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It is Philippe Van Parijs' conviction that the Marxist tradition can be kept alive as an essential ingredient of Left-wing thinking, but only providing dutiful conservation gives way to ruthless recycling: the discarding of encumbering elements, and the reshaping of the remainder, using the latest intellectual technology. The essays collected in this book examine the structure and potential of historical materialism as a general theory of social change, they draw the lessons of the failure of Marxist crisis theory, and show how a rejuvenated notion of exploitation can illuminate the analysis of the class structure of welfare state capitalism or the assessment of international migration. They explore and advocate a 'capitalist road to communism', that expands the realm of freedom while bypassing socialism, and they develop those aspects of the Marxist project that converge, at the deepest level, with political ecology.

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*Studies in Marxism and social theory*

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*Edited by* G. A. COHEN, JON ELSTER AND JOHN ROEMER

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

With Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme  
54 Boulevard Raspail, 75270 Paris Cedex 06, France

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521122146](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521122146)

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First published 1993  
This digitally printed version 2009

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Van Parijs, Philippe, 1951–  
Marxism recycled/Philippe Van Parijs.  
p. cm. – (Studies in Marxism and social theory)  
Includes index.  
ISBN 0 521 41802 X  
1. Marxism. 2. Historical materialism. 3. Capitalism. I. Title. II. Series.  
HX44.5.P37 1993  
335.4 – dc20 92–23166 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-41802-7 Hardback  
ISBN 978-0-521-12214-6 Paperback

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For my fellow Septembrists,  
in deep gratitude for a decade  
of exceptional intellectual stimulation

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# Acknowledgements

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## 1 From contradiction to catastrophe

This chapter grew out of a paper presented in Oxford in December 1978 at Charles Taylor's Historical Materialism seminar, which consisted in a discussion, with G. A. Cohen, of the central theses of the latter's (then forthcoming) *Karl Marx's Theory of History*. An earlier version appeared in the *New Left Review* (London) 115, May–June 1979, 87–96. I am particularly grateful to Jerry Cohen, Steven Lukes, and Rom Harré for stimulating discussions.

## 2 Marxism's central puzzle

This chapter grew out of part of a paper on 'Marxist causation' presented at the 1981 meeting of the September group. An earlier version appeared in German in *Analyse und Kritik* (Berlin) 4 (2), 1982, 197–210, as part of a special issue devoted to a discussion of G. A. Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, and in English in *After Marx* (T. Ball and J. Farr eds.), New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 88–104. I am very grateful to Terry Ball, Jerry Cohen, Jon Elster, John Roemer, Robert van der Veen and Erik Wright for their comments on the first draft. Some of the points made in this chapter were further clarified in 'The shifting primacy puzzle. A rejoinder' (*Analyse und Kritik* 5, 1983, 223–30), in which I responded to G. A. Cohen's 'Reply to four critics' (*Analyse und Kritik* 5, 1983, 195–222).

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### 3 A rational reconstruction by way of obituary

This chapter grew out of a paper presented at the Economics Departments of the Universities of Louvain-la-Neuve and Cambridge and at the Communication and Cognition seminar at the University of Ghent. It first appeared under the title 'The falling-rate-of-profit theory of crisis. A rational reconstruction by way of obituary', in *Review of Radical Political Economics* (New York), 12 (1), Spring 1980, 1–16 and was reprinted in *History of Economic Thought* (Mark Blaug ed.), London: Edward Elgar, 1990, 126–44. An abridged French version forms a section of Jacques Attali, *Les Trois Mondes*, Paris: Fayard, 1981, 106–17. I am grateful to my audiences and referees, to Phil Armstrong, Johannes Berger, Sue Black, Jim Devine, Michel De Vroey, Ernst Fahling, Heiner Ganssmann, Jacques Gouverneur, Bob Rowthorn, and above all to Andrew Glyn and John Roemer, for many useful comments.

### 4 Why Marxist economics needs microfoundations

This chapter is a slightly revised version of a reply to Patrick Clawson's 'A comment on Van Parijs's obituary' (*Review of Radical Political Economics* 15 (2), 1983, 107–10). It was first published under the title 'Why Marxist economics needs microfoundations. Postscript to an obituary' in *Review of Radical Political Economics* 15 (2), 1983, 111–24. I am very grateful to Joseph Chung, Philippe De Villé, Jim Devine, Michel De Vroey, Heiner Ganssmann, Andrew Glyn, Jacques Gouverneur, Makoto Itoh, Alain Lipietz, Jim Lindsey, Angelo Reati and John Roemer for stimulating discussions. To get a fair picture of the debate, one would of course need to read Clawson's arguments as he stated them himself, not just my restatement of them.

### 5 Exploitation and the libertarian challenge

A Dutch version of this chapter was presented at the University of Antwerp in March 1986. It was first published as chapter 5 of *Modern Theories of Exploitation* (A. Reeve ed.), London and Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1987, 111–31. (Spanish translation in *Zona Abierta* (Madrid) 51/2, 1989, 87–114.) I am grateful to John Baker, Sue Black, Jean Cartelier, Terrell Carver, Michel De Vroey, Andrew Glyn, Jacques Gouverneur, Erik Oger, Andrew Reeve, John Roemer, Ian Steedman and Robert van der Veen for fruitful discussions and useful comments on an earlier version.

## 6 A revolution in class theory

This chapter grew out of a comment on Erik O. Wright's framework for class analysis which I presented at the international seminar 'Recent developments in class theory and class analysis' held in Amsterdam in April 1985. It was presented at the annual meeting of the Dutch Association of Political Scientists (Amersfoort, June 1986) and at the 1987 meeting of the September Group. It first appeared in *Politics and Society* 15, 1987, 453–82, and was reprinted in *Debates on Classes* (Erik O. Wright et al.), London: Verso Books, 1989, 213–41. I am particularly grateful to Leo Apostel, Sue Black, Johannes Berger, Sam Bowles, Mino Carchedi, Jos de Beus, Michael Krätke, Mary Nolan, Adam Przeworski, Ian Steedman, Robert van der Veen, Jenny Walry and Erik Wright for useful comments and discussion.

## 7 Marxism and migration

This chapter is based on the commentary I presented at the Ethikon Institute conference on ethical aspects of the transnational migration of people and money (Mont Saint-Michel, October 1989), subsequently published as 'Citizenship exploitation, unequal exchange and the breakdown of popular sovereignty' in *Free Movement* (Brian Barry and Robert Goodin eds.), Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992, 155–66. I thank Brian Barry, Bob Goodin and the other participants in this particularly successful meeting for their useful comments.

## 8 A capitalist road to communism (with Robert J. van der Veen)

Early versions of this chapter were presented at a discussion group in Manchester (May 1983), at the 1983 meeting of the September Group and at a seminar at the Freie Universität Berlin (May 1984). The final version was written, jointly with Robert van der Veen, in the course of my stay as a visiting lecturer at the University of Amsterdam in the Spring of 1985. It was originally published in *Theory and Society* 15 (5), 1986, 635–56, and is reprinted here by permission of Kluwer Academic Publishers. (German translation in *Umbau des Sozialstaats* (M. Opielka and I. Ostner Hrsgb), Essen: Klartext, 1987, 167–76. Spanish translation in *Zona Abierta* (Madrid) 46/47, 1988, 19–45.) We are particularly grateful to Rod Aya, Heiner Ganssmann, Norman Geras, Andrew Glyn, André Gorz, Staf Hellemans, Cornelia von Kleist, Michael Krätke, David Purdy, Ian Steedman and 'Titanic', to all our colleagues in the September Group (especially Jerry

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Cohen, Jon Elster, Adam Przeworski and Erik Wright), to three anonymous referees and to each other, for stimulating discussions and comments from which the final version has benefited greatly. Because most of these people, to put it mildly, remain rather critical of our central idea, they can hardly be held responsible for whatever the reader may find objectionable, indeed scandalous, in this chapter.

**9 Universal grants versus socialism (with Robert J. van der Veen)**

An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the 1986 meeting of the September Group. It was originally published in *Theory and Society* 15 (5), 1986, as a reply to the comments by Johannes Berger, Joseph Carens, Jon Elster, Alec Nove, Adam Przeworski and Erik Wright on the original version of chapter 8 above, and is reprinted here by permission of Kluwer Academic Publishers. (A Spanish translation appeared in *Zona Abierta* (Madrid) 46/47, 1988.) We are very grateful to Ian Gough, Gérard Roland and all members of the September Group (especially Hillel Steiner) for useful comments on an earlier draft.

**10 In defence of abundance**

This chapter is a much revised version of a paper discussed at the Universities of Amsterdam and Louvain-la-Neuve in May and November 1985. It was first published in *Analyzing Marxism* (K. Nielsen and B. Ware eds.), 15, 1989, 467–95. I am very grateful to Philippe Mongin, Alec Nove, Roald Ramer, Gérard Roland, Ian Steedman, Robert van der Veen and Bob Ware, for having helped me out of some of the confusions contained in earlier versions. Conversations with Hans Achterhuis, Ivan Illich, Riccardo Cappi and Marc Germain have drawn my attention to neglected dimensions, which I am sure I have not incorporated to anything like their satisfaction. I have been greatly exercised by a number of earlier treatments of these issues, especially by Tartarin, Nove, Phelps and Roland. It is because these have not left me fully satisfied that I felt I wanted to have a go at it myself. Without them, however, my job would have been far tougher, and the end result far rougher.

**Envoi: The greening of Marx?**

Except for the opening paragraph, this chapter was initially published in *L'Ecologiste* (Namur, Belgium) 49, January 1984, 38–40 as an echo to the

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*Acknowledgements* xv

celebrations that marked the 100th anniversary of Marx's death. (Dutch version in *Vlaams Marxistisch Tijdschrift* (Gent) 18, 1984, 28–33.) A fuller and more academic formulation of these ideas can be found in my contribution to the Marx conference held in Paris in December 1983 ('Marx, l'écologie et la transition directe du capitalisme au communisme', in B. Chavance, ed., *Marx en perspective*, Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1985, 135–55).