when the working day averaged fourteen hours than now when eight hours is the rule, but I am not convinced that it has completely disappeared.

For workers who recognize that they are human beings with interests, the next step in becoming class-conscious is to see their interests as individuals in their interests as members of the working class. It is not immediately apparent that the best way to obtain a good job, more pay, better conditions, etc. is to promote the interests of one's class. On the contrary, the practical isolation that capitalism forces on all its inhabitants makes the very notion of shared interests difficult to conceive. It was Marx, himself, who noted that the individual in capitalist society is "withdrawn into himself, wholly preoccupied with his private interest and acting in accordance with his private caprice."²³ The character of the ensuing struggle is well brought out in Marx's definition of "competition," its all purpose label, as "avarice and war among the avaricious."²⁴ Throughout society, calculator meets calculator in the never ending battle of who can get the most out of whom. "Mutual exploitation" is the rule.²⁵

With so much indifference and hostility ingrained in the way of life and outlook of everyone, it is not surprising that the competition between workers for a greater portion of the meager fare which goes to them as a class is no less intense. Marx is eminently aware that, "Competition makes individuals, not only the bourgeoisie, but still more the workers, mutually hostile, in spite of the fact that it brings them together."²⁶ This competition first rears its head at the factory gate where some are allowed in and others are not. Inside the factory, workers continue to compete with each other for such favors as their employer has it in him to bestow, especially for the easier and better paying jobs. After work, with too little money to spend, workers are again at each other's throats for the inadequate food, clothing, and shelter available to them.

The cooperation that characterizes industrial labor hardly offsets the atomizing affect of so much inner-class competition. The scales are even more unbalanced than this suggests, since the individual worker, without a conception of his identity in the group, is incapable of appreciating the essential links between his own labor and that of his co-workers. Cooperation is something of which he is only dimly aware. So it is that both his social activity and product are viewed as alien powers. To be able to see one's interests as an individual in one's interests as a member of the working class under these conditions is no little achievement.

After workers realize they have interests, and class interests at that, it is essential next that

they adopt Marx's view of what these latter are. I accept that there are objective interests which accrue to a class in virtue of its social-economic position, and, also, Marx's understanding of what these are for the workers, including their overriding interest in transforming the system. However, his belief that most workers will sooner or later come to agree with us has received little support from history. Without a doubt, this is the step at which the greater part of the proletariat has faltered.

When Samuel Gompers, the early leader of the AFL, was asked what the workers want, he answered, "More." And, as much as I would like to dispute it, this strikes me as an accurate description of how most workers have conceived their interests then and now. Most workers who have grasped that they have interests as workers have seen them in terms of getting a little more of what they already have, making their conditions a little better than what they are, working a little bit less than they do. As limited, cautious men, the workers have little, cautious designs. Their horizons have been clipped off at the roots. As with most of their other personal shortcomings, this is a result of the alienation Marx so eloquently describes. It is simply that their conditions have so limited their conceptions, that these conceptions offer them little opportunity to break out of their conditions.

While Marx was aware that most workers did not share his view of their interests, he refused to acknowledge the real gap which separates the two positions, or to devote serious study to its causes and likely consequences. Thus, when Jules Guesde came to London to seek Marx's advice about an election program, Marx could write, "With the exception of some trivialities which Guesde found necessary to throw to the French workers despite my protest, such as fixing the minimum wage by law and the like (I told him: 'If the French proletariat is still so childish to require such bait, it is not worth while drawing up any program whatever')"²⁷ But the proletariat, not only in France but throughout the capitalist world, were so "childish," and they remain so.

Marx's inability to grasp the staying power of the workers' trade union designs is due, in part, to his belief that the capitalists would not and could not accede to most of these demands; having got nowhere for so long, the workers would not fail to see that their real interests lay elsewhere. In part, he believed that whatever minor benefits they managed to force upon the capitalists could only be temporary, acquired in booms, in periods of rapidly expanding capital, and lost again in depressions. And, in part, he thought that whatever improvements withstood the test of time were so clearly insignificant that this fact would not be lost upon the workers themselves. These were the "crumbs" which, he said, do nothing to bridge the "social gulf" between the classes.²⁸ In capitalism, even when the workers get higher pay, this is "nothing but better payment for the slave"; it does not "conquer either for the worker or for work their human status and dignity."²⁹ The successes of the English Factory Acts in ridding capitalism of its worst abuses are treated in the same light.³⁰

However, it is one thing for us to agree with Marx's characterization of such improvements as "crumbs" which do not win for the workers their "human status and dignity," and quite another to believe that most workers agree as well, or that they ever have, or that they ever will. On the contrary, the same conditions which so limit their horizons that a higher wage is considered the acme of their interests make it likely that a few dollars added to their pay packet will be regarded as a major success. In keeping with this Lilliputian perspective, rather than being disappointed with "crumbs," they will use their collective bargaining power to obtain more. Organized into unions, they have managed to retain many of the gains made in prosperous times through the reoccurring crises, and, with the steady growth of society's absolute product, they have succeeded in acquiring a higher standard of living than Marx thought possible. Given the time

and the patience, even pyramids can be built of crumbs. But most workers have never wanted anything else, nor have they ever conceived of their interests in other terms.

Once workers accept that they have class interests and that Marx is right about what these are, the step they must take is to consider these interests more important than ties of nation, religion, race, etc. In the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) Marx declared that the proletariat had already lost both religious and nationalist attachments.³¹ This is one conclusion he was later forced to qualify, as least as regards English and Irish workers. The hopes for a growing proletarian brotherhood received an almost fatal setback by the chauvinistic behavior of the European working class during World War I. With such divisions firmly entrenched in the psychology of most workers, an all too frequent reaction in time of economic hardship has been to seek for scapegoats among their class. It is against those who compete with them for scarce jobs, against fellow workers who can be easily distinguished because of their nationality, religion, or race that much of their pent up ire is directed.

One does not have to offer a theory of where these prejudices come from and how they operate to hold that the weight Marx attached to them is seriously inadequate. Oddly enough, Marx provides the framework for such a theory in his account of alienation and the mystification which accompanies it, where we also learn that the tenacity of these prejudices is a function of the degree of distortion present. How could such deprived people be expected to operate with abilities they have lost? How could workers, who are manipulated more than any other group, overturn the results of this manipulation in their own personalities?

Besides causing conflicts among workers, the excessive attachment to nation, religion, and race is also responsible for a lot of inter-class cooperation, workers and capitalists of the same nation, etc., joining together to combat their alien counterparts.³² In these circumstances, the hatred workers should feel for their exploiters, which is another requirement for class consciousness, is all but dissipated. The whole education, culture, and communication apparatus of bourgeois society, by clouding the workers' minds with noncontroversial orthodoxies, has succeeded admirably in establishing numerous links between the classes on trivial matters. Aren't we all fans of the Green Bay Packers?

The workers, with relatively few exceptions-depending on the country and the period-don't really and deeply hate capitalists, because they cannot distinguish them sharply enough from themselves, because they have never been able to set off a sufficiently unencumbered target to hate. Whatever class mobility exists-this is a more significant factor in America than elsewhere-merely serves to compound the problem. And if some workers are aided in making this distinction by having a capitalist with a long nose or different colored skin, they are more likely to become incensed against his religion or race than against his class.

One excruciating result of such bourgeois successes is that workers, including socialist workers, often admire capitalists more than they hate them. Workers who live vicariously through their employer are not limited to those with a stunted conception of their interests. And their envy is not of a man who has more, but who is in some sense better. Such an admission is already contained in the widespread drive for respectability and prestige, for "status." Actions acquire status according to a particular social code, which is set and promulgated in every society by the ruling social and economic class. To be interested in acquiring status is to submit to the social code that determines it. It is to accept the legitimacy of existing society, and to admit, however feebly, that one's interests as a citizen are somehow superior to one's interests as a worker.

Marx and Engels were often made aware of this failing, which affected many of their own

stalwarts, particularly in England. If Tom Mann, one of the truly outstanding leaders of the English working class, was-as Engels relates-"fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor," what could one expect of the others?³³ Yet, Marx and Engels always treated this "bourgeois infection" (Marx's term) as something skin deep and of passing importance.³⁴ My own conclusion from such evidence, which has not diminished with the years, is that the vast majority of workers, including some devotees of Marxist parties, have never really and decisively rejected the society which has despoiled them, but have always been more concerned to be accepted by it than to change it.

The next step up the ladder to class consciousness is that workers must have an inkling, however vague, that their situation can be qualitatively improved. It does no good to know what they need and to have the proper likes and dislikes if they believe that nothing can be done about it. For, in this situation, lotteries and football pools remain the only escape from the lot that has befallen them. We have all heard such rejoinders as "The world will never change" and "Rich and poor will always be with us." What it is important to realize is that it is not only workers whose horizons stop at "more" who are afflicted with this pessimism, but also many who share Marx's conception of their interests. Clearly, the relevant question is how could people who are so battered by their reality believe otherwise? A vision requires hope, and hope requires a crack in the ceiling, such as few good landlords in any society permit.

Frederick Lessner, a working-class acquaintance of Marx, says of his introduction to Weitling's book, *Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom*: "I read it once, twice, three times. It was then it first occurred to me that the world could be different from what it was."³⁵ But how many workers would read this kind of book work even once? Yet, it was only through such sustained mental effort that a man who became a model for his class could obtain a major prerequisite for engaging in socialist activity, the idea that a more just society can be constructed. More recently, disappointment with the Soviet experiment has served as another kind of block to the workers' imagination.

Once workers who have accompanied us so far accept that change for the better is possible, the next hurdle is becoming convinced that they have something positive to contribute to this effort. A widespread phenomenon in our time, which we can only assume was also present in Marx's day, is the feeling of powerlessness, the self-reproach that there is nothing one can do which matters. Most people simply feel themselves too small and the establishment which requires overturning too large and imposing to see any link between individual action and social change.

Each person must make his own decision whether to join others for political action, and must justify to himself and, perhaps, to his family the time and energy this new commitment will take. In this situation, even people with strong socialist views are prone to say, "One more, one less-it won't make any difference." Everything from going to vote to manning the barricades is affected by this doubt. Socialist views come coupled with the duty to act upon them only where the individual is convinced that somehow or other, sooner or later, his participation will count. In Marx's day, many of the most restless spirits among the European proletariat immigrated to the New World simply because they did not believe there was anything they personally could do to improve the old one.

Assuming we cross this hurdle, we are now confronted with workers who have grasped what Marx takes to be their interests, who possess the proper attitudes toward co-workers and capitalists, who believe it possible to create a better world, and who think that they can help effect this change-it is essential, next, that they consider the strategy advocated by Marx or their

Marxist leaders to be the fight one. Marx was thoroughly pragmatic when it came to the means for achieving social change, favoring the ballot where it could work and revolution where it could not.³⁶ Because national circumstances and traditions vary so greatly and because of the many peculiar "accidents" that cannot be systematized, Marx felt he was in no position to offer detailed advice; and, despite the reams written on Marx's theory of revolution, there is none. Most of his comments on this subject are very general, as when he says, the "social disintegration" will be "more brutal or more human, according to the degree of development of the working class itself."³⁷

Nor did Marx ever speculate on what is the proper kind of political party or movement to make the revolution. The First International was a loose coagulation of working-class unions, educational associations, and parties whose first aim was to promote class consciousness. This, as we will recall, is also how Marx saw his task. When enough workers became class-conscious, they would know what to do and how to do it.

If Marx had no theory of revolution, he equally had no theory of democracy, and certainly felt no commitment to use "democratic" and "constitutional" methods. With his mixture of contempt and distrust for bourgeois democracy, his bias on the side of revolutions is a clear one. Once his followers were permitted to operate inside the constitution, however, many of them ceased thinking of their goals as outside it. For better or worse, they were determined to believe that it was possible to obtain what they wanted by obeying the rules (and even the customs) of the political game. What began as a tactical means became an end, displacing in the process their former end. Yesterday it was the Social Democrats and there are indications that the same metamorphosis is occurring in many Communist parties today.

Marx's correspondence is full of complaints against working-class leaders, many of them close students of Marxism, for their tactical bungling, usually for engaging in compromising actions with the bourgeoisie. He most often attributes their mistakes to personal faults, and, in this way, manages to exonerate their following. Ernest Jones, the Chartist leader, is described as the general of an army who "crosses over to the camp of the enemy on the eve of battle."³⁸ The army, apparently, was ready to fight. Again, my conclusion is more severe, for the evidence has been compounded many times over since Marx's day. The rules and practice of the capitalist political game, with its perpetual promise of the half-loaf, poisons the socialist rank and file as well as their leaders. For the workers to take up revolutionary tactics, it is essential that they be completely disillusioned with all reformist leaders and methods. But, in democracies, such leaders and methods are generally able to secure a small part of what they promise. The result is that the workers are kept dangling, wed to solutions which cannot solve; yet, temptation, and with it hope, never ceases.

One final step remains. Once workers grasp what they need as workers, who their friends and enemies are, that a better world can be created, what must be done to create it possess the confidence that they have some-thing to contribute and that by avoiding the trap of reformism they can succeed, what is still required is that they have the ability when the time comes to act. An imprisoned class consciousness that cannot be translated into revolutionary action is no class consciousness at all. Waiting for the German proletariat to provide a revolutionary initiative which never came, Rosa Luxemburg-whose politics ran a close parallel to Marx's own-paid for the delay with her life. Yet, in the aftermath of World War 1, Germany probably had more workers who had climbed all previous steps than any capitalist country either before or since. But when the opportune moment for action arrived, most of them held back. This does not excuse the betrayal of the German Social Democrats who argued against rebellion and helped

put down the outbreaks that occurred; it only helps explain, at least in part, their unfortunate success. Luxemburg's fate may very well have been Marx's had he lived in a more troubled land at a more troubled time. Or, would he have read the handwriting which had been on the wall since 1848 or thereabouts and become-a "Leninist"?

Marx's mistake was to believe that understanding things correctly, in a way that calls for a particular action, necessarily leads to people taking this action. First of all, in the case before us, there is the very real fear of being hurt. Very few workers have the courage which comes with having nothing to lose, simply because they always have something to lose, their lives if nothing else. In recent years, of course, they have much more to lose, the growing number of objects which they have purchased. Because they have relatively few possessions, and ones they have worked very hard to obtain, the proletariat have become as petty as the petty bourgeoisie have always been about their goods. In this situation, the tendency is to look not at what one has to gain, but at what one has to lose in any radical change. This is the same affliction that the peasants have always suffered from.

But such last minute restraint can also be attributed to two related psychological mechanisms about which Marx knew very little. It has often been remarked how people in authority browbeat others to act against their recognized interests, how awe, respect, and habit combine to overturn the most rational conclusions. This falling into line under any circumstances is part of a syndrome which T. W. Adorno and others have popularized as the "authoritarian personality."³⁹ Rooted in the habit of taking orders, a habit which extends back to the earliest years of education and family training, it eventually succeeds in being felt as a duty. So great is the emotional compulsion to obey that the adult, who has been conditioned in this way, may actually feel physical pain when he disobeys.

How exactly this effect is created or the precise mechanism through which it operates cannot be gone into at this time. For my purposes, it is enough to state that it exists, and that the conditions in which most workers are raised-admittedly, more so in some cultures than in others-are only too well suited to producing authoritarian personalities. Thus in moments of crisis, many workers find themselves emotionally incapable of departing from long established patterns of subservience, no matter how much they rationally desire to do so.

The second psychological malfunction working to disrupt Marx's expectations is the security mindedness of the proletariat, what Erich Fromm has called their "fear of freedom."⁴⁰ People not only refuse emancipation because choosing against habitual patterns is painful, but because they irrationally fear what is to be chosen. What is new and unknown is more terrifying to many than the terror which is known. They think at least they have been able to live through the troubles they have had. How do they know they will be able to deal as well with the new troubles which await them?

People lack confidence in the future, essentially, because they lack confidence in themselves; but nothing in the lives of workers has enabled them to acquire such confidence. Again, those who are most in need of freedom are the very ones whose wretched, ego destroying existence has acted to make them afraid of freedom. In such straits, there will always be workers who desire to see the future conform to the past except at the limits of despair. This failing, admittedly, like the irrational need to obey, is more likely to afflict those who are not poised to act against the system. However, diseases-and what I have been describing are emotional diseases-generally have little respect for the political sophistication of their victims.

After removing workers for this, that, and the other shortcoming, and many for a combination of them (the actual combinations as I have indicated may vary), what is left? How many workers

were class-conscious in Marx's time or are now? How many could have become class-conscious then or could become so now? How many workers who became class-conscious were able to remain so (for if character alters, it alters in both directions)?

V.

From the foregoing account, it appears that class consciousness is an extraordinary achievement of which very few workers at any time have shown themselves capable, and that there is little reason to believe this will change. Indeed, with greater inter-class mobility, increasing stratification within the working class, and the absolute (not relative) improvement in the workers' material conditions in our century, some of the factors which have helped bring about class consciousness where it did exist have lost much of their influence. The pessimistic import of such truths has led to the demise of more than one socialist and is at least partly responsible for the slight attention paid to problems of class consciousness by socialist writers.

Yet in trying to account for the past failures of the working class, my intention has not been to predict the future but to affect it. This is only possible, however, after frankly and fully admitting the real psychological as well as social barriers that exist to proletarian class consciousness. On the basis of the foregoing analysis, the problem with which socialists are confronted may be stated as follows: in order to have a revolution, there will not only have to be other severe crises in the capitalist system (these will occur), but a large segment of the working class will have to develop characteristics that will enable them to respond to one or another of these crises by becoming class-conscious.

This manner of posing the problem is not affected by differences of opinion regarding how quickly class consciousness can arise. The French events of May 1968 found workers climbing many of the steps to class consciousness in short order (just as the aftermath found many of them as quickly descending). Particularly impressive was the way workers initially rejected the gigantic wage increases won by their trade union leaders. Clearly, at this stage, a large number of workers wanted fundamental social change, though most were still uncertain as to what exactly that was or how to get it. The events of May were not only a result of preceding conditions and events, social, economic, and political, but as well of the ability of the most radical working class in any advanced capitalist country, with the possible exception of Italy, to respond as they did. And this response, when and to the limited degree that it occurred (whatever the guilt of the French Communist party), is evidence of the speed at which under certain pressures the barriers to class consciousness can be overcome. We have not been dealing, however, with how fast workers can become class-conscious, but with all such consciousness contains. While the complexity of this condition suggests slow or staggered development, it is clear that particular events can greatly speed the process.

It is time now to examine more closely the causes for Marx's own excessive optimism. Marx was forever expecting the proletariat to become class-conscious, essentially, because in his scheme for understanding man and society there is no niche put aside for their continued refusal to do so. We have already seen how the needs people have are conceptualized as one with the wants they feel for whatever it is that will satisfy these needs. Marx is aided (and, perhaps, even encouraged) in constructing this knot by the German language where *Bedingungen* means both "need" and "want." As a result, Marx is inclined to believe that people want or will soon come to want that for which they have needs, or, by extension, which serves as the means to acquire what they need. Yet, people may have needs for which they never consciously want relief, and others-

as Freud has shown-of which they never become aware, and still others the means to the satisfaction of which they never directly want.

Marx's position that life-activity is purposive brings him to a similar conclusion whenever the self is treated as the object. But, again, the necessity Marx finds is one he himself introduces into his concepts. In fact, people may act without purpose, without consciously seeking any particular development or goals. It was such faulty conceptualization which led Marx to treat consciousness, despite qualifications to the contrary, as the mental reflection of surroundings and kept him from correctly estimating the real gap between objective and subjective interests.

In this manner, the link between conditions and character-for all the space it gets in Marx's writings-remains undeveloped. The problem of the receptivity of character to new influences, its malleability, particularly relative to age, is nowhere discussed. Marx is obviously correct in holding that the individual is to a remarkably high degree the product of his society, and that by changing his living conditions we change him, but there are at least two questions that still have to be answered: are the changes which occur in character always rational, i.e., in keeping with the new interests that are created? How long does it take for new conditions to produce new people?

Marx believed that the effect of conditions on character was rational and relatively quick acting. The evidence examined in this paper argues against such beliefs. Before attempting to modify Marx's conceptual framework, however, we must first realize that very little that passes for irrationality here is sheer madness. For the most part, it is a matter of too little attention paid to some factors and too much to others, or of the right amount of attention paid too late. Given where his calculations should take him and when, the individual's response to his environment is distorted; he has become fanatical in his devotion to some needs and a cold suitor to others.

One factor, in particular, which has received less than its due in Marx's writings is the sexual drive. Young people are more interested in sex, devote more time to thinking about and trying to satisfy this drive, and are immensely more effected by it (by not having sex even more than by having it) than most adults, even after Freud, would care to admit. If one doesn't eat, one starves to death. But what happens if one doesn't satisfy the sexual drive, or does so only rarely, hurriedly, and with a lot of guilt? One doesn't die, but how does such abstinence effect the personality? Which qualities does it reinforce and which does it weaken? There are no conclusive answers, but it is my impression that sexual repression among the workers, as among other classes, has contributed significantly to their irrationality.⁴¹

By the right amount of attention paid too late, I have in mind the time lag which exists between the appearance of new conditions and resulting changes in character. Though Marx accepted the necessity of some such lag, he did not make it long enough; nor did he properly estimate the potential for mischief which this delay carried with it. People acquire most of their personal and class characteristics in childhood. It is the condition operating then, transmitted primarily by the family, which makes them what they are, at least as regards basic responses; and, in most cases, what they are will vary very little over their lives. Thus, even where the conditions people have been brought up in change by the time they reach maturity, their characters will reflect the situation which has passed on. If Marx had studied the family more closely, he surely would have noticed that as a factory for producing character it is invariably a generation or more behind the times, producing people today who, tomorrow, will be able to deal with yesterday's problems.

Even children, whose characters are more affected by existing conditions, don't become all these conditions call for, since the family, which is the chief mechanism through which society

bears upon them, is staffed by adults whose outlook reflects the previous state of affairs. If, for adults, existing conditions come too late, for the young, who can do little about them in any case, they are reflected through a prism that both modifies and distorts the influence they would otherwise have. As a result, only in extreme cases do new conditions make people behave as they do (and these are generally young people); more often, old conditions determine their actions, and then, for the reasons given, this takes place in an irregular and distorted manner. In a society, such as capitalism, which is changing (albeit, in its superficial aspects) very rapidly, this means that the character of most people never catches up with their lives. They seem destined to be misfits, whose responses are forever out of date.

In order to allow for the irrationality which comes from this time lag, I would introduce into Marx's conceptual framework the idea of character structure, understood as the internalization of early behavior patterns, as organized habit. Such characterological hardening of the arteries derives whence character derives, but is a product apart, exercising a relatively independent influence on how one will respond to future events and conditions.

The idea of character structure does little violence to Marx's basic framework; the interactions he describes go on as before, except that something now mediates between conditions and response, between needs and wants, between objective and subjective interests, between activity and consciousness, something into and through which the one must be translated to become the other. As such, character structure is both a product of alienation and, with the real conditions of life, a contributing cause of alienated activity. With the introduction of this new factor we can better explain why workers so often find their inclinations in conflict with the demands of the current situation, why they consistently misunderstand and are incapable of responding to it in ways that would promote their interests. We can better explain, too, why people today are driven to act in ways that might have been rational a generation ago, in a war, a depression, or a boom which existed then but no longer does. The concept of character structure also helps account for the proletariat's "fear of freedom" and their submissiveness before authority, which are, after all, simply attempts to repeat in the future what has been done in the past. Finally, character structure helps to explain the distorting sentiments of nation, race, and religion, as well as the worker's pessimism regarding a better form of society and his own role in helping to bring it about by treating them as expressions of early behavior patterns that, internalized within the individual, have acquired a dynamic and power of their own.

Thus, whenever the system has been in crisis, when it was in the workers' interests to construct new solutions, their character structure has disposed them to go on seeking old nostrums, where they can continue to act as they have been and know how to. To be sure, new social and economic conditions did develop with the growth of imperialism, workers' movements were often cursed with poor leadership at critical moments of their history, and capitalists have sought to exacerbate national and racial antagonisms-all this, as Marxists rightly maintain, has served to inhibit the development of proletarian class consciousness. What those who accept Marx's analysis have seldom admitted is that the character structure of most workers has also been at fault. With the introduction of this concept into Marx's framework, workers must be viewed not only as prisoners of their conditions, but of themselves, of their own character structures which are the product of previous conditions.⁴²

VI.

The introduction of the concept of character structure into Marx's scheme, substituting a sense

of retarded rationality for the sense of irrationality toward which so much of this study seemed to point, has great significance for a socialist strategy. If, as part of their alienation, workers cannot react to their conditions, no matter how bad they get, in a rational manner, then all efforts to attain widespread class consciousness are doomed to failure. They are, that is, unless some manner can be found to affect their character structure during its formative years, to make sure that the behavior patterns internalized there never develop or, more to the point, never acquire the degree of durability they now have. Looked at in this way, the focal point of a socialist strategy must be those conditions which most affect the young. For it is possible to alter the character structure of workers by fighting against its construction, by counteracting the disorienting influence of family, school, and church, whatever in fact makes it difficult for the individual once he becomes an adult to make an objective assessment of his oppression and to act against it.

The concrete aims of radical activity, on the basis of this analysis, are to get teen-age and even younger members of the working class to question the existing order along with all its symbols and leaders, to loosen generalized habits of respect and obedience, to oppose whatever doesn't make sense in terms of their needs as individuals and as members of a group, to conceive of the enemy as the capitalist system and the small group of men who control it, to articulate their hopes for a better life, to participate in successful protest actions no matter how small the immediate objective, and to create a sense of community and brotherhood of all those in revolt. The purpose is to overturn (or, more accurately, to undermine) the specific barriers that have kept past generations of workers from becoming class-conscious. Full class consciousness can only occur later on the basis of adult experiences, particularly in the mode of production. Making allowances for exceptions on both ends of the scale, what can be achieved now is essentially a predisposition to respond to the conditions of life in a rational manner, what might be called a state of preconsciousness. Capitalism willing, and capitalism is periodically willing, revolutionary effects will follow.

To insist on the necessity of altering character structure is not to argue that only new men can create a new society, but to reaffirm that changes in both people and conditions are needed for a socialist revolution to occur. The opposition between idealism (where men are held responsible for transforming society) and vulgar materialism (where material conditions are) is, in any case, a false one. There is a constant, many-sided interaction going on, and the problem has always been how to capture (and conceptualize) the dynamics of this process so as to participate in it more effectively.

The conditions that now exist in the United States (more so than in other capitalist countries) are exceptionally well suited to the strategy I have been urging. In stressing the importance of social conditions in determining what people are and how they act, Marxists have not given sufficient attention to the fact that some conditions have a greater effect on what people are and others on how they act. This is chiefly because the people referred to in the two instances are not the same. Since we acquire the greater part of our character when young, it is conditions which most affect the young that most affect what people are (or what they are a generation later when the once young have become adults); whereas adults are the subject of conditions, generally more extreme, which are said to affect how people act.

Recent events have thrown up a number of important new conditions which exercise their predominant effect on what people are. Among these are the Vietnam War in which the young are expected to fight as well as to believe, a pause in the cold war and with it in anticommunist ideology, an increasingly evident racism that goes counter to taught ideals, the hunger and

suffering seen daily on television, frequent disruption of community services and schools, growing unemployment among the newly trained and among incoming skilled workers of all sorts, the pill and drugs, and the new obscurantist puritanism that has arisen to combat both. In each case, a pattern of behavior in which the older generation grew up and which, through its transformation into character structure, contributed significantly to a passive acceptance of their lot is changing into behavior that in one or more respects opposes adolescents to the existing social and political system. It remains for socialists, especially young socialists, to make the most of these conditions, not to instigate a youth revolt (whatever that is) or to create an auxiliary of the working class, but to alter the character structure of the next generation of workers.

It is not possible for a paper that argues for a particular strategy to canvass all possible tactics that can be used to advance it. The choice of tactics requires detailed study of the time, place, and parties involved. Still, the strategy advocated here does suggest that the effort some radical groups are putting into high school "organizing" and publishing high school papers should be greatly expanded, especially in working-class districts, even at the expense of other activities in poor communities and among adult workers. Also, insofar as the aim is understood in the negative sense of breaking up existing behavior patterns, the hippies and Yippies-by holding up establishment ways and virtues to contempt and ridicule-may have as much to contribute as the more orthodox forms of protest. The means of keeping young people open to a rational calculus of advantages later in life may be quite different from those required to help them make the calculus itself. What exactly these means are needs further investigation, but for the moment I would not rule out any form of protest that increases or clarifies young people's discontent and their opposition to established authority.⁴³

If the "revolution" is, as most socialists will admit, at a minimum decades away, then it is proper-given the conservative function of character structure and its greater malleability early in life-that we begin preparing for it among workers who will be around and relevant at the time. Samuel Gompers and his successors in the AFL-CIO sacrificed the revolutionary potential of the working class to the immediate needs of real workers; today, paradoxically, socialists with their limited means must pay less attention to real workers, certainly to workers over thirty (thirty-five?), so that they can help to develop a revolutionary working class.

1. Instances of such explanations can be found in Karl Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann* (London, 1941), pp. 107, 135; Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, ed. and trans. Dona Torr (London, 1941), pp.249, 256-57, 350,502; Marx and Engels, *Selected Writings* I (Moscow, 1951), p.249; A. Lozoysky, *Marx and the Trade Unions* (New York, 1935), pp.38, 58-59.

2. Marx, *On Colonialism* (Moscow, n.d.), p. 201. See, too, *Selected Correspondence*, pp.280-81.

3. Engels, *Briefe an Bebel* (Berlin, 1958), pp.82-83. See, too, Lozoysky, *Marx and the Trade Unions*, p.61.

4. Marx, "Eighteenth of Brumaire," *Selected Writings* I, p.225.

5. Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, trans. R. Dixon (Moscow, 1956), p.53.

6. Marx speaks of the proletariat on one occasion as "that misery conscious of its spiritual and

physical misery, that dehumanization conscious of its dehumanization and therefore self-abolishing." *Ibid.*, p.52.

7. C. Wright Mills, *The Marxists* (New York, 1962), p.115.
8. George Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p.73.
9. V. I. Lenin, "What is To Be Done⁹." *Selected Works*, 12 volt. (Moscow, n. d.), 11:77.
10. *Ibid.*,p.53.
11. *Ibid.*, 88-89. For a useful survey of other interpretations of class consciousness see H. Wolpe's "Some Problems Concerning Revolutionary Consciousness," *The Socialist Register 1970*, ed. Ralph Miliband and John Saville (London, 1970), pp.251-80.
12. According to Marx, "The contradiction between the individuality of each separate proletarian and labor, the conditions of life forced upon him, become evident to him himself, for he is sacrificed from youth upwards and, within his own class, has no chance for arriving at the conditions which would place him in the other class." Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, translated by R. Pascal (London, 1942), p.78.
13. Thorstein Veblen, "The Economics of Karl Marx: II," *The Place of Science in Modern Civilization and Other Essays* (New York, 1961), p.441.
14. Engels, "Preface," Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, trans. Samuel Moore (Chicago, 1945), p.5.
15. *Holy Family*, op. cit., p.52 (my emphasis). For a discussion of the workers' alienation, see B. Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1971).
16. Though encased in another set of concepts, this is one of the main conclusions to emerge from Marx's discussion of natural and species powers in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (henceforth referred to as *1844 Manuscripts*), trans. Martin Milligan (Moscow, 1959), esp. pp- 74-76, 156-58
17. Martin Nicholaus, "The Unknown Marx," *The New Left Reader*, ed. Carl Oglesby (New York, 1969), pp.105-6.
18. *Letters to Dr Kugelmann*, op. cit., p.107.
19. *Selected Correspondence*, op. cit., p.118.
20. *1844 Manuscripts*, op. cit., p.71.
21. Marx, *Capital III* (Moscow, 1959), p.128.
22. *Ibid.*,p.135.
23. Marx, "Zur Judenfrage," Marx and Engels, *Werke I* (Berlin, 1959), p.366.
24. *1844 Manuscripts*, op. cit., p.68.
25. Marx and Engels, *Deutsche Ideologie* in *Werke III* (Berlin, 1960), p.395.
26. *German Ideology*, op. cit., p.58.
27. Marx, *Letters to Americans*, trans. Leonard E. Mins (New York, 1953), p.124.
28. Marx, 'Wage Labor and Capital," *Selected Writings I*, p.91.
29. *1844 Manuscripts*, op. cit., p.81.
30. Marx, *Capital I*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Moscow, 1958), pp. 279 ft.
31. *Communist Manifesto*, op. cit., p.28.
32. *On Colonialism*, op. cit., p.301. In "Civil War in France" (1871), however, Marx still treats the German and French proletariat as if they were devoid of strong nationalist sentiment.
33. *Selected Correspondence*, op. cit., p.461.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 147. In 1863, Marx wrote to Engels, "How soon the English workers will free

themselves from their apparent bourgeois infection one must wait and see." Engels had just written him, "All the revolutionary energy has faded practically entirely away from the English proletariat and the English proletariat is declaring his complete agreement with the rule of the bourgeoisie." Ibid.

35. Frederick Lessner, "Before 1848 and After," *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, no editor, (Moscow, n. d.), p.150.

36. Engels tells us that Marx thought the transition to socialism in England, for example, might be peaceful and legal. Engels, "Preface to English Edition," *Capital I*, op. cit., p.6.

37. Ibid., p. 9.

38. *Letters to Americans*, op. cit., p.61.

39. T. W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York, 1950). Marx had some conception of this failing as it applied to German workers. Of them, he says, "Here where the workers are under the thumb of bureaucracy from childhood on and believe in authority, in the constituted authorities, it is a foremost task to teach them to walk by themselves." Lozovsky, *Marx and the Trade Unions*, op. cit., p.42. In the same year, 1868, he writes to Engels, "For the German working class the most necessary thing of all is that it should cease conducting its agitation by kind permission of the higher authorities. A race so schooled in bureaucracy must go through a complete course of self-help." *Selected Correspondence*, op. cit., p.249.

40. Erich Fromm, *Fear of Freedom* (London, 1942), esp. pp.1-19.

41. For an illuminating discussion of the role of sexual repression in helping to produce such irrationality, see Wilhelm Reich, *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, trans. Theodor P. Wolfe (New York, 1946), esp. pp.19-2⁸, 122A3.

42. Useful discussion of the concept of character structure can be found in Reich' *Character Analysis*, trans. T. P. Wolfe (New York, 1961), esp. 22 ft; and in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure* (London, 1961), Pt. 2. Another attempt to revise Marx's conceptual scheme is found in Marcuse's distinction (though barely suggested in Marx's writings) between "true" and "false" needs. *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1964), p.6. Rather than having to overcome or undermine barriers rooted in character structure, Marcuse states the problem in terms of a struggle between two kinds of needs. In focusing on this broad distinction, however, the change-producing levers in human personality are disassembled. The same reconstruction leads Marcuse to overemphasize those elements in the population (particularly students) in whom liberating needs are dominant as agents of revolutionary change.

43. For further discussion of some of the tactics advocated in this paper, see Reich's "What is Class Consciousness?", trans. Anna Bostock, *Liberation*, vol. 16, no. 5 (October, 1971), pp.

15A9. Though Reich devotes more attention to the problem of promoting class consciousness in adults than I feel is justified by his analysis of character structure, his stress on youth is unique in the serious literature on this subject. Reich's important contribution to Marxism in this area is summarized in B. Oilman, "The Marxism of Wilhelm Reich; or the Social Function of Sexual Repression," in *The Unknown Dimension: European Marxism Since Lenin*, ed. Karl Klare and Dick Howard (Basic Books, 1972).