

Social And Political Philosophy

Module Code: CSPH7037

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Marxism: Reform or Revolution: Block Four

Block Four: Marxism: Reform or Revolution

The question may be asked why do I include Marxism in this block. For while Marx is an important social and political philosopher, we have spent significant time on his philosophy in other modules of this programme. This is, of course, true but I want in this block to focus on few things in particular, firstly, to get students to actually read some Marx in the original¹, as you have been doing, in other blocks in this module, and in doing so to get to recognise Marxism political roots. I also want to demonstrate some of the 'reforms' that have taken place in Marxism since its founder's death. However, as we have covered Marx and Marxism in some detail elsewhere this will be a shorter block than some of the others in this module.

Introduction

In the previous blocks we looked at examples of liberalism as a philosophical and theoretical perspective from a number of thinkers that have, so to speak launched liberalism as a political project.² Liberalism, it can be said, is incontrovertibly Marxism's opposition in political struggles over the state, however, while the Marxist political-philosophical project is different from that of liberalism the historical difference should not obscure the fact that Marxism and liberalism have shared important beliefs and assumptions about social and economic progress and about the future realisation of the free society.³ Both have fought against oppression and for political equality emphasised the freedom of the individual, the inevitability of progress and the power of human reason; characteristics that identify them with modernity and the enlightenment project. Nevertheless, Marx and Engels were scathing in their criticism of liberal ideology and theory, seeing it as partial, ideological and serving the interests of the bourgeois class. Marx and Engels sought to turn liberal political philosophy and theory on its head and begin not from abstract principles and ideals but from the real conditions of people living with the effects of nineteenth century capitalism.

Marx and Friedrich Engels, write the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* 1848, and in it they write as their opening lines- '*There is a spectre haunting Europe - the spectre of Communism*' - Marx and Engels appeal to the working class to throw off the yoke of bourgeois domination, thus:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible

¹ You will need access to Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, *The German Ideology*, pp.39-41, trans C.J. Arthur, (1970, Lawrence & Wishart: London) but an e-copy of the work can be found here: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf

² We have not yet finished with liberalism and we will in the next block be looking at contemporary forms of liberalism and its influence as a political philosophy on social policy

³ The achievements of liberal-democratic movements in securing social and economic changes are acknowledged by Karl Marx (1818-83) and Friedrich Engels (1820-95) as necessary, constituent stages on the road to communism.

overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

The work is both a brilliant piece of political propaganda and the key that unlocks the whole of Marxist theory and the *Manifesto* represents a turning point in nineteenth century political theory. It represents the practical application of Marx and Engels' philosophical method and introduces to the world Marx unique philosophical mechanism *historical materialism*. Historical materialism is rooted in two post-Enlightenment sources: Hegelian idealism and the materialism of Feuerbach. Marx and Engels' perspective on historical change incorporates elements from each of these sources but ultimately rejects both as one-sided bourgeois, philosophies. Georg W.F. Hegel⁴, as we have seen from our earlier studies offered that the movement of human history mirrored the evolving of human freedom and, in particular, to the liberation of human consciousness. History is understood as a sequence of stages in which the categories of human thought are made *realised* in forms of social and political organisation. Each 'epoch' of history comprises an advance in the 'self-consciousness' of humankind or the evolution of Spirit (*Geist*). For Hegel, each such stage - and the social and political arrangements associated with it - represents a new reality for human consciousness and thus, claimed Hegel, physical being is determined by consciousness: history is human consciousness realising itself in the world. Central, and fundamental to the evolutionary method of Hegel's philosophy is the character of this form of movement: the *dialectic*. This put roughly and simply here⁵ is a process of successive negations by means of which a thesis generates an antithesis both of which are then subsumed under a higher synthesis. To understand Marx's position on these issues, something must be said briefly about Hegel's idealistic philosophy.

The protagonists of this method proffer the hypothesis that concepts are either true or false. Falsehood is seen as a form of limitation or incompleteness, where truth is a form of completeness: a transcendence of limitation. The dialectic is a process of progression among concepts, whereby a more adequate concept is generated from inadequate beginnings or antecedents, through overcoming the oppositions intrinsic to them. In other words, a concept is a starting point, posited as a potential description of reality. Necessarily, as a condition of its existence, it will already carry an internal logical contradiction through which it eventually capitulates its position to its negation. The concept's very being necessitates its own metaphorical shadow and this shadow testifies to the inaccuracies of its initial description. Or, if you like, just as an existential verbal testament can not be made without a background of silences - an absence of language - which in its existence testifies to the verbal testimony's inadequacy as a total description (the last word on the matter) so a concept has its

⁴ Hegel's philosophy has been covered in detail in the module *Knowledge and Culture*.

⁵ For a detailed exposition of this see *Knowledge and Culture*.

negation. But the concept's positive and negative poles, in this way, present, in the struggle of contradiction, a new concept. This new concept more adequate than the last, and it is able to mediate in this 'ascent to a higher plane' from which it can be comprehended and reconciled. This process of ascent, in certain Marxist thinking is termed *diremption* or in Hegelian terminology *Aufhebung* usually translated sublation.

But unlike the Hegelian universe the Marxian dialectic is applied to a material reality, reality which is wholly or basically material, not basically constituted by thought or ideas, as Hegel and idealism tend to hold, and is governed by natural laws that science seeks to discover.⁶ And we have to note here, then, the influence of Ludwig Feuerbach on Marx. Feuerbach, of whom we will say very little here except that, he was a strident critic of Hegel, claiming that the latter had made the human being into an object of thought rather than viewing thought as a product of the human being. For Feuerbach, 'man' is the source and origin of all things - thought, belief, invention, and economy - and is led falsely to believe that gods or laws of consciousness preordain his destiny. In contrast to Hegel, Feuerbach proposed that consciousness is determined by physical, corporal existence: history is the trail of consciousness left behind by how humanity lives. Thus, although Marx is critical of him in many respects, he accepted Feuerbach's arguments against Hegel. Marx's insistence on materialism testifies to his rejection of Hegelian idealism but this does not involve the embracing of scientific materialism in that empiricist form that characterizes the enlightenment. Indeed there are crucial differences. The dialectic nature of material reality reveals it to be far from static: it is no mass of atoms or sub-systems that are related to one another purely externally. Neither is it a process of gradual evolutionary change. On the contrary, it is a causally interconnected totality, both internally unified and contradictory. It involves a process of inevitable change necessitated by such contradiction, but change is revolutionary and has genuine qualitative novelty. We see that what distinguishes Marxist materialism from other types of materialism is that while it too asserts the primacy of matter it, as we have said before, is not reductionist. It does not, therefore, assert that everything that exists is matter. Admittedly, it does attempt to state general laws governing the motion and development of matter. Yet it is creative in the sense that through the dialectic human beings are part of and interconnected with material reality, and as such necessarily produce effects in and changes to, that reality.

This philosophical and theoretical analysis of reality manifests in Marx's political work, for example, the *Manifesto* and *The German Ideology*, in the theory's practical application. It is sufficient to say here that for Marx this way of apprehending social reality means, simply, that human beings never produce simply as individuals, but as members of a definite form of society, feudal or capitalist, for example. Producing something involves relationships with other people and these relationships are structured by

⁶ The notion of concept used here designates not just a mental practice that has a relation of correspondence to reality but it also designates actual social practices that pass a social relations.

the economic organisation of society. In capitalist societies, for example, individuals are not at all free and equal as argued and assumed in liberal theory, for these societies are based on class domination and exploitation. The idea of the free individual and the free market disguises the class character of inequality and the necessary relation of exploitation on which capitalism depends. Whereas liberalism attempted to distinguish the political economy from the social economy, Marxism proposes that all economic activity is fundamentally social and cannot exist without an organisation of social relationships in a specific mode of production. The separation between 'economy' and 'society' in liberal theory and politics is a mystification, an ideological distortion, of the real character of capitalism.

Marking the Political Character of Marxism

In the course of history each method of production gives rise to a typical political organisation furthering the interests of the economically dominant class. It is in *The German Ideology*, which⁷ Marx wrote in 1845⁸, where we see Marx tracing the political origins of the state and other social institutions, such as the law, church and family, to the division of labour. The state, here, is seen to act in opposition to the real interests of all members of society by constituting an 'illusory community'. And it is in this work where Marx sets out his thesis for change and it is here we find a materialist theory of history incorporating a labour theory of value. It is again in this work that we find Marx's starting point is not dogma of political theory or the idealism of political consciousness, but real individuals grounded in 'natural conditions', who are distinguished from animals in that they produce their means of subsistence and thereby their actual material life. This activity or 'mode of life' defines the individual:

As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.
(GI, p.42)

Thus, a more detailed examination of this work is required.⁹ It is important to appreciate that Marx is not propounding an individualist thesis such as was held by Locke or Rousseau. The idea of a pre-contractual 'State of Nature' is for Marx a myth.¹⁰ Productive forces and

⁷As I have said above I am using Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, *The German Ideology*, pp.39-41, trans C.J. Arthur, (1970, Lawrence & Wishart: London) but an e-copy can be found here: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf

⁸ Although *The German Ideology* was not published until 1932 and it was this work and the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, written in 1844 but again not published until the 1927, that were to influence the thinking of the Frankfurt School

⁹ Most of the main ideas are clearly set out in Part IA (Sees 2-4, pp.45-52). You are recommended to devote particularly close attention to these sections, even though Marx develops some of the ideas discussed there later in the book.

¹⁰ Read now p.p. 42-49

hence 'individuals' are from the moment of their first appearance in history inseparable from social and political relationships or intercourse (*Verkehrsee* p.42) grounded in material activity. The first historical act, he says is the production of the means to satisfy needs; the subsistence needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Moreover it is this social context that gives rise to and indeed determines language, culture, and consciousness itself:

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental productions as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. - real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. (GI, p.48)

'Life', he says 'is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life'. It should be noted that Marx sees himself as thereby avoiding the error of 'abstractionism', which he thinks was committed by both British empiricism and German idealism (pp.47-48). The initial social relationship is that of the family (p.49), and it is in this context that a number of key terms in Marx's analysis are first introduced: division of labour, contradiction, alienation and his account of property and class. From the beginning of history productivity involved man simultaneously in both natural and social relationships which are interdependent:

Consciousness is at first... merely consciousness concerning the immediate sensuous environment and consciousness of the limited connection with other persons and things outside the individual who is growing self-conscious. At the same time it is consciousness of nature, which first appears to men as a completely alien, all-powerful and unassailable force, with which men's relations are purely animal and by which they are overawed like beasts; it is thus a purely animal consciousness of nature (natural religion) just because nature is as yet hardly modified historically. (We see here immediately: this natural religion or this particular relation of men to nature is determined by the form of society and vice versa. Here, as everywhere, the identity of nature and man appears in such a way that the restricted relation of men to nature determines their restricted relation to one another, and their restricted relation to one another determines men's restricted relation to nature.) (GI, p.51)

As the population increased, with a consequent increase of productivity and needs, so incrementally develops Originally found in familial

relationships, in ethnic biology, or in historical accidents, with the multiplication of needs the division of labour becomes more evident, established and complex. Necessarily and inevitably (perhaps) contradictions appear between social relations and forces of production, as Marx asserts:

The forces of production, the state of society and consciousness can and must come into contradiction with one another, because the division of labour implies the possibility, nay the fact that intellectual and material activity- enjoyment and labour, production and consumption - devolve on different individuals, and that the only possibility of their not coming into contradiction lies in the negation in its turn of the division of labour. (GI, p.51)¹¹

Division of labour explains for Marx the class based antagonism characterised by each historical epoch and its 'mode of production' and in each their relation to property and the means of production. From the concept of division of labour, Marx derives his theory of property and class. Property arises from the unequal distribution of labour and its products contingent upon the opposition of individual families in society. Indeed division of labour and private property are identical expressions, the former relating to an activity while the latter refers to the product of that activity. Marx's historical analysis of the emergence of classes will not be summarized here; it can easily be followed particularly in Sec. C of *The German Ideology*.¹²

More importantly arising now we have class interest and class conflict. The possession of private property leads to antagonism between classes, one of which comes to be the dominant or ruling class. This ruling class, says Marx, controls not only the means of material production but also the ideas of an epoch (p.64). In due course -once the contradiction between forces of production and social relations has become apparent - a class struggle ensues which brings about the overthrow of the dominant class, the victors becoming the new ruling class. Furthermore, it this class interest and class conflict that explain civil society and the State. By 'civil society' Marx means the totality of commercial relationships (*Verkehr*), grounded in the forces of production, which exist between individuals:

Civil society embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces. It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage and, insofar, transcends the State and the nation, though, on the other hand again, it must assert itself in its foreign relations as nationality, and inwardly must organise itself as State. (GI, p.57)

¹¹ Implicit here is the 'materialized' Hegelian dialectic referred to above.

¹² Please read this section before moving on.

The State then for Marx is an abstraction and, 'the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests, and in which the whole of civil society of an epoch is epitomised' (p.80). Again:

... all struggles within the State, the struggle between democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, the struggle for the franchise, etc., etc., are merely the illusory forms in which the real struggles of the different classes are fought out among one another. (GI, p.53)

It follows that all common institutions, including the legal system and justice which 'is reduced to the actual laws', are formed through the mediation of the State (p.80).

It is class conflict that engenders 'alienation', by which Marx means the state of discord experienced by individuals when they come to recognize a lack unity and congruence between their own interest ('self' or 'self-consciousness') and that of the community ('collective' or 'class-consciousness'). Initially it is man's own activity - the social role into which he is forced as a result of division of labour - which opposes him, but subsequently it is the bureaucratic and political State itself that is the alien power which enslaves him and constitutes a threat to his individuality in the context of family or civil society (see pp.53-56). The primary aim of political activity (reform or revolution) must therefore be to eradicate class interest, class conflict and thereby dehumanisation, exploitation and alienation: to construct (create from class consciousness) a unified society in which there is no conflict between private and public interest, a society in which men will be really free.

The 'mode of production', which is 'classless', 'unified' and 'collective' is, of course, communism. But *how* is the communist society to be realized? Marx's answer is unequivocal through *revolution*. Now revolution was novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth century libertarian movements in Europe and America which appealed, as we have seen in earlier blocks, to 'Laws of Nature', the 'Rights of Man' which will offer to guarantee '*Liberte, Egalite, Fraternity*' to all. These 'revolutions' are for Marx mere abstractions and expression of bourgeois ideology grounded in property relations.¹³ His clarion call is for the 'revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat'. This can only be achieved when the bourgeoisie itself is overthrown, the class-system is abolished and the State has been transformed by the collective will, thus producing a real community in which the individual will be able to become truly 'conscious'. (p.83):

Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution;

¹³ Please read, for example, what he says about 'Utilitarianism' on pp.109ff. and compare his discussion of 'Kant and Liberalism' on pp.97 ff.

this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew. (GI, p.p.94-95; but also see pp.82-88)

The communist revolution differs from all previous revolutions, Marx says: it is directed against the *mode* of activity, does away with *labour*, and abolishes classes and thereby class-rule because the class that carries it through 'is not recognized as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc. within present society' (p. 94). It is important to note that the revolution must be simultaneously international¹⁴ and that communism is not thought of as an *ideal* but as an actual movement:

Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence. (GI, p.p. 56-57)

But this 'abolishment' by 'revolution' has to be justified, and Marx with need to justify turning his 'theory' into 'action'. We have seen, then, above that Marxism insists that knowledge of that material reality presupposes a human contribution in the process of the dialectic. And this means that Marxism conceptualizes material reality as specifically social. But this poses a problem for Marxism and the dilemma can be stated thus. For Marxism to function as an objective position while still retaining its prescriptive role in the interpretation of the social formation, it will not, as we have seen, be enough to proffer the description of an idea of an ideal society, upholding the interests of a certain class and based on a critique of the existing social order. It must be able to present this prescription as being informed from a general epistemological foundation: To put it more technically, Marx's and Engel's inversion of the Hegelian dialectic, may be construed, in short, as claiming that there is but one correct way of apprehending reality, one set of facts, and that Marxism, as the method that enables the only correct analysis of social processes which penetrates the ideological forms, is the science that reveals the underlying structure of reality. This is problematic since there first has to be some way of guaranteeing such claims and they do not follow just from the fact that Marxism judges and dismisses all other theories of apprehension from its own theoretical and methodological position. Next, is that this interpretation of Marxism generates internal confusion. That is, there is a conflation of its descriptive role as a science with what can be construed as a prescriptive role as a politico-philosophical theory; the latter is made without question within the deterministic nature of the former. This, of

¹⁴ (See p.56),

course, grounds any moral content of the theory in a system of natural descriptions. While it may be correct then to conflate facts and values, (in the sense that exploitation is present in the relationship between worker and capitalist, where exploitation is a technical and descriptive of the mechanism underlying this relationship) its claim that the adoption of Marxist method leads to the correct apprehension of the facts means that there is only one way that they can be conflated (i.e. that exploitation is unfair), and thus it still has to deal with the first criticism. Specifically, it has to explain how the theory is to be formulated to enable it to further a transition from its theoretical critique of the bourgeoisie to encompass a practice that will not only reflect a classless (communist) apprehension of reality or worldview, but also act or facilitate the replacement of capitalism by this practice. There are those who have wished to point out, that the answers to the dilemma are there in the works of Marx and only need the right reinterpretation; a reinterpretation of 'revolution'. It is time to consider the main contenders to this authority.

II

Marxist revisions and reforms

The propagation of Marxist theory (consciousness and political activity) encountered many difficulties as its proponents struggled to address the dilemma we have mentioned above. Certainly, to a generation of Marxist thinkers the above interpretation of Marx Engels became the given orthodoxy. With their particular philosophy of nature with its metaphysical determinism they could persuade themselves that the *mode* of activity was but an automatic mechanism which was underpinned by the inevitability of the day to come; the signature on the guarantee of the social revolution. In such a philosophy they were confident enough to claim that:

*Capitalist society has failed; its dissolution is only a matter of time; irresistible economic development leads with natural necessity to the bankruptcy of the capitalist mode of production. the erection of a new form of society in a place of the existing one is no longer merely desirable; it has become something inevitable.*¹⁵

This is a clear statement of this type of economic determinism, as one commentator puts it:

In the conception of such a science as discovering causal laws explaining change, especially laws of the materialist kind, the material base determining thoughts and ideas, seem to imply an inevitability about the coming transformation of capitalism that makes political initiatives impossible and unnecessary or at any

¹⁵ K. Kautsky, Das Erfurter Programm, quoted in A. Callinicos, *Althusser's Marxism*, p. 14 (1976, Pluto Press,).

rate epiphenomenal...The revolution on this point of view appears less a political act, the culmination of the class struggle, than simply the collapse of the capitalist system inevitably brought about by its own internal contradictions.¹⁶

In opposition to this interpretation of Marxism began to break into several distinct schools of thought and action, some of them in direct opposition to the economic determinism and 'scientism' of the this position. These include 'Austro-Marxism'; Hilferding, amongst others, and 'Western Marxism' associated with Korsch, Lukacs and Gramsci.¹⁷ One of the defining characteristics of the development of these schools of Marxism is the extent to which they have reformed Marx and Engels' writings into other philosophical frameworks (and vice versa) with the aim of more clearly understanding the individual's role in the construction and reform of revolutionary movements. They reject the notion of a homogenised mass proletariat that is led towards an economic determinism and are more cognisant the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice (praxis) in the arising of class consciousness. In short, they seek to 'reform' the Marxist tradition by overturning the focus on scientific objectivity. Reformed Marxism focuses on the real forms social relations inhabit and transform super-structural institutions, A 'reformed' Marxism attempt to develop a theory of social change and social theories that acknowledges complex determinations in the construction of social life, social institutions and social relations. Even where the theory attempt to reaffirm ta Marxist science, that is he primacy of the economy in determining consciousness this is specified as mediated effect of multiple relations of causation in state activity Althusser, for example argued that the state served to maintain capitalist social relations by imposing a dominant ideology on society through a network of 'Ideological State Apparatuses'. Notable among these were schools, the media and the institutions of the welfare state. By representing social life *in* capitalism as natural and inevitable, the dominant ideology 'interpellated' (or 'socialised') the working classes into their prescribed roles *under* capitalism. This interpellation naturalised the social roles so that their existence appeared normal and unchallengeable.

Another reformer of Marxist tradition include the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, especially Benjamin, Horkheimer and Adorno, Marcuse and Habermas. The critical theory of the Frankfurt School, in reality a collection of divergent perspectives, attacked the concept of 'Reason' in modern philosophy and, consequently, the value of the Enlightenment in securing freedom from myth and oppression. Then there was the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, for example, explored the means by which the capitalist state maintains its rule - and, by extension, how a merely on the bourgeoisie's capacity to use force but on its capacity to engineer sufficient

¹⁶ Edgley, Roy. (1983) 'Philosophy' in *Marx: The First Hundred Years*, Fontana , p.252

¹⁷ Again we do not have the time and space her to go into the details of such 'oposition' but it has been covered somewhat in other modules in this programme.

consent for its dominance from other important social groups, thereby creating a powerful 'bloc' supporting the bourgeoisie's political interests. The leadership exerted by the bourgeois class was achieved by building a web of political alliances, by disseminating particular ideologies and by creating a network of institutions that could be represented as necessary to the maintenance of order, prosperity, social well-being, and so on. In these respects, Gramsci emphasised the importance of cultural - as well as political and economic - forces in sustaining the capitalist system. This leadership Gramsci called 'hegemony', a concept intended to indicate that the bourgeois class was active in building and maintaining its dominance, not merely defending it.

There is not the space here to explore the extensive details of these but two points should be noted before we move on. First, from their inception, the various Marxisms have recognised that the 'proletariat' is not - and probably never will be - a homogenised mass of people who share a single consciousness. Anti-capitalist forces come in many different guises, such that struggle around the capitalist state is not merely the mechanical realisation of an over-arching historical law that predetermines the death of capitalism. Second, the different institutions characteristic of capitalist systems, whilst certainly imbued with the logics of capital accumulation and struggle over wage labour, are not structured only by those logics. Instead, they operate according to several distinct principles and rationalities that have their own independent consequences for the organisation of social and economic life. In particular, such institutions are mediated by cultural dynamics that are divisive and iniquitous in much more complex ways than the division of ownership of the means of production. It is of course suffice to say that these 'reforms' do not go unopposed by Marxist and they often act as oppositions and contradictions to each other.

Final Comments and Summary

We have seen how Marx has claimed that 'Marxism' was 'scientific'. And this is primarily because his 'theory' is intended to apply to the totality of phenomena that makes up social reality. Thus it is if a science at all, a social science. In contrast to Hegelian philosophy, Marx's theory is essentially materialist. This is not to say he denies the existence of mental phenomena, but he does think of material reality as prior to consciousness and thus that social institutions and social structures and indeed consciousness itself is to be understood in terms of economic or productive forces. This is certainly a bold claim which, to say the least, is questionable not merely by philosophers but by Marxist philosophers. And we have outlined at the end of section one above the main criticisms of this economic determinism, this epiphenomenal relation between base and superstructure, as threefold. We also claimed how this has led to reform of the 'orthodox' Marxist position

A central concept in Marxism theory is the 'dialectic'. And Marxism as a

theory has social reality progressing historically and dialectically. However, this there is, we have noted, a tension between the apparent inevitability of the dialectic process and individual human action and agency to bring about change. If Marx claims in social reality change is always in accordance with the dialectic, and is to be understood in terms of epiphenomenal economic or productive forces, then 'revolution' has to be explained more in terms of acquiescence than agency. This dilemma has not gone unnoticed by certain reformers of Marxist philosophy and attempts have been made to reconcile these two factors by positing a certain kind of reciprocal relationship between both human consciousness and social reality and the economic base and the super-structure. How successful these attempts have been we have not the space to record, suffice it is to say that the debate is on going and we may meet it again before too long.