Work and Freedom in Marcuse and Marx

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Herbert Marcuse's writings constitute a modification of Marxian socialism, a reinterpretation of the teachings of Karl Marx which attempts to account more fully for social changes since Marx's time. However, this modification of Marxian theory involves a complete revision of various conceptions which are fundamental to Marx's thought. It is the purpose of this article to indicate the source of a major theoretical difference between Marx and Marcuse and to suggest various currents which flow from this source.

Marcuse, it shall be shown, is caught within a system of thought which he calls "technological rationality." This mode of thought arises from the view that the "telos" or end of history is the domination of nature. Nature is to be dominated or controlled by men because all human desires cannot be satisfied from her fruits. Thus nature appears as a stern and incomprehensible taskmaster. Further, she is such a poor and mean provider that she forces her children to rise up against her. Nature is to be tortured until she delivers her secrets to men; these hitherto unknown forces (the secret store of nature's power) are to be ferreted out and brought under the conscious control of men (as history). Human desires are increasingly fulfilled through the concrete application of these secrets as productive techniques. Historical advance is seen as progression in technology. The harnessing and exploitation of all natural and human resources for the purpose of dominating nature and alleviating the scarcity of nature is *the* historical project. All human endeavours are to be integrated towards this end. The plurality of human aims are "rational" only to the extent that they contribute to the domination of nature. Politics becomes reducible to economics; ethics, to the techniques for rendering conscious the unconscious forces in man and nature.

Technological development is the concrete embodiment of reason in history. Human liberation is the work of reason, of technological rationality; men are free to the extent that they subjugate nature. Automation is the condition for total liberation. Also automation, the complete domination of nature by man, undercuts the grounds of the domination of man by man. The existence of classes, and the conflict between them, is due to scarcity. This condition obtains with the reign of nature whose sovereignty is ever eroded by technical advances. Technology will conquer scarcity and simultaneously class conflict. Class war is secondary to the war of man and nature. The transcendence of class conflict, "the end of history," will spring from the complete victory of man over nature, and in turn will allow the full control and planning of social development.

It is often thought that Marx was, as Marcuse is, an adherent of "technological rationality." Indeed there are various strands in Marx's writing which accord with this system of thought. But Marx was not an adherent of this mode

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of thought because he did not believe, as does Marcuse, in the abolition of work, in complete automation. Marx did not think it possible that men could ever cease to work; nor did he think such a utopian possibility would be desirable. Work is seen by Marx as an interchange between man and nature which may be either an activity of freedom or of bondage; it is not, as with Marcuse, inherently unfree, a legacy of man's servitude to nature.

However, before proceeding further, we might illustrate what is meant by "technological rationality" by reference to Aristotle, a thinker whose standards of rationality stand in direct contrast to those of Marcuse. As opposed to the doctrine of natural scarcity propounded by Marcuse, the doctrine of natural plenty is central to Aristotle's *Politics*. He writes that "it is the business of nature to furnish subsistence for each being brought into the world" (1258a). "Property ... for the purpose of subsistence is evidently given by nature to all living beings ..." (1256b). However, Aristotle did not think nature provided sufficiently to allow all men leisure to attend to affairs of state or to do philosophy, the two supremely human activities. Certain men, namely, the class of slaves, are condemned to "the realm of necessity," to spend their time and energy in the production of the necessities of life.

Thus, for Aristotle, nature's plenty is not incompatible with the existence of a class of men who are kept from "the realm of freedom," who are deprived of the opportunity to deliberate about public affairs, to choose amongst alternative courses of action which bear vitally on their lives. Although Aristotle recognizes that a number of men may be wrongfully prevented from realizing their potential (the slaves who are so only "by convention"), he feels that the existence of slaves is not inherently inconsistent with nature's plenty. For, he argues, certain men are by nature slaves. Nature creates these men deficient in spirit to be willing to die for freedom and lacking in reason to be able to make a fruitful contribution to political life. Aristotle argues that, if a man is a slave by nature, it is natural, and in fact in the slave's own interest, that his activities be organized and his life ruled by those more capable than himself (1255b).

There is, however, one strange anomaly in Aristotle's account of slavery which bears on our discussion of Marcuse's belief that nature is to be subjugated. Aristotle writes that "there is only one condition on which we can imagine managers not needing subordinates, and masters not needing slaves. This condition should be that each (inanimate) instrument could do its own work ... if a shuttle should weave of itself, and a plectrum should do its own harp-playing" (1253b). Thus Aristotle imagines, although he does not develop this suggestion, that class divisions can be rendered superfluous if production could be automated. However, Aristotle does not consider this to be a real possibility. Nor, because of his view of the natural differences between men would he consider automation desirable. The conquest of nature would create such a chaotic condition that no one would be fulfilled.

Aristotle is able to consider nature to be bounteous because he does not consider all men to be equal, to have the potential to make fruitful use of leisure time. Marcuse considers nature to be niggardly, and for this reason, to be subjugated and controlled by productive techniques, because he considers all men

Le travail et la liberté chez Marcuse et Marx

L'article examine le système de pensée que Marcuse appelle la « rationalité technologique ». Ce système assigne, comme fin à l'histoire, la domination de la nature par la maîtrise de ses forces, dans le monde extérieur comme dans la conscience humaine. D'après les tenants de ce système, les projets historiques alternatifs sont une perte de temps et d'efforts que les hommes rationnels doivent repousser.

Marx n'a pas été un adepte de cette théorie, quoique certains éléments de sa pensée, adoptés par les Bolsheviks et Marcuse, y correspondent. Marx n'était pas d'accord avec l'idée défendue par Marcuse que le travail est le legs de la dépendance des hommes à l'endroit de la nature : d'après lui, le travail n'est pas seulement une conséquence fatale des exigences de la subsistance, mais aussi un besoin fondamental qui permet à l'homme de réaliser ses capacités par la production. Le « travail libre » n'y est donc pas une contradiction dans les termes comme chez Marcuse ; c'est une possibilité dans la réalité et c'est une possibilité que la révolution socialiste pourrait réaliser.

L'idée que le travail est mécanique et oppressif par nature a conduit Marcuse à reviser la théorie marxienne de façon substantielle. Il refuse l'interprétation matérialiste voulant que la modification des moyens et des rapports de production soient à la source des changements sociaux. Il ne croit pas que le contrôle du processus de la production par les travailleurs soient la base de leur émancipation : une production nécessaire est forcément répressive, non-libre, et la liberté n'est possible qu'au-delà de la contrainte production. Les changements techniques ne rendent pas le travail moins mécanique et la participation des travailleurs à la formation des politiques industrielles et aux moyens de les réaliser ne libèrent pas le travail. La liberté étant au-delà du processus de production, l'automation est la condition de la libération humaine. Cette automation sera réalisée le plus efficacement au moyen de la planification centrale et de l'orientation des forces productives existentes par une élite incontrôlée. Aussi une révolution dans la conscience des hommes, une révolution culturelle, est-elle nécessaire pour leur faire admettre le règne des technocrates « rationnels » ?

Marx n'était pas un adepte de la « rationalité technologique » parce que sa théorie tâchait d'abord de délimiter les conditions de la liberté et du développement de l'homme au sein du processus de la production, et non pas de le libérer de la servitude naturelle du travail. C'est dans l'adoption de la « rationalité technologique » qu'il faut voir, chez Marcuse, la source de son rejet du matérialisme marxien, sa justification de l'exploitation maximale des forces de l'homme et de la nature pour fins d'automation et ses tendances anti-démocratiques.

to have an equal claim to be free from toil. Is then the doctrine of natural plenty in conflict with that of human equality? Not necessarily, for reasons that both Aristotle and Marcuse do not consider. Nature's plenty and human equality are compatible if and only if the interaction between man and nature (work) is not necessarily degrading and servile. Marx, as will be shown, was able to envisage a classless society in which men worked, a view that neither Aristotle nor Marcuse could share.

We may see from the quotation above that Aristotle did not think weaving or harp-playing were activities befitting free men. Work and freedom are incompatible according to Aristotle and, as we shall see, according to Marcuse as well.

Marx did not believe that work is inherently oppressive. Indeed it is central

to Marx's thought that work is not to be considered as a means to procure subsistence but rather as a means to express human personality.[1] Work is the means whereby men objectify their "subjectivity," externalize inner needs and talents, actualize their potential, give concrete form to their latent capacities, or realize their human nature. Productive activity is men creating and defining themselves; it is the means whereby men obtain an identity. Work, for Marx, is the uniquely human activity; in contrast to the animals, "man produces when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom."[2] Work can thus be an end in itself, a "joy."[3] Considered abstractly, work is the self-realization of the human personality. Indeed work must be such for Marx to distinguish between non-alienated and alienated labour. The former is not repressive; in fact, it constitutes human self-realization. But alienated labour is the means by which an individual's "realization is his loss of reality";[4] his capacities are repressed rather than expressed in production.

Alienation, for Marx, arises from the separation of the worker from the means of production, from the ownership of the means of production by non-labourers. In such a condition, an individual must alienate his labour-power to a capitalist in order to obtain a subsistence wage. The capitalist prescribes production goals, the amount of labour to be done, and the methods by which it is to be done; the worker has no interest in his work except to obtain the wages necessary to support himself and his family. Such labour is hated toil which elicits none of the labourer's qualities.

The means of production are, in Marx's view, the conditions for the expression of human personality. This is why the question of the ownership of the means of production is of such central importance to Marx. To possess the means of production is to be able to express one's nature in production; to be separated from the means of production is to be forced to alienate one's personality in labour.

Thus, for Marx, work is not necessarily unfree. Marcuse recognizes that Marx's early writings express the desire to see an alteration in the conditions of production so that men can freely realize their capacities in work. But Marcuse is wrong to assert that

> The later Marxian concept implies the continued separation between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom, between labor and leisure – not only in time, but also in such a manner that the same subject lives a different life in two realms. According to this Marxian conception, the realm of necessity would continue under socialism to such an extent that real human freedom would prevail only outside the entire sphere of socially necessary labor.[5]

Marcuse is referring to the following passage in *Capital*:

> Freedom in [production] can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as the blind forces of Nature; and

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[1] See *The German Ideology* (London, 1965), 31–2.
[2] *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (Moscow, 1961), 75.
[3] *Ibid.*, 79.
[4] *Ibid.*, 105–6.
[5] *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969), 20–1.

achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite.[6]

Marx does think that a shortening of the working day is a basic condition of human freedom, that leisure and education are essential for the extension of the human personality through work. But Marcuse does not indicate that Marx thought the realm of necessity could itself be free. For Marx, in his mature as well as his early writings, work is not inherently unfree, oppressive; rather work, even in the realm of necessity, "is itself the activity of freedom." Marx does not agree with Adam Smith that work is to be considered a punishment for original sin:

A. Smith seems far from seeing that an individual, "in his normal conditions of health, strength, activity, capacity and skill," has also the need for a normal portion of work, for an end to rest. To be sure, the amount of work itself appears given externally in the aim sought and the obstacles to the attainment of that end to be overcome by labour. But A. Smith has just as little an inkling of the fact that this overcoming of obstacles is in itself the activity of freedom – and that further the appearance of merely external natural necessity is stripped off from external ends and that these ends can be posited as those the individual sets himself – that thus work is the activity of self-realization, of the objectification of the subject, therefore real freedom.[7]

It is crucial to stress that Marx did not think that work is inherently oppressive, a view which distinguishes his thought from that of Marcuse. For Marx, a post-capitalist mode of production does not depend primarily on the automation of production as it does for Marcuse,[8] but upon different conditions of production, namely, new uses of machinery and altered relations of production. Communism, in Marx's understanding, is not the abolition of labour but rather radical improvements in the conditions under which men labour. The end of the communist movement was not the elimination of the working class but rather the creation of conditions in which work is an activity of freedom, dignity and fulfilment. Marx wishes to see the workers' potential realized in work whereas Marcuse sees no potentialities to be realized in work. As Marcuse sees work to be inherently oppressive, the end of the workers must be the total negation of what they are; their historical function is to become non-labourers, to deny their qualities and needs as labourers. It is perhaps not surprising that Marcuse's doctrine, unlike that of Marx, has been espoused solely by the middle class. We shall return to this point later on in our discussion.

According to Marx, it is an eternal necessity that men work. "Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production."[9] The realm of necessity then continues in

[6]*Capital* (Moscow, 1962), III, 800.
[7]*Grundrisse der Kritik der Politichen Oekonomie* (Berlin, 1953), 505.
[8]See prefaces to *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, 1961) and *Negations* (Boston, 1968); *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1966), 16, 36–7.
[9]*Capital*, III, 799.

communist society. Work is necessary but it is not of an oppressive character. Marx foresees the use of new productive techniques whereby a worker is not compelled to exert his energy in one simple task; machines with replaceable parts and men with well-rounded educations and vocational training will render the existing division of labour obsolete. Mechanized labour is not, for Marx, inherently mechanical. Solidarity amongst the workers, engineers, and technicians will result in the invention of machines designed not primarily to maximize consumer goods and profits in production but to realize and develop the creative capacities of workmen.

Marx states that "... an early combination of productive labour with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present day society."[10] In communist society, education will be combined with production.[11] Marx did not mean by this that persons are to receive a narrow vocational training that would necessitate the co-ordination and supervision of specialized tasks by more generally educated men.[12] Rather the reverse. Not only would this combination of work and education prepare the workers for a variety of functions but also would serve to bridge the gap between mental and physical labour, managerial and manual labour; each individual would be able to "take part in the general – both theoretical and practical – affairs of society."[13]

The combination of work with education would mean that theoretical knowledge could be practically applied in workshops and practical problems on the shop floor could be clarified in the schools. The educative process is two-way; problems being posed in both the factory and the school room, or the land and agricultural colleges, and solutions being found in both places. Education is to follow the bent and inclination of the student rather than being merely bookish or monotonous, the use or practical application of which is beyond the imagination of most students. The science of mechanics would be more appealing to young men and women after they have operated machines and are perplexed by their operation and the principles behind their operation. Biology and soil chemistry would not be merely academic disciplines when children work with animals and the planting of crops. The combination of work with education, for Marx, has the purpose of instilling in people the scientific and technical knowledge regarding the productive process at an age when persons are most receptive to, and curious about, scientific problems, when the mind has not been blunted by purely manual labour nor dulled by purely academic problems which appear to have no practical pertinence.

Marx characterized capitalism as an inversion of the subject and object of work. That is, Marx thought that machines had come to determine the movement of men's minds and bodies rather than men determining the movement of machines. In Marx's view, most of the producers in pre-capitalist societies, through the exercise of their imagination and intelligence, determined the form and character of their work and had command over their instruments of production, but in capitalist society all the skill and knowledge that was once the property of the craftsmen becomes incorporated in machines and men become

[10]*Critique of the Gotha Programme* (Moscow, 1959), 36.
[11]*The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Moscow, n.d.), 81; *Capital*, I, 484, 488.
[12]*Grundrisse*, 593.
[13]F. Engels, *Anti-Duehring* (Moscow, 1954), 252.

mindless machine minders. Tasks become simple, repetitive, and mechanical; no imagination or intelligence is required of the workmen in production. All the science and technical knowledge is embodied in machines and all the organizational labour is the function of the capitalists. This, in crude outline, is Marx's understanding of the alienation of the labourer from the mental conditions of production which follows upon his separation from the material conditions of production. It is this alienation which the combination of work and education is designed to remedy. A revolution in education is essential to provide the workers with intellectual command over industrial processes.

Marcuse never discusses Marx's fruitful suggestion regarding the combination of work and education. This is because Marcuse does not think the process of production can be substantially improved, made less oppressive and more fulfilling. As he writes, "The more complete the alienation of labor, the greater the potential of freedom: total automation would be the optimum. It is the sphere outside labor which defines freedom and fulfillment ..."[14] Or even more explicitly, Marcuse writes that "necessary labor is a system of essentially inhuman, mechanical and routine activities; in such a system, individuality cannot be a value and an end in itself. Reasonably, the system of societal labor would be organized rather with a view to saving time and space for the development of individuality outside the inevitably repressive work-world."[15]

Marcuse, as distinct from Marx, believes the realm of necessity to be unalterably opposed to the realm of freedom. Marcuse sees the two realms to be based on two different principles. The realm of necessity is structured on the performance principle – that is, on the principle that one must renounce the pursuit of immediate pleasure for the external purpose of subsistence production, organized by a bureaucracy over which one has no control.[16] The realm of freedom is structured on the pleasure principle, on the principle that desires are to be immediately fulfilled through the exercise of the imagination, play, sexual relations, etc.

Marx did not think that human life and personality was to be split in two. Nor did he think total automation is the condition of human freedom. Freedom would arise, Marx thought, with the abolition of the division between mental and manual labour brought about by the combination of education with work. Automation, rather than freeing men, would oppress men if, as Marx thought, "labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want"[17] in communist society. According to Marx's view of post-capitalist society, the work-world is clearly not to be divorced from a realm of human fulfilment.

Marcuse's revision of Marx centres around the unalterable opposition between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom. In Marcuse's understanding of capitalist society, the former totally engulfs the latter; the cycle of toil and relaxation completely exhaust the time of modern men: no time is left for true leisure or play. Technical resources are present to allow all men a substantial part of the day free from toil, but this potential is not actualized because the ruling élite artificially expands the realm of necessity through the

[14] *Eros and Civilization*, 142; cf. *An Essay on Liberation*, 20–1; *One-Dimensional Man*, 16, 37; *Negations*, 258.
[15] *Eros and Civilization*, 178.
[16] *Ibid.*, 199; *One-Dimensional Man*, 44, 251–2.
[17] *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 22.

simulated needs created by planned obsolescence, advertising, etc., and by armaments to be used against the enemies of the élite within and without the society. Marcuse argues that because a capitalist economy requires an armaments industry and a conditioned demand for useless commodities, men have to work much harder in order to maintain the capitalist system and the interests of its dominant class, than they would if they produced only for themselves. Thus the repression exercised by the capitalist class in order to constantly expand production is more than that necessary for the reproduction of life under a socialist mode of production. This "surplus repression" pervades all facets of modern life. The work ethos, or the performance principle engendered by the ruling class for its interests of domination, totally invades men's personalities to the instinctual level, preventing them from having satisfactory erotic relations, an accurate awareness of their relations, a creative imagination, etc. Free instinctual gratification would divert the energy requisite to surplus-production and would hence undermine the capitalist system. Thus the ruling class manipulates men to accept safe outlets for their desires, outlets which impair mental health but which do not sap energy for production. The resolution of this unfortunate state of affairs can only arise through a revolution against the capitalist class which will eliminate surplus repression and, by so doing, will increase the realm of freedom and decrease the realm of necessity.

This revolution, according to Marcuse, will make concrete the potentialities of freedom in advanced industrial countries. Ever-increasing automation will force the realm of necessity to recede in the face of the growing realm of freedom. Then, "the expanding realm of freedom becomes truly a realm of play – of the free play of individual faculties."[18] Work becomes play, sensual pleasure of, as Fourier put it, "travail attrayant."[19] Thus, in Marcuse's view, in post-capitalist society work becomes play; all human activities are motivated by the pleasure principle, by erotic inclination. Production, in Marcuse's communist society, will become as free and enjoyable as any human activity or relationship.

Marx's view of communal production stands in marked contrast to that of Fourier and Marcuse. Work in communist society, Marx says, will constitute "self-realization of the individual, which does not mean that it becomes mere fun, mere amusement, as Fourier thinks with the naïvety of a flowergirl (grisette). Truly free work, e.g., composition, is damned serious and, at the same time, it is the most intensive exertion."[20]

Marcuse believes that Marx's austere ethos is to be overthrown; he recommends a turning away from Marx to Fourier, since the former does not think work can become play.[21] Marcuse foresees a transformation from the work ethos and its culture hero, Prometheus, to a pleasure ethos and its culture heroes, Orpheus and Narcissus. The former, a suffering servant of humanity, is dedicated, in Marcuse's eyes, to the principles of industry, whereas the latter represent the more indolent pleasures of artistic creation and intellectuality. It is around the images of Orpheus and Narcissus that the new world is to be structured.[22]

[18] *Eros and Civilization*, 204.
[19] *Ibid.*, 199–201. Marcuse cites F. Armand and R. Maublanc, *Fourier : textes choisis* (Paris, 1937), II, 240 ff.
[20] *Grundrisse*, 505; cf. p. 599.
[21] *An Essay on Liberation*, 21–2.
[22] *Eros and Civilization*, chaps. 8–10.

The closing words of Marx's doctoral dissertation are, "Prometheus is the noblest saint and martyr on the philosophical calendar." And, since Marcuse has explicitly identified his view of communism with that of the utopian socialist Fourier, Marx thought Fourier, and would think Marcuse, as naïve as a flower-girl.

Marx differed from the utopian socialists, Owen, Fourier, and St Simon, in three fundamental and interrelated respects. First, they did not perceive that the motive force of history is developments in productive forces or that social development is based upon advances in production relations and techniques. Secondly, they did not indicate the means whereby their social ideas would be implemented in practice. These socialists were not scientific, according to Marx, because they did not see that the working class could verify socialist hypotheses through revolutionary action. Thirdly, utopians foresaw a socialist society ruled by a rational managerial élite. Marx, on the other hand, foresaw socialist society to be based on the power of the working class, power generated by the effective control of the means of production.

Marcuse agrees with the utopian socialists in the above-mentioned differences with Marx. In discussing these differences in greater detail, I hope to show that they are facets of a single disagreement between Marcuse and Marx; that is, the former does not think that workers, while they remain workers, can become free, while Marx believes they can. In order to throw light on Marcuse's differences with Marx, an account of Marx's conception of history is in order.

The materialist interpretation of social development is an assertion that alterations in the relations between social classes depend on, and must be accompanied by, transformations in productive techniques, by developments in the kinds and uses of machinery. Social movements which are not based or materially embodied in developments in technical processes cannot issue forth in transformed social relations. It is for this reason that some think the Soviet Union has not abolished class divisions since no new productive forces have emerged which could render a ruling class redundant.

The materialist conception, however, does not assert that the level of technological development constitutes the level of social development. For example, Marx nowhere asserts or implies that Oriental despotisms are based on a lower level of technical advance than Ancient or Feudal modes of production. What distinguishes one economic epoch from another is the distinctive ways in which instruments of production are used and the different ways in which men relate to one another in production. Nor does Marx think that socialism is distinguished from capitalism simply in virtue of a higher level of technological development. A socialist mode of production is to be based on different uses of machinery and different productive relations. Marx tersely asserts: "The idea of some socialists, that we need capital but not capitalists, is completely false."[23]

But, for Marcuse, there is to be no substantial alteration in the means (machinery) and relations of production in the transformation from capitalist to socialist society. Socialist society is "'new' not only(and perhaps not at all) with respect to technical innovations and production relations, but with respect

[23]*Grundrisse*, 412.

to the different human needs and the different human relationships in working for the satisfaction of these needs."[24]

Thus Marcuse is not concerned with a transformation in what Marx called the "base" or the infrastructure of society but only with the "superstructure." Marx thought the base of society consisted of the means and relations of production which shaped the superstructure of society, that is, the forms of consciousness, the modes of consumption, societal relations and institutions such as the family, church, fraternal associations, etc., laws, and the forms of the state apparatus. The superstructure in turn asserts an influence on the base of society, according to Marx, which may modify the structure of society so as to aggrevate or diminish class conflict but not to the extent that it can transform the fundamental class relations of that society. Changes in laws, in forms of consciousness, and social institutions are usually secondary to developments in productive forces of society. When there is an alteration in the superstructure which is not accompanied by developments in technical processes or productive relations, this change is at best a mere illusion of progress. Crudely expressed, developments in the base of society are, for Marx, basic; developments solely in the superstructure are superficial.

Marcuse is not concerned with "basic" transformations in society; he is not interested in the technical innovations that would make mechanized labour less mechanical: nor does he deal with reorganization of unions nor with workers' participation in industry. Rather, after his violent denunciation of capitalism, in the rather limp conclusion to *One-Dimensional Man*, he advocates an extension of the welfare state, the elimination of the spurious needs created by advertising, an extension of birth control programs, an increase in privacy so as not to compel the sensitive to be inflicted with the "sounds, sights and smells" of the mass, the prevention of the pollution of air and water, the creation of parks and gardens, and the better treatment of animal life.[25] Many of these programs may be worthy objectives, but it is less clear that they would constitute basic changes in our economical system, changes which are fundamental to a socialist revolution.

The reason that Marcuse does not advocate radical alteration in the economic base of society is because he perceives that capitalist modes of production are well on their way to becoming automated. Automation is "the very base of all forms of human freedom."[26] While men have to work, they cannot be free. Hence there is no point in the creation of machinery designed to actualize the human potential in work as human fulfilment can only be found outside the work process. Nor is there any value in substantial alterations in the relations of production, alterations aimed at transferring the power of making technical and policy decisions (including control of training schools and institutes of education) from management to the unions. Radical alterations in the means and relations of production would only be palliatives; complete freedom, the aim of socialism, is only possible through the complete substitution of human labour by machines.

[24] *An Essay on Liberation*, 88.
[25] *One-Dimensional Man*, chap. 9.
[26] *Ibid.*, 231.

Moreover Marcuse sees the workers in modern societies to be so conditioned and manipulated by the ruling class that they are not capable of revolutionary action or industrial self-management. The conservative character of modern workers militates "against the notion that the replacement of the prevailing control over the productive process by 'control from below' would mean the advent of qualitative change."[27] Marcuse opposes the aim of "autogestion" (workers' control or management of industry) which is advocated by French and Italian unionists. This strategy cannot lead to ever-increasing power of the workers and a basis for a transition to socialism. Workers' control of industrial processes and policy would lead to the creation of vested interests of labour within the capitalist system, interests which would further entrench and solidify capitalism.[28]

Marcuse's position on the role of unions stands in marked contrast to that of Marx. They do agree that unions in fact have been almost solely concerned with economic aims. In 1866, Marx wrote for a congress of the International Working Man's Association: "The trade unions have hitherto paid too much attention to the immediate disputes with Capital. They have not yet fully understood their mission against the existing system of production. They have kept aloof from the general social and political movement."[29] Nevertheless, this perception did not prevent Marx from thinking that the unions acted as "schools" for socialist organization and administration. The trade unions are "centres of gravity for the whole working class, very much like the mediæval guilds and corporations for the burgess class." They are "the *foci* of the working classes, in the interest of their complete emancipation." Unions are essential to prevent the unbridled exploitation of capital but they are also "all the more important as organized bodies for the abolition of wage-labour and of the capitalist domination."[30]

Marx thought that if socialism is to triumph, it must be through the activity of the workers themselves. The unions are to play a vital part in the transformation of capitalism to socialism by the accumulation of economic power and by serving as a training ground in the techniques of organization and administration, techniques essential not only to overthrow capitalism but also for socialist management of industry. He did not believe with Lenin and Marcuse that workers could rise only to a "trade-union consciousness." Unlike Marcuse, Marx thinks that unions can effect radical changes in the relations of production.

I have above indicated that Marcuse advocates "superstructural" rather than "basic" changes in the capitalist system and have suggested that the reason for this is his belief that productive autonomy or free work is not a possible goal, is in fact a contradiction in terms. Marcuse's revision of Marxian materialism springs from this source.

According to the materialist conception of history, social and political power derive from mastery of the work situation, from effective control of the means

[27]*Ibid.*, 252.
[28]"The Obsolescence of Marxism," in N. Lobkowicz, ed., *Marx and the Western World* (Notre Dame, 1967), 415.
[29]From M. Beer, *A History of British Socialism* (London, 1929), II, 219.
[30]*Ibid.* A more complete discussion may be found in A. Lozovsky, *Marx and the Trade Unions* (New York, 1942).

of production. Proletarian self-mastery or the emancipation of the working class depends on the workers' material, intellectual, and administrative command of production. Marcuse, as we have seen, denies this as he believes workers' emancipation is only possible outside the process of production. The measures he recommends for the liberation of men from capitalism are only indirectly related to the work process; they are "superstructural" alterations rather than modification of the economic base of capitalism.

However, Marcuse does advocate the socialization of the means of production and centralized planning of the economy. But according to the Marxian conception, these measures are not "basic" unless they are accompanied by a radical alteration in technical processes and production relations. Socialism, for Marx, involves not only common ownership of the means of production but also power to the working class, industrial, social and political "self-government of the producers."

Marcuse does not mention new uses of machinery, the combination of work and education, union organization and industrial administration, in short, those measures which Marx perceived to be the basis of a revolution in the division between mental and material production, managerial and manual labour. In fact, Marcuse states that a socialist society

> would continue to depend on a division which involves inequality of functions. Such inequality is necessitated by genuine social needs, technical requirements, and the physical and mental differences among the individuals. However, the executive and supervisory functions would no longer carry the privilege of ruling the life of others in some particular interest.[31]

Thus Marcuse's socialism is a society where some men rule the lives of others, but they do not do so "in some particular interest." The administrative hierarchy which Marcuse wishes to entrust with the supervision of a socialist economy may not wish to exercise power in the interest of domination, but we have nothing more material than trust to guarantee that they do not.[32]

Since Marcuse's revolution does not result in a material basis for the emancipation of the workers from oppression, socialism springs from a cultural revolution, a radical alteration in men's consciousness without fundamental changes in the means or relations of production. "The development not of class consciousness but of consciousness as such, freed from the distortions imposed upon it, appears to be the basic prerequisite for radical change."[33] The conquest of nature must be directed not only at the outside world in the form of production but also increasingly at the natural or unconscious forces in man. This cultural revolution or "moral rebellion"[34] will primarily devolve on that group whose consciousness is least distorted by capitalist affluence – the students. It is they who must lead the masses to a higher level of consciousness. Marcuse writes: "A radical change in consciousness is the beginning, the first step in changing

[31] *One-Dimensional Man*, 44.; cf. *Eros and Civilization*, 205.
[32] Marcuse states that "the repressive bureaucracy" in socialist countries is only perpetuated because of the threat that capitalist countries pose to them. *One-Dimensional Man*, 42; preface to *An Essay on Liberation*. Weber's reflections on bureaucracy and Marx's thoughts on Oriental despotism are apposite here.
[33] "The Obsolescence of Marxism," 417.
[34] *An Essay on Liberation*, 62.

social existence: emergence of the new Subject. Historically, it is again the period of enlightenment prior to material change – a period of education, but education which turns into praxis: demonstration, confrontation, rebellion."[35]

Marcuse is not at all clear about the ends of the cultural revolution, the student movement. He at times suggests that the function of the students is to radicalize the working class and then make common cause with them. However, he feels that this course of action would probably meet with a limited response from the workers, not because radical intellectuals have little to offer in the way of basic improvements in conditions of work, but because the working class are the manipulated dupes of the bourgeoisie. The radicalization of the workers may be impossible within capitalist society. They must first be "liberated from all propaganda, indoctrination and manipulation." Marcuse is ambiguous about how this liberation will be effected. At times, he suggests an "educational dictatorship"[36] by an intellectual élite as a transitional period until the masses become fully conscious and accept the ruling hierarchy structured by technological rationality. Marcuse writes that this transitional period

> would only mean replacement of this present elite by another; and if this other should be the dreaded intellectual elite, it may not be less qualified and less threatening than the prevailing one. True, such government, initially, would not have the endorsement of the majority "inherited" from the previous government – but once the chain of past government is broken, the majority would be in a state of flux, and, released from the past management, free to judge the new government in terms of the common interest.[37]

Marcuse's cultural revolution is then fundamentally undemocratic. He wishes to create a revolution without what Marx would call the objective conditions of a revolution. Revolutionary activity which is not grounded in the material conditions of a revolution inevitably, Marx states, leads to terror.[38] In addition, a premature coup would "pre-empt the developing revolutionary process" and would prevent the workers from becoming trained in the techniques of organization and administration that are essential in the fight against capitalism.[39] Marcuse's "educational dictatorship" would, in Marx's eyes, deprive the workers of their best possible education, an education arising from their struggles with capital. As Marx makes clear in the third thesis on Feuerbach, revolutionary activity is a process of self-education; without such, it is necessary to divide society into two parts, the educators and the educated.

Marcuse's revision of Marx's materialism is then manifest in their different interpretation of the source of revolutions. For Marx, revolutions arise when relations of products are a fetter on men's productive capacities. But Marcuse does not think revolutions are occasioned by developments and conflicts in productive techniques and relations. For example, Marx thought that the "bourgeois" revolution of 1648 and 1688 were based on, and hence had their grounds of success in, an incompatibility between the growing productive developments in manufacture and agriculture and ossified relations of production; the feudal system of property inhibited the growth of agriculture and guild regulations

[35] *Ibid.*, 53.
[36] *One-Dimensional Man*, 40–1.
[37] *An Essay on Liberation*, 70.
[38] *Werke* (Berlin, 1956), IV, 338–9.
[39] *Ibid.*, VIII, 598–9.

acted as a fetter on the development of manufacturers. Whatever the deficiencies of Marx's analysis of the origin of the modern era, it bears favourable comparison to that of Marcuse. Marcuse writes that the "new, higher period of civilization was painfully born in the violence of the heretic revolts of the thirteenth century and in the peasant and labour revolts of the fourteenth century."[40]

Those who think that these revolts were basic factors in the emergence of the bourgeois epoch will be able to see the historic significance of student confrontations, embued with the ethos of conditional toleration, in laying the groundwork for a new epoch. The Albigensian martyrs, the crusade against whom was among the first but by no means the last of European witch-hunts, have a much more basic effect in the emergence of the modern world in Marcuse's interpretation of history than they have in Marx's.

If the revolution in consciousness is not based on development in technical processes and production relations, it is also not directed towards the eventual control of production by the workers. Marcuse writes:

> Self-determination in the production and distribution of vital goods and services would be wasteful. The job is a technical one, and as a truly technical job, it makes for the reduction of physical and mental toil. In this realm, centralized control is rational if it establishes the precondition for meaningful self-determination ... in its own realm – in the decisions which involve the production and distribution of the economic surplus, and in the individual existence.[41]

Productive freedom or self-determination should be economized in socialist society because, in Marcuse's view, there are no meaningful alternatives to technological rationality. *The* historical problem from which all other social problems derive is the domination of nature:[42] all productive resources are to be integrated towards this end. The only rational end of man is thus the maximal exploitation of nature through production. Alternative ends, such as the creation of conditions conducive to self-realization in work and workers' participation in policy decisions regarding the conditions of work, are irrational or "wasteful" in terms of the standard of technological rationality. The demand for improved quality of conditions of work may be in conflict with the demand for maximum efficient production and hence the former is irrational by Marcuse's standards and is to have no part in the shaping of the new society. Industrial policy becomes a "technical job" because there are no longer any policy decisions that have to be made by those concerned with production: the one end of the domination of nature prevails over conflicting and "wasteful" aims. How men would want to work is irrelevant; production goals and methods are determined by a technical élite. In socialist society, "technological rationality, stripped of its exploitative features, is the sole standard and guide in planning and developing the available resources for all."[43]

In existing capitalist societies, Marcuse argues, the particular interests of agriculture, union leadership, and especially the captains of industry and the mili-

[40] *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (Boston, 1965), 108.
[41] *One-Dimensional Man*, 251–2. Needless to say, those arch-exponents of "technological rationality," the Bolsheviks, justified the replacement of union and soviet control of industry by the party hierarchy in terms of the needs of rapid technological development.
[42] *Ibid.*, 231, 237.
[43] *Ibid.*, 251.

tary prevent the rationalization of the economy. A revolution against these particular interests, in the name of the dominated groups within and without the leading industrial nations, is thus necessary to strip the "exploitative features" from the capitalist system. But this revolution will only remove "exploitative features" from the system; it will not effect any alteration in the economic base of the system. In short, Marcuse's revolution is to result in further centralization of existing productive forces and in a rationalization of the superstructure of the system – the laws, social relations, institutions, needs and forms of consciousness – to harness it to the end of the complete domination of nature.

Marcuse's doctrine is a radical departure from Marx's conception of "self-government of the producers." In *The Civil War in France*, Marx provides his fullest sketch of the organization of post-capitalist society. He portrays a devolution of centralized administration to the communes, the units of production. A citizens' militia is to replace the army and the police force. All managers, administrators, and public servants are elected and responsible to the members of the commune. Rather than advocate a curtailment of political democracy, as Marcuse does, Marx foresees the extension of democracy into the industrial and social realms. While Marcuse advocates the rule of an unchecked hierarchy governing in consonance with technological rationality, Marx asserts that "nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to supersede universal suffrage by hierarchic investiture."[44]

Marcuse's utopian socialism differs from "scientific" socialism in that it does not believe that an alteration in class relations must be based on radical developments in the means and relations of production, nor that effective control of production by the workers is the means to working class emancipation, nor that the workers, through party and union activity, will be the primary agents of their emancipation, nor that this emancipation will result in industrial management and self-government of the producers. These differences may be seen to derive from a single source, namely, that Marx was not an adherent of technological rationality and Marcuse is.

It is not the degree to which nature is dominated but rather the different ways in which men regulate their interaction with nature that, for Marx, distinguishes one mode of production from another. A pre-automated society, a condition in which nature is not completely dominated, may be free if technical processes and relations of production are such that the workers have material, intellectual, and administrative command of production. Productive freedom is a real possibility; there is nothing inherent in work which makes it repetitive, mechanical, and oppressive. Machinery does not in itself make work mechanical. Rather it may be one of the means to bring science and art to the sphere of production, if machinery were not designed solely to maximize social productivity. Industrial production does not necessitate a hierarchy of command, a division between management and manual labour. With a radical alteration in education such as Marx suggests, unions could fulfil many of the functions of management, or at least those of the board of directors in capitalist enterprises or central planning committees in socialist countries. Marx thought that the

[44] *The Civil War in France* (Moscow, n.d.), 65.

workers' movement would bring to fruition the possibility of self-determined work as the material basis of a democratic society.

Marcuse, on the other hand, does not think productive freedom is a real possibility. Freedom is possible only outside the inherently oppressive and mechanical realm of production.[45] Command of production by the workers hence would not lead to their liberation. Social advance does not depend on "a material basis" and Marcuse sees no point in an alteration of technological processes, a union of work and education, or militant union activity aimed at the existing relations of production. Nor does the cultural revolution abolish a managerial élite or provide the means with which this may be controlled by the workers. Autonomy is only possible outside the realm of production. Automation is "the very base of all forms of human freedom."

Since "all joy and all happiness derive from the ability to transcend Nature,"[46] all human and natural resources must be directed towards this end. Marcuse's acceptance of technological rationality, his belief that *the* historical project is the domination of nature, entails that the most efficient utilization of human energies in the pursuit of a fully automated condition is the primary human end. Considerations such as the quality of conditions of work and the self-government of the producers are irrational in terms of technological rationality.

Marcuse claims Marx's vision of socialism is deficient in that the latter thought men would always have to work, that Marx did not foresee the possibilities engendered by automation. Marcuse writes: "... Marx's own idea of socialism was not radical enough and not utopian enough. He underrated the level which the productivity of labour under the capitalist system itself could attain and the possibilities suggested by the attainment of this level."[47]

If the above intimates that Marx would have revised his doctrine in the "utopian" manner of Marcuse, I think the statement is entirely misleading. For Marx and Marcuse have two distinct visions of the constituent elements of human excellence. Marx thought the human in men resides in their productive functions. Work is the activity in which men pit their intellect, imagination, and will against the external world and thus give concrete form to their human potential. The overcoming of obstacles through work is the essentially human activity, the activity of human freedom asserting itself. The condition of complete automation that Marcuse hopefully anticipates would not be welcomed by Marx since he believed that free work is "life's prime want." Nor would he desire a period of transition until nature is dominated where self-determination in production is "wasteful."

Marcuse's "utopianism" is a rejection of Marxian materialism in favour of a system of thought he calls technological rationality. His advocacy of a non-repressive society based on automation and governed by a rational technocracy, is appealing to many, possibly because few burdens are placed on the human will. But perhaps freedom consists, as Marx says, in the overcoming of obstacles.

[45]It is perhaps to be noted that Trotsky justified "the militarization of labour" because of men's natural aversion to work. See *A Defence of Terrorism* (London, 1921), 122–3, 131–4.
[46]*One-Dimensional Man*, 237.
[47]"The Obsolescence of Marxism," 413.