

Modern China

<http://mcx.sagepub.com>

The Symposium Papers: Discussion and Comments

John G. Gurley

Modern China 1977; 3; 443

DOI: 10.1177/009770047700300409

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://mcx.sagepub.com>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Modern China* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://mcx.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://mcx.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations <http://mcx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/3/4/443>

The Symposium Papers

Discussion and Comments

JOHN G. GURLEY

Stanford University

Although I have no special academic qualifications for the task of summarizing and commenting on the papers in the symposium on Mao and Marx, the editor has nevertheless turned to me, I feel in desperation, as one among the very few who did not contribute to the symposium, and who is, therefore, eligible for such an assignment. I have most reluctantly accepted this invitation.

Inasmuch as all of the papers in the symposium analyze the problem of the relation of Mao to Marx and Engels, and because none of them explains exactly what it is that Marx and Engels stood for, or precisely how their terms were defined, it seems essential to begin with their theory of history and revolution, as I understand it.¹ I then intend to establish links between this "original Marxism" and the theory and practice of Mao Ze-dong.² After that, my comments on the various papers should at least be understandable, even though disputable, and they can be brief.

Beyond dispute, however, are the benefits conferred on all of us by the participants' informed and lively discussion of these issues. My hope is to suggest ways of building on what has now been done so well.

MODERN CHINA, Vol. 3 No. 4, October 1977

© 1977 Sage Publications, Inc.

MARX'S AND ENGELS' THEORY OF HISTORY

Marx and Engels analyzed historical development with three broad categories: the productive forces, the relations of production, and the superstructure.

The productive forces comprise the material means of production and labor-power. The former include the subjects of human labor (natural resources, raw materials, and the environment) and the instruments of human labor (tools, equipment, structures, and animals). Labor-power is the aggregate of people's mental and physical capabilities in production.

The relations of production include work relations and ownership relations. The former link together the two major components of the productive forces—labor-power and the means of production—in material production (manufacturing, mining, agriculture, and transport). Ownership relations are not only legal relations, but, more broadly, relations of control over the productive forces and their products. Since all ownership relations have been class relations, the heart of the relations of production consists of class structures.

The superstructure includes institutions and ideology that reflect the underlying economic base (that is, the productive forces plus the relations of production). The dominant forms of institutions, such as the state, family, religious and educational establishments, and the legal system, support the privileged positions of the ruling class. The dominant ideology serves the same purpose, by justifying and holding together the existing order. However, the superstructure also contains forms of institutions and ideology that reflect the interests of subordinate classes.

The mode of production is the system of producing which is carried on within specific ownership and work relations.

Marx's and Engels' theory of history—Marx always spoke of "the laws of history"—is that accumulated changes in the productive forces will ultimately cause a qualitative change in the relations of production. Such changes in the economic base will sooner or later cause changes in the superstructure. The first change occurs because old relations of production eventually become fetters on the further expansion of the pro-

ductive forces. The second change occurs because some old superstructural elements impede the full development of the new mode of production.

The expansion of the productive forces is inherent in the dialectical relationship that exists, through productive labor, between human beings and their material means of production. As people work to obtain their material needs, they change their world and themselves at the same time. Conscious productive labor generates new subjects and instruments of human labor as well as improved labor-power—enhanced human skills and abilities, new perceptions and needs. These new skills and needs both enable and compel human beings to achieve still higher results in productive labor. The development of productive forces, therefore, includes the growth of human capabilities, the greatest productive force of all.

As productive forces develop, they increasingly come into conflict with the relations of production. Since society will not sacrifice its acquired productive forces, and since ruling classes are highly reluctant to relinquish the work and ownership relations through which they prosper, a revolution is usually necessary to resolve the conflict in favor of the productive forces, which then acquire the relations appropriate to them. The revolution is, of course, carried out by human beings—by a rising class that is associated with the new productive forces over the old ruling class that is linked with the productive forces of a prior era.

During the period of growing dissonance between the productive forces and the relations of production, the expanding productive forces tend to bring about work relations appropriate to their optimal utilization. The extent to which this occurs, however, depends on the particular ownership relations that prevail and on other circumstances. In any case, as productive forces expand, work relations may be modified for a time without precipitating fundamental or qualitative changes in ownership relations.

When relations of production have been changed into forms that harmonize with the enlarged productive forces, elements of the superstructure change—some quickly, some slowly,

perhaps some hardly at all. Parts of the superstructure, such as values held about ancient Egyptian art or Shakespeare's plays, may be relatively unimportant to the form of the economic base and so, for extended periods, may be immune to changes in the base. Other parts, however, such as the ideology that rationalizes the exploitation of one class by another, will change quickly and thoroughly. It is clear from what has already been said that superstructural elements, in turn, affect the economic base, either by impeding or facilitating its further progress. Like a child, the superstructure is "determined" by its parents in the economic base. And, like a child, it can influence the further progress of its parents.

Human beings are part of the productive forces. They are also, through work and ownership relations, part of the relations of production. In the superstructure, the ideology is held by human beings, and they are also integral parts of the institutions and systems of authority. Thus, when accumulated changes in productive forces ultimately alter the relations of production, the changes are achieved by human actions. And when changes in the economic base cause changes in the superstructure, human beings are again implicated. Whatever the causal relationships postulated among Marx's and Engels' three historical categories, the agency of change is human beings.

While an individual can presumably do whatever he or she wants to do, Marx and Engels believed that *effective* human actions are tightly circumscribed within an orderly world: people make their own history, but not exactly as they please. Consequently, effective human action is largely determined by circumstances "directly found, given and transmitted from the past." Freedom resides in the capacity of people for understanding such necessity—that is, the world's orderliness. A rational understanding of the world enables people to escape from being history's pawns to becoming, eventually, history's masters—to becoming free.

Since Marx and Engels believed that people make their own history, albeit under a definite set of circumstances not chosen by themselves, they would have been puzzled by the modern argument between voluntarist and determinist versions

of historical change. Certainly they would have considered as invalid the identification of voluntarist with *human* action or will and the identification of determinist with *nonhuman*, material or technological changes. Changes in productive forces, they thought, are the bases for historical change, but these forces include human beings, whose actions, necessary for change, have determinate causes. As Lenin said, in perfect harmony with Marx and Engels: "the idea of historical necessity does not in the least undermine the role of the individual in history" (Fischer, 1972: 24).

Marx and Engels believed that the proletarian revolutions against capitalism would very likely occur first in the most advanced capitalist countries, more or less simultaneously, where the productive forces had sufficiently developed to be in serious conflict with the relations of production and where, consequently, class struggles were acute. "No social order ever perishes," Marx declared, "before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed" (see Dobb, 1970: 21). However, these revolutions might be sparked by bourgeois-democratic revolutions in less-developed countries, such as Germany of the 1840s and Russia of the 1880s, in which the proletariat—more developed there than in seventeenth-century England or eighteenth-century France—would play an important role. A bourgeois revolution of this newer type would become the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, and each revolution would complement the other. In particular, if the spark were struck by Russia, the resulting proletarian revolutions in Europe might enable Russia to push forward toward socialism much more rapidly than otherwise. Still proletarian revolutions and the attainment of socialism would first take place in the most advanced capitalist countries.

FROM "ORIGINAL MARXISM" TO "MAOISM"

Inasmuch as the industrial working-class movement first arose in the most advanced countries of the world, it is under-

standable that Marx and Engels assumed that proletarian revolutions would initially happen in those countries. Marx had few doubts, and at times was certain, about that. Instead, his fear, at least at one point, was whether *socialist* Europe—as he put it in a letter to Engels on 8 October 1858—would be crushed “in this little corner” by the ascending bourgeois societies in the rest of the world (Avineri, 1969: 464). In fact, a century later the question had become the reverse: whether *capitalist* Europe would be crushed in its little corner by the ascending Marxist societies throughout the rest of the world. How did Marx’s fear turn into its opposite?

To begin with, Marx and Engels were wrong about socialist Europe because they underestimated the growing strength of the bourgeoisie and the declining revolutionary zeal of the proletariat, both of which were products of the unusually rapid growth of capitalism, as an international system, in the second half of the nineteenth century. During this period, while Marx and Engels were analyzing the problem of proletarian revolutions, capitalism was being transformed from its competitive to its monopoly-imperialist stage—that is, to a stage that saw the further rapid internal development of capitalist economies and the spread of capital and capitalism from their developed center to underdeveloped outer regions, which the center’s bourgeoisies controlled and exploited. As a result, capitalism grew richer and stronger at its developed center and became vulnerable along its lengthening extensions to the peripheral areas.

Consequently, revolutionary Marxism, in its original form, was drained of its capability of overthrowing European bourgeoisies, who became increasingly potent, and so it was largely driven out of the developed center. At the same time, it was attracted to the assailable outer reaches of global capitalism. A Marxian revisionist socialism—fashioned by Eduard Bernstein and others—which contemplated gradual and legal means of achieving socialism on the basis of a steady accretion of economic, social, and political gains to the working class within the institutions of capitalism, largely usurped the place in the center

formerly occupied by the original brand of revolutionary Marxism. In the less-developed areas of global capitalism, on the other hand, original Marxism became Leninism. Thus, the historical conditions that led to the initial failure of original Marxism produced revisionism in one place and a different brand of revolutionary Marxism in another. Both came out of the same historical development, which was not fully foreseen or analyzed by Marx and Engels.

Marxism took the form of revisionism at the center because capitalism created, on the world stage, ample room for the further development of the center's productive forces, which moderated class conflicts within these societies to the extent that the proletariat was no longer willing or able to carry out revolutions against the bourgeoisie.

Marxism took the new revolutionary form of Leninism outside the center—in Russia to begin with—because international capital, by imposing itself on national modes of production, distorted the relations of production in ways that impeded the full development of these countries' productive forces, including masses of human beings themselves. This generated a revolutionary situation that remained within the general Marxian framework because the revolutionary movement contained Marxian analyses and continued to be directed ultimately against capitalism—but now against capitalism as a global system. The actual further development of capitalism, therefore, led to new revolutionary movements against it. But these revolutionary movements were now more complex than in original Marxism because the social formations in which they occurred were more complex, as well as being farther removed, in their institutions and ideology, from the socialist stage. Thus, the attainment of socialism in the periphery of world capitalism required a shifting alliance of classes, in which the peasantry and national bourgeoisie played important roles, the proletariat led the alliance, and it was in turn led by a vanguard communist party.

While this movement, in all its complexity, was a departure from original Marxism, early Leninism otherwise stayed within

the Marxian fold by envisaging a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia that would spark socialist revolutions in Europe, which in turn would further the struggle for socialism in Russia. Somewhat later, Leninism, departing even in this regard from original Marxism, postulated that the proletariat in Russia could attain *political* power before the European proletariat did, but could not complete the economic forms of socialism in the absence of proletarian revolutions in the West. Still later, Leninism, pushing another step beyond original Marxism, theorized that, even in the absence of immediate European proletarian revolutions, Russia could in fact attain, tortuously in isolation, the economic forms of socialism. However, the path to socialism could be shortened, and the capitalist stage of development largely skipped in the periphery, if there did exist proletarian governments in the West prepared to render full assistance to their less-developed friends.

These departures from original Marxism were necessitated by the invalidity of one of the main theses of original Marxism (that pertaining to socialist Europe), by the growing inability of colonial areas to develop fully their productive forces within the narrow confines of distorted relations of production, and by the revolutionary opportunities afforded by imperialist wars, which grew out of the uneven development and intense rivalries among monopoly capitalist nations. In short, the Leninist departures were forced on revolutionary Marxism by the manner in which world capitalism developed after 1870 or so. And since this actual development unfolded only over decades, revolutionary theory itself necessarily advanced only over decades.

Just as Leninism was Marxism in the age of monopoly capital, colonialism, and imperialist wars, so Stalinism was Leninism in the age of Soviet isolation—an isolation, within a sea of imperialism, that grew out of the historical conditions already noted. In such circumstances, the first Marxian state inevitably had enormous problems in building a socialist society. The Bolsheviks had no experience and very little theory to assist them in such a task. The assignment facing the Bolsheviks was

exceedingly difficult in view of the fact that they were the first to carry out a proletarian revolution, and this in a backward, defeated, and demoralized country. Further, partly because of the traditions of original Marxism, the Bolsheviks' strength was narrowly confined to the cities; they hardly knew the countryside, where most of the people lived. Moreover, several months after taking control, the Bolsheviks were plunged into a civil war supported by foreign powers, which brought them to their knees, devastated the country, and decimated the urban proletariat, the class basis of their support. It was also true that the ranks of the Bolsheviks were too thin to allow them to replace the bureaucracies of the Tsar, to provide industry with the specialists and technicians required for industrial leadership, to supply the needed manpower for the planning agencies, and to fill the top positions in the Red Army. The bourgeoisie took over many of these positions. Finally, because of the above, the deep traditions of Tsarist Russia weighed heavily on Bolshevism; Tsarism imposed its standards and methods on the new party, and so the process was started that eventually brought about at least partial degeneration of the party.

Stalin, building on Marx, Engels, and Lenin, faced with these initial problems and with the growing isolation of a backward country in a hostile capitalist world, was compelled to concentrate primarily on the rapid construction of Soviet economic and military power while trying secondarily at the same time to erect the first socialist society. The priority and urgency of the first occupation, coming on top of the initial difficulties faced by the Bolsheviks, led to Stalin's failure to provide the momentum in Soviet society that would carry it through socialism toward communism. Stalin did establish for the first time, however, within the Marxist-Leninist tradition, the principal structures of socialism: national planning, nationalization of industry, and collectivization of agriculture.

The isolation of the Soviet Union was broken by the success of the Albanian, Yugoslavian, Korean, and Chinese revolutions, and by the establishment of Soviet hegemony in other parts of eastern Europe. These revolutions came in the wake of World

War II, the second of capitalism's great internecine wars. These wars, in turn, grew out of the expansionary forces inherent in monopoly capitalism and the resulting rivalries created among capitalist powers over the division and redivision of the world, and they weakened the hold of these powers on their colonial possessions and other dependent areas.

Thus, the objective basis of Stalinism was eroded, which permitted Stalin, ever so gingerly, and Stalin's successors, more emphatically, to reverse some features associated with his name—especially those features that furthered rapid industrial growth while retarding the attainment of socialism, such as income inequalities, geographical imbalances, urban-rural disparities, and lopsided priorities. However, the Stalinist era had generated so many bourgeois tendencies within the economy that they came to be represented by growing numbers of Soviet leaders. After Stalin's death, these tendencies coalesced into a revisionist Marxism, akin to Bernstein revisionism, that espoused peaceful coexistence with imperialism (belief in the peaceful intentions of imperialist powers), peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism (opposition to violent revolution), peaceful transition from socialism to communism (opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat and to class struggles), and economism (opposition to bold measures for social transformation). The tenets of original Marxism, however, continued to coexist with, and stand in opposition to, revisionism in the USSR, this opposition being the ideological reflection of the enduring struggle between the new bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This struggle of opposites has generated both revisionist and revolutionary actions by the Soviet leadership.

The Chinese communist revolutionary movement was born out of struggles against feudalism and imperialism in China and from the fires of the Russian revolution. Stalin both encouraged this new revolutionary movement and enfeebled it. Turning East to protect the isolated, backward Soviet Union from British and Japanese imperialism, Stalin sought a strong antiimperialist ally in the Guomindang, which eventually helped Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jie-shi) in 1927 to betray the

Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the urban areas. Thus, it was the Soviet Union's isolation in the world, owing to the objective conditions that led to the failures of revolutions in the West, that produced Stalinism and its China policy and so contributed to the decimation of the CCP in China's cities. Unlike Russia of an earlier day, the strength of imperialism in China's urban centers also contributed to the ruralization of the CCP.

"Maoism" is the ideological reflection of China's backwardness (rudimentary productive forces and so a preponderance of peasants), its deep traditions shaped largely in isolation from the rest of the world over the millenia, and the more immediate failure of its proletarian revolution in the urban areas during the 1920s. The defeat of the CCP in the cities drove it into the countryside, into the midst of backward, scattered peasants, where base areas were established and defended against repeated military attacks by the Guomindang. China's backwardness, her long isolation, and the urban rout of the CCP all combined to form the ingredients of what later became Maoism—a peasant-based, military-oriented, revolutionary movement. These factors produced Mao, as the leader of this movement, because he embodied the attributes demanded by the historical circumstances.

In the case of the Soviet Union, the backwardness and its isolation in a growing hostile world led to an overemphasis on building up the productive forces on the basis of bourgeois efficiency criteria, at the expense of growing inequalities, the depoliticization of the masses, and with great imbalances in the economy, especially the serious neglect of agriculture, rural areas, and consumer goods.

The isolation of the CCP, on the other hand—to which the Soviet Union's isolation contributed—led to quite a different outcome. The CCP, driven into terribly impoverished areas, and under steady military attack, found it almost impossible to emphasize productive forces, and instead concentrated first on changing the relations of production and the superstructure. Maoism thus very clearly developed into a rural-based

movement that emphasized social transformation (land reforms, cooperatives, women's liberation, ideological remolding, and so on) before technical transformation, and, partly because of its constant defensive military campaigns, stressed mass movements among the people of the base areas.

The Chinese communist revolutionary victory in 1949 was the result of the growing appeal of Mao's peasant-based movement, the increasing nationalism engendered by imperialism— itself an outcome of the expansionary forces inherent in monopoly capitalism, and the turmoil produced and opportunities provided by monopoly capitalism's second great internecine war. Thus, the same historical forces that produced Leninism, World War I, and the Russian revolution (that is, the transformation of competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism and imperialism, uneven development among capitalist powers, and bitter rivalry among them), also produced World War II and the Chinese revolution.

Marxist China was protected and aided by the presence of the Soviet Union in the late 1940s and early 1950s. China owes her own existence to that of the Soviets. Despite Stalin's initial efforts to hold back the Chinese communist revolution after 1945, the Soviet Union, by its later friendship with Mao's China, protected it from the encroachments of the imperialist nations during this period. In the absence of the Soviet state, world imperialism (which, of course, would have included Russia), even though weakened after World War II, would have prevented for some time the Chinese and other Marxian revolutions from occurring in Asia, or at least would have defiled them. The Soviet Union, by aid and trade, also helped China in the 1950s to establish a strong economic base of productive forces.

Socialism, like capitalism, develops logically. The Marxian revolutionary movement necessarily begins in the center of world capitalism, is displaced by a weak Marxian revisionism, and moves to the outer regions. There revolutionary socialism first takes root, but it develops under such pressure from world capitalism that it becomes distorted. This distortion, however,

is an adaptation by Marxian socialism for its survival and so for its later development elsewhere along higher paths. Each new socialist arrival, compared to its predecessors, has potentially greater protection against imperialism, more aid from its socialist allies, and more options among development strategies. Because of this last factor, socialist countries increasingly take different paths and so, in the age of nationalism, come into conflict with one another. Nevertheless, Marxian revolutionary socialism, in many different forms, spreads rapidly around the outer regions and eventually gains sufficient strength to weaken the advanced bourgeoisies in the center. This allows the revival there of revisionist Marxism, and perhaps later on of still another form of revolutionary Marxism.

The role of the CCP and Mao in the logic of world socialist development, it goes without saying, has been extremely important. The Maoists, building on Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, and protected by the "distorted" presence of the Soviet Union, were able to fashion successfully the first socialist society to achieve some momentum through socialism toward communism. This step was, of course, a vital link in the continuing progress of socialism throughout the world. I judge "progress" and "distortion" on the basis of the abiding core of Marxian socialism and communism, which has persisted for over a century, and on its enrichment, which is a continuing process that grows out of the long historical revolutionary movement in which socialism overcomes not only capitalism but also itself in its earlier, incomplete forms.

If I may now summarize briefly in terms of the outstanding Marxist leaders: Marx and Engels, on the basis of the rise of the European industrial proletariat in the first half of the nineteenth century, analyzed the contradictions of capitalism within a bold new theory of history and revolution, subjected capitalism to scathing criticism, and predicted the success of proletarian revolutions against it. These supreme critics of capitalism, however, failed in their attempts to validate their prediction of capitalism's demise.

Lenin, influenced by the development of competitive capitalism into its monopolist and imperialist forms toward the end of the nineteenth century, studied the strengths and weaknesses of the later stage of capitalism and showed how to carry out a successful revolution against it. But Lenin failed to build a socialist society after the revolution.

Stalin, constrained by the backwardness of the Soviet Union and the growing threats against it, succeeded in rapidly building up his country's productive forces within the socialist framework of national planning, nationalization of industry, and collectivization of agriculture. But Stalin failed to establish a society in which continued progress could be made through the socialist stage toward communism (with its essential characteristic of classlessness).

Mao, basing himself on Stalin's and Lenin's theory and practice and the further development of capitalist imperialism and its internecine wars, succeeded in carrying out a revolution in such a way that, for the first time, continuing momentum through socialism toward communism could be achieved. Building on the theory and practice of his Marxist predecessors, Mao became the architect of a socialist society that serves as a model for many of the world's poor. But the path to this success was also the path to the split of the world Marxist movement; within success lurked failure.

When this story is placed squarely within the framework of Marx's historical materialism, definite links, each fashioned not capriciously but in the vise imposed by historical circumstances, are established between original Marxism and "Maoism." The story, as I see it, is a global one of socialist progress, in theory and practice, set against capitalist deterioration throughout this century.

COMMENTS ON THE SYMPOSIUM PAPERS

It is clear, then, that I am in general accord with Pfeffer's argument that "understanding the thought of Mao Ze-dong in theory and practice requires seeing it as a revolutionary

development strategy evolved from within the Marxist-Leninist tradition to achieve Marx's communist goals in China." I also believe, with him, that there has been a strong tendency in the China field to separate "Maoism" from its rich background, and that it is necessary, for a fuller understanding of revolutionary China, to reestablish those links. This requires, first of all, a real knowledge of what Marxism is and is not. In our field, a glaring problem in this regard seems to be the different interpretations given in the symposium papers to "determinism" and "voluntarism." Marx and Engels were almost certainly determinists in that they believed social change and the human actions propelling it had scientifically ascertainable causes—that human actions were not capricious. Some authors in the symposium equate voluntarism simply with human actions, which, whatever else it might be, is definitely not Marxism. This suggests that there is something basically wrong with the discussion of these concepts, and this misunderstanding, I believe, reflects other deficiencies in the field's grasp of Marx and Engels. Second, the establishment of links between Marx and Mao requires an investigation of world socialist development with the use of Marx's own theory of historical change and revolution. Marxists have used this theory imaginatively and convincingly in analyzing world capitalist development, but they have give little thought to the socialist side of development. Many of our authors, some of whom are historians, compare Mao to Marx without any sign that each must be placed within an ongoing historical process of global socialist development if their roles are to be properly understood. Marxists have taught us to see, say, Grover Cleveland and Franklin Roosevelt as essentially cut from the same cloth but at different stages of capitalist development, which required certain responses at one time and others at a later time. I have tried in the second section of this paper to show how a start might be made in this direction with respect to socialism.

Schwartz is correct that the theory and practice of Mao are also related to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western thought and to the Chinese cultural heritage, and that the thought of Mao Ze-dong is not the same as Marx's own thought.

But, despite these other relations, the bonds between Mao and Marx are the crucial ones for understanding world socialist development; that understanding, I feel, can be enriched but not fundamentally changed by the inclusion of these other dimensions. Mao has most certainly departed from Marx, but the departures, I have argued in Section II, do not represent spontaneous or inexplicable actions but revolutionary responses by social classes made within the narrow confines allowed by historical circumstances. If the departures can be explained by Marx's own theory of history, then they can be seen as elements of a logical pattern of historical development. This still leaves open the question, raised earlier by Schwartz, of whether these departures reflect the disintegration of Marxism or its progress. I have already expressed my judgment that it is the latter, while Schwartz has argued for the former view. I do not know what further evidence can be presented, but I believe that the answer can be pursued best within the framework that I have just suggested.

Although I could easily be mistaken, Walder's thesis appears to be that Marx was not an economic determinist because, in fact, he gave a prominent role to the superstructure, even though he gave ultimate priority to material structures, and because he did not set forth "a rigidly-defined, predetermined progression of stages of history." Moreover, Walder continues, Mao was not a voluntarist because, in fact, he believed that human consciousness is transformed only through the transformation of the economic base, including the relations of production. Like Marx, Mao sees a "mutual 'inneraction' between the densely interrelated aspects of a single conceptual structure." Consequently, Walder tells us, Mao and Marx have much in common.

I limit myself to only a few comments. First, Marx did not give ultimate priority to material structures. This he gave to the productive forces which include not only material means of production but labor-power as well—that is, human beings. It is human beings who fashion "material structures." When they do, they change not only their world but themselves at

the same time. And human actions, which are necessary for change, Marx insisted, have determinate causes. Second, Marx cannot be ruled out as a determinist simply because he gave a prominent role to the superstructure. After all, considering just one part of the superstructure, the ideas that classes have and act on might be the ideas they *must* have and *must* act on, in some determinate way. These ideas come from the practical social activity and struggles engaged in by these very classes. And those activities and struggles come from the way the productive forces have developed, especially in opposition to the existing relations of production. It is not fortuitous that certain ideas become dominant ones and others remain subordinate, or that some ideas have a major impact on the economic base while other ideas have none. These differences, Marx felt, can be explained by the structure of the economic base and especially the class relations within that base. In general, therefore, I agree with Wakeman's and Schram's contention that Marx was more of a determinist than Walder thinks.

At the same time, Mao seemed to see the world with more room in it for surprises, reversals, and spontaneity than Marx and Engels did. While Mao was a materialist, his world was somewhat disorderly; it provided openings for some human action seemingly independent of the "laws of history." Indeed, Mao did not consistently think in terms of historical laws, and in this respect alone he differed markedly from his predecessors.

Finally, without getting into other issues, there is no need to draw such fine distinctions, as Walder does between interaction and inneraction, determine and presuppose, entities and aspects, and causal and dense interrelations to explain Marx's theory. Many scholars have set forth this framework in a simple, straightforward manner, which I attempted to emulate in the first part of this paper. In the end, Walder's conclusion that Mao is very Marxist seems flat and excludes the more interesting terrain of differences and the historical reasons for them. Schwartz, much as I disagree with his conclusions, seems to have a better grasp of this than Walder does.

Schram, in his two contributions, confesses that in the past he saw a greater gulf between Mao, on the one hand, and Marx

and Engels, on the other, than he does now. "Looking at Mao's thought as a whole . . . I find it to be far more subtle and many-sided, and in many respects far more Marxist, than I had previously believed." Nevertheless, Schram asserts, there is a sharp contrast between Mao and Marx; there are aspects of Marx's thinking that are quite incompatible with Mao's. As Pfeffer correctly asks, presumably with a hopeless shrug, "what are we to conclude from all this?" Is Mao a Marxist, or isn't he? My answer is that, if one takes a Marxist (that is, dialectical materialist) view of Marxism itself, Mao could differ significantly from Marx and still be solidly within Marxism, as it has developed through struggles in a logical way over time. Schram gives no indication of ever having considered this, and, unfortunately, Pfeffer does nothing to aid him. Schram and others, in regarding Marxism more or less statically, are reduced to saying, in effect, A is A, B is B, and B is something like A but not quite. That being agreed on, some authors are then free to claim that B is *really* unlike A, and others that B and A are *really* very similar. In my judgment, that is the metaphysical pattern one finds in most of these papers. It is not a dialectical materialist way of thinking about A and B.

Schram tries to make this comparison between A and B by means of the categories of "voluntarist" and "determinist." He states that these two strands exist separately in the writings of Marx and Engels and simply cannot be brought together satisfactorily. If this had been possible, he says, "surely Marx and Engels would have done it, or least tried." But the fact is that this is exactly what Marx and Engels did and constitutes one of their outstanding achievements. It is people who make history, but they make it as determined beings; there would seem to be no gaps in the Marxian world for "spontaneity" and "capriciousness" to enter. Change is caused by people, but people are creatures of "specific, concrete, and scientifically ascertainable causes," as one astute scholar of Marx has written (Venable, 1966: 186).

Meisner writes that Mao did not "sin" against Marx, but he certainly departed from him—and had to if a revolution

were to be carried out successfully in a country where it was desperately needed. It is another question, though, Meisner adds, whether that revolution was socialist. His answer is "only in part." On the one hand, many Marxian policies have been carried out in China. On the other, Meisner implies that the peasants and workers do not have "the political means to determine the conditions under which they work and to control the products of their labor. That, after all," he notes, "is the first and essential condition of socialism." By the masses' lack of political means, Meisner refers to the continuing presence of the dictatorship of the proletariat in China—of the state—which Meisner apparently believes is supposed to disappear, according to Marxist theory, during the socialist stage, and the continuing presence of which denies peasants and workers their socialist rights. I find this a strange reading of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, especially after they clearly distinguished between socialism and communism. According to their theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat would disappear only in communism when classes had been eliminated; and this dictatorship during socialism would be in the interests of the masses and would encourage increasing worker control over work relations. While that is "only" theory, I do not know of evidence that practice in China substantially departs from it. Furthermore, Meisner does not present a useful framework for judging the extent to which China is or is not a Marxian socialist country. He relies only on a comparison between China's practice and Marx's own writings, and I have already indicated how very inadequate and ahistorical that is.

Friedman's point is that Mao departed from Marx, and so the two revolutionaries are different. Marx left the creation of socialism to the future. "It is absurd . . . to believe that Marx is unambiguous and decisive" on this issue, while Mao "is simply carrying forward Marx's ideas." Indeed, Mao is "a great revolutionary innovator and creator, perhaps the greatest ever"; Marx should be measured from the Maoist base, not Mao from the Marxist base. I have no quarrel with this.

Selden agrees with Pfeffer's assessment of the China field, but he adds the important point that in recent years "the field"

has changed for the better, partly under the impact of "the mini-cultural revolution in the United States and Europe in the late 1960s." As a result, Pfeffer's complaints should be modified. Selden views Mao as definitely in the Marxian tradition, even though Mao was confronted with new problems, especially that of transforming a backward peasantry into a proletariat. China's peasants today, Selden writes, are not Marx's backward and isolated peasants of yesterday. While Mao's peasants are not yet a socialist proletariat, they have made much progress in that direction. In this sense, Mao has created the preconditions for the ultimate achievement of communism within the Marxian tradition. That is a conclusion in need of further discussion.

Andors adopts a predominantly idealist view of Marxism by defining it as "a set of explicit and implicit values which influence human action." These values spur people, in their misery and alienation, on to communism, which evolves "historically as the result of the human drive to build a truly human civilization"—that is, one without alienation, social differences, pollution, and urban sprawl. Since these are Mao's goals, too, Andors concludes, Mao is a Marxist. This analysis reminded me of a resolution establishing the Fabian Society: "That an association be formed whose ultimate aim shall be the reconstruction of society in accordance with the highest moral possibilities" (Cole, 1961: 4). If Andor's paper sounds more uplifting than Marxian, it is no doubt because, within severe space limitations, he was compelled to focus on just one aspect of the entire controversy.

Starr observes that, while Mao regarded himself as a Marxist, he tended "to emphasize the discontinuities rather than the consonance of his theoretical conclusions with those of Marx." Because of his own theory and practice in China, he arrived at different conclusions. Mao was a creative and audacious Marxist, which is a judgment similar to Friedman's views.

Some authors have emphasized the similarities of Mao and Marx, others their differences. There is no difficulty in compiling a list on either side. On the former side, Mao thought in terms

of Marx's categories of historical materialism and had Marx's revolutionary outlook; he carried out socialist programs, which emphasized collectivism, the reduction of social differences, planning, and the development of productive forces, all in keeping with Marx's theory; and his ultimate aim was communism, the same as Marx's. On the other side, Mao did not carry out a proletarian revolution against a fully-matured bourgeoisie in the "Marxist way." Instead, he fomented revolution by means of base areas defended militarily; developed politically, socially, and economically; and supported by the peasantry, as the leading revolutionary class, against landlords and various hues of the bourgeoisie. He introduced new elements (for example, New Democracy) in the transition from the old society to socialism; he greatly emphasized class struggles and social transformation in the building of a socialist society; and he had new approaches to the transition from socialism to communism. Also, Mao rejected Marx's analysis of alienation because he viewed the peasants, in the populist manner, with reservoirs of energy and creativity—the opposites of alienated attributes. Finally, Mao's world was not as "tight" as Marx's; there were more gaps in it for surprises and upsets.

The authors in their symposium papers have thus far only stated these similarities and differences; the point, however, is to explain them. There is no better way to explain Marxism than with Marxism.

NOTES

1. Since the writings of Marx and Engels are widely known and have been cited often in the symposium papers, I have not documented the statements in the first section of this paper on Marx's and Engels' theory of history. In addition to the works of these authors, I have used my book (Gurley, 1976a), Shaw (forthcoming), and Venable (1966). Shaw's forthcoming book is the best statement I have ever seen on this topic.

2. In this section, I rely directly on my unpublished paper (Gurley, 1976b), but, of course, indirectly on the standard works dealing with Marx and Engels, Bernstein, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and the worldwide communist movement.

REFERENCES

- AVINERI, SHLOMO [ed.] (1969) *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.
- COLE, MARGRET (1961) *The Story of Fabian Socialism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press.
- DOBB, MAURICE [ed.] (1970) *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Karl Marx). New York: International Publishers.
- FISCHER, ERNST [ed.] (1972) *The Essential Lenin*. New York: Herder & Herder.
- GURLEY, JOHN (1976a) *Challengers to Capitalism: Marx, Lenin, and Mao*. San Francisco: San Francisco Book Company.
- (1976b) "The dialectics of development: USSR vs. China." An unpublished paper given as the Marshall Lectures at Cambridge University, November.
- SHAW, W. H. (forthcoming) *Production and Progress: A Study of Marx's Theory of History*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press.
- VENABLE, VERNON (1966) *Human Nature: The Marxian View*. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company.

John G. Gurley is professor of Economics at Stanford University. He was managing editor of the American Economic Review, 1963-1968, and is the author of Challengers to Capitalism: Marx, Lenin, and Mao and China's Economy and the Maoist Strategy.