

MARX AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT
PROJECT

Marx, as much as Condorcet, was a figure of the Enlightenment, though coming, as he did, after its paradigmatic articulations, and particularly after Hegel and in the face of the counter-Enlightenment, we find an altered and arguably a more developed set of Enlightenment beliefs and conceptions. I shall first state some central features of a rather minimalist conception of Enlightenment humanism. I then shall indicate how Marx, while remaining a part of it, modified it. That completed, I shall characterize features which are canonical conceptions for Marx and indeed for the Marxist traditions and specify two of them, which might plausibly be thought, despite Marx's intent, to be at odds with his historically and contextually sensitive Enlightenment humanism. Finally, I shall seek to give a reading of those key conceptions which will show that they are not actually at odds with such a humanism but instead give the Enlightenment project a more realistic grounding.

Two central tenets should be stressed as minimal core elements of the Enlightenment. One is a conviction that reason (that is the resolute use of our reflective and creative intelligence), when rigorously and repeatedly applied in an impartial way, will lead to human emancipa-

The author is professor of philosophy at the University of Calgary. He is an editor of *The Canadian Journal of Philosophy* and a past president of the Canadian Philosophical Association, and is the author of *Equality and Liberty* (Rowman & Allanheld, 1985), *Marxism and the Moral Point of View* (Westview Press, 1988) and co-editor of *Marx and Morality and Science, Morality & Feminist Theory*, both published by the University of Calgary Press.

tion, yielding a society that will at last be humane and just, in which there will be extensive human flourishing. The second is a belief in universal human rights and the possibility of their actual instantiation in such a society. The Enlightenment was about building a new society with new, less irrational and more humane persons than most of us are now.

Marx's Enlightenment "Rationalism"

These two elements are importantly linked in the Enlightenment belief that the existence and content of human rights and moral behavior are to be determined by the use of reason—that is, by careful, empirically constrained and, in a broad sense, scientifically oriented inquiry and, as well, by reflective deliberation. We do not, on such a way of viewing things, just regard something as morally acceptable because it is the thing done, because we feel it in our blood, because of some revelation or religious authority or because it is required by some metaphysical system. We start with our considered convictions given to us in the traditions in which we come of age—where else would we start?—but we need not end there. What is morally acceptable, the Enlightenment has it, must stand up to the test of reason characterized broadly, as I have characterized it above. In a similar way, reason, *so characterized*, is the arbiter of what we are justified in believing are “facts” and of what it is otherwise reasonable to believe, including what it is reasonable to believe may become “facts.”

Paradigmatic Enlightenment theorists (e.g. Condorcet and Voltaire) believed (as did Hume, a less paradigmatic representative) in the possibility and desirability of both a science of human nature and a science of society; they further believed (Hume more skeptically than the more paradigmatic figures) that with such sciences firmly in place, under the guidance of reason, there would be a more general human flourishing, emancipation and liberation.

Both Marx and Engels inherited these Enlightenment beliefs, as did the main figures of the Marxist tradition. For them, in contrast with the utopian socialists, it was vital that their socialism be scientific, though they construed “scientific” in the broad sense I utilized above in characterizing the Enlightenment project. Yet they differed from the paradigmatic figures of the Enlightenment in not construing a science of society on a model that is roughly Newtonian, in rejecting mechanistic materialism, in stressing the importance of the social and the his-

torical, and in looking for deep forces of unreason working “behind our backs”: forces which skew, in ways we would typically not be aware of, how we ascertain what is reasonable to believe and do and what is and is not morally acceptable.

Unlike paradigmatic Enlightenment figures, Marx did not seek to explain social and political phenomena, including various political and social ideas, in terms of conceptions drawn from individual psychology. Instead he explained such phenomena, including ideas, as pervasively being the outcome of social, political and ultimately of economic institutions. It was also important for Marx, as well as for later Marxists, to come to see things historically. Here Marx was, as everyone knows, deeply indebted to Hegel. Marx and Marxists very much wanted a science of history in order perspicuously to describe and explain what they took to be the development of human society as a whole, to show that it was indeed a development, to defend this development as progress (including, as Engels in particular stressed, moral progress) in which forms of society arise, stabilize themselves and eventually fall with the development of the productive powers of human beings. These productive powers answer ever more adequately to human needs and thus to our unfolding human powers and thus over time, as one social form replaces another, to our interest in reason.¹ This, of course, is a science of history with an emancipatory intent, which, if it actually comes to anything, would fulfill realistically—but only when the productive forces were sufficiently developed—key ideals of the Enlightenment. It would show us how we can come to have a humane and just social order answering to human needs. It gives us a sense, over historical time and cultural space, of what progress would look like. Moreover, it gives us a sense of human beings, as they develop their productive forces, making, sometimes consciously, their own history. As Marx stresses, they make, again and again, as the epochs unfold, their own history, though not just as they please, in ways that answer ever (when things are looked at in the long run) more adequately to their human needs. They seek to achieve a greater human flourishing and a better society, though they typically only retrospectively can clearly see what is to be done.

This conception, the methodological heuristic of which has been called historical materialism, gives us determinate grounds for endorsing the Enlightenment confidence in our capacity to use reason in an emancipatory way. But it has also been thought (by not a few—some crudely and some with nuance and sophistication) that this very historical materialism throws a spanner into the brave new conceptions of

the Enlightenment. If historical materialism is true, then, according to many, morality totters and we human beings, if we see things clearly, cannot but be fatalistic in a way that Marx and indeed no figure of the Enlightenment was.² I shall return to this in the next section.

The Marxist Canon

Before turning to the next way in which Marx's theory, notwithstanding his intentions, may in fact run against the Enlightenment project, I want to set out what, in all that vast corpus, are the conceptions which are canonical to Marx and as well to Marxism. In speaking of them as "canonical," I mean to say that they are so central to Marxism and to an attempt to see in Marx a determinate theory and practice, that, if many of these conceptions were abandoned, we could no longer speak of Marx or of Marxists as having a distinctive and interesting social theory with a claim to saying some important things that may be approximately true. (I do not, of course, suggest that Marxism is only a social theory. That is plainly false for it is also a revolutionary doctrine with an associated conception of practice. In speaking of Marx as we do here it is vital to remember that, though he had extensive interests in theory, he was a dedicated revolutionary and his interests in theory were largely instrumental to his revolutionary commitments.)³ Different Marxists and different interpreters of Marx give different readings to these core conceptions. Moreover, they place a different stress on various elements in them. However, the differences are not so endless that there is no recognizable core.

In speaking of the canonical core I speak of the fact that all the classical Marxists accept some form of dialectical method, some conception of the unity of theory and practice, some conception of human nature (that is, a conception of the needs and capacities of human beings and of the importance of this in human life), some conception of the distinctive importance of economics revolving around the labor theory of value and the historical functions of economics, a conception of historical materialism, of ideology and its critique, of class, class struggle, the necessity for revolution as the most probable outcome of class struggles, the transition from capitalism to socialism and of the future communist society along with the belief that certain historical factors, among them (and essentially) class struggle, will lead to its occurrence and, as well, a belief in the desirability of its occurrence.

However—and this fits well with Marx's own attitudes—the exis-

tence of this canonical core to the contrary notwithstanding, Marxism is a developing body of theory and practice and is not fixed in stone. Some core elements may in time drop out and new ones may enter. Analytical Marxists, for example, tend to be suspicious of talk of dialectics beyond the banalities that we should steadfastly look for connections, take a wider view, pay attention to historical developments and have a diachronic as well as a synchronic point of view. There has been, even among Marxist economists, a widespread rejection of the labor theory of value and even some skepticism concerning historical materialism.⁴ But all that notwithstanding, the list above constitutes the canonical core and, as Jon Elster has stressed, even those within the Marxist tradition who reject one or another part of the canon take these core conceptions very seriously indeed.⁵ Anyone who can coherently regard herself as a Marxist, takes as her point of departure these core conceptions. Moreover, if too many of these core conceptions were jettisoned by a person who regarded herself as a Marxist then she could no longer coherently think of herself as a Marxist, though—and rightly so—“too many” cannot be defined with precision. Marxism, to use old-fashioned terminology, is an open-textured concept.

On the assumption that this canon delineates in a skeletal way the core of Marxism, I need next explain why it has been so widely believed that the acceptance of that core is incompatible with acceptance of key elements of Enlightenment humanism. The Enlightenment, in spite of its opposition to religious worldviews, shared with them a desire to moralize the world. The Enlightenment articulated doctrines of human rights and a conception of what a just and good society would look like, and it tried to use reason to lead us to that New Jerusalem. It has been maintained that Marxists who understand what they are about, and who accept the core I have just specified, need to realize that belief in human rights is mere bourgeois prejudice serving bourgeois class interests, that talk of a just and good society is ideological twaddle and that moralizing cannot bring about significant social change. A consistent Marxist is a Marxist anti-moralist, rejecting morality and moral theorizing as ideology and rejecting any claim to there being an objective moral standpoint or moral point of view. Such beliefs, it is said, are incompatible with a proper understanding of either historical materialism or the nature of class interests. Enlightenment aspirations for liberation cannot be achieved through morality and reason. Marx's own touching faith in Enlightenment values, some critics say, squares badly with core elements in his theory: par-

ticularly with his concept of ideology, with his historical materialism and his belief in classes and distinctive class interests. Marx, in spite of his sometimes self, should have been a Marxist anti-moralist.⁶

Marxism and Morality

While not being a Marxist anti-moralist or indeed any kind of Marxist at all, Sidney Hook in his perceptive "The Enlightenment and Marxism" argues in a probing manner that Marx's understanding both of ideology and of historical materialism pose problems for his conception of socialism as a higher and better form of society and for his linked conception of a through and through democratic society which would protect human rights, not merely as formal rights, but as rights with some genuine substance.⁷ Hook further argues that these problems remain, sometimes in exacerbated form, for the Marxist tradition. All this, of course, squares badly with the Enlightenment tradition.

Hook considers historical materialism first. Hook remarks that for Marx, "the development of society is conceived as being governed by immanent laws of economic production that determine the birth, development, and the death of all societies until man as a truly free agent comes to his own."⁸ People make history: they are not, on Marx's view, hapless flotsam on the sea of history. But, given the truth of historical materialism, the fact that there are laws which "determine the development of society" makes it the case that we are not completely free to make and remake history at will. "The viable alternatives of action are determined by something external to our will. The range of alternatives is determined by institutions and habits of the past."⁹ What kinds of social revolution can occur at a given time are of certain determinate sorts and whether they will in fact occur and can be sustained will depend not only on resolute class struggle but also on certain socio-economic preconditions. In spite of the efforts of Babeuf and other socialist thinkers and militants, the French Revolution had to be a bourgeois revolution and could not have come at that time to have had a socialist character. When it occurred, as Hook puts it, "the capitalist mode of production wasn't sufficiently developed to make possible the realization of the socialist ideals of organization and distribution."¹⁰ This recognition of the historical boundedness of social ideas and of their dependence on the mode of production led to doctrines such as that "the real content of demands for justice reflected only the level of economic need of society."¹¹

Paradigmatic Enlightenment thinkers spoke in the strongest terms of the rights of man, and there is of course the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* of 1791. As Hook well puts it:

. . . for the thinkers of the Enlightenment the existence of the rights of man was a common article of belief however they differed in their definitions, enumerations, and justifications of the belief. To be human meant that one was morally entitled to a certain mode of treatment, formally positive, concretely negative, at the hands of one's fellows. Whether human rights were ultimately grounded in God, nature, or human nature, whether they were justified by reason or utility, were matters of dispute; but there was no dispute that all individuals possessed these rights, that they were not created or granted by any society or state or government, whose moral right to existence could and should be judged by whether it furthered them or not. Where enumerated these rights expressed the moral conscience of the time revolted by injustice and cruelties.¹²

Marx and subsequent Marxists, as it has often been noted, would in the midst of political struggles, as a tactical or strategic matter, appeal to rights; but, Hook argues, this "practical strategy of natural rights is at war with the theory of natural rights."¹³ Hook continues:

. . . Marxism as a movement of social protest, reform, or revolution talked a language which made no sense in the light of the doctrines of historical materialism. In the Enlightenment tradition the language of natural rights is the natural language invoked to curb the excesses of power. It was this language that Marxism invoked where it voiced the demands of the suffering and oppressed for relief as well as for justice. But according to the theory of historical materialism all talk of the rights of man was simply an ideology, a rationalization of the needs of a burgeoning capitalist society. It denied the existence of any component of independent moral validity or autonomy in the appeal to human rights. If the issue was merely one of power or interest there is no more reason for one class or party in the social conflict to prevail than another, "right" should be a synonym of "might" and "wrong" of "weakness," a view which no Marxist can consistently hold when he speaks of exploitation of labor or protests against the suppression of human freedom. To say that the principle of freedom for which so many human beings willingly died during the French Revolutionary Wars was merely a slogan whose real content was the demand for freedom to buy cheap and sell dear, for freedom of contract, mobility, accumulation of capital, despite and against feudal restrictions, sounds utterly cynical. And it actually does a profound injustice to those Marxists whose ethical sensibilities are revolted by some proposed methods of achieving relief

from social injustice. I know of few Marxists who escape incoherence and inconsistency when they speak of natural or human rights from the standpoint of historical materialism.¹⁴

Hook illustrates, by way of an example, this kind of Marxist ambivalence verging on incoherence with a passage from an English Marxist, H. M. Hyndman. In 1921 Hyndman remarks, speaking of the French Revolution:

Never in human history were great ideals prostituted to baser ends. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" is the glorious motto still inscribed on the buildings and banners of the French Republic. But what did those noble abstractions mean to the class triumphant in the French Revolution, the class whose members were its leaders throughout? Liberty to exploit by wage slavery and usury. Equality before laws enacted in the interest of profiteers, and justice administered in accordance with their profiteering notion of fair play. Fraternity as a genial brotherhood of pecuniary exploitation. The "Rights of Man" was deliberately perverted to the right to plunder under forms of equity.¹⁵

Hook then, though he overstates it, makes a point familiar from analytical philosophy. "It makes no sense," Hook remarks, "to assert that moral ideals have been betrayed or perverted unless we believe that they have a meaning and validity independent of the historical activities with which they have been identified."¹⁶ If all talk of right or wrong is, just in virtue of being moral talk, without any validity since it simply rationalizes the interests of some class or other (typically the dominant class), then no legitimate non-ideological point can be made with moralizing phrases such as "being betrayed or perverted." Hook is maintaining that there is a kind of internal incoherence to the Marxist position. Below I shall seek to show how the Marxist need not be so trapped.

Marx, as has been indicated, is prone to see morality as ideology: to reduce, as Hook puts it, talk of human rights "to rhetorical masks of economic class interests."¹⁷ These claims, as Hook points out, were not lost on many informed and sensitive people who saw the justice of the Marxist claim "that although equality of rights is a necessary condition for social justice by itself equality is not sufficient, for it was compatible with many different modes of treating human beings some of which are experienced as intolerable."¹⁸ Paradigmatic Enlightenment theorists proclaimed that the law must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. Marx responded that where economic

disparities are substantial, as they are in feudal and capitalist societies, the law does not and cannot protect or punish equally.¹⁹ If a millionaire is fined a thousand dollars for the same offense as a check-out clerk the effect on them will be very different indeed. Moreover, the millionaire can afford a very different quality of legal counsel than can the check-out clerk. These and similar things make it a farce in such formal terms to speak of equality before the law. To fail to note such things is to fail to note how deeply ideological our moral and legal conceptions are. Rights-talk, and morals-talk more generally, in our capitalist societies are “outworn bourgeois notions or prejudices, irrelevant to the practices of socialist militants.”²⁰ But a recognition of this seems at least to undermine any reasonable basis for criticizing capitalist society or any other society and urging that it be replaced, where reasonably possible, by another better society or social order. The rational justification (if that isn’t pleonastic) for Marxist militancy seems to have been pulled out from under it.

Thus two elements—historical materialism and ideology—from the canonical core of Marxism may make trouble for Enlightenment humanism and with that for the claim that Marx’s account provides a more persuasive articulation of that tradition than those given by its founding fathers. Marx was one of the great denouncers of all time. *Capital* and the *Grundrisse*, as well as his other mature works, plainly and unequivocally condemn capitalism and much of the ethos that goes with it. But this, some have thought, is of no avail, for such canonical concepts as historical materialism and ideology commit a consistent Marxist to an *immoralism*—some might even claim to a nihilism—that is plain incompatible with the moralizing stance Marx sometimes takes. They undermine any defense of autonomy (something Marx himself clearly prized) or of a just and humane society of emancipated persons: the very world the Enlightenment envisions.²¹

I shall maintain, against the depiction of Marx as an immoralist, that a plausible, textually responsible reading of these key concepts (the concepts of historical materialism and ideology) can be given which does not have immoralist consequences. It is not the case that, in order to believe, as Marx did, that morality is ideology, we must also (if we are consistent) be amoralists, immoralists, nihilists or some kind of moral skeptic or relativist.²² It is not that Marx articulates some alternative theoretical way of viewing morality. He never wrote a treatise on moral philosophy or a book on the morality of revolution or on what the just society should look like. Marx would have looked on such enterprises with irony and suspicion, perhaps even with scorn.

What I shall argue is that a good understanding of what historical materialism is and what ideology is, including most moral ideology, will show that these concepts are not incompatible with the taking of a moral point of view, with arguing that in our time capitalism is exploitative, unjust and an impediment to the fullest and most extensive human flourishing feasibly achievable. I shall also argue that these canonical conceptions are not incompatible with making claims of an arguably objective sort about a just and emancipatory social order that in general terms squares with the underlying ideals of the Enlightenment.

Historical Materialism and Morality

To start with historical materialism: being a little more rigorous about what it is will, I believe, provide the key. In his classic capsule statement of it in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx remarks that the economic structure of society, constituted by its set of relations of production, is the real foundation of society. This economic structure is the basis on which there "rises a legal and political superstructure . . . to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness."²³ Yet even the economic structure, as part of the whole mode of production, is what it is during a given epoch because it corresponds to a certain development of the productive forces, another element of the mode of production. In this way, as Marx puts it in his preface, "the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general."²⁴ What we need clearly to understand, if we would understand historical materialism, is that, looking at human history as a whole, and not just at the development of particular societies, the productive forces tend to develop throughout human history and as they develop they will periodically come to clash with the relations of production when these relations impede the growth of the productive forces. This, in turn, tends to cause conflict in society.²⁵ A central element of this is class conflict. Different socio-economic organizations of production, which at various times have characterized human history, rise and fall as they enable or impede the expansion of society's productive capacity. The growth of the productive forces explains the general course of human history.

Does the acceptance of this, as Hook and many others believe, justifiably undermine a belief in morals? If historical materialism is true,

can there be no transhistorical set of moral principles to which all people should conform, regardless of class or situation?

Engels may very well be right in denying that if historical materialism is true there are any eternal moral principles with any determinate content.²⁶ But there still could in the various epochs with their determinate modes of production be contextually justified moral principles that have a perfectly reasonable objectivity. Historical materialists can perfectly well say that at such and such a time with such and such a mode of production, such and such moral principles are justified and that at still another time with yet another mode of production a different set of moral principles is justified. Judgments about what is or is not correct at each of these times, as far as historical materialism is concerned, can be perfectly objective; they can be made across modes of production and can, in principle at least, be seen to be justified by any reflective person with normal sympathies and with a good knowledge of the relevant facts.²⁷

The de facto dependency of the extant moralities on modes of production does not rule out a belief in moral progress. Engels was perfectly explicit about this.²⁸ As the production forces develop, they open up more and more possibilities for well-being, for human flourishing, and, specifically, for more autonomy for more people. Feudal society opened up more such possibilities than ancient slave-owning society did; capitalist society opened up more such possibilities than feudal society; and socialist societies will, if Marx's account of historical materialism is near the mark, open up still more such possibilities for more people than do capitalist societies. The lives of more people become better—objectively better—as we go through these epochal transformations. This is plainly not the road to immorality, nihilism or even relativism. There is nothing skeptical or subjective about such a position.

Ideology and Morality

I turn now to ideology. Marx famously, and some think notoriously, said that morality is ideology: that moral beliefs express in a disguised way class interests, usually those of the dominant class, though they are standardly taken by people in the society as objective claims which answer to the interests or needs of everyone alike.

On the face of it Marx to be at all consistent must be an immoralist,

amoralist or nihilist rejecting all moral ideals as so much rhetorical rubbish. It is my belief that appearances are deceiving here and that there is a reading of "ideology" fully justifiable and in accord with Marx's text which will show that none of these anti-moralist consequences follow from Marx's claim that morality is ideology.²⁹

This, I admit, sounds paradoxical. To relieve this paradox I will need first to characterize what I think is, particularly with philosophers, a wide-spread misunderstanding about Marxist conceptions of ideology and then give a general characterization of ideology and a gloss on that characterization that will properly spell out what is involved in the claim that morality is ideology.

Many intellectuals, and most particularly philosophers, are prone to misunderstand the claim that morality is ideology, in effect, if not explicitly, taking it as an *epistemological* claim or a claim about the *logical* status of moral notions—all moral notions, ill thought-out notions as well as carefully deliberated ones. It is a claim, they think, that when we get clear about what moral ideas really are, when we get clear about the very meanings of these concepts, we will come to see that the very idea of their being moral knowledge or valid moral belief is nonsense; for moral ideas are, and can be, nothing but class-based social demands which—simply because of what moral ideas must be—are without any rational warrant. But in fact, Marx's remark about morality being ideology is an observation in the *sociology of morals* and not in *moral epistemology* or *moral philosophy*. By "sociology of morals" I mean theories about the origin and function or functions of morality in society. Does, for example, morality emerge through social stimulation and does it help create or strengthen bonds of solidarity between people? By a "moral epistemology" I mean a theory about whether or not morality can yield knowledge, and if so how is it that moral propositions are known, or reasonably believed, to be true or false. Moral philosophy includes moral epistemology, but it is as well an inquiry into what, if anything, is the supreme principle of morality or whether there are several fundamental principles with no one taking precedence. It also asks whether, as a justificatory base, an ethics should be rights-based, duty-based, goal-based or some mixture thereof, and whether there is a distinct manner of reasoning in ethics which would show us that, and how, we could justify moral beliefs and actions. This, and much more, goes into a philosophical theory of ethics and a moral epistemology but I have given enough of an account to show how very different it is from a sociology of morals.

What I am claiming is that Marx tendered a distinctive sociology of

morals which, he claimed, shows how moral ideas arise in class societies and tend to function to further or at least protect the interests of the dominant class. Their typical social role is to reconcile us to our condition, typically a dominated condition, in class societies. This, Marx claims, is their ideological function; but there is no philosophical claim being made here about what moral claims are and must be. There is no claim that something in the very nature of a moral idea makes it function in this way: no claim that moral conceptions *must be* essentially illusory.

It is all too easy to confuse this sociological conception of the role typically played by moralities in class societies with an iconoclastic bit of moral epistemology which claims that "believing in morals" must be an illusion because there can be no objective prescriptivity built into the fabric of the world, since moral ideas are simply objectivized emotions.³⁰ This Hume-like conception of morality may tell it like it is, but there is nothing in Marx or the Marxist tradition requiring the acceptance of such a theory.

Ideological beliefs are part of the superstructure for Marx but *not* everything that is in the superstructure is ideological.³¹ Marx thought there could be genuinely social scientific ideas, including his own ideas about a science of society, which were superstructural without being ideological. An *ideology* is a cluster of superstructural beliefs (or practices associated with such beliefs) which are (a) typically mystifying or illusory; which (b) typically involve our public conceptions of ourselves; which (c) reflect, though typically in a disguised way, the interests of a determinate class or other primary social group (such as the Afrikaners); and which (d) are presented as impartially answering to the interests of everyone alike in the society. Ideologies typically mold the way we see things. They are distortion-prone and function, very typically, to keep people (particularly the dominated classes) in place. However, they do not *necessarily* distort, though they do necessarily answer to class interests or to something very like class interests. *That something answers to class interests is the mark of the ideological.*

With such a conception of ideology, in which mystification is a *contingent* feature, there is no necessary conflict between either science and ideology or morality and ideology. Marx, in writing *Capital*, sought to make a contribution to our scientific understanding of how whole socio-economic systems work *and* he at the same time made a contribution to socialist ideology by supporting working class interests in showing (trying to show) how the capitalist system can be broken. Since an ideology in answering to class interests *need* not do so by dis-

tortion, *Capital* could at one and the same time, without any inconsistency at all, be both scientific and ideological. The same thing could be said for Smith or Ricardo, though their scientific accounts supported different class interests.

Similar things can be said about morality and ideology. Marxists argue that capitalism exploits and dominates workers. If that is true and if, as Marxists also think, the productive forces are sufficiently advanced so that socialism is a reasonable possibility, then it can sensibly be argued—and with a certain moral force—that achieving socialism would be a good thing and that we ought to struggle to make socialism a reality. Those two judgments, judgments which Marxists would make, are plainly moral judgments. They are, that is, genuinely moral remarks—and indeed they could be morally justified. But they could also be ideological at the same time. That is, they could serve the interests of the working class. But this does not necessarily turn such moral claims into mere bits of ideology which distort our understanding of the situation in our struggle against the capitalist class and in favor of the working class. Again there *need* be no conflict between the moral and the ideological: something could be genuinely moral and could, as well, be morally justified while remaining ideological. Just as there is no necessary conflict between science and ideology, there is no necessary conflict between morality and ideology. The core principles of Marxism, therefore, do not conflict with Enlightenment ideals. Indeed Marx should be seen as crucially developing the Enlightenment project rather than as unwittingly undermining it. This makes him not an enemy of, but a central figure in Enlightenment humanism.³²

NOTES

1. Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, trans. Emile Burns (New York: International Publishers, 1939), chs. IX–XI. See also Kai Nielsen, "Engels on Morality and Moral Theorizing," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 26 (1983).
2. William Shaw, "Marxism and Moral Objectivity" in Kai Nielsen and Steven Patten, eds., *Marx and Morality* (Guelph, Ont.: Canadian Association for Publishing in Philosophy, 1981); Kai Nielsen, "If Historical Materialism is True, Does Morality Totter?" *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (January 1986); and Kai Nielsen, "Historical Materialism, Ideology and Ethics," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 29 (1985): 47–63.
3. Friedrich Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx" in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 681–82.

4. G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); Richard W. Miller, *Analyzing Marx* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); John E. Roemer, *A General Theory of Exploitation and Class* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986); John E. Roemer, ed., *Analytical Marxism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Marx* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Daniel Little, *The Scientific Marx* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Andrew Levine, *Arguing for Socialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).
5. Elster, 531.
6. Sidney Hook, "The Enlightenment and Marxism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 29, no. 1 (January–March 1986): 93–108. Allen Wood and Richard Miller, while defending with considerable resourcefulness the Marxist anti-moralist line, do not assent to the claim that being a Marxist anti-moralist runs counter to Enlightenment humanitarian values. See Allen Wood, "Marx's Immoralism" in Bernard Chavance, ed., *Marx en Perspective* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales, 1985), 681–98 and Richard Miller, *Analyzing Marx*, part I. See also Andrew Collier, "Aristotelian Marx," *Inquiry* 29, no. 4 (December 1986): 459–70 and Collier, "Scientific Socialism and the Question of Socialist Values" in Kai Nielsen and Steven Patten, eds., *Marx and Morality* (Guelph, Ont.: Canadian Association for Publishing in Philosophy, 1981), 121–54. For a careful textual account of Marx's views on human rights see George G. Brenkert, "Marx and Human Rights," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (January 1986): 55–77.
7. Hook, 93–109.
8. *Ibid.*, 95–96.
9. *Ibid.*, 96.
10. *Ibid.*, 97.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 98.
13. *Ibid.*, 99. G. A. Cohen, in a way that is very unusual for a Marxist, argues that Marxists should believe in natural rights, that that belief does not conflict with the canonical core of Marxism and that it is confusion on the part of many Marxists about the nature of morality that makes them think otherwise and make theoretical claims that belie their own practice. See G. A. Cohen, "Freedom, Justice and Capitalism," *New Left Review* no. 126 (March–April 1981): 3–17 and Cohen, "Peter Mew on Justice and Capitalism," *Inquiry* 29, no. 3 (September 1986): 315–23. For some standard difficulties in traditional conceptions of human rights see my "Human Rights," *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (April–June 1986): 151–56.
14. Hook, 99.

15. *Ibid.* See E. M. Hyndman, *The Evolution of Revolution* (London, 1921), 236. Cited by Hook.
16. Hook, 99. I say "overstated" because of the following considerations. Hook is right for starters (and importantly so) in asserting that if moral talk (all moral talk) is just rhetorical rubbish serving class interests then there is no possible conceptual space left even to claim that moral ideals have been betrayed or perverted. Only if they are capable of being validly asserted would it make sense to say that they could be betrayed or perverted. To get such talk off the ground we must have some non-vacuous contrast. But the validity claim might be understood in a far more historicist way than Hook allows, one that would not be so independent of the historical activities with which they have been identified. (Remember, historicism is one thing and relativism another.) Hook simply begs the question posed by those who would give a more contextual or historicist reading of such validity claims.
17. *Ibid.*, 100.
18. *Ibid.*, 101.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, 102.
21. *Ibid.*, 107–8. Hook's references to Marx are from *MEGA*, 1/1, 561, *MEGA*, 1/1, 615 and *MEGA*, 1/8, 278.
22. I have developed these views in my "Marx and Moral Ideology," *African Philosophical Inquiry* 1, no. 1 (January 1987): 71–87; "A Marxist Conception of Ideology" in Anthony Parel, ed., *Philosophy and Politics* (Waterloo, Ont.: University of Waterloo Press, 1983), 139–61; "Are Moral Beliefs Ideological Deceptions?" in Bhakhu Parekh and Thomas Pantham, eds., *Political Discourse* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987), 82–96; "Marxism and the Moral Point of View," *American Philosophical Quarterly* (1987); and "Justice, Class Interests and Marxism," *Dialogos* (1987).
23. Karl Marx, "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy" in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton Inc., 1987), 3–6. G. A. Cohen, "Forces and Relations of Production" in Betty Matthews, ed., *Marx 100 Years On* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), 111–34; G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense*; and G. A. Cohen, "Reply to Four Critics," *Analyse & Kritik* 5, no. 3 (December 1983): 195–222.
24. Marx, "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy," 4.
25. Kai Nielsen, "Taking Historical Materialism Seriously," *Dialogue* 22 (1983): 319–338.
26. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 94–105. Nielsen, "Engels on Morality and Moral Theorizing."
27. Nielsen, "If Historical Materialism is True, Does Morality Totter?" and "Marxism and the Moral Point of View."
28. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 105.
29. Joe McCarney, *The Real World of Ideology* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980);

Nielsen, "A Marxist Conception of Ideology"; "Are Moral Beliefs Ideological Deceptions?"; "Marx and Moral Ideology"; and "Marxism, Morality and Moral Philosophy"; Joseph P. DeMarco and Richard M. Fox, eds., *New Directions in Ethics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 92–112.

30. J. L. Mackie, *Contemporary Linguistic Philosophy—Its Strength and Its Weakness* (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1956); his *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1977), and his *Hume's Moral Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980). For a discussion of Mackie's views and, more generally, of projectivism and of the rejection of objective prescriptivity, see the essays in Ted Honderich, ed., *Morality and Objectivity* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).
31. John McMurtry, *The Structure of Marx's World-View* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 123–56. Note his citations of Marx there.
32. Harry Garfinkel reminded me on an occasion of reading this paper that paradigmatic Enlightenment figures were individualists in a way that Marx and Marxists were not and this individualism was a central element in classical Enlightenment thought. I agree that it was and that it is in conflict with Marx and Marxism. However, the core elements of my minimalist conceptualization of the Enlightenment are also fundamental features of the classical Enlightenment and are detachable from its individualism. I concentrate on these features and show how they square with a Marxist view of things. It should also be noted that arguments for rights were central to Enlightenment thought. It could be the case, though I am not claiming it, that Marx like Bentham rejected rights—and particularly natural rights—while still accepting other moral notions as legitimate. If this were the case he would in another way be moving away from paradigmatic Enlightenment views. But there are, if my arguments in the text are near to the mark, more than enough similarities to make Marx an heir to the Enlightenment.