ABSTRACT: The notion social class attains a well defined theoretical content for the first time in the works of the Classical Political Economists, who defined classes on the basis of the specific income form that each category of people (class) obtains. This approach to classes, when combined with the Classical labour value theory, may lead to a theory of class exploitation of the labour class by the capitalist class. The theory of classes has been, thus, totally banished from the corpus of „modern” (neo-classical) „Economic Science”. Consequently, „social class” has been regarded as a mainly sociological category. The sociological approaches to classes are characterised by a certain theoretical ambiguity, since they are, in most cases, based on a form of theoretical individualism inherited to modern social sciences by Political Philosophy. The scientific elements inherent in Political Economy’s class theory were preserved only by the Marxian class theory, which, though, revolutionised the Classical approach, creating a new, purely non-economic and non-mechanistic „relationist” class theory. Theoretical approaches which attempt to give the Marxian class theory a „subjectivist“ interpretation, or to reduce it to the methodological individualism of „modern“ (neo-classical) economic theory, are -according to my opinion- of very low analytical value.

1. Introduction

The theory of the classes comprises one of the most controversial chapters of the Social Sciences, in the sense that it comprises a forefront of confrontation between the different theoretical schools which are formulated within the field.

I may, therefore at this point reiterate, as an introductory clarification for what is to follow, the position that was stated by de Ste. Croix (1983, pg. 31): „It seems to me hardly possible for anyone today to discuss problems of class, and above all class struggle (or class conflict), in any society, modern or ancient, in what some people would call an ‘impartial’ or ‘unbiased’ manner. I make no claim to ‘impartiality’ or ‘lack of bias’, let alone ‘Wertfreiheit’, freedom from value-judgements”.

The purpose of the present paper is to defend the ability of Marxist class theory to scientifically investigate the structure of modern capitalist societies, by formulating, simultaneously, a Marxist approach to the notion of social classes.

In order to state the criteria of the basis of which may be made the necessary theoretical evaluations, I will begin with a brief reference to the first theoretical foundation of the notion of social classes in the framework of Classical Political Economy. In this way, the theoretical parameters will become apparent, which determined the articulation of more recent approaches. The Marxist notion of the
mode of production, as developed by Althusser in Reading Capital, will be used as a "starting point" for a more detailed theoretical approach to the class structure of capitalist social formations, whereas a critique to a recently developed subjective-individualist approach to social classes will illustrate the theoretical accuracy of the Marxist approach adopted by this paper.

2. The Notion of Social Classes in Political Economy

The notion of social classes acquires for the first time theoretical - analytical content in the works of the Classical School of Political Economy, which Adam Smith initiated in 1776 in "The Wealth of Nations", and the historical cycle of which is considered to have closed in 1848, with the "Principles of Political Economy with some of their Applications to Social Philosophy" of John Stuart Mill (Roll 1989, Rubin 1994).

The notion of social class first appears, of course, in Ancient Greek and Roman society. However, for the ancient writers, social class consisted of either a clear descriptive term with practical use in the formation of the "commonwealth" of the city (separation of the free citizens into "classes" according to the amount of property), or as a normative notion (a description of an ideal social organisation, in the framework of which are determined, by mainly political criteria - that is in reference to the organisation of power - the "classes")\(^1\). The approaches to the classes during the Middle Ages had a similar normative character.

The precursors of Classical Political Economy were, of course, the Physiocrats, who articulated a concept of social classes on the basis of a series of theoretical deductions. However the society (and the classes) that the Physiocrats described was itself idealised, it was a model that they were dreaming of imposing, with the assistance of the monarchy, upon France: an agricultural - capitalist society which derived its characteristics a) from the conviction that only agricultural economy can create a surplus above the costs of production, and b) from the idealisation of certain elements of British capitalism in the second half of the 18th century.

Quesnay (1694 - 1774) thus defined three classes: The "productive class" (that is the capitalist farmers and their farm workers), The "sterile class" (that is the capitalists, the independent workers, and the wage-earning labourers of non-agricultural sectors), and the "class of Proprietors" (that is, the land owners who rented out their fields to the capitalist farmers).

Turgot (1727 - 1781) improved this Physiocratic theoretical scheme, separating the capitalist farmers from the farm workers, and the capitalists of the

\(^1\) The most characteristic case is, perhaps, the division of classes in the ideal Republic of Plato: The class of rulers - leaders, that is, administrators of the Republic, should be philosophers, possessors of knowledge, who would be deprived of any private property. Subsequently the class of guardians in defined, who are responsible for military security, and finally the class of creators, that is all those who are involved in "economic life" (Plato 1982, 434C, 421C).
non-agricultural sector from the workers of this sector. Thus, there emerged an idealised economy with five (instead of three) classes.

Adam Smith puts an end to these normative approaches, placing as the object of his analysis that which he perceived as the substantial content of human economy in general, (and which, according to Marx was nothing more than the historically determined social framework of capitalism): the economy of generalised commodity production. Within this framework, he defines the classes on the basis of the objective position of the individuals who constitute them in economic life. In other words, the objective class integration of each individual is considered to be the consequence of his (her) specific economic function, independently from its particular technical or natural characteristics.

Following suit, each class is defined by the Classical School of Political Economy, in relation to the particular form of income which is earned, independently from whether this income is acquired in one sector of the economy or another.

Smith thus defines three classes. The capitalists (owners of the means of production), who gain profit as income, the workers who gain wages as income, and the landowners, who gain rent as income (from the renting of their fields to the capitalist-farmers).

This concept of the class division of society remains a steady theory of the Classical School\(^2\). In addition, this concept of the Classical Economists about the class division of society may imply a theory of class exploitation. More specifically, the view of the division into classes according to the particular type of income, in connection with the (eg. Ricardian) labour theory of value (according to which the value of a merchandise is determined by the total labour which is spent for its production), leads to the theory of surplus value: That is the perception of profit as a part of that net (new) value, which although it is produced by the workers, it is acquired by the capitalists.

Profit emerges since wages comprise only one portion of the produced (by the workers) net value, since "the natural price of labour is that price which is necessary to enable the labourers (...), to subsist and to perpetuate their race" and it, therefore, „depends on the price of the food, necessities, and conveniences required for the support of the labourer and his family“ (Ricardo 1992, 52).

The theory of surplus value was developed, of course, by Marx; there is, however in an implicit form in the work of the Classical Political Economists and particularly of Ricardo, as is otherwise apparent from the excerpt that we have just mentioned. Furthermore, the labour theory of value inevitably concludes with a

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\(^2\)The produce of the earth -all that is derived from its surface by the united application of labour, machinery, and capital, is divided among three classes of the community, namely, the proprietor of the land, the owner of the stock or capital for its cultivation, and the labourers by whose industry it is cultivated“ (D. Ricardo, 1992, 3).
perception of competition between capital and labour. Because if we ignore the land-rent (and wearing down of the means of production), "the whole value of commodities is divided into two portions only: one constitutes the profits of stock, the other the wages of labour" (Ricardo 1992, 64). Thus, given the value of a commodity, which "is regulated by the quantity of labour necessary to produce it, (...) profits would be high or low in proportion as wages were low or high" (Ricardo 1992, 64).

It is not by chance, then, that the theory of social classes constitutes a constituent element of economic science, as long as the Classical School dominates in it. From the middle of the 19th century, that is, from the moment that those theoretical approaches, which originate from the apologetic ideological stand dominated economic thought (from the effort to defend, if not sanctify the capitalist system in opposition to its critics), from that moment then, the notion of social classes is gradually omitted.

With the work of J. - B. Say (1767 - 1832) there is already an attempt to: a) replace the labour theory of value with the theory of subjective utility (as the determinant factor in the formation of prices) and b) replace the theory of classes with the theory of "production factors". According to this last concept, which constitutes the theoretical foundation of contemporary neo-classical theory, each of the (three) major "production factors" (capital, labour, land) produce that portion of the net product which the possessor of the said "factor" receives as income. (Rubin 1989, p 301-306).

Contemporary neo-classical theory erases any element of the classical theory of the classes which could be implied even in the concept of "production factors", as it introduces the model of "circular flow of income" (the "income cycle"), which describes the reproduction of the "economy". In this model, there appear only two types of economic subjects: businesses and households. The households (or more precisely the individual members of the households) are possessors of the various "production factors", which they offer (exchange) to enterprises for an income. With their income, the households purchase "goods" which the enterprises "offer" (produce).

With the income cycle, any mention of the social relations of production disappears. Consequently, the social classes are also omitted as a theoretical constituent category of Political Economy. (See also Weeks, 1989, 12 ff.). The individuals (members of the household) decide on the "quantity" of "production factors" that they offer, according to the income that they "wish" to acquire, or to

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3 It is thus understandable why Carey, who considered that the capitalist economy embodies the Harmony of interests wrote in 1848 that Ricardo's "book is the true manual of the demagogue, who seeks power by means of agrarianism, war, and plunder". (Carey, The Past, the Present and the Future, Philadelphia, 1848, 74-75, quoted by Rubin 1989, 327-328).
their "choices" between "free time" and "labour". The dominant (neo-classical) economic theory excludes any concept of class antagonism, or of class exploitation.

The removal of the concept of "social classes" from the theoretical system which is called "economic science" lends an unadulterated sociological character to this concept. It is solely Sociology then which considers the social classes as one of its objects of study, which is often related to the concept of power. The latter concept (of power) was articulated initially, of course, within the frame-work of modern political philosophy and political theory (Hobbes, Machiavelli, Spinoza) to describe the "political dominance" of the sovereign or the state, independently of any concept of social classes: Power is approached as being the process or the result of the "unification" of separate individuals into a "political community".

The sociological approach to the concepts of "power" and "social classes" does not overturn this fundamental positions of political philosophy, according to which power and society are not more than the "socialisation" and the gathering into a "Polity", of separate individuals, who are perceived as being the protarchic (free-willed and reasoning) beings of each "community".

3. The Concept of "Social Classes" in Sociology

The sociological approach to classes is part of a more general sociological concern related to "social groups". The "groups" emerge on the basis of variant social processes (processes of "socialisation" of the individuals) and of corresponding theoretical criteria: The function of state apparatuses (state bureaucracy, military etc.), religions, ethnical or racial particularities, ideological or cultural components, economic differentiations, age characteristics etc. The social

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4. "The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another, (...), is to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will (...) which is a common power to keep them in awe and to direct their actions to the common benefit" (Hobbes, Leviathan, in Machiavelli/Hobbes, 1952, 100). "The right which determines the power of the many is customarily called public authority and he who by the general will has the responsibility of public affairs, possesses this power (...) The right of the ruler, who has no other limitation but that of his own strength, is founded mainly on the fact that there is the will that we could say is that of public power, to which everyone must conform, and alone determines the good and the bad, the just and the unjust (...) (Spinoza Tractatus theologico-politicus, in Spinoza, undated, 45 and 61). Of course, behind these positions of the classical political philosophers are always implied perceptions which (in Marxist terms) could be considered as referring to concepts, such as "class relations of power", "class hegemony", appropriation - deprivation of the power of the subjects by the ruler (the ruling classes) etc. Such elements are to be found mainly in the works of Machiavelli (see Gramsci 1949, Althusser 1987), but also Spinoza (Moreau 1978, mainly Ch. 6, 99 ff.).

5. "The tension between the individual and society, the opposition between the general and the particular, presumes necessarily that the individual is not directly subject to the social whole, but that in this process there are middle degrees. These middle degrees are described in sociology from the end of the 19th century, especially by Durkheim, and later, in the established notion of the group" (Institut fuer Sozialforschung, Soziologische Exkurse, in Institutou ..., 1987, 75).

6. The "economic classes" may thus be defined on the basis of what are today customary in sociological research, more or less arbitrary income categories; that is, on the basis of the amount of monetary income, independently of the source of its acquisition. E.g. the "upper"
designations which concentrate individuals into various "groups" are considered as
given empirical entities ("the" state, "the" religions...) which need no further
theoretical interpretation. Correspondingly, it is theorised that individuals are
integrated into these groups according to their innate ("human") characteristics,
(psychological tendencies, "needs" etc.).

In contrast to the approach of Classical Political Economy, the sociological
approach to the classes is based, as a rule, on „loose”, from a theoretical standpoint,
criteria. In other words, it doesn't seek causal-structural relationships which locate
the essential-specific characteristics of social relations, on the basis of which the
social classes could also be defined. It is, rather, in the case of the sociological
approach, less for a theoretical synthesis and more for a categorising of the endless
variations of empirically identifiable social reality. For this reason, at the base of the
sociological approach is always implied the idea that the individual is, in the final
analysis, the determining category: the individual is not subject to a dominant type of
social determinations (social relations), but may integrate into as many "groups" as
may emerge from the multitude of the "given" (and empirically apparent)
"socialisation trends", none of which is considered as being dominant.

Under these theoretical givens, class, as a "social group", which is formed on
the ground of a "common interest", is perceived according to the definition of this
"common interest". In the case of Classical Political Economy any such definition of
"common interest" is superfluous, since it is apparent that the particular position of
each class in production, and its consequent particular form of income, defines the
framework of class "common interest" as well: increase of profits and share (the
percentage in the net product) of profits or respectively of the rent on the one hand,
increase of the real wages and of the share of wages, on the other. In the
sociological approach, the determination of each dominant "socialisation trend" is
demanded, in order to make a corresponding determination of the "communalities of
interest" and the classes. It is thus understandable why, e.g., criteria of "political
power" (more precisely, the criterion that one, historically formulated, social caste

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income class, the "upper - middle", the "middle" the "lower - middle" and the "lower" income
class. The classes are multiplied when criteria of "behaviour" and "life - styles" etc. are taken
into consideration. For this approach, see, e.g. Vester 1994.

That is, the question is not posited of what is "the" state, "the" religions, etc. A theory of social
relations and institutions of power is absent. It is worth referring here to Gramsci's critique of
sociology, who approaches the same issue which we have noted, from another view - point:
Sociology cannot be considered as the science "of the conditions and the laws which regulate
the evolution" of humanity, since it overruns the fact that "the human being can only be
conceived as a historically determined human being, who has developed and lives (...) in a
determined social complex, or a totality of social relations" (Gramsci 1949, 149). In relation to
the same issue, Gramsci notes that the "fundamentally new element" which Marxism
introduces into social sciences is the „proof that there is no abstract 'human nature' which is
stable and unaltered" (op. cit.).
mans the highest positions of the state apparatus) are often chosen to determine the "politically dominant class", or "the political oligarchy".

However, even in the cases where the sociological approach attempts to determine "common interests" on the economic level of society, the results are again characterised by a relative theoretical looseness, since the structural characteristics of the social relations of production are not perceived.

A characteristic example is the analysis of Max Weber, although it consists of one of the rare sociological attempts toward a strict theoretical laying of the foundations of classes. Weber defines classes on the basis of an objectively existing common interest: "Class conditions and class means in itself, simply, realities of identical (or similar) formal situations of interest, in which each person is in the same position as many others" (Weber 1947, 177). On the basis of this definition, he defines two basic class groups: That of "rentiers" or "positively privileged owner classes" (Positiv privilegierte Besitzklassen), and that of the "negatively privileged owner classes" (Negativ privilegierte Besitzklassen). In the first class group he considers that there belong: "a) rentiers of human beings (slave owners), b) rentiers of land, c) rentiers of mines, d) rentiers of buildings (owners of buildings of production and machinery), e) rentiers of ships, f) creditors, g) rentiers of bonds" (Weber 1947, 178). "Negatively privileged owner classes" consist of: "a) those who are objects of possession by third parties, b) the socially demoted (Deklassierte), c) those under heavy debt, d) the 'poor'" (Weber 1947, 177).

It is apparent that with this definition, classes are joined in common and equated, which belong to completely different systems and types of society organisation (such as slave-owners with capitalists, or slaves -and serfs- with wage-earning workers), or classes which in specific historical periods have strongly divergent and/or conflicting interests (such as land-owners and capitalists, especially, during the period which preceded the industrial revolution), without sufficient theoretical justification. In a parallel way, related groups of capitalists and businessmen are differentiated (such as the industrialists and ship-owners). On the other hand, the wage relation does not appear as what is particular to the workers' condition, but the fact that they don't possess their means of production ("socially demoted")

Among the positive elements of Weber's approach, we should, however, note that it identifies the demarcation line between the (economically) dominant and

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8 Beyond this, Weber considers that a class (a "class condition") exists only in reference to the market (as "a condition of the market"), thus excluding from the definition of classes, those pre-capitalist social groups which are not related to market conditions, and which he call "castes". For a critique on this aspect of Weber's class theory, and on his "static" perception of classes (the classes are defined in Weber independently from one another, something which is on the antipode of the Marxist approach on class struggle) see: Ste Croix 1983, 85 ff.
the economically dominated classes. (For a defence of the basic arguments of M. Weber, see Giddens 1973, particularly Ch. 2. In the same book is posited an interesting presentation of the main recent sociological approaches on the concept of social classes: Ch. 3 and Ch. 14 - 15).

The sociological analysis of the classes therefore, leaves unexploited the scientific content of the analysis and the conceptual categories of Classical Political Economy. The only approach which "salvaged" the scientific core of the theory of classes, as it was formulated by Classical Political Economy, so as to transform it later and integrate it into its own more general view of society, is Marxism. Marxist theory revolutionised the Classical Economic approach, giving it an unadulterated non-economic and non-mechanistic "relationist" content.

4. The Marxist Approach

Classical Political Economy viewed the determining characteristic of capitalist society (which was perceived as the "society generally"), as being the generalised commodity production. According to Smith, the full domination of this economic form (of the generalised commodity production) would also inevitably lead to the political regime "of ideal liberty and ideal justice" (Smith 1981, IV. IX 28, 674), that is to the developed bourgeoisie-parliamentary political system. This not only meant that the economic processes are historically stronger than political processes, but that the economy can be studied independently from the other aspects of social life. On the basis of this principal, the Classical school of Political Economy adopts as its object of study, the economy and society of generalised commodity production, where of course, "labour" (the labour force) is included in the realm of commodities. In the framework of this analysis (which in the writings of Ricardo took on its most theoretical character and ignored all the secondary forms of capitalist economy) was formulated the theoretical scheme of the three classes (land-owners, capitalists and wage-labourers), which we described above.

Marx adopts the approach of Classical Political Economy concerning classes as the initial theoretical precondition for the formulation of his class-theory. 11 The

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9 It is obvious that when I refer to Marxist theory, I mean a specific version of Marxism, which will be described in following, different from many others, such as, e.g. from "Soviet Marxism". Marxism was never a "single and unique" theory. (See Milios 1995, and the related bibliography which is included there).

10 The state, as a public authority, as a system of taxation, as legislation etc., is present in the analyses of the Classic Economists.

11 In the unfinished 52nd chapter of the 3rd Volume of Capital, Marx notes: „The owners of mere labour-power, the owners of capital and the land-owners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground-rent - in other words wage-labourers, capitalists and land-owners - form the three great classes of modern society based on the capitalist mode of production“. He hurry to note immediately however, that the criterion of form of income does not close the theory of classes and posits the question: „What makes wage-labourers, capitalists and land-owners the formative elements of the three great social classes?“ On issues related to this "temporary" definition of classes by Marx, see Balibar 1986-a 620 ff., and Dimoulis 1994, 46 ff.
specific position that each "individual" acquires in the social relations of production constitutes the initial condition which determines their class integration.

Marx, however, is not restricted to this position. He identifies, isolates, and develops the "relationist element" which contains the position of the Classical Economists, and in this way, he formulates a new theory of social relations, and of classes as the main element of these relations. Marx developed the position of the Classical Political Economists in two directions:

a) He demonstrated the element of class antagonism, of the conflicting interests between the main classes of capitalist society and particularly between the capitalists and wage-labourers. Even further, he grasped the unity between the competing classes of society, the unity and coherence of society, in terms of social-class power:

Power no longer constitutes the "right of the sovereign", or the "power of the state" in relation to (equal and free) citizens, but a specific form of class domination. Power is always class power, the power of one class, (or a coalition of classes), of the ruling class, over the other, the dominated classes of society. This power, which stabilises on the basis of dominant social structures, is reproduced within class antagonism, within the struggle of the classes. The specific unity of society is, therefore, inseparable from the unity of the specific class power, which is insured within the class-struggle. "That which connects social groups and individuals is not a higher common interest, or a legal order, but a clash in continuous development". (Balibar 1988, 217)

The Marxist theory of classes thus constitutes a theory of class power within class struggle. The classes are, therefore, defined exclusively on the field of class struggle. They do not pre-exist class struggle, and consequently "they cannot be defined separately one from the other, but only through the social relations of an antagonism, which brings the one class in confrontation with the other" (Balibar 1986-a, 620). This means that the classes shall be perceived mainly as social relations and practices and not as "groups of individuals".

12 The non-class relations which exist in a society, such as e.g. the relations between adults and minors, the relations between the two sexes, the various "races" or the various religious groups are always determined and shaped in correspondence to the main aspect of social relations, the class relations of power. For the substantiation of this Marxist position, see Dimoulis 1994, es 47 - 51. Also the very penetrating analysis of Wallestein on the concepts "race" and "prestige group - formations": (In Balibar/Wallesrstein 1988, 254, ff.) in which the conclusion is also substantiated that "prestige group - formations (such as parties) constitute confused collective representations of the classes" (279). This penetrating analysis of Wallestein is limited, in my opinion, by his mistaken and contradictory perception of "world capitalism" (see also Milios 1983, Milios 1989).

13 “It is in each case the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the immediate producers (…) in which we find the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social edifice, and hence also the political form of the relationship of sovereignty and dependence” (Marx 1991, 927). As Ste. Croix (1984 100) correctly observes, according to Marxist theory „class (…) is the collective social expression of the fact of exploitation, the way in which exploitation is embodied in a social structure”.


Class practices, which always develop within the framework of a system of class power and domination, have therefore an objective dimension, independently of whether or not there is the capacity (in each circumstance) to acquire consciousness of their common social interests, of those who are part of classes that are oppressed and subject to exploitation. In fact, a crucial element of class power is its capacity to avert the realisation of common class interests by those who belong to classes that are being dominated or are sustaining economic exploitation. (Demoulis 1994)\(^{14}\).

b) Parallel to the construction of the theory of class power, within the context of class struggle, Marx perceives that specific societies consist of a mosaic of social - class relations (and of specific historical manifestations of these social relations), which do not all belong to the same type of social coherence (the same type of class power). They constitute, rather, the specific historical result of the evolution of society, which, as a rule allows the "survival" of elements with roots to previous types of social organisation, to previous historical systems of class power (e.g. feudalism).

Marx seeks and isolates, in this way, those elements of social relations which: 1) Comprise the unique character of capitalism, of each capitalist society, of capitalist class domination generally and discerns this from the corresponding elements of other types of class domination (and of the corresponding social organisation). 2) Constitute the permanent, "unaltered" nucleus of the capitalist system of class domination, independently from the particular evolution of each specifically studied (capitalist) society.

That is, he removes those consequences of class struggle which are ascribed to the particular forms in each case of the historical manifestation of the capitalist system, which do not necessarily constitute elements of the core of the class relations of power.

Thus a new theoretical object emerges: the (capitalist) mode of production. On the basis of the theoretical analysis of the mode of production, each particular class society can thus be studied in depth, (each particular class social formation).

To summarise: Marx and Marxist theory after Marx establish the foundation for the theory of class struggle, on the basis of the theoretical position that the relations of which society consists, are for the most part relations of power of one class (or a coalition of class forces) over the other classes of society. Furthermore,\(^{14}\)

\(^{14}\) For the critique of the opposite theoretical approach, according to which „a class exists as such only from the moment when it possesses a class consciousness of its own”, see Poulantzas 1973, 78 ff. Also see Ste. Croix (1984, 102): „If ancient slaves are indeed to be regarded as a class, then neither class consciousness nor political activity in common (...) can possibly have the right to be considered necessary elements in class” Let it be noted here that the perception that a basic element of class is necessarily class consciousness ("classes are conscious collective subjects") shall not be identified with the individualist - subjective approach on classes, which we will discuss in the last heading of this article ("classes are the product of the common will, decision and action of a large number of individuals").
that these social relations of power are organised historically, in different countries and in different times, with different ways. This means that if we remove from the particular forms with which social relations appear in each country, and at each historical moment, and seek the deeper structural elements of these relations, we will find that there are certain characteristic ways of organisation of societies (of social power), which in each case are dominant. To each of these ways of social organisation, corresponds a unity of economic, political and ideological structures of a specific type: That is a specific type of economic domination and exploitation corresponds to a type of organisation of political power and the domination of a specific type of ideological forms.

5. The Marxist Concept of Modes of Production and the Classes

Each mode of production has as its basic foundation the relationship between social classes (those which produce and those which acquire the surplus of this production) with the means of production (and therefore with the final product), without being restricted to these "economic" relations alone.

The capitalist mode of production, for example constitutes precisely the causal nucleus of the totality of capitalist power relations (and not social relations as such), the fundamental social-class interdependencies which define a system of social power (a society) as a capitalist system. It is established in the capital-relation initially on the level of production: in the separation of the worker from the means of production (who is thus transformed, on the economic level, into a wage-labourer, possessor only of his labour-force, and, on the judicial-political level, into a free citizen) and in the full ownership of the production means by the capitalist: the capitalist has both the power to place into operation the means of production (which was not the case in pre-capitalist modes of production) as well as the power to acquire the final surplus product.

The (capitalist) mode of production does not, in this way, constitute exclusively (nor mainly) an economic relation (as, in contrast, occurs in the classes in the theoretical system of Classical Political Economy), but refers to all of the social levels (instances). In this is also contained the core of (capitalist) political and ideological relations of power. In the capitalist mode of production, there is thus articulated the particular structure of the capitalist state. Consequently, it is revealed

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15 For the Marxist concept of the mode of production see Althusser, in Althusser/Balibar 1968, esp. Ch. IX.

16 In this sense, surplus value, that is the particularly capitalist form of the surplus product, is mainly a social relation (a class relation of power and exploitation) and not simply a quantitative value amount (whatever "is left over", when from the total value of the net product is subtracted the value which corresponds to the necessary means of subsistence of the workers). As Marx writes, industrial capital’s „existence includes that of the class antagonism between capitalists and wage-labourers“ (Marx 1992, 136). See also the excerpt of Marx in Footnote 13.
that the capitalist class possesses not only the economic, but also the political power; not because the capitalists man the highest political offices of the state, but because the structure of the political element in capitalist societies, and more especially of the capitalist state (its hierarchical - bureaucratic organisation, its "classless" function on the basis of the rule of Law etc.) corresponds to and insures the preservation and reproduction of the entire capitalist class domination. Similarly it becomes apparent that the structure of the dominant bourgeoisie ideology (the ideology of individual rights and equal rights, of national unity and of the common -national- interest, etc.) corresponds to the perpetuation and the reproduction of the capitalist social order and of the long-term interests of the capitalist class. The dominant ideology thus constitutes a process of consolidation of capitalist class interests, precisely through its materialisation as a "modus vivendi", as a "way of life" not only of the ruling, but in an altered form, of the ruled classes as well.

In pre-capitalist modes of production, in contrast, the ownership of the means of production on the ruling class was never complete. The ruling class had under its property the means of production, i.e. it acquired the surplus product, but the working-ruled classes still maintained the "real appropriation" (Poulantzas 1973, 26) of the means of production (the power to put them into operation). This fact is connected to significant corresponding characteristics in the structure of other social levels as well, both political and ideological. Economic exploitation, that is the extraction of the surplus product from the worker had as its complementary element direct political coercion: the relations of political dependence between the dominant and the dominated, and their ideological (as rule, religious) articulation.

The mode of production, therefore, describes the unique difference of a system of class domination and exploitation. There is also contained here the fundamental trends and causal coherences which emanate from this system as well as the terms of its reproduction.

In a specific society there may exist more modes (and forms) of production. However, since each of these corresponds to different relations of social (class) power, and is thus inclined toward a different type of organisation of social cohesion,

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17 "It is not enough that the conditions of labour are concentrated at one pole of society in the shape of capital, while at the other pole are grouped masses of men who have nothing to sell but their labour-power. Nor it is enough that they are compelled to sell themselves voluntarily. The advance of capitalist production develops a working class which by education, tradition and habit looks upon the requirements of that mode of production as self-evident natural laws" (Marx 1990, 899).

18 See also Marx 1991, 927 and Footnote 13.

19 "The capitalist process of production, therefore, seen as a total, connected process, i.e. a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capital-relation itself; on the one hand the capitalist and on the other the wage-labourer" (Marx 1990, 724). For the concept of the reproduction of the capital-relation, as a basic element of the concept of "capitalist mode of production" in Marx, see M. Heinrich 1986.
the joining of different modes of production is contradictory and is always accomplished under the domination of one particular mode of production\textsuperscript{20}. The domination of one mode of production (and particularly of the capitalist mode of production) is connected to the tendency toward the dissolution of all the other competing modes of production. However, the final domination or the deflection of this tendency is not a given a priori; its outcome is always determined by existing social correlations.\textsuperscript{21} In most cases, the break-up of the pre-capitalist modes of production takes the form of agricultural reform, precisely since it involves modes of production which are mainly based on pre-capitalist property relations in the land.

6. Classes in a Specific Capitalist Society, according to Marxist Theory

A major theoretical problem arises when one approaches social groups which can not be ascribed to the main categories formulated by a theory. To name only one example, there is no way to consider the self-employed producers within the three-class theoretical framework of Classical Political Economy. The Marxist theory is the only approach which can theoretically attack such problems in a coherent conceptual approach.

According to Marxist theory, the concept of mode of production constitutes, then, the initial theoretical tool for the analysis of social (class) relations which constitute a specific society. However, on the basis of this concept alone, it is not possible to approach according to Marxist theory, the multitude of social relations (or social classes), within a country, and this point has always been a subject of dispute among Marxist theorists.

The mode of productions refers exclusively to the core of class relations not to class relations as such. After subtracting from all the particular historical forms in which class relations exist\textsuperscript{22}, each mode of production leads to only two classes: the class of the dominant-exploiters, and the class of those dominated - who become the object of exploitation. In the capitalist mode of production are thus defined the capitalist class, and the class of wage-labourers; in feudalism the class of the feudal lords, and the class of serfs, etc. It is apparent that according to the number of

\textsuperscript{20} Productive processes which do not lead to relations of exploitation (production and detachment of the surplus-product) as is the case with the self-employed producer, (simple commodity production), do not constitute a mode of production, but a form of production.

\textsuperscript{21} See the letter of Marx to Vera Sassulitsch in 1881, MEW, Vol. 19, 396-400. Also Milios 1988, Ch 7.

\textsuperscript{22} The position, for example, that the capitalist mode of production dominates in a country, means that the dominant (and not necessarily the largest numerically) social relation is capital which exploits wage-labour, that the surplus product takes the form of surplus value, etc. Beyond this, however, nothing is clarified concerning the specific form of capitalist power relation: Concerning e.g. if, the duration of the work-day is 12, 10 or 7 hours; what is the dominating form of capital (e.g. commercial, industrial, banking capital, etc.); if the work force has high or low - specialisation; if the reproductive functions of the capitalist state (education, social welfare, etc.) have been developed to a greater or lesser degree; if the economic and political antagonisms are to a greater or lesser degree acute, etc.
modes of production that coexist in a specific society (in one social formation), the corresponding pairs of classes are internally ordered. In any specific class society, however, there are always more classes, due to the following reasons:

1) In a given class society, within the framework of social relations which are connected to the domination of a particular mode of production, classes or sections of classes may be historically formed which are not tied to any mode of production.

These are classes which either:
a) are formed in correspondence with forms of production or,
b) originated in modes of production which have dissolved under the weight of the expanded reproduction of a new dominant mode of production.

The typical example for sub-case (a) is the traditional petty-bourgeoisie class, of self-employed producers, who own the means of production which they use. The traditional petty bourgeoisie class is constructed in reference to a form of production: the production of simple (and not capitalist) merchandise, that is, merchandise which doesn’t contain a profit.

The typical example for sub-case (b) is the class of land-owners in some capitalist countries (e.g. Britain), which emerges from the transformation-adjustment of the class of the feudal lords: with the break-up of the feudal mode of production, feudal ownership is transformed into a capitalist type (complete) ownership of land, and the serfs are evicted from the land (which is now fenced off by the land-owners), and are deprived of any of their previous rights to the (use of) land. Within this process, the feudal lords become land-owners in the contemporary (capitalist) sense: owners of the land, who (as we have already noted), enjoy as a special form of income, the capitalist land-rent, through the renting of their lands to the capitalist-farmers.

This new type of land-owners are no longer the primary dominant class of society, as was the case with the feudal land-owners, during the period of feudalism, in which it was the main mode of production. However, they participate in the new coalition of ruling classes, which are unified under capital, since capitalist land-rent constitutes a section of the surplus-value produced in capitalism: The total produced surplus-value is divided into profit and into land-rent. (Marx 1991, 779 ff.)

The class of land-owners, however, does not constitute a component element of the capitalist mode of production; that is, an inevitable result of its dominance. It constitutes a manifestation of a specific historical variation of this domination. It is thus understandable (but is a historical given in capitalist countries other than Britain) how the reduction, or even the disappearance of the class of land-owners occurred, in instances where the domination of capitalism leads to different class correlations of power in rural areas, and the establishment of different property relations follow. The most common version of this is the splitting up of the lots, and
their acquisition by those who directly cultivate them, a portion of whom are transformed into self-employed producers of simple commodities and another portion into farmers - capitalists (who employ wage-farm workers on a permanent or seasonal basis).

2. In capitalist societies, a part of the functional exercising of social (economic, political, ideological) power is entrusted to non-members of the ruling class. Thus the "new petty-bourgeoisie class" emerges.

The mode of production, as the main aspect of social-class relations (their causal structural nucleus), always refers to class positions and functions, independently from the agents which perform these functions. Thus, two types of class functions are discerned, and consequently two classes: The functions of the ruling class (acquisition of surplus value, the exercising of political power through the state, the organisation of ideological power through the ideological apparatuses of the state), and those of the ruled class (production of value and surplus value, reproduction of the material economic, political, ideological-conditions of wage-relations). The functions of the two basic classes are thus integrated and compose the particular characteristics of capitalist power relations, and at the same time delineate the field of class competition between the two.

In specific capitalist societies, one part of the functions of the dominant capitalist class (of capital) is given over to agents (individuals) who are not part of the ruling class, and who are, in fact, often subjected to direct capitalist exploitation:

- Functions which insure the extraction of surplus value, such as, e.g., the supervision-overseeing-control of the production process (technicians, engineers, etc.).

- Functions which insure the cohesion of capitalist political power, (state bureaucracy, the judicial apparatus, the military, etc.).

- Functions for the systematisation and dissemination of the ruling ideology, such as, e.g. education.

The product that emerges from the staffing of the apparatuses and processes of the exercising of capitalist power (within the existing social formations) with elements that are not part of the ruling class, is, then, the new petty-bourgeoisie class.

That is, these are categories of wage-earners which are not part of the working class, precisely because of their position in web of the functions involved in the exercise of capitalist (economic, political, ideological) power. In a parallel way, these elements are not part of the capitalist class, to the extent that they are not owners of the means of production (capitalists).

The theoretical approach to the new petty-bourgeoisie class constitutes always a problem for all Marxists who ascribe all really existing classes to a mode of
production. Characteristic is the case of N. Poulantzas, who considered the new petty-bourgeoisie as an outcome of the "monopolistic phase" of the capitalist mode of production.  

In reality, the new petty-bourgeoisie does not constitute a phenomenon of any "contemporary phase" of capitalism, but appears from the very first period of its domination, along with the bourgeoisie state and industry.

Precisely since, according to Marxist theory, the classes are defined on the field of class struggle (that is since each class is defined in connection with other social classes), the criteria for the delineation of a class, as well as for the formation of particular strata or fractions within it, are defined in connection with the power relations, and the basic characteristics of class struggle. With this perspective as a base, N. Poulantzas (1974), supports the position that the self-employed producers of simple commodities (the traditional petty-bourgeoisie class), and the wage earners who are not part of the working class (the new petty-bourgeoisie class), constitute sections of one and the same social class, the petty-bourgeoisie class.

Particularly significant for the analysis of a specific society is also the Marxist concept of social category: This is the concept which describes certain particular results of the functioning of the state apparatuses concerning the process of class struggle. More specifically, a similar position of particular categories of individuals in the area in which a state apparatus functions, has as a result, the relative homogenisation of the activity of these individuals, even if they belong to different social classes.

These agents, despite their (possibly) different social integration, together constitute a social category. In circumstances of a crisis in the state apparatus, in relation to which a social category is formed, it is possible for it to be organised into a social force: That is, the social category assumes a unified political intervention into the given conjuncture of class struggle. Social categories with particular significance in contemporary capitalist social formations consist of the state bureaucracy (Poulantzas 1973 325 ff., sect. V) and the (school and university) youth (see also Milios 1993).

From all of the above it becomes, I believe, apparent that the Marxist theory of classes constitutes a theoretically more complete system of analysis of the entire social reality: it is neither "economistic" (it doesn't "attribute" the classes to the economy, it doesn't consider that they are defined by exclusively economic criteria),

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23 "In contemporary France (...) the two fundamental classes are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But we also find there the traditional petty bourgeoisie (...), the 'new' petty bourgeoisie (...) dependent on the monopoly form of capitalism" (Poulantzas 1973-a, 33).

24 "Mr Ure has already noted how it is not the industrial capitalists but rather the industrial managers who are 'the soul of our industrial system'" (Marx 1991, 510).

25 For the concepts of class fractions, strata, and social categories, see also Poulantzas 1973 84 ff. For the critique of certain views of Poulantzas, in relation to the Marxists definition of classes, as well as the Marxist concepts of productive and non-productive labour, see Milios 1990, 71 ff.
nor does it overlook the possibility of action beyond class actions. By contrast, since it adheres to the analysis of total (economic, political, ideological) power relations, it avoids both the "economism" of Classical Political Economy, as well as the empiricist "politicism" of sociological approaches.

7. Multiple-Employment, Class "Multi-Valence" and Class Theory.

A "traditional" way to question the (objective) class theories (the concept of classes as objectively existing social relations), and more specifically the Marxist theory of classes, is to consider classes as being the result of the common will and action of separate individuals: Classes exist only to the degree (and only when) a single (class) consciousness and (class) will of a category of individuals is formed. This approach offers its supporters the capacity to assert that "today there are no classes", since no unified class consciousness and will can be identified within the ruled classes (see, for approaches of this type, Goldthorpe 1987).

However, the empiricist surface upon which this approach is based, proves to be untenable, if it is projected into the past: After the successive long historic periods of "absence" of classes (of class self-consciousness) - e.g. in Russia of the 19th century - the classes seem to have emerged historically as did Athena from the head of Zeus - e.g. in Russia of 1905 and 1917. Thus, the claim that what occurred so many times in the past will not be repeated in the future (the "parthenogenesis" of the classes) doesn't seem particularly convincing. This claim can only acquire some scientific semblance when it introduces "objective" factors into its theoretical base: In other words, when it "shows" that the conditions which existed in the past and which allowed the formation of the classes (of class consciousness and action) in the form that we knew them, have finally ceased. The theory of "class multi-valence" which was formulated during the previous decade, moves precisely in this direction.

According to this approach, the phenomenon of multiple - employment tends to assume such dimensions in contemporary capitalist societies, that the dividing lines between the classes are nowadays confused, precisely since a significant percentage of the population is (considered to be) part of, simultaneously, (through multiple employment) different "classes".

26 This position doesn't mean that Marxist theory has "resolved" every issue that is related to the scientific study of class societies. Beyond the fact that the production of scientific knowledge is an unending process, an important role is played here by the inherent "conflictedness" of Marxism, and the necessity of it being employed on the field of social antagonisms as a precondition for its scientific objectivity (Althusser 1977). However, the "open problems" (Balibar 1986-a) which are still to be found within Marxist class theory, do not refute the fact that it is a theory which can claim the titles of coherence and scientific objectivity.

27 It is true that economism itself constitutes those specific versions of Marxism, of classical socialdemocratism and of soviet (Stalinist) Marxism, which were already dominant, from the decade of 1930, in the political organisations and the parties that were related to Marxism.
This is a "middle range" approach, which arises from the "theorisation" of a (supposedly) empirically proven "reality". That is, the phenomenon of multiple-employment constitutes the starting point for the articulation of a new theory concerning "social classes". This is achieved since multiple-employment is considered to be identical with class "multi-valence", that is the integration of the individuals into differentiated class positions, and in this sense, the shedding of boundaries between the classes.

As the theoretical starting point of the approaches concerning "class multi-valence", should be considered the current of "analytical Marxism", which was formulated during the decade of 1980 in Gr. Britain and the USA.

The basic foundation for "analytical Marxism" is comprised of methodological individualism, that is, the perception that the individual (and his choices) theoretically have priority over any social structure or process. (For the theoretical bases of "analytical Marxism", see analytically Birnbaum/Leca 1986, Malakos 1991, and Gravaris 1991). As one of the basic representatives of this current argues, all social phenomena, their structure and their changes are explainable in ways that include only the individuals, their traits, their goals, their convictions, and their actions (Elster, 1983, 328). This methodological principal results in the theoretical positions which we have noted above:

The classes have no objective existence, independently of the social consciousness and acts of individuals. Thus classes exist only if the individuals which comprise them develop among themselves relations of solidarity and common action. In all other circumstances, it is simply a "gathering of individuals". 29

The theoretical "particularity" of "analytical Marxism" (as of each "subjective" theory of the classes) lies in the fact, that it combines two different principles, 1) the basic methodological position of neo-classical economic theory on the priorities of the individual, from the will and (rational) choices of whom are considered to emanate every kind of social process or structure, (methodological individualism)30, with 2) the position that there are (likely to be) social classes, (to the extent that individuals systematically develop common perceptions and actions). In essence, it is a subordination of the position about the existence of classes to the methodological individualism of neo-classical theory: In contrast to Classical Political

28 As Malakos (1991, 61) correctly observes, this position can not be considered proven, since, in essence it claims that the traits, the convictions, the goals and the actions of individuals (the social "behaviours" of individuals) do not emerge in conjunction with their social determinations, without in a parallel way indicating from where they emerge.

29 This perception on the "subjective" construction of the classes exists, as we have previously mentioned, from a much earlier date. The case of Sombart is characteristic, who defined classes as the "result of a consciously created conviction concerning common integration", (Sombart 1922, 1093), and makes the clarification that "a class doesn’t exist until the separate individuals realise (their) common interests" (op. cit.).

30 See analytically the volume: Pierre Birnbaum/Jean Leca 1986, where there are studies of the representatives of "analytical Marxism" J. Elster and A. Przeworski, 60 ff., 77 ff.
Economy, individuals are not only considered as "components" for the formulation of the social "body" (which is, though, governed by its own regularities and "natural" relationships between the cause and the caused: the "invisible hand" of Adam Smith), but are understood -without a trace of evidence, and often even contrary to common sense\(^{31}\)- as self-powered, willed beings, who transcend every social structure or coercion.

It is, then, a view that remains on the surface, on the "phenomena" of capitalist societies, where the individuals are (according to the ruling ideology) "free" to decide without coercion.\(^{32}\) The individualistic horizon of this theory only leaves room enough for multiple-employment to be perceived as a "rational choice" of the individual and to identify, as a consequence, with "class multi-valence" (since the class condition is considered to be a common "choice" of a group of individuals who constitute a society).

A basic representative of the approach concerning "class multi-valence", which has become popular in Greece, is Prof. K. Tsoukalas, mainly in his work "State, Society and Labour, in Post-war Greece" (K.T., 1986). Tsoukalas’ arguments were developed in relation to the analyses of E.O. Wright, which are presented especially in his book *Capital, Crisis and the State* (Wright 1978. See also K.T., 1986, 156-57). According to Tsoukalas, in modern capitalism, the "Marxist" avowal that "social agents possess only one specific position in the system of the social division of labour" is not valid any more (K.T., 1986, 147). In contrast, "We are facing the widening appearance of multivalent and multi-synthetic forms of the incorporation [of individuals] into the system of the social relations of production. The phenomena of multi-activity and multiple employment, appear in all capitalist countries, and in some cases they tend, if not to dominate, at least to involve large segments of the population" (K.T., 1986, 155).

From the above affirmations, the author concludes that "the spreading of the phenomenon should lead to a dramatic re-articulation of the theory of classes" and that "the insistence on the simplistic and singular forms may become extremely disorienting" (K.T., 1986, 157).

To support the theoretical origins of his approach, the author claims, at first, that not only multiple-employment, but also "partial employment (...) in consciously chosen by the worker" (K.T., 1986, 184), and constitutes a "conscious choice (...) an expression of a general strategy (...) concerning the disposition of time". And he concludes: "we have no reason to suppose that partial employment is a product of unemployment" (K.T., 1986, 305). In contrast, it emerges from the "possibility of

\(^{31}\) Przeworski (1988, 95) claims that if someone belongs to a certain class, and especially to the working class, it is not a result of a given social structure, nor because he/she has no other choice. He/she becomes e.g. a worker because he/she chooses to become a worker.

\(^{32}\) As E. Balibar (1988, 217) notes: „Individualism is above all an ideological result which is connected to the economy of commodity production and to the modern state“.
rational intentional action" (K.T., 1986, 305) which the individual has acquired, and the entire family unit, due to the shortening of the work-day which was accomplished in modern capitalism: "Time becomes an object of discreet management of opportunity" (p. 186) and the household is transformed into a family quasi-business (K.T., 1986, 121), while the "potential worker functions as a single-person business" (K.T., 1986, 189). Put simply: Since the shortening of the work-day, and the "new forms of employment" give the individuals-quasi-businesses, the possibility to develop a "strategy of multi-employment", and to the extent that the individuals adopt such strategies, then the classes (as totalities of individuals who have chosen a common course of action) tend toward being abolished: Every individual will be an agent of varied and contradictory activities and functions, and thus the ground for "relations of solidarity and common action" between individuals, that is the construction of classes, will cease to exist.

The whole concept of „class multi-valence“ is based on the identification of (multiple) employment with (multiple) class integration. However, if one sets out from a different, that is non-individualistic conception on the construction of the classes, as is the approach of Classical Political Economy or the Marxist approach, then in no way can the concept of multiple-employment be identified with the concept of class multiplicity or „multi-valence“ and neither does it necessarily lead to it.

According to these non-individualistic approaches, class integration is synonymous with the objective integration of the individual within the entire network of social relations. Thus, the wage-earner in the private sector of the economy who doesn't perform a supervisory or management function, is integrated into the working class, regardless of whether he/she has a comparatively higher or lower wage, and even regardless of whether he/she has more than one of this type of job, full, or part-time. The self-employed individual is part of the traditional petty-bourgeoisie class, whether he/she has simply a clothing store in Athens 12 months a year, or is involved with it for only 9 months, to be self-employed for the other 3 months in a bar in a tourist area.

Furthermore, "multiple - employment" of this type, in activities which belong to the same type of class integration, is the rule for major capitalist enterprises, not in "contemporary phase" of capitalism, but from the first moment of its existence. Capital transfers a portion of its profits for re-investment, from one branch and sector of production to another, seeking the highest possible profit rate. What is more "commonplace" than a large cement industry, the consortium of which includes not only pre-fabricated concrete companies, but merchant marine and hotel business, makes "investments" in state interest-paying bonds, and in land, participates in the share-capital of a steel factory and controls a series of commercial companies abroad? In fact, the majority of shares of such a consortium may not be owned by an
actual individual, but by large bank, which makes it more than apparent that capital
(the bourgeoisie class, as well as other classes) is primarily a social relation, and not
individuals, or the result of individual "will" and "strategies".33

Class „multitude“ only exists when there are forms of multiple-employment
involved, which are not part of the same type of class positions and functions. But
even this phenomenon, to the extent to which it exists, does not constitute the
"contemporary phase" of capitalism itself, but is connected to the very fact that the
classes within the capitalist system have always been open, thus allowing a degree
of class mobility and „multi-valence“ of individuals. The capitalist mode of production
is based on the "free labourer" and the "free contract"; that is, class integration and
"pinning down" is imposed, as Marx has repeatedly emphasised, only through the
"silent violence" of the dominant economic relations.

At this point, however, we will have to insist. Class „multi-valence“, i.e.
the integration of an individual into various class positions and functions can only
then be possible and comprehensible on a stable basis, when it involves class
positions that are not in opposition to each other.

A land-owner who invests a portion of the rent that he receives into a
capitalist enterprise, or who founds and manages such an enterprise, is in class
terms "multi-valent"; he belongs simultaneously to the class of land-owners, and to
the class of capitalists. Between these two class properties, however, there is no
structural contradiction, in the sense that the two class positions belong to the bloc of
the ruling classes, to the classes whose income originates from the surplus product
which is produced by the ruled classes.

Similarly a farmer, who works a few months a year as a wage-earning
construction worker, possesses two class positions (self-employed farmer, wage-
labourer), the both of which, however, are part of the dominated classes. The only
reasonable thing that remain is to assume that he sought the second wage-labour
employment, because the size of his lot and his earnings from farm self-employment
no longer ensure a satisfactory income, neither does it provide him with the prospect
of becoming transformed into a agro-capitalist (business man), with the increase in
produce, the hiring of wage-labourers, the further expansion of his agricultural
enterprise with new cultivation yielding high profits, etc.34 In this last circumstance, it
would be a process of the transformation of the class integration of the farmer, which

33 „It is not just the objective conditions of the process of production that appear as its result.
The same thing is true also of its specific social character. The social relations and therefore
the social position of the agents of production in relation to each other, i.e. the relations of
production, are themselves produced: they are also the constantly renewed result of the

34 Evidence for this view has been given by all of the related empirical studies as well. Thus, in
a recent study on the multiple-employment in the agricultural sector of Greece, it was found
that "the multiply - employed household (...) maintains a use of land 10 acres smaller in size
(in comparison to non-multiply-employed households, J. M.]“ (Damianos et al 1994, 96).
would carry with it the typical characteristics of social ascent: From a self-employed (farmer), he would have been transformed into a capitalist - businessman of the agricultural sector. This social ascent would exclude any possibility of his also seeking a parallel wage-labour employment. His „multi-valence“, (if it existed), would be exhausted exclusively in the processes of seeking a higher rate of profit: Investments in other branches of the economy, etc.

Simultaneous integration, on a steady base into the class of the capitalists (the ruling classes) and the working class (the ruled classes) is inconceivable. What is conceivable is the abandoning of the second (working) integration in favour of the first, and that is the typical process of social ascent. Thus, if there existed, in fact, a performing "strategy for class evolution" on the basis of multiple - employment, then its results would be expressed through the reduction of the percentage of wage-earners, and an increase in the number of businessmen (and of certain categories of free professionals) in total employment. Something like this, however, doesn't exist. On the contrary, as Levaditis (1993) notes, "even Tsoukalas himself founds a tendency for the expansion of wage - earning, therefore his argument (on social ascent through multiple - employment) cannot be founded". (Levaditis 1993, 111).

A final issue which is worth insisting on is that class „multi-valence“ does not constitute a phenomenon which is connected with the so-called "contemporary phase“ of capitalism, but is observed from the first moment of the existence of capitalist social relations. In contrast to the pre-capitalist modes of production, the classes in capitalism never constitute, as we have stated, "close totalities”, a fact which always allows a degree of class mobility for individuals (e.g. through education). Beyond that, the phenomenon of class „multi-valence“ takes intense form during historical conjunctures of transition from one type of social relations to another, and consequently during periods of the transformation of class relations.

A very characteristic case of this kind is the historical phase of the dismembering of the pre-capitalist relations of production in favour of capitalist relations, a phase which is characterised initially by the indirect subordination of the workers to mercantile capital: the cottage system of domestic-manufacturing, which produces for the merchant pre-purchaser (buyer-up). (See Rubin 1989, 153-166). During this period, that is essentially in the 17th and 18th century, the indirectly subordinated to capital, worker of the cottage-industry, often continues to work as a self-employed farmer as well. As Rubin observes: „The domestic system did relieve the entrepreneur-buyer up of all fixed-capital costs (buildings, implements of production), while it made it possible for the cottage workers to work at home and combine their activity with subsidiary occupations (agriculture, growing fruit and vegetables, etc.). It was because of these advantages that the domestic system proved able to compete with the manufactories, all the more so since the latter held
no special advantages in terms of technology" (Rubin 1989, 156. For the subordination of the tenant - industry to mercantile capital, also see Marx 1991, 452 ff.).

Perhaps the most eloquent description of the living conditions and of the "multiple - employment" of workers during the first phase of the development of capitalism was that on Engels, in his work "The condition of the working class in England", which was first published in 1845. In this work, among other things, we read that before the generation of the results of the industrial revolution, "the weaver was usually in a position to save some money, from which he tented a small plot of land, which he cultivated in his free time". (Engels, in Marx-Engels-Werke -MEW- vol. 2, 1976, 238).

The claims, then, that Marxist analysis did not note the phenomenon of multi - employment, are totally mistaken, and that, furthermore, these phenomena mainly characterise the contemporary period of capitalism (See Caire in Labica/Bensussan 1983, 90 and 91). Beyond the ignorance of historical writings and references, these claims betray a probable confusion between the abstract objects of theoretical analysis (which are constructed only on the basis of the most fundamental determinations of social relations - e.g. the concept of mode of production) and the more specific objects of analysis (which contain a much greater number of determinations, e.g. the working class in England at the beginning of the 19th Century).

It becomes, therefore, apparent that the phenomenon of multiple employment does not entail the need for the formulation of a new theory of social classes. Furthermore, we can say, as a conclusion, that the approach of "class multi-valence" constitutes a failed attempt to submit the theoretical concepts and the theoretical criteria of objective class theories (and especially of Marxist theory) to the methodological individualism of the dominant ideology, and more specifically to contemporary neo-classical economic theory. Thus, it constitutes a theoretically contradictory and empirically unproved approach. In contrast, the Marxist approach constitutes the only non-apologetic and non-normative analysis, which can prove that it is simultaneously scientific, and critical.

35 However, we may without reservation suppose that, according to its extent, this phenomenon has serious repercussions on the modes (political and syndicalist) of workers behaviour.
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