INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of this work is to develop at least the outlines of an adequate Marxist moral and social theory. By a "moral and social theory" I mean one that provides a set of moral principles or standards by which to judge social arrangements and, by so doing, provides criteria to decide between competing sets of historically possible social arrangements. Such a theory must contain enough of an empirical, social-scientific theory to determine which sets of social arrangements are real historical possibilities and—of those that are possible—which best conform to the moral principles or standards propounded by an adequate moral theory.

By an "adequate" moral and social theory I mean one that is based on a correct set of empirical, social-scientific theories and on an adequate (i.e., correct) moral theory. By an "adequate" or "correct" moral theory I mean one that is most in wide reflective equilibrium with our considered moral judgments. (Whether there is one unique theory that is in wide reflective equilibrium with everyone's judgments or whether morality is in some sense relative is discussed in chapter 7.)

By a "Marxist" moral and social theory I mean one that (1) is informed by the spirit of Marx's radical humanism and egalitarianism; (2) is based on the empirical theses centrally important to the Marxist political perspective (particularly Marx's theory of classes and class struggle and his analysis of capitalism); and (3) attempts to defend the Marxist's basic normative political positions. The first of these positions is that socialism—that is, democratic, self-managing socialism—is morally preferable to any form of capitalism as well as to any other form of society possible under the conditions of moderate scarcity and moderate egoism. The second is that social and/or political revolution, if necessary (and sufficient) to effect the appropriate transformations, is prima facie morally justified.

Anyone interested in developing such a theory and showing that it is both a Marxist theory and a plausible moral theory faces two tasks. The first is to interpret Marx's moral views and, if pos-
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possible, to reconstruct his implicit moral theory. This task is made difficult, of course, by the submerged character of these views. The second task is to answer the charge made by Marxists and non-Marxists alike that Marxism and morality are somehow in compatible. The completion of the first task is necessary if we are to know precisely what it is we are to critique and/or make adequate; the completion of the second is necessary if we are to have a coherent notion of a Marxist morality or a Marxist moral and social theory.

The task of interpreting and reconstructing Marx's implicit moral theory is taken up in part I (chapters 1 through 3). The task of showing the compatibility of Marxism and morality is discussed in part II (chapters 4 through 7). In part III (chapters 8 through 10), I attempt to refute Marx's criticisms of justice and rights and then attempt to provide at least the outlines of an adequate Marxist moral and social theory. In order to accomplish the latter task, I attempt to provide an acceptable theory of social justice, on the one hand, and a minimal set of plausible Marxist empirical, social-scientific theses on the other. Although I view these three parts of the present work as compatible and mutually supportive, I do not claim that the correctness of one part is absolutely dependent on the correctness of the others. For example, one could accept most of the claims within one section of this work and consistently reject most of the claims in the others. Therefore, the adequacy of each of the three sections can and should be judged separately.

To begin the interpretive task, chapter 1 traces the development of Marx's moral views from his earliest published works through the development of his original philosophical system (as expressed in The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844) to his transitional works (of which The German Ideology is the most important) and, then, to his works of maturation (1847–1858) and his fully mature works (1858–1883). The Grundrisse and Capital are the most important works of these latter two periods. (For my periodization of Marx's works, see the Appendix.)

The major theses propounded in this chapter are that although Marx does not have a fully developed philosophical theory about morality, he does have a normative moral perspective, in which there is a fundamental continuity, at least from the formation of his original systematic views in 1844 through his later works. This moral perspective is based on three primary moral values: freedom (as self-determination), human community, and self-realization, as well as on some sort of principle demanding an egalitarian distribution of these goods—or at least the good of freedom. (No effort is made at this point to analyze the exact nature of this principle or Marx's concept and theory of freedom. This task is postponed until chapter 3.) I argue further that the evaluative content of alienation is reducible to or analyzable in terms of these values and principles.

In chapter 2 I review attempts to interpret Marx's overall moral perspective or theory as a species of hedonistic utilitarianism, eudaemonistic utilitarianism, and as some form or other of nonutilitarian consequentialism (e.g., self-realization theory or perfectionism). I argue, in opposition to all of these interpretations, that Marx is a mixed deontologist: he demands not simply the maximization of the primary nonmoral goods of freedom, human community, and self-realization but a radically egalitarian distribution of these goods (or at least the good of freedom). Further, he takes the nonconsequentialist notion of human dignity rather than pleasure, happiness, or human perfection as the ultimate court of appeal in moral reasoning.

In chapter 3 I argue that, in the final analysis, the most fundamental nonmoral good to be promoted, for Marx, is freedom (as self-determination). The notion of "human dignity" is even more fundamental for him, but it cannot be classified as a nonmoral good because it cannot be specified without using moral terms. It is, in other words, a moral good.) Freedom, the feeling of human community, and the realization of "truly human" potentialities (particularly through the production and "consumption" of higher cultural products) are all intrinsically valuable on Marx's view and, thus, all components of his theory of the good. But it is only his principle of freedom (which must be construed as a principle of equal freedom on my interpretation) that provides grounds for a theory of the right, i.e., a theory of right action, duty, obligation, and/or the rights of individuals. (Although such principles may not be needed in a full-fledged communist society, they are essential in the first stage of communism, even on Marx's view.)

Although Marx did not explicitly defend these views as such, he believed that everyone should be as free and self-determining as
possible. He further believed that if this were possible, people would realize their natural propensities for human community and self-realization. On my reconstruction of Marx's moral "theory," the value of freedom is basic because it is the pursuit of a maximum system of equal freedom and opportunity that provides possible grounds for legitimate social coercion, e.g., a system of just laws. The pursuit or maximization of either human community or self-realization does not, on my reconstruction of Marx, provide such grounds. These latter values will be realized to the extent to which a maximum system of equal freedom and opportunity is reached, but their fulfillment does not determine right action or ground obligation. On the Marxist view, of course, a maximum system of freedom and opportunity cannot exist in class-divided societies (more on this presently).

Such a maximum system of freedom and opportunity can be interpreted as an explication of Marx's principle of freedom (as self-determination). This principle is to be interpreted—in my reconstruction of his views—as demanding a maximum system of equal freedom, where "freedom" is taken to designate both negative freedom (i.e., freedom from undue interference in one's personal affairs) and positive freedom (i.e., freedom to control one's own life). Positive freedom, in turn, is taken to consist of two demands (or rights): (1) the right to equal participation in social decision-making processes that affect one's life, and (2) the right to equal access to the means of self-realization (i.e., an equal opportunity to attain the means of self-realization, which, for our purposes, can be taken to consist of Rawls' primary goods, including—most importantly—the good of self-respect.

In the section of this chapter entitled "Morality and Marx's Concept(s) of Exploitation," I first distinguish his general concept of exploitation from his concept and theory of economic exploitation. Second, I distinguish his transhistorical theory of economic exploitation from its applications to various modes of production, e.g., capitalist exploitation. In analyzing economic exploitation I further distinguish between labor theories of exploitation and distributational theories of exploitation, and between force-inclusive definitions and definitions of "exploitation" not including force or coercion as a necessary condition. I argue for a labor theory of exploitation together with a force-inclusive definition such that economic exploitation turns out to be essentially forced, unpaid, surplus labor that is transferred by one mechanism or another from economically productive to economically nonproductive classes.

Exploitation, I argue, violates Marx's principle of maximum equal freedom. On this analysis, economic exploitation is always prima facie wrong and, on Marx's empirical assumptions, almost always all-things-considered wrong in actual societies. This analysis, however, leaves open as a logical possibility that economic exploitation is not all-things-considered wrong in particular circumstances—especially circumstances one can think up when producing artificial, hypothetical scenarios. It also leaves open the possibility that economic exploitation can be condemned as bad or wrong in a particular society even when it cannot feasibly be eliminated at that point in time.

But even if it can be shown, through textual exegesis, that Marx's works contain a ubiquitous moral perspective that can even be reconstructed as a full-fledged moral theory, it is difficult to reconcile this fact with his many criticisms of morality and moral theorizing. In chapter 4 I attack the position that has come to be known as "Marx's Anti-Moralism" or "Marxist Immoralism." According to this position, Marx's writings—and, consequently, Marxism—are devoid of moral content. Sometimes this is asserted on the basis that Marxism is completely (and entirely) scientific and thus has no room whatever for morality or normative views. Sometimes it is asserted on the basis that Marx (supposedly) advocates the pursuit of "nonmoral" values such as freedom, human community, or self-realization, but not of moral values such as justice or right. (This is the position of Allen Wood and Richard Miller, for example.) Sometimes it is asserted on the basis that Marx and Marxism reject "morality" in favor of individualistic pursuit of naturalistic inclinations, i.e., in favor of a version of ethical egoism. (Feuer, Skillen, and Collier all argue along these lines.) Needless to say, I argue against these views, all of which I consider pernicious.

Another pernicious claim is that Marx and Marxists are committed, by the nature of their worldview, to the doctrines of moral historicism and/or moral futurism, that is, to the doctrines that whatever social formations have evolved or will evolve are, ipso facto morally justified. While some of Marx's remarks might lead to the belief that he held one or both of these views of morality, I argue that the preponderance of evidence is to the contrary. Further, even if Marx had held these views, there would be no good
reason for the contemporary Marxist to do so. This claim is taken up and, I believe, refuted in chapter 5.

In chapters 6 and 7 I consider the problem of justifying a moral principle or theory from a Marxist point of view. Chapter 6 takes up the cluster of issues having to do with the relation between morality and ideology. My contention is that once we become clear about the concepts of morality and ideology, there is no important sense in which morality (as a whole) is ideological and thus no reason—coming from these quarters at any rate—to repudiate morality or moral theory.

Chapter 7 takes up the apparent problem that, as Engels puts it, morality is not "absolute" or "eternal" but relative to particular socioeconomic classes or historical epochs. This brings us squarely up against the problem of moral relativism (in all its guises) and the related issues of moral objectivity and the methodology of moral theory construction. I contend that if Marx, Engels, and other Marxists had been aware of the crucial distinctions between descriptive ethical relativism, normative ethical relativism, metaethical relativism, and (what I refer to as) metaevaluative relativism, they would at least have rejected normative ethical relativism (which is the only genuinely pernicious form of ethical relativism). I argue that descriptive ethical relativism is true but trivial. In addition, I maintain that no matter what position is taken on metaethical and metaevaluative relativism, these positions weigh no more against the Marxist's normative moral judgments than anyone else's and thus are irrelevant for purposes of deciding between them.

It is my contention, in other words, that all of the objections to the compatibility of Marxism and morality taken up in chapters 4 through 7 can be met. These objections, it seems to me, are primarily the result of Marx and later Marxists either ignoring or taking mistaken positions on such metaethical issues as the nature of morality, the logical structure of moral discourse, the nature of moral argument, and the possibility of justifying moral judgments, principles, and theories. However, in fairness to Marx, Engels, and other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Marxists (and thinkers in general), it should be pointed out that most of the metaethical questions involved here had not even been properly formulated at that time, let alone answered. Thus they had a much better excuse for making such mistakes than do recent and contemporary Marxists. Some of the positions Marx and Engels take on these metaethical questions can, in fact, be seen as basically healthy reactions to the excessively metaphysical views of morality prevalent in their time. That the conceptual tools necessary to solve these philosophical problems or puzzles (e.g., the method of linguistic or conceptual analysis) had not yet evolved at that time insured, however, that many of the positions they came to endorse were inepiscopious or worse.

Since it is precisely these questions that the analytic-linguistic tradition of philosophy has examined and, to a certain extent, answered over the last several decades, my strategy is to utilize the theoretical advances of this tradition to clarify and solve (or dissolve) the problems that Marxists tend to have with morality and moral theory and to answer objections concerning the relation between Marxism and morality. I shall also utilize the advances made within Analytic Marxism, a more recently developed school within the analytic-linguistic tradition. This school or movement

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2 In particular, I have in mind such contemporary Anglo-American analytic-linguistic moral and social philosophers as R. M. Hare, Philippa Foot, G. J. Warnock, Kurt Baier, William Frankena, Richard Brandt, Isaiah Berlin, John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Brian Barry, Thomas Scanlon, Amartya Sen, John Hart, Joel Feinberg, Jeffrie G. Murphy, Richard Wasserstrom, Alan Gewirth, Henry Shue, Rolf Sartorius, Bernard Williams, Robert Paul Wolff, Stephen Lukes, Kai Nielsen, Richard Norman, Norman Daniels, Allen B. Buchanan, and Andrew Levine. (Although Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor are important figures in contemporary Anglo-American moral and social philosophy, it would probably not be accurate to describe them as analytic philosophers.) (See references in the bibliography.)

3 This school includes such social scientists as John Roemer, Robert Brenner, Eric Olin Wright, Claus Offe, Adam Przeworski, Pranab Bardhan, and Phillipe van Parijs, and such philosophers as G. A. Cohen, Jon Elster, Richard Miller, Allen W. Wood, Milton Friedman, Derek H. P. Allen, George Brenkert, Jeffrey Reiman, John McMurry, William H. Shaw, Frank Cunningham, Daniel Little, Robert Ware, Norman Geras, Anthony Skilling, Andrew Collier, David Schweickart, Iris Marion Young, Roger Gottlieb, Lawrence Crocker, Julius Senat, Gary Young, Nancy Holmstrom, Richard Arneson, and George Paniches. (Wolff, Lukes, Nielsen, Daniels, Buchanan, and Levine could also, I think, be classified as Analytic Marxists on the rather broad definition of the term I have in mind.) (See references in the bibliography.)

While I'm not sure all of these individuals would classify themselves as Analytic Marxists, they all seem to share (to a greater or lesser extent) the characteristics of being (1) grounded in the analytic-linguistic tradition of philosophy, (2) scholars of Marx and Marxism, and (3) basically sympathetic to Marxism or at least socialism. Since I utilize the writings of all these authors, the present work might almost be considered a joint effort of this school. Needless to say, the members of this school of thought are often at odds with one another over particular issues, and none of the above-listed authors can be expected to agree with all the positions taken in this work. Moreover, it will be seen that I have strong disagreements with a number of these figures. In fact, large parts of this work can be seen as a polemic against those philosophers propounding "Marxist anti-rationalism" positions particularly Wood, Miller, Skilling, and Collier.

Excellent review articles on Analytic Marxism are Miller's "Marx in Analytic Phi
seeks to apply the methods and techniques of analytic philosophy in order to interpret, clarify, reconstruct, and/or critique both the empirical and normative components of Marxism. Analytic Marxists have done much to reconstruct and critique historical materialism and Marx’s other empirical theories. They have also attempted to clarify the relation between Marxism and morality in general and between Marxism and concepts and theories of justice and/or human rights in particular. (As we shall see, however, one of the major issues dividing Analytic Marxists is whether Marxism is genuinely compatible with theories of justice and/or rights.)

In my opinion, the synthesis of these traditions is an extremely important development. It will serve as a corrective to the dogmatic and/or obscurantist philosophical traditions with which Marxists have often been involved, e.g., Soviet-sponsored and developed “diamat.” Whatever criticisms one might have of the analytic tradition, it does not lack clarity, precision, or logical rigor. On the other hand, Anglo-American moral and social theory has often been overly complacent and guilty of failing to come to grips with social reality. Whatever criticisms one might have of Marxist and socialist moral and social theory, it has not lacked substance or social relevance.

In any case, if my arguments and analyses are correct, there is no difficulty in either admitting that Marx’s worldview has a moral component or in entering into the enterprise of constructing an explicit Marxist moral theory. But has it been argued that even if this is true, a Marxist moral theory cannot be based on the concepts of social justice and/or human rights because Marx rejects these concepts and moral theories even more vehemently than morality in general. Chapter 8 examines these contentions and concludes that most of Marx’s criticisms of concepts and theories of justice and rights parallel his criticisms of morality and moral theories in general and are based on the same sorts of conceptual muddles. I argue for three theses. First, Marx (and Marxists) need theories of social justice and/or human rights insofar as they are concerned to claim that socialism—as opposed to full-fledged communism—is morally preferable to capitalism, and that the government of a socialist society has legitimate political authority to which the political obligations of its citizens correspond. Second, contrary to much recent literature on the subject, Marx implicitly espouses principles of justice that are to govern social arrangements in societies embodying what Hume and others have called the circumstances of justice (i.e., moderate scarcity and moderate egoism). Third, there is no contradiction between being committed to advancing the class interests of the proletariat (i.e., advancing the cause of socialism), on the one hand, and the demands of social justice, on the other. In fact, if what I have to say in the remaining portion of the work is basically correct, justice demands that we attempt to advance the interests of the proletariat (and other oppressed classes), especially, the cause of socialism.

To make these points clear, however, Marx’s conception of socialism must be distinguished from his conception of communism, on the one hand, and from contemporary post-capitalist societies, on the other. Full-fledged communist society—what Marx calls the “higher stage of communism” in “Critique of the Gotha Program”—is a stateless, coercionless society based on the social ownership of productive property. It presupposes material abundance (as opposed to moderate scarcity) and the spontaneous and willing cooperation of the new, “fully socialized” or “fully humanized” persons who apparently are able to reach a consensus on all social and economic questions. It is a society that has gone beyond the “narrow horizon or bourgeois right,” a society that has transcended Hume’s famed circumstances of justice (moderate scarcity and moderate egoism). Thus it is a society with no need for such juridical concepts as distributive justice or human rights since such concepts are needed (and, indeed, intelligible) only within the circumstances of justice.

On the other hand, socialism—what Marx calls the “first stage of communism”—is characterized by the socialization of productive property, the elimination of profit as the basic motive of production, and by the fact that the working class and its allies (i.e., other oppressed and exploited classes) have been raised to the position of the ruling class (or classes). It is, however, still characterized by moderate scarcity, the incomplete socialization (or humanization) of the individual, and, thus, by the continuing existence of the state—albeit a democratic state—whose function is to adjudicate between conflicting claims put forward by individuals or groups of individuals and to coordinate the pursuit of the general welfare.

Though Marx, Engels, and the other major figures of Classical Marxism (Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky, and Gramsci) thought that the socialization of productive property and the elimination of pri-
vate profit as the dominant motive in economic decision-making processes were absolute prerequisites for the development of a better society, they also characterized socialism (i.e., the first stage of communism) as being more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois societies and thought that freedom (both negative and positive) would be more extensive. Furthermore, they believed that—except in the most severe circumstances—democracy and self-determination ought to apply to decision-making processes in both the political and economic realm. As a result, they found the notion of privileged bureaucracies monopolizing such decision-making processes entirely noxious. Marx, in fact, takes the state bureaucracy to task in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, where he describes it as exploiting not only the working class and other subordinate classes but the bourgeoisie and landed aristocracy as well. In *The Civil War in France* he goes into considerable detail in describing safeguards against the bureaucratization of post-capitalist societies, including direct representational democracy, the right of immediate recall, and, most importantly—the requirement that no representative or person holding public office earn more than an average worker.

Once these distinctions are made, it is clear—it seems to me—that presently existing post-capitalist societies (i.e., so-called “communist countries”) not only fail to be communist societies, according to Marx’s definition, but also fall short of being socialist societies; they are not even societies that have reached the first stage of communism, as defined by Marx and the Classical Marxists. Although the nature of these societies is still much in dispute even among Marxists—who variously classify them as communist, state-capitalist, state-socialist, or even bureaucratic-centralist—I shall, for purposes of this work, classify them as *state-socialist*. This is meant to indicate that while they have eliminated capitalism, they are as yet still too repressive, bureaucratic, and undemocratic to be classified as socialist. From a Marxist point of view, however, it would seem that so long as one classifies them as post-capitalist societies, one must be committed to opposing the restoration of capitalism no matter what other criticisms one might have of these societies. This is because, from the Marxist point of view, such counter-revolutions would presumably constitute a retrogression of world-historical importance in the development of an international federation of democratic, self-managing socialist societies to which all Marxists are seemingly committed.

Notice, however, that the way “socialism” has been defined leaves open the choice between a socialist command economy and a socialist market economy (such as exists in Yugoslavia). Whenever economy turns out to be more efficient, more compatible with democratic social and political institutions, or—generally speaking—more in line with the principles of an adequate theory of social justice is the economy that should be chosen. Although admitting that the market could play a dominant role in a socialist society is a major revision of the Marxist perspective, the historical fact that market-socialist Yugoslavia is arguably the most democratic and self-managing as well as—in certain ways—the most productively efficient post-capitalist society in existence obviously makes this revision a live option within the Marxist tradition.

If my analysis has been correct so far, then it seems clear that the following three theses should be accepted: (1) only socialism—as opposed to full-fledged communism—is a practical historical possibility at least in terms of the near and medium future; (2) thus it is socialism—and not communism—that Marxists should be most concerned to argue for; and (3) since socialism is characterized by both moderate scarcity and a state, Marxists need a theory of right (e.g., a theory of social justice and/or human rights) and must face up to all of the problems found in traditional social and political philosophy.

Once we have accomplished what Kai Nielsen has referred to as a “metaethical and methodological clearing of the decks” concerning the relation between Marxism and both morality in general and theories of justice and rights in particular, the stage is set for analyzing Marx’s implicit theory of distributive justice. This, in turn, will set the stage for constructing an adequate theory of social justice, which, in turn, is a necessary component of an adequate Marxist moral and social theory.

In chapter 9 I consider ten Marxist and left-leaning objections to John Rawls’ theory and argue that though his theory requires certain modifications to be adequate, these are not nearly as sweep-

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4 It should be noted that the Gorbachev regime in the Soviet Union is currently pushing programs of liberalization and economic reform (glasnost and perestroika). However, it should also be noted that even if these programs were fully implemented, they would constitute a liberalization but not a full-fledged democratization of Soviet society along the lines envisioned by the Classical Marxists. Although such liberalizations are much to be desired, they would not, in and of themselves, mean that such contemporary post-capitalist societies fulfill all the requirements for being a genuine socialist—let alone communist—society.

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Rawls pointedly fails to do. I argue that an adequate theory of social justice, when applied in this manner, will lead to the conclusion that we have—as a corollary of our natural duty to support and promote just social institutions—a duty to support and promote those organizations and/or movements that have a reasonable chance to lead eventually to a worldwide federation of democratic, self-managing socialist societies.

I would like to clarify two points before proceeding to the main body of the text. The first concerns the breadth of the moral and social theory being put forward, the second whether or not the theory can be classified as Marxist.

It should be kept in mind that I do not claim to provide a comprehensive moral theory. I am offering only the outlines of what I take to be an adequate Marxist moral and social theory. And its moral component is a theory of social justice, not a theory of every aspect or level of morality. In particular, I do not offer a full-fledged theory (or vision) of the good life. I do analyze Marx's theory of the good life when I examine his concept and theory of alienation; his values of freedom (as self-determination), human community, and self-realization; and his vision of communist society. But I do not attempt a full-scale reconstruction of his theory of the good life or offer such a theory on my own. This is because I am primarily concerned with what we minimally owe one another as free and equal moral beings in a social context, i.e., in terms of considerations of social justice and/or the rights of people.

Moreover, I am not offering a theory of the virtues or even an ethic of interpersonal relationships. Like Rawls, I am concentrating on the basic social structure: first and foremost, on the economic system and the political constitution. This is justified by the fact that precisely these structures determine people’s life prospects to a very large degree. Thus, if we are committed to the notion that people have a right to equal concern and respect, this means the right extends to the design of basic social institutions and, secondly, to the design of governmental policies and programs.

Such a theory does not completely ignore the virtues since it seeks to justify or at least presupposes one virtue: that of justice or citizenship, i.e., the propensity or disposition to abide by the principles and dictates of social justice. What I and many others do assume, however, is that it is possible to develop a theory of
social justice without at the same time developing a complete theory of the virtues or an ethics of individual action. This is not to say that a theory of social justice is a complete moral theory, only that it is relatively autonomous. What this view does deny, of course, is the thesis that a theory of the virtues in any sense holds primacy over an ethics of principles, in general, or a theory of social justice in particular. Although I do not have the space to argue the point here, I believe that the autonomy of an ethics of principles, in general, and theory of social justice, in particular, can and should be maintained. In treating basic social institutions, these theories are ultimately more important than an ethics of virtue or individual action, and agreement among rational moral persons seems more readily attainable on this “minimal” set of moral views.

Another way in which the breadth of this project may seem restricted is that it does not attempt a detailed analysis of all significant social inequalities or forms of oppression. For example, it does not consider in detail the oppression of women or minorities. This is in part because the nature of such forms of oppression—in particular, the link between them and the class oppression and exploitation characteristic of capitalism—is difficult to establish. Although Marxists are prone to claim that there is such a link, in view of the fact that such forms of oppression predated capitalism and have not been completely eliminated in contemporary post-capitalist societies, this is far from clear.

The socialist movement, of course, has generally aligned itself with the demand that all such forms of inequality and oppression be eliminated. Most socialists also hold the empirical view that it is possible to accomplish this only in a democratic socialist society. In any event, the theory of justice I am putting forward in this book makes this same demand. At least to the extent that such inequalities and forms of oppression can be ameliorated by altering social institutions, programs, or policies, I believe that the implementation of the principles of social justice I have proposed in the context of a democratic, self-managing socialist society would almost certainly lead to the elimination or amelioration of these inequalities and forms of oppression.

As to the second point, some will question the Marxist pedigree of the views put forward in this work. Ultimately, it is of little concern to me whether these views are classified as Marxist or non-Marxist, but it seems to me that it would be more than a bit disingenuous to deny that they are Marxist since they are explicitly designed to defend the basic normative political positions of Classical Marxism. But a few remarks on this issue are perhaps in order.

First, some will claim that the views propounded in this work cannot be classified as Marxist because I do not accept the dialectical method, or because they do not conform to the tenets of dialectical materialism. My response to this is twofold. First, as Marx makes clear in "Afterword to the Second German Edition" of volume 1 of Capital, the dialectical method—as he employed it—is simply viewing social formations and processes diachronically as opposed to synchronically. This is something I also stress. As for dialectical materialism, it should be pointed out that as a logical, epistemological, and/or metaphysical system it is not native to Marx’s mature thought. As Robert Tucker notes:

Marx has no “dialectical materialism” as a doctrine of nature apart from history . . . “Dialectical materialism” as a theory of nature apart from human history is a development of the later scholastic period of Marxism . . . Engels . . . sought to supplement Marx’s “modern materialism” . . . with a doctrine of dialectics in nature that was a melange of Hegel at his worst and the materialism of such 19th-century writers as Haeckel.⁶

Moreover, many versions of “dialectics” and “dialectical materialism” are virtually incoherent from the start since, following Hegel, they deny the logical laws of noncontradiction, identity, and the excluded middle (usually without even adverting to the difficulties these laws may run into at the quantum level of physical reality). Therefore, if in order to be classified as Marxist a work has to reject these logical laws or accept the crude metaphysical and epistemological doctrines proffered by Engels, Stalin, Mao, and Soviet-sponsored "diamat," then this work proudly fails to qualify.

Second, against those Marxists who insist that “dialectics” is the distinctive method of Marxism and/or the only sound method for doing philosophy and/or social science, I agree with John Roemer that there is [no] specific form of Marxist logic or explanation. Too often, obscurantism protects itself behind a yoga of special terms and privileged logic. The yoga of [traditional] Marxism is ‘dialectics’. Dialectical logic is based on several propositions

which may have a certain inductive appeal, but are far from being rules of inference; that things turn into their opposites, and quantity turns into quality, [and all things are “internally” or “systematically” connected]. In Marxian social science, dialectics is often used to justify a lazy kind of teleological reasoning.\(^7\)

Jon Elster concurs. He claims that “there is no ‘dialectical reason’ that separates Marxists from ordinary mortals”\(^*\) and that “there is no specifically Marxist form of explanation [such as dialectics] . . . no commitment to any specific methods of analysis, beyond those that characterize good social science generally.” According to Elster, this means that Marxian social-scientific theory will rely on three types of explanation of social phenomena: (1) causal explanation (i.e., explaining a phenomenon by citing the antecedently occurring—but nonintentional—psychological and socioeconomic causes of the phenomenon); (2) intentional explanation (i.e., explaining a phenomenon by citing the intentions—or antecedently intended consequences—of the agents involved); and (3) consequence explanation (i.e., citing the subsequent consequences of a phenomenon in order to explain it). The most important variety of intentional explanation is rational-choice explanation (including game theory) which, according to Elster, “is becoming a central, perhaps even dominant view in the social sciences.”\(^10\) The most important variety of consequence explanation is functional explanation; i.e., explaining a phenomenon by citing the beneficial consequences that, supposedly, function to bring about the phenomenon.

Some parts of Marxist empirical theory—e.g., theories of ideology and preference formation—will probably be straightforward causal explanations citing both psychological and socioeconomic causes. Other parts, however, require intentional explanation. Almost all Analytic Marxists concede that rational-choice theory—especially, game theory—must be employed in those areas of Marxist theory involving strategic interaction: specifically, exploitation, class struggle, class alliances, and questions concerning reform and revolution. (This, of course, does not mean that the institutional constraints on people’s behavior are left out of the causal picture; from a Marxist point of view, such constraints are especially relevant to explanations of social phenomena.) Functional explanation, however, has been the subject of vigorous debate within Analytic Marxism, especially between G. A. Cohen and Jon Elster.\(^11\) The consensus that has emerged is, first, that functional explanation (in either biology or social science) is not an autonomous form of explanation since in order to be sound it must be provided with a causal story connecting the phenomenon to be explained with the beneficial consequences that follow it in time. (Such a causal story usually involves a feedback mechanism of some sort. The search for such feedback mechanisms is also referred to as “the search for microfoundations.”) The second part of the consensus, however, is that sometimes functional explanations are extremely plausible even in the absence of known causal mechanisms and that such functional explanations ought to be provisionally accepted while the search for microfoundations proceeds. (G. A. Cohen offers an illuminating example of such a situation when he argues that it probably was reasonable for most natural historians who immediately preceded Darwin to be convinced that the traits of biological organisms are generally explainable by the beneficial consequences they have for such organisms, even though these theorists did not yet have Darwin’s theory of natural selection to provide the microfoundations for this explanation.\(^12\) Similarly, it may well be reasonable to accept one formulation or another of the laws of historical materialism—which are functional laws—even though we are not now able to articulate the social-psychological microfoundations of these laws.)

Perhaps the most vigorous methodological debate still taking place within the Analytic Marxist tradition concerns the related issue of methodological individualism. According to Elster, “Methodological individualism is the view that all institutions, behavioral patterns, and social processes can in principle be explained

\(^7\) Roemer, “‘Rational Choice’ Marxism,” p. 191.
\(^*\) Elster, An Introduction to Karl Marx, p. 21.
\(^\text{10}\) Elster, “Further Thoughts on Marxism, Functionalism, and Game Theory,” p. 220.
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in terms of individuals only: their actions, properties, and relations.”

Against this view Johannes Berger and Claus Offe maintain that “in spite of the potential helpfulness of game theory it has a limited reach because social structures remain irreducible to individual acts of decision.” They further note that

Logically, the game starts only after the actors have constituted, and their order of preferences has been formed as a result of processes that cannot themselves be considered as part of the game. Instead, such limits as the resources available to the actors, their learning capacity, their priorities, and the payoffs of alternative modes of strategic behavior must be accounted for in a conceptual framework other than that of “rational choice.”

But this is not something that such Analytic Marxists as Elster and Roemer would wish to deny. It is not their position that all social phenomena are to receive intentional/rational choice/game theoretic explanations. As previously mentioned, the formation of preferences and explanations of similar constraints on behavior are precisely the sort of phenomena that require causal—as opposed to intentional—explanations. They insist only that in principle all social phenomena—including social structures—can be explained in terms of individuals. Elster holds that

adherence to methodological individualism should not blind one to the dangers of premature reductionism.

The [claim] is not that there already exists a social psychology or sociology that has effectuated a complete reduction. Rather, it is that there is no objection in principle to such a reduction being carried out, even though it may remain impracticable for the foreseeable future.

Elster attempts to preempt other possible objections to methodological individualism by specifying that

first the doctrine has no implications about the kind of individual-level explanation that is needed to carry out the reduction. In particular, the assumption that individuals are rational and selfish is not part of the doctrine, although compatible with it. Second, it does not assume that individuals are “atoms” that have a presocial existence before they come together to form society. Relations between individuals must be let in on the ground floor of social explanation. Third, it does not extend to what goes on inside people’s heads. In the phrase “The United States fears the Soviet Union,” the first collective noun is subject to reduction but not the second, because what the individual Americans fear may well be a nebulous collective entity. How ever this debate is resolved, it is clear that none of these controversies or forms of explanation has anything to do with “dialectics.” It should be noted, however, that while these three types of explanation—causal, intentional, and functional—provide Marxism (and social science in general) with a rather broad range of explanatory alternatives, much of traditional Marxist explanatory theory is eliminated if one limits oneself to them. Certainly, the teleological explanations of historical phenomena in which Marx and Marxists sometimes indulge must be expunged. The notion that history is inherently tending toward communism because it is inherently tending toward the self-actualization of human species-being—in particular, the maximization of human freedom—is simply leftover Hegelian baggage having no scientific value whatever. There are other elements that must be jettisoned as well. As Elster argues:

The Marxist methodology that [we ought] emphatically to reject is an amalgam of three elements. The first is methodological holism, the view that in social life there exist wholes or collectivities, statements about which cannot be reduced to statements about the member individuals. The second is [unconstrained] functional explanation, the attempt to explain social phenomena in terms of their beneficial consequences for someone or something, even when no intention to bring about these consequences has been demonstrated. The third is dialectical deduction, a mode of thinking that is derived from Hegel’s Logic and that does not lend itself to brief summary.

13 Elster, An Introduction to Karl Marx, p. 22.
15 Ibid., p. 525.
16 Elster, An Introduction to Karl Marx, p. 23.
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Therefore, if in order to be classified as Marxist a work must accept—without appropriate caveats—these questionable methodological assumptions or accept the obscurantist Hegelian thesis that social reality is to be explained by specifying which social and economic categories "sublate" (as in Hegel's *Aufhebung*) which other categories in a "systematic" or "dialectical" manner, then, again, this work proudly fails to qualify.

Although more sophisticated versions of dialectics and dialectical materialism have been offered by such Marxist theorists as Colletti, Schaff, Sommerville, Cornforth, and Marković, to the extent that they go beyond Marx's original thesis that social phenomena must be viewed diachronically, they can—for purposes of this work—be safely ignored.¹⁹

Second, perhaps some will claim that the moral and social theory I develop and defend cannot be considered Marxist because I

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For Marxist attempts to synthesize "dialectics" with Marx's theory of alienation, see Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, and Ollman, *Alienation*.


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do not accept certain basic or crucial Marxist empirical views. But this will depend not only on which views I accept or reject but also on which of Marx's many empirical theories are taken as canonical. While I do not accept all of Marx's empirical theories as true, I do accept a great many as being approximately true or true in a slightly modified form. Here I shall briefly summarize what I take to be Marx's major empirical theories and indicate whether I find them acceptable. (I shall have more to say about most of these views as this work progresses.)

Let us first break down Marx's empirical theories into three interrelated but distinguishable sets of views, each more general and abstract than the next. The first is his theory of history—historical materialism—which attempts to explain epochal social change by appeal to the concepts of productive forces (i.e., raw materials, instruments of production, and the productive knowledge and skill of producing agents), relations of production (i.e., the economic structure of society as determined by effective ownership rights over persons and productive forces), and the social-political superstructure (i.e., all noneconomic social institutions).

At the next level of abstraction we have Marx's theory of classes and class struggle, which puts forward theses about the nature of socioeconomic classes, the struggle of these classes over the social surplus product, the state as the agent (albeit sometimes independently minded agent) of the ruling class, the subordination of the intelligentsia and intellectual life in general to the ruling class and its interests, etc.

At the lowest level of abstraction or generality, we find Marx's analysis and critique of capitalism and his projections concerning post-capitalist societies. But here it should be noted that what might be called Marx's general labor theory of value—or, more simply, his theory of surplus value—belongs to his theory of classes and class struggle. However, the two pillars of his economic theory—namely, the specific labor theory of value (which equates abstract, homogeneous, socially necessary labor time with the prices of commodities in equilibrium market conditions) and the theory of the falling rate of profit—both belong to his analysis and critique of capitalism.

But statements of Marx's empirical views are always open to two questions. First, is the statement of the view a correct interpretation of Marx? Second, is the view, as stated, true? Consider his theory of historical materialism. On what I shall call the standard (or technological determinist) interpretation—which is based pri-
marily on Marx's famous preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*—historical materialism postulates two very general historical 'laws': (1) the 'law' of technological determinism (the forces of production determine the relations of production) and (2) the 'law' of economic determinism (the mode of production or socioeconomic base determines the social-political-legal superstructure). (The word is here put in scare quotes to indicate that these so-called 'laws' may be only law-like tendencies. Popper's objections to Marx's 'laws' are taken up in chapter 5.) G. A. Cohen puts forward this interpretation of historical materialism in his groundbreaking work, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense*. However, Richard Miller (in *Analyzing Marx: Morality, Power, and History*) and Jon Elster (in *Making Sense of Marx*) both take issue with this interpretation.

Miller and Elster contend that even though this is a fair reconstruction of Marx's general formulations of historical materialism, it is not consistent with his concrete historical analysis of epochal transformations. Miller argues for a "mode of production" interpretation of historical materialism on which "basic, internal economic change arises (whenever it does, in fact, take place) on account of a self-transforming tendency of the mode of production as a whole, that is, the [social] relations of production, the forms of cooperation and the technology through which material goods are produced."20 This means that epochal change can—and usually does—occur as a result of changes in the relations of production, i.e., these relations sometimes determine forces of production rather than the other way around. Elster agrees with Miller on this point, but what of the veracity of these interpretations? Elster, for example, attacks the standard interpretation of historical materialism for lacking social-psychological microfoundations to explain the proposed "laws" and for thus being irreducibly teleological or functionalistic. Furthermore, according to Elster, the standard theory is "inherently less plausible than an alternative account, according to which property relations are determined by their tendency to promote or hinder surplus maximization [as opposed to maximizing the rate of innovation or optimizing the forces of production]."21

The debate recorded so far primarily concerns the thesis of technological determinism. But similar questions can be raised con-

cerning the thesis of economic determinism. In fact, when it comes to interpreting Marx on this issue, one can find in his writings at least three models concerning the relation of the mode of production or economic substructure—i.e., the forces and relations of production, taken together—to the social-political-legal superstructure. The first postulates that the substructure (mode of production) strictly determines the superstructure. The second postulates that the substructure determines the superstructure, but "only in the final analysis." The third—often referred to as the organic or "dialectical" model—claims that the substructure and superstructure are "mutually determining."22

As to the question of which version of historical materialism (as a whole) is most adequate, I shall not take a position. My rationale is that the empirical theses I take to be centrally important to the formulation of an adequate Marxist moral and social theory are drawn from Marx's theory of classes and class struggle and his analysis of capitalism and projections concerning post-capitalist society. Thus, which formulation of historical materialism is most true to Marx or most nearly correct is not a major concern of this work. In fact, although I believe that the theses of some versions of historical materialism are highly plausible, it would not defeat the purpose or project of the present work if, strictly speaking, no version of historical materialism turned out to be true. Consequently, it is not imperative for purposes of the present work to take a position on every point of difference among the sophisticated reconstructions of this theory currently to be found in the works of Cohen, Miller, Elster, and others.

Let us now turn to Marx's (transhistorical) theory of classes and class struggle, which I take to be of crucial importance. This is, of course, where Marx's theory of economic exploitation comes into play: each historical form of class society is most perspicuously viewed as a struggle by the major socioeconomic classes over the social surplus product. The key to such a society lies in understanding how surplus labor (or surplus product or value) is pumped out of the productive classes by the nonproductive class (or classes) and in understanding the "laws of motion" of that mode of production. (In capitalism, for example, the capitalist class pumps surplus social product out of the working class, and the basic law of motion is that of the maximization of exchange value or, more loosely, profit.) In accord with these basic facts,
Marxist theory attempts to explain class behavior on the basis of (objective) class interests and (subjective) class consciousness and to account for the nature of the state, the nature of the dominant ideologies, etc.

Marx's even more concrete analysis of capitalism and his projections concerning post-capitalist societies are equally important for developing an adequate Marxist moral and social theory. Although certain of Marx's theses and predictions—for example, his theory of the falling rate of profit and his prediction that a stateless, conflict-free communist society inevitably will come into existence—are surely false, many of his theses concerning the economic and social dysfunctions of capitalism and his predictions concerning the rise of revolutionary movements and appearance of post-capitalist societies are just as surely true. (I shall have more to say on these matters as this work proceeds.)

I do reject the specific version of Marx's labor theory of value and—as just mentioned—his theory of the falling rate of profit under capitalism. Since the latter is taken up in detail in chapter 5, I shall not pursue it here, but my rejection of the former requires further comment. The *popular doctrine* of the labor theory of value is that the value of a commodity is determined by the amount of labor that went into creating it. But this version of the theory is false even according to Marx, who held that the value of a commodity is determined by the amount of labor socially necessary to create it, given current technology. (Following G. A. Cohen, I shall call this the *strict doctrine*.)

Marx then relates the labor value of a commodity to its price. More specifically, the value of a commodity (which supposedly is determined by the labor socially necessary to make it) determines the price of that commodity in equilibrium market conditions. Jon Elster summarizes the objections to this theory that are accepted by many contemporary Marxist economists and by most Analytic Marxists as follows:

The labor theory of value is intellectually bankrupt. The very concept of the labor content of a commodity is ill defined in the presence of heterogeneous labor or heterogeneous work tasks. Even assuming that the concept could be defined, it has no useful role to perform. The equilibrium prices and rate of profit can be determined without invoking labor values. If any connection obtains, it is rather the other way around: Prices must be known before we can deduce labor values. The labor theory of value does not provide a useful criterion for the choice of socially desirable techniques, nor does it explain the actual choice of technique under capitalism. It vitiates the otherwise important theory of fetishism and detracts from the otherwise effective criticism of vulgar economy. Nor does the labor theory of value offer any useful insights into the possibility of stable exchange rates and of surplus.

But this does not vitiate Marx's theory of exploitation as the expropriation of surplus value. As Allen E. Buchanan points out, all we need for Marx's sociology of economics to make sense is the distinction between necessary labor-time (i.e., the time it takes direct producers to produce the bundle of goods they consume) and surplus labor-time (i.e., the time they work that produces goods beyond those they consume). Furthermore, as G. A. Cohen puts it: "What raises a charge of exploitation is not that the [nonproducing] class gets some of the value the worker produces, but that it gets some of the value of what the worker produces. Whether or not workers produce value, they produce the product, that which has value."

Of course, if one takes as canonical the labor theory of value and/or the theory of the falling rate of profit, then the moral and social theory advanced in this work cannot be considered Marxist. It is not clear, however, that these views must or should be accepted as canonical. Although it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty which of Marx's many views are canonical, I would assert that any perspective that accepts substantial parts of (1) Marx's theory of classes and class struggle, (2) his analysis of the social and economic dysfunctions of capitalism, and (3) his projections concerning at least the first (or "lower") stage of communism, and that, in addition, accepts the basic normative political positions of Marxism, ought to be labeled "Marxist." In fact, I would assert—with some qualifications—that the sine qua non of Marxism is its normative component. As Elster states:

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26 See Buchanan, *Marx and Justice*, p. 46.

Marxism is defined mainly by two . . . features. First, the belief that alienation and exploitation interfere with the good life for man and that their suppression is not only desirable but feasible. Or at the minimum, the unfeasibility of suppressing them has not been proven. Secondly, Marxism is characterized by a few fundamental theoretical assumptions about the structure and development of societies, with emphasis on the interrelation between property rights, technical change, and class struggle. Of these, the first, normative element constitutes the *sine qua non* of Marxism. The second, explanatory element can to some extent be modified and revised without loss of identity. Only to some extent however, since the normative theory itself would have to be given up if it were to be shown that the Marxist proposals are radically unfeasible, either in the sense that even the first stage of communism would not be viable or in the sense that capitalism will never produce a communist revolution [or transition].

In order to elucidate and refine this normative content it is, in my opinion, essential to bring recent and contemporary analytic political philosophy to bear. We should not even be surprised, I think, to find that there is considerable overlap in the ethical views espoused by contemporary left-liberal moral and social philosophers within the analytic-linguistic tradition and Analytic Marxists (or, indeed, Marxists in general). As John Roemer puts it:

To demonstrate the nature of [the] injustice [of class-divided, exploitative societies] political philosophy must be called upon. . . . These are not questions of positive history, but of philosophy concerning what constitutes a desirable or just society. The sharpest form of the political debate on this question [of what constitutes a desirable or just society] is between Marxists and libertarians on questions of self-ownership, inheritance, and various kinds of rights. [But] it is not at all clear how analytical Marxists will differ [on these questions] from non-Marxist philosophers like Ronald Dworkin, John Rawls, and Amartya Sen . . . the lines drawn between contemporary analytical Marxism and contemporary left-liberal political philosophy are fuzzy. This indicates there is a common core, yet to be elucidated.

27 Elster, "Further Thoughts on Marxism, Functionalism, and Game Theory," p. 220.

(It is my hope that the present work will go a long way toward elucidating this common core.)

Another challenge to the Marxist pedigree of the moral and social theory developed in the present work would be one that challenged the analysis of contemporary post-capitalist societies offered here and/or the claim that political revolutions to democratize such societies might be justified on a Marxist point of view. Few, if any, Marxists and Marxologists will dispute my description of the Marxist’s basic normative political positions: socialism—i.e., democratic self-managing socialism—is morally preferable to any form of capitalism and any other form of society possible in the present historical epoch, and revolution, if necessary and sufficient to effect the appropriate transformations, is *prima facie* morally justified. However, many Marxists will reject my characterization of contemporary post-capitalist societies as state-socialist, i.e., as not even meeting Marx’s criteria for the first stage of communism. Although to some extent this may be an empirical dispute concerning how democratic and open (i.e., non-repressive) contemporary post-capitalist societies are, for the most part it is a verbal dispute concerning the terms “socialism” and “communism.” My only claim is that the definitions given these terms by the Classical Marxists prevent existing post-capitalist societies from being classified as either socialist or communist.

What flows from this claim, however, depends on what additional empirical assumptions one accepts. If one adduces that so-called communist societies are not post-capitalist societies at all but—as some Marxists claim—state-capitalist societies, then one presumably does not look upon them as historically progressive, in the sense of being steps toward a world socialist society, and thus would not necessarily care if they were transformed into more traditionally recognizable forms of capitalism. If, on the other hand, one holds that such societies have eliminated capitalism and are at least a halting step toward a worldwide democratic socialist society (or federation of such societies), then one would view them as historically progressive in the above sense and thus presumably would be opposed to their being transformed again into capitalist societies. Although I will not argue for it here, it seems abundantly clear that the latter position is the one in accord with the tenets of Classical Marxism.

An even more controversial position I assume to be in line with the tenets of Classical Marxism is that political revolutions are *prima facie* morally justified if necessary and sufficient to transform
CONTEMPORARY POST-CAPITALIST SOCIETIES INTO DEMOCRATIC, SELF-MANAGING SOCIALIST SOCIETIES. SOME MARXISTS—FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE PROCLAMATION THAT THE U.S.S.R. PASSED FROM THE FIRST TO THE HIGHEST STAGE OF COMMUNISM IN THE LATE 1950S—PROBABLY WOULD CLAIM THAT SUCH REVOLUTIONS ARE NOT NECESSARY BECAUSE THESE SOCIETIES ARE ALREADY DEMOCRATIC AND SELF-MANAGING. ALTHOUGH THIS HARDLY SEEMS A TENABLE POSITION, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THE REVOLUTIONS CALLED FOR ARE NOT SOCIAL REVOLUTIONS DESIGNED TO CHANGE THE MODE OF PRODUCTION OR CLASS POWER BUT, RATHER, POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS DESIGNED TO MAKE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS MORE DEMOCRATIC AND LESS REPRESSIVE. IN FACT, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CLASSICAL MARXISTS, THERE IS ALWAYS A PRIMA FACIE CASE TO OPPOSE A SOCIAL REVOLUTION DESIGNED TO RETURN SUCH POST-CAPITALIST SOCIETIES TO CAPITALISM SINCE SUCH COUNTER-REVOLUTIONS WOULD BE VIEWED AS SEVERE BLOWS TO THE LONG-TERM PROCESS OF CREATING A WORLD SOCIALIST SOCIETY. IN ADDITION, SINCE PEACEFUL EVOLUTION IS (ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL) ALWAYS MORE PREFERABLE TO VIOLENT REVOLUTION, PROONENTS OF THE POSITION I AM ATTRIBUTING TO CLASSICAL MARXISM WILL ADVOCATE SUCH POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS ONLY IF THERE IS A VIABLE REFORMIST ALTERNATIVE.

Finally, a challenge to the Marxist qualifications of the moral and social theory put forward in this work might be based on the rejection of my claim that market socialism may ultimately be preferable to any other form of post-capitalist as well as capitalist society. Note, however, that my definition of “democratic, self-managing socialism” does not automatically decide in favor of either a command or a market socialist economy. Thus one could accept the moral and social theory propounded in this work and simply reject the claim that market socialism is a feasible alternative.

However, a growing number of Marxists—having observed the historical experience of Yugoslavia’s market socialist society, which has existed since the early 1950s—have come to the conclusion that market socialism is a viable and perhaps preferable historical alternative. Since Marx emphasized that actual historical developments will illuminate the structure of future post-capitalist societies, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have seriously considered the implications of the fact that market economy post-capitalist societies (i.e., Yugoslavia) have arguably proved more economically efficient, more democratic, and less repressive than post-capitalist societies having command economies. It is important to note, however, that there are two structural features of market socialism that add up to an answer to many of Marx’s objections to capitalist market economies. First, economic enterprises are to a large degree democratically controlled by their workers. The consequence is that labor can no longer be considered exploited as it is under capitalism because, as Schweickart puts it, “labor is not another ‘factor of production’ technically on par with land and capital. Labor is not a commodity at all, for when a worker joins a firm, she becomes a voting member, and entitled to a specific share of the net revenue.” (The notion of exploitation will be defined and analyzed in the last section of chapter 3.)


On the philosophical plane, self-managing market socialism is ably defended by Stejamović, Marković, Petrović, Supek, and other members of the Praxis school of Yugoslavian Marxists. Perhaps the most sophisticated attempt at integrating both economic and philosophical arguments in defense of this system is David Schweickart’s Capitalism or Worker Control?

Two excellent anthologies containing articles by economists, sociologists, and philosophers are Horvat et al. (eds.), Self-Governing Socialism (2 vols.) and Vanek (ed.), Self-management: Economic Liberation of Man.


It should be noted, however, that Yugoslavia is currently suffering its worst economic crisis of the post-war period. The figures are depressing. Foreign debt rose from $4 billion to $20 billion between 1972 and 1981. Inflation is currently running at 20 percent annually, with wage increases restricted to 13 percent. Unemployment stands at 15 percent, and the annual growth rate is currently less than 2 percent per year. How this downturn in Yugoslavia’s economic fortunes is best analyzed is debatable. Some will claim it shows that market socialism is inherently unworkable. Others see it as a temporary setback or the result of Yugoslavia’s economy being too closely tied to the world capitalist market. Of those who believe that Yugoslavia’s current economic problems show an inherent weakness of market socialism, some see the solution as less economic planning and/or greater privatization of the economy (i.e., a return to capitalism), while others see the solution as more economic planning and less privatization (moving toward a socialist command economy). Perhaps only empirical evidence gathered from the further development of the current Yugoslavian experience and/or other future experiments in market socialism will answer these questions.

Schweickart, Capitalism or Worker Control?, p. 51.
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The second structural feature is that investment is democratically controlled by society. Thus, it is argued, market socialism contains the best of both worlds (or, in this case, economies). It is supposed to maintain the efficiencies of the market while eliminating or ameliorating the dysfunctions of capitalist systems. For example, social control of investment capital arguably eliminates or at least ameliorates the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism since it eliminates the phenomenon of the "investment strike" by private owners of capital during economically pessimistic periods. Moreover, it is argued that other phenomena that can be characterized as dysfunctional (such as the sales effect, the denigration of the value of labor, and the rapid depletion of natural resources) can also be eliminated or ameliorated. The argument here is as follows: (1) many of the dysfunctions of capitalism depend upon the tendency of the capitalist market to expand (which is the only sure way to keep the investment climate healthy and thus prevent an "investment strike"); (2) a market socialist economy need not constantly expand to be healthy; therefore, (3) a market socialist economy need not suffer these dysfunctions.\footnote{For a more detailed rendering of this argument, see chapters 2, 3, and 4 of Schweickart's \textit{Capitalism or Worker Control}?}

While it is true that this view will necessitate giving up some of Marx's arguments against capitalism, based on the evils of the market per se, the Marxist tradition will not lack strong arguments against capitalism. They will be based on such dysfunctions as those mentioned above, as well as on the fact that private ownership of productive property leads to extreme differentials of wealth and power. (I cite additional considerations in chapter 10.)

Although my theory leaves the question an open one, if market socialism can be shown by theoretical arguments and/or historical observation to fulfill best the principles of an adequate moral theory or, more precisely, an adequate theory of social justice, then Marxist orthodoxy must give way. If market socialism can be expected to meet the criteria of a just society more effectively, then the claim that it is preferable must be accepted whether or not the position can legitimately be classified as Marxist. After all, what is ultimately of importance is the correctness of a position or theory, not its pedigree.