

Class, Status, Party*

Max Weber

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A NOTE ON MAX WEBER—

Max Weber, a contemporary of Lenin and Richard Strauss, has been called the "Marx of the bourgeoisie." He inherited his central questions from Marx: How did Occidental capitalism come about? What is its character? Where is it going? With Marx he shared the perspective of world history and the interest in economics and society.

Yet the role of ideas and of interests in history is the major theme of Weber's studies. He continually puzzled over the wide differences between the outcome of man's action and what the actor intended. The logic of history, he thought, does not coincide with the calculation of history makers—least of all with those of event-making men. Is man, then, doomed forever to fool himself? Why is it that modern industrial capitalism, one type among others, required a vanguard of middle-class Puritans, of saintly men who meant to serve God but who unwittingly promoted capitalism, which, once in the saddle, could dispense with religion? And why did modern capitalism arise only in the Occident? Why not in antiquity or in China, or India? In searching for answers, Weber went to the Prussian Junker's estate, to the latifundia of ancient Rome and the plantation of the old South, from the textile mills of Westphalia to the wool merchants of the city of London. Modern munition makers and Parsee traders, Roman bankers and the modern stock exchange, Indian castes and the Chinese mandarin bureaucracy, the salvation prophecies of world religions and the world's legal systems came under his sociological scrutiny.

Like Marx's, the work of Weber remained a torso; most of it was published posthumously. Even twenty years after Weber's death most of his work still waits to be assimilated. So far, Weber's methodological self-clarification and the justification of what he was doing in the face of Heidelberg philosophers has mainly concerned academic sociology. His substantive work is a challenging bequest and his influence is spreading.

Weber, again like Marx, was deeply concerned with man's freedom. That is why he focused upon the compulsive character of institutions and the weight of political and military power. Personally, he was powerless, a solitary figure: the Jeremiah of German imperialism. In vain he scanned the German horizon in search of a stratum fit to lead Germany successfully through an age of imperialist

rivalry, war, and revolution. The Bonapartist bombast of the Kaiser was debunked by Weber as the pose of a vain dilettante. The Prussian Junkers were seen as provincial agrarian capitalists masquerading as an "aristocracy" and putting the imprint of the parvenu upon German "society." He saw bourgeois liberalism, as emasculated by Bismarck, stuck in the local quagmires of petty interest and guild spirit. He condescendingly respected the Social Democrats as hard-working, well-meaning Philistines who disbelieved their own radical phrases and repeated for the left the phrase mongering of pan-Germanic literati of the right. Thus Weber felt "as if seated in an express train and in doubt as to whether the next switch will be set right."

He pitied those who needed illusions and "spiritual comfort"; he despised those who deceived others. Disillusioned in a disenchanted world, he was ready to face the "icy darkness" that he saw settling over Europe after the first world war. In the eighteen-nineties, Weber had set out as a monarchist; he ended as a sceptical liberal for whom democracy was a mere technique for selecting efficient political leaders.

He was, however, quick to criticise dreams of the "corporate state." The propagandists of such notions, he wrote, "fancy that 'the state' would then be the wise agent controlling business. The reverse holds! The bankers and capitalist entrepreneurs, so much hated by them, would become the unrestrained and uncontrolled masters of the state. Who in the world is the state besides this cartel machinery of large and small capitalists of all sorts, organizing the economy when the state's policy-making function is delegated to these organizations? . . . The profit-interest of capitalist producers, represented by the cartels, would then exclusively dominate the state." The competition between the rational bureaucratic state and the corporation bureaucracies of modern capitalism seemed to Weber a necessary condition for the survival of vestiges of personal freedom.

Weber addressed a similar argument to socialism. In 1906 he predicted bureaucratic socialism for Russia in a brilliant essay on the first phase of the Russian revolution. Socialism and the class struggle of the proletariat appeared to him as only a vehicle fostering the bureaucratization of modern civilization. The army of self-equipped knights had been superseded by armies of soldiers—separated from the means of destruction; socialism would merely complete this process of bureaucratic collectivization in the sphere of production. Socialism appeared to Weber as the very embodiment of rationalization, one more step in the "disenchantment of the world." Bureaucracies appeared to Weber as indestructible, the vital necessity of metropolitan masses. It is here that Marx becomes Weber's challenge.

* From *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, (Tübingen, 1922), pp. 631-40. The definitions of the following terms do not occur in the original German passage; we have taken them from other contexts of *W. und G.* and inserted them as parts of this text: "law," "societal action," "communal action." We have also inserted definitions of "class situations" and "class." One cross-reference, to a passage in *W. und G.*, p. 277, has been omitted and one footnote has been placed in the text. Otherwise, the translation is as literal as grammar and clarity seemed to permit. G. & M.

For Marx, capitalism was an "anarchy of production." Rationalism was not given; it was a task. Therefore, the pursuit of a rational society was identical with man's liberation from "blind social fate."

For Weber, capitalism was rationalized, and he thought of this rationalism with melancholia. The pursuit of personal freedom become private: a tarrying for loving companionship and for the cathartic experience of art as a this-worldly escape from institutional routines. For the rest, a fearless account of the impact of institutions upon man informed Weber's work. He had no prophecy to offer, but he felt strong enough to face up to unvarnished reality without the intellectual sacrifice which he felt all creeds demand.

The brutal punch and the delicate insight of Marx are quite fully retained by Weber. He was, of course, aware that his conception of the state was similar to that advanced by Trotsky. The excerpt which follows may be understood as a completion, from Weber's own standpoint, of the unfinished chapter on class in Marx's Capital.

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LAW exists when there is a probability that an order will be upheld by a specific staff of men who will use physical or psychological compulsion with the intention of obtaining conformity with the order, or of inflicting sanctions for infringement of it. The structure of every legal order directly influences the distribution of power, economic or otherwise, within its respective community. This is true of all legal orders and not only that of the state. In general, we understand by "power" the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.

"Economically conditioned" power is not, of course, identical with "power" as such. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds. Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich himself economically. Power, including economic power, may be valued "for its own sake." Very frequently the striving for power is also conditioned by the social "honor" which it entails. Not all power, however, entails social honor: The typical American Boss, as well as the typical big speculator, deliberately relinquishes social honor. Quite generally, "mere economic" power, and especially "naked" money power, is by no means a recognized basis of social "honor." Nor is power the only basis of social "honor." Indeed, social honor, or prestige, may even be the basis of political or economic power, and very frequently has been. Power, as well as honor, may be guaranteed by the legal order, but, at least normally, it is not their primary source. The legal order is rather an additional factor which enhances the chance to hold power or honor; but it cannot always secure them.

The way in which social "honor" is distributed in a community between typical groups participating in this distribution, we may call the "social order." The social order and the economic order are, of course, similarly related to the "legal order." However, the social and the

economic order are not identical. The economic order is for us merely the way in which economic goods and services are distributed and used. But, of course, the social order is conditioned by the economic order to a high degree, and in its turn reacts upon it.

Now: "classes," "status groups," and "parties" are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.

Determination of Class-Situation By Market-Situation

In our terminology, "classes" are not communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action. We may speak of a "class" when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets. These points refer to "class situation," which we may express more briefly as the typical chance for a supply of goods, an "external" life fate, and an internal life fate, in so far as this chance is determined by the amount and kind of power, or lack of such, to dispose of goods or services in a market situation. The term "class" refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation.

It is the most elemental economic fact that the way in which disposition over material *property* is distributed among a plurality of people, meeting competitively in the market for the purpose of exchange, in itself creates specific life chances. According to the law of marginal utility this mode of distribution excludes the non-owners from competing for highly valued goods; it favors the owners and, in fact, gives to them a monopoly to acquire such goods. Other things being equal, this mode of distribution monopolizes the opportunities for profitable deals for all those who, provided with goods, do not necessarily have to exchange them. It increases, at least generally, their power in price wars with those who, being propertyless, have nothing to offer but their services in native form or goods in a form constituted through their own labor and who above all are compelled to get rid of these products in order barely to subsist. This mode of distribution gives to the propertied a monopoly on the possibility of transferring property from the sphere of use as a "fortune," to the sphere of "capital goods"; that is, it gives to them the entrepreneurial function and all chances to share directly or indirectly in returns on capital. All this holds true within that sphere in which pure market conditions prevail. "Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations. It does not matter whether these two categories become effective in price wars or in competitive struggles.

However, within these categories, class situations are further differentiated, on the one hand, according to the kind of property that is usable for returns; and, on the other hand, according to the kind of services that can be offered in the market. Ownership of domestic buildings; productive establishments; warehouses; stores; agricul-

turally usable land, large and small holdings—quantitative differences with possibly qualitative consequences—; ownership of mines; cattle; men (slaves); disposition over mobile instruments of production, or capital goods of all sorts, especially money or objects that can be exchanged for money easily and at any time; disposition over products of one's own labor or of other's labor differing according to their various distances from consumability; disposition over transferable monopolies of any kind—all these distinctions differentiate the class situations of the propertied just like the "meaning" which they can and do give to the utilization of property, especially to property which has money equivalence. Accordingly, the propertied, for instance, may belong to the class of rentiers or to the class of entrepreneurs.

Those who have no property but who offer services are just as much differentiated according to their kinds of services and according to the way in which they make use of these services in a continuous or discontinuous relation to a recipient. But always this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate. "Class situation" is, in this sense, ultimately "market situation." The effect of naked possession *per se*, which among cattle breeders gives the non-owning slave or serf into the power of the cattle owner, is only a forerunner or real "class" formation. However, in the cattle loan and in the naked severity of the law of debts in such communities for the first time mere "possession" as such emerges as decisive for the fate of the individual. This is very much in contrast to the agricultural communities based on labor. The creditor-debtor relation becomes the basis of "class situations" only in those cities where a "credit market," however primitive, with rates of interest increasing according to the extent of dearth and a factual monopolization of credits, was developed by a plutocracy. Therewith "class struggles" begin.

A number of men whose fate is not determined by the chance of using goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g., slaves, are not, however, a "class" in the technical sense of the term. They are, rather, a "status group."

Communal Action Flowing from Class Interest

According to our terminology, the factor which creates the "class" is unambiguously economic interests, and indeed, only those interests involved in the existence of the "market." Nevertheless, the concept of "class-interest" is an ambiguous one: even as an empirical concept it is ambiguous as soon as one understands by it something other than the factual direction of interests following with a certain probability from the class situation for a certain "average" of those people subjected to the class situation. The class situation and other circumstances remaining the same, the direction in which the individual worker, for instance, is likely to pursue his interests may vary widely according to whether he is constitutionally qualified for

the task at hand to a high, to an average, or to a low degree. In the same way, the direction of interests may vary according to whether or not a communal action of a larger or smaller portion of those commonly affected by the "class situation," or even an association among them, e.g., a "trade union," has grown out of the class situation from which the individual may or may not expect promising results. Communal action refers to that action which is oriented to the feeling of the actors that they belong together. Societal action, on the other hand, is oriented to a rationally motivated adjustment of interests. The rise of societal or even of communal action from a common class situation is by no means a universal phenomenon.

The class situation may be restricted in its effects to the generation of essentially similar reactions, that is to say, within our terminology, of "mass actions." However, it may not even have this result. Furthermore, often merely an amorphous communal action emerges. For example, the "murmuring" of the workers known in ancient oriental ethics: the moral disapproval of the work-master's conduct which in its practical significance probably was equivalent to an increasingly typical phenomenon of precisely the latest industrial development, namely, the "slow down" (the deliberate limiting of work effort) of laborers by virtue of tacit agreement. The degree in which "communal action," and possibly "societal action," emerges from the "mass actions" of the members of a class is linked to general cultural conditions, especially to those of an intellectual sort, and to the extent of the already evolved contrasts; it is especially linked to the transparency of the connections between the causes and the consequences of the "class situation." However strongly life chances may be differentiated, this fact in itself, according to all experience, by no means gives birth to "class action" (communal action of the members of a class). The fact of being conditioned and the results of the class situation must be distinctly recognizable. For only then the contrast of life chances cannot be felt to be an absolutely given fact to be accepted, but can be felt to be a resultant from either (1) the given distribution of property, or (2) the structure of the concrete economic order. It is only then that people may react against the class structure, not only through acts of an intermittent and irrational protest but in the form of rational associations. There have been "class situations" of the first category (1) of such a specifically naked and transparent sort in the urban centers of antiquity and during the Middle Ages; especially then, when great fortunes were accumulated by factually monopolized trading in industrial products of these localities or in food stuffs. Furthermore, under certain circumstances, in the rural economy of the most diverse periods when agriculture was increasingly exploited in a profit-making manner. The most important historical example of the second category (2) is the class situation of the modern "proletariat."

Types of "Class Struggle"

Thus every class may be the carrier of any one of the possibly innumerable forms of "class action," but this is not necessarily so. In any case, a class does not in itself constitute a community. To treat "class" conceptually

as having the same value as "community" leads to distortion. That men in the same class situation regularly react in mass actions to such palpable situations as economic ones in the direction of those interests which are most adequate to their average number is an important and after all simple fact for the understanding of historical events. Above all, this fact must not lead to that kind of pseudo-scientific operation with the concepts of "class" and "class interests," so frequently found these days, and which has found its most classic expression in the statement of a talented author,¹ that the individual may be in error concerning his interests but that the "class" is "infallible" about its interests. But if classes as such are not communities, nevertheless class situations emerge only on the basis of communalization. But the communal action which brings forth class situations is not basically action between members of the identical class; it is an action *between* members of different classes. Communal actions which directly determine the class situation of the worker and the entrepreneur are: the labor market, the commodities market, and the capitalistic enterprise. But, in its turn, the existence of a capitalistic enterprise presupposes a very specific communal action to exist which is specifically structured so as to protect the possession of goods *per se*, and especially the power of individuals to dispose, in principle freely, over means of production. The existence of a capitalistic enterprise is preconditioned by a specific kind of "legal order." Each kind of class situation, and above all when it rests upon the power of property *per se*, will come to efficacy in the clearest way when all other determinants of reciprocal relations are, as far as possible, eliminated in their significance. It is in this way that the utilization of the power of property in the market obtains its most sovereign importance.

Now "status groups" hinder the strict carrying through of the sheer market principle. In the present context they are of interest to us only from this one point of view. Before we briefly consider them, note that not much of a general nature can be said about the more specific kinds of antagonism between "classes" (in our meaning of the term). The great shift, which has been going on continuously in the past, and up to our times, may be summarized, although at the cost of some precision: the struggle in which class situations are effective has progressively shifted from consumption credit toward, first, competitive struggles in the commodity market and, then, toward price wars on the labor market. The "class struggles" of antiquity—to the extent that they were genuine "class struggles" and not struggles between status groups—were initially carried on by indebted peasants and perhaps also by artisans threatened by debt bondage struggling against urban creditors. For debt bondage is the normal result of the differentiation of wealth in commercial cities, especially in seaport cities. The situation has been similar among cattle breeders. Debt relationships as such produced class action up to the time of Cataline. Along with this, and with an increase in provision of grain for the city by transporting it from the outside, the struggle over the means of sustenance emerged. It centered in the first place around the provision of bread and the determination of the price

1. Probably Georg Lukács. (Translators)

of bread. It lasted throughout antiquity and the entire Middle Ages. The propertyless as such flocked together against those who actually and supposedly were interested in the dearth of bread. This fight spread to involve all commodities essential to the way of life and to handicraft production. There were only incipient discussions of wage disputes in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. And slowly they have been increasing up into modern times. In the earlier periods they were completely secondary to slave rebellions as well as to fights in the commodity market.

The propertyless of antiquity and of the Middle Ages protested against monopolies, preemption, forestalling, and the withholding of goods from the market for the purpose of raising prices. Today the central issue is the determination of the price of labor.

The transition is represented by the fight for access to the market and for the determination of the price of products. These fights went on between merchants and workers in the putting-out system of domestic handicraft during the transition to modern times. Since it is quite a general phenomenon we must mention here that the class antagonisms which are conditioned through the market situation are usually most bitter between those who actually and directly participate as opponents in price wars. It is not the rentier, the share-holder, and the banker who suffer the ill will of the worker, but almost exclusively the manufacturer and business executive who are direct opponents of workers in price wars. This is so in spite of the fact that it is precisely the cash boxes of the rentier, the share-holder, and the banker into which the more or less "unearned" gains flow, rather than into the pockets of the manufacturers or of the business executives. This simple state of affairs has very frequently been decisive for the role which the class situation has played in the formation of political parties. For example it has made possible the varieties of patriarchal socialism, and the frequent attempts—formerly, at least—of threatened status groups to form alliances with the proletariat against the "bourgeoisie."

Status Honor

In contrast to classes, *status groups* are normally communities. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined "class situation" we wish to designate as "status situation" every typical component of the life fate of men which is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of "*honor*." This honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality. Also this honor can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity. In the subsistence economy of the organized neighborhood, very often the richest man is simply chieftain. However, this often means only honorific preference. For example, in the so called pure modern "democracy," *i.e.*, one devoid of any expressly ordered status privileges for individuals, it happens that only the families coming under approxi-

mately the same tax class dance with one another. This example is reported of certain smaller Swiss cities. But status honor need not *necessarily* be linked with a "class situation." On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.

Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently they do with very palpable consequences. This "equality" of social esteem may, however, in the long run become quite precarious. The "equality" of status among the American "gentlemen", for instance, is expressed in that outside the subordination determined by the different functions of "business" it would be considered strictly repugnant—wherever the old tradition still prevails—if even the richest "chief," while playing billiards or cards in his club in the evening, would not treat his "clerk" as in every sense fully his equal in birth-right. It would be repugnant if the American "chief" would bestow upon his "clerk" the condescending "benevolence" which marks a distinction of "position" which the German chief can never disavow from his attitude. This is one of the most important reasons why in America the German "clubby-ness" has never been able to attain the attraction which the American clubs have.

Guarantees of Status Stratification

In content, status honor is normally expressed in that above all else a specific *style of life* can be firmly expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle. Linked with this expectation are restrictions on "social" intercourse (i.e., intercourse which is not subservient to economic or any other of business's "functional" purpose.) These restrictions may confine normal intermarriages to the status circle and may lead to complete endogamous closure. As soon as there is, not a mere individual and socially irrelevant imitation of another style of life but, an agreed-upon communal action of this closing character, the "status" development is under way.

In its characteristic way stratification by "status groups" on the basis of conventional *styles of life* evolves at the present time in the United States out of the traditional democracy. For example, only the resident of a certain street ("the street") is considered as belonging to "society," is qualified for social intercourse, and is visited and invited. Above all, this differentiation evolves in such a way as to make for strict submission to the fashion that is dominant at a given time in society. This submission to fashion also exists among men in America to a degree unknown in Germany. Such submission is considered to be an indication of the fact that a given man *pretends* to qualify as a gentleman. This submission decides, at least *prima facie*, that he will be treated as such. And this recognition becomes just as important for his employment chances in "swank" establishments, and above all, for social intercourse and marriage with "esteemed" families, as the "qualification for "duelling" among Germans in the Kaiser's day. As for the rest: certain families resident for a long time (and, of course, correspondingly wealthy), families (e.g.: "F. F. V., i.e., First Families of Virginia") or the actual or alleged descendants of the "Indian Prin-

cess" Pocahontas, of the Pilgrim fathers, or of the Knickerbockers, the members of almost inaccessible sects and all sorts of circles setting themselves apart by means of any other characteristics and badges . . . all these elements usurp "status" honor. The development of status is essentially a question of stratification resting upon usurpation. Such usurpation is the normal origin of almost all status "honor." But the road from this purely conventional situation to legal privilege, positive or negative, is everywhere easily travelled as soon as a certain stratification of the social order has in fact been "lived in" and has achieved a stability by virtue of the stabilization in the distribution of economic power.

"Ethnic" Segregation and "Caste"

Where the consequences have been realized to their full extent the status group evolves into the closed "caste." This means that the status distinctions are guaranteed not merely by conventions and laws, but also by *rituals*. This occurs in such a way that every physical contact with a member of any caste which is considered to be "lower" by the members of a "higher" caste is evaluated as making for a ritualistic impurity and to be a stigma which must be expiated by a religious act. Individual castes develop in part quite disparate cults and gods.

In general, however, the status structure reaches such extreme consequences only where differences which are defined as "ethnic" lie at its bottom. The "caste" is, indeed, the normal form in which ethnic communities usually live side by side in a "societalized" manner. These ethnic communities believe in blood relationship and exclude exogamous marriage and social intercourse. Such a caste situation exists with the phenomenon of "pariah" peoples which is found all over the world. These people form communities which have acquired specific occupational traditions of handicrafts or of other arts and which cultivate the belief in their ethnic community. Such people then live in a "diaspora" strictly segregated from all personal intercourse except that of unavoidable sort; and their situation is legally precarious. But by virtue of their economic indispensability, pariah people are tolerated, indeed, frequently privileged, and they live in interspersed political communities. The Jews are the most impressive example in history.

The "status" segregation grown into the "caste" and the mere "ethnic" segregation differ in their respective structures: the caste structure transforms the horizontal and unconnected coexistences of the ethnically segregated groups into a vertical social system of super- and subordination. Correctly formulated: a comprehensive societalization integrates the ethnically divided communities into specific political and communal action. In their consequences they differ precisely in this way: whereas the ethnic coexistences condition the reciprocal repulsion and disdain but allow each ethnic community to consider its own honor as the highest one; the caste structure brings about a social subordination and an acknowledgment of "more honor" in favor of the privileged caste and status groups. This is due to the fact that in the caste structure ethnic distinctions

as such have become "functional" distinctions within the political societalization (warriors, priests, artisans that are politically important for war and for buildings, and so on). But even the pariah people who are most despised are usually apt to continue cultivating in some manner that which is equally peculiar to the ethnic and the status communities: the belief in their own specific "honor." This is the case with the Jews.

Only with the negatively privileged "status groups" does the "sense of dignity" take a specific deviation. The sense of dignity is the precipitation in individuals of social honor and of conventional demands which the positively privileged "status group" raises for the deportment of its members. The sense of dignity which characterizes positively privileged status groups is naturally related to their "being" which does not transcend itself, that is, to their "beauty and excellency" (*The Good and The Beautiful*). Their kingdom is "of this world." They live for the present and by exploiting their great past. The sense of dignity of the negatively privileged strata can naturally refer to a future lying beyond the present, be it of this life or of another. In other words, it must be nurtured by the belief in a providential "mission" and by a belief in a specific honor before God as the "chosen people," that is, by beliefs either that in the beyond "the last will be the first" or that in this life a messiah will appear to bring forth into the light of the world which has cast them out the hidden honor of the pariah people. This simple state of affairs, and not the "resentment" which is so strongly emphasized in Nietzsche's much admired construction in the *Genealogy of Morals*, is the source of the religiosity cultivated by pariah status groups. In passing, we note that this trait, resentment, may be accurately applied only to a limited extent; for one of Nietzsche's main examples, Buddhism, it is not at all applicable.

Incidentally, the development of status groups from ethnic segregations is by no means the normal phenomenon. On the contrary, since objective "racial differences" are in no way basic to every subjective sentiment of "ethnic" community, the ultimately racial foundation of status structure is rightly and absolutely a question of the concrete individual case. Very frequently the "status group" is instrumental in the production of a thoroughbred anthropological type. Certainly the "status group" is to a high degree effective in producing extreme types and consists in a selection of personally qualified individuals (e.g., the Knighthood selects those who are fit for warfare, physically and psychically.) But the selection of persons is far removed from being the only, or the predominant, way in which status groups are formed: Political membership or class situation has at least as frequently, in all times, been decisive. Today the class situation is by far the predominant factor. For the possibility of a style of life expected for members of "status groups," is, of course, usually conditioned economically.

Status Privileges

For all practical purposes, stratification by status everywhere goes hand in hand with a monopolization of ideal

and material goods or chances in the manner which we have come to know as typical. Besides the specific status honor, which always rests upon distance and exclusiveness we find all sorts of material monopolies. Such honorific preferences may consist of the privilege to wear special costumes, to eat special dishes denied others by taboo, the privilege to carry arms which is most palpable in its consequences, the right to pursue certain non-professional dilettante artistic practices, e.g., to play certain musical instruments. Of course, material monopolies do provide the most effective motives for the exclusiveness of the status group, although, in themselves, they are rarely sufficient. But almost always they come into play to some extent. Within a status circle there is the question of intermarriage: the interest of the families in the monopolization of potential bridegrooms is at least of equal importance and is parallel to an interest in the monopolization of daughters. The daughters of the circle must be provided for. With an increased inclosure of the status group, the conventional preferential opportunities for special employment grow into a legal monopoly of special offices for the members of these delimited groups. Certain goods become objects for monopolization by status groups. In typical fashion these everywhere include "entailed estates"; frequently they also include the possessions of serfs or bondsmen and finally special trades. This monopolization occurs positively or negatively:

Positively: when the status group is exclusively entitled to own and to manage them;

Negatively: when, in order to maintain its specific way of life, the status group must *not* own and manage them. For the decisive role of the "style of life" in status "honor" means that the "status groups" are the specific bearers of all "conventions." In whatever way it may be manifest, all "stylization" of life either originates in status groups or at least is conserved by them. Even if the principles of status conventions differ greatly, they reveal certain typical traits, especially among those strata which are most privileged. Quite generally, among privileged status groups there is a status disqualification which operates against the performance of common physical labor. This disqualification is now "setting in" in America against the old tradition of esteem for labor. Very frequently every rational economic pursuit, and especially "entrepreneurial activity" is looked upon as a disqualification of status. Artistic and literary activity is also considered to be degrading work as soon as it is exploited for income, or at least when it is connected with hard physical exertion. An example is the sculptor working like a mason in his dusty smock as over against the painter in his salon-like "studio" and those forms of musical practice which are acceptable to the status group.

Economic Conditions and Effects of Status Stratification

The frequent disqualification of the gainfully employed as such is a direct result of the principle of status stratification peculiar to the social order, and of course, of this principle's opposition to a distribution of power which is regulated exclusively through the market. These two factors operate

along with various individual ones, which will be touched upon below.

We have seen above that the market and its processes "knows no personal distinctions": "functional" interests dominate it. It knows nothing of "honor." The status order means precisely the reverse, *viz.*: stratification in terms of "honor" and of style of life peculiar to status groups as such. If mere economic acquisition and naked economic power still bearing the stigma of its extrastatus origin could bestow upon anyone who has won it the same honor as those who are interested in status by virtue of style of life claim for themselves, the status order would be threatened at its very root. This is the more so as, given equality of status honor, everywhere property *per se* represents an addition even if it is not overtly acknowledged to be such. But if such economic acquisition and power gave the agent any honor at all, his wealth would result in his attaining more "honor" than those who successfully claim honor by virtue of style of life. Therefore all groups having interests in the status order react with special sharpness precisely against the pretensions of purely economic acquisition. In most cases they react the more vigorously the more they feel themselves threatened. Calderon's respectful treatment of the peasant for instance, as opposed to Shakespeare's simultaneous and ostensible disdain of the "canaille" illustrates the different way in which a firmly structured status order reacts as compared with a status order which has become economically precarious. This is an expression of a state of affairs that recurs everywhere. Precisely because of the rigorous reactions against the claims of property *per se*, the "parvenu" is never personally and without reservation accepted by the privileged status groups, no matter how completely his style of life has been adjusted to theirs. They will only accept his descendants who have been educated in the conventions of their status group and who have never blemished the honor of the status group by their own economic labor.

Hence, as to the general effect of the status order, only one consequence can be stated, but it is very important. It is that the hindrance of the free development of the market occurred first for those goods which status groups directly withheld from free exchange by monopolization. This monopolization may be effected either legally or conventionally. For example, in many Hellenic cities during the epoch of status groups and also originally in Rome the inherited estate (as is shown by the old formula for indictment against spendthrifts), was monopolized just as were the estates of knights, peasants, priests and especially the clientele of the craft and merchant guilds. The market is restricted and the power of naked property *per se* which give its stamp to "class formation" is pushed into the background. The results of this process can be most diverse. Of course, by no means do they necessarily take the direction of weakening the contrasts in the economic situation. Frequently the reverse holds. In any case, where stratification by status permeates a community as strongly as was the case in all political communities of antiquity and of the Middle Ages, one can never speak of a genuinely free market competition as we understand it today. There are wider effects than this direct exclusion

of special goods from the market. There is a circumstance which follows from the above mentioned contrariety between status order and purely economic order. It is that in most instances the notion of honor peculiar to status absolutely abhors that which is essential to the market: higgling. This notion of honor abhors higgling among peers and occasionally it taboos higgling for the members of a status group in general. Therefore, everywhere there are status groups, and usually the most influential, who consider almost any kind of overt participation in economic acquisition as absolutely stigmatizing.

Thus, with some over-simplification, one might say that "classes" are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas "status groups" are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special "styles of life." An "occupational group" is also a "status group." For normally, it successfully claims social "honor" only by virtue of the special "style of life" which may be determined by occupation. However, the difference between classes and status groups frequently overlap. It is precisely those status communities most strictly segregated in terms of "honor," *viz.*, the Indian castes, who today show, although within very rigid limits, a relatively high degree of indifference with regard to pecuniary "income." However, the Brahmins seek such income in quite heterogeneous ways.

As to the general economic conditions making for the predominance of stratification by "status" only very little can be said in general. When the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable, stratification by status is favored. Every techno-economic repercussion and transformation threatens stratification by status and pushes the "class situation" into the foreground. Epochs and countries in which the naked class situation is of predominant significance are regularly the periods of technical-economic transformations. And every slowing down of the shifting of economic stratifications in due course leads to the growth of "status" structures and again makes for the resuscitation of the important role of social "honor."

Parties

Whereas the genuine locus of "classes" is within the "economic order," the locus of "status groups" is within the "social order," *i.e.*, within the sphere of the distribution of "honor." From within these spheres, classes and status groups influence one another and they influence the legal order and are in turn influenced by it. But "parties" live in a house of "power."

Their action is oriented toward the acquisition of social "power," that is to say, toward influencing a communal action no matter what its content. In principle, parties may exist in a social "club" as well as in a "state." As over against the actions of "classes" and "status groups," for which this is not necessarily the case, the communal actions of "parties" always mean a societalization. For party actions are always directed toward a goal which is striven for in planned manner. This goal may be a "cause"

(the party may aim at realizing a program for ideal or material purposes), or the goal may be "personal" (sinecures, power, and from these honor for the leader and followers of the parties). But usually the party action aims at all these simultaneously. Parties are, therefore, only possible within communities which are somehow societalized, that is to say, which have some rational order and a staff of persons available who are ready to enforce it. For parties aim precisely at influencing this staff, and if possible, to recruit it from party followers.

In any individual case, parties, may represent interests determined through "class situation" or "status situation," and they may recruit their following respectively from one or the other. But they need be neither purely "class" nor purely "status" parties. In most cases they are partly class parties or partly status parties, and frequently they are neither. They may represent ephemeral or enduring structures. Their means of attaining power may be quite varied, ranging from naked violence of any sort to canvassing for votes with coarse or subtle means: money, social influence, the force of speech, suggestion, clumsy hoax, and so on to the rougher or more artful tactics of obstruction in parliamentary bodies.

The sociological structure of parties differs in a necessarily basic way according to the kind of communal action which they struggle to influence. Also parties differ according to whether or not the community is stratified by status groups or by classes. Before all else, they vary to the structure of "domination" within the community. For their leaders normally deal with the conquest of a community. They are, in the general concept which is maintained here, not only products of specially modern forms of domination. We shall also designate as parties the

ancient and medieval "parties," despite the fact that their structure differs basically from the structure of modern parties. By virtue of these structural differences of domination it is impossible to say anything about the structure of parties without discussing the structural forms of social domination *per se*. Parties which are always themselves structures struggling for domination are very frequently organized in a very strict "authoritarian" fashion. . . .

Concerning "classes," status groups," and "parties" it must be said in general that they necessarily presuppose a comprehensive societalization, and especially a political framework of communal action, within which they operate. This does not mean that parties would be confined by the frontiers of any individual political community. On the contrary, at all times it has been the order of the day that the societalization (even when it aims at the use of military force in common) reaches beyond the frontiers of politics. This has been the case in the solidarity of interests among the Oligarchs and among the democrats in Hellas, among the Guelfs and among Ghibelines in the Middle Ages, and within the Calvinist party during the period of religious struggles. It has been the case up to the solidarity of the landlords (international congress of agrarian landlords), and has continued among princes (holy alliance, Karlsbad decrees), socialist workers, conservatives (the longing of Prussian conservatives for Russian intervention in 1850). But their aim is not necessarily the establishment of new international political *i.e.*, territorial, dominion. In the main they aim to influence the existing dominion.

[The posthumously published text breaks off here. An unfinished draft of a classification of status-groups follows.—G. and M.]

Thomas for President?

Several readers have asked me whom, if any one, I am going to vote for this fall. Regretfully, I have to reply: no-one. Three of the five presidential candidates can be eliminated at once: Roosevelt and Dewey for reasons already expressed in this department, and the Prohibition Party candidate because I am in favor of alcoholic beverages. The Socialist Labor Party is, formally at least, revolutionary socialist. Unfortunately, however the SLP is a sect with little relevance to the present, frozen in the tradition of De Leon so completely as to make the most orthodox Trotskyist seem positively liberalistic by comparison. (If the Workers Party, incidentally, had a candidate for president, I would probably vote for him.) That leaves Norman Thomas.

My objection to Thomas can be put briefly: he is a liberal, not a socialist. A "socialist", as I use the term anyway, is one who has taken the first simple step *at least* of breaking with present-day bourgeois society. Despite an undoubtedly sincere personal belief in socialism, Norman Thomas has been unable, either intellectually or politically,

to take this step. His role has always been that of the left opposition *within the present society*, the fighting crusader in small matters (like Hagueism and other civil liberties issues) and the timid conformist in big matters (like the present war). His own campaign material describes him, accurately, as "America's Conscience." It seems a great pity that Norman Thomas did not become the editor of *The Nation* instead of succeeding Debs. Both *The Nation* and the Socialist Party would have gained: the former would be a more courageous and significant publication, and the latter would have had a better chance to develop into a revolutionary party.

The essential liberalism of the man comes out in (1) the manner in which he makes his criticisms of the status quo, and (2) the way he met the greatest political issue of today, the war, both before and after Pearl Harbor.

(1). Thomas' favorite approach is to assume that Roosevelt and the others in power are honest, reasonable men trying just as earnestly as he himself to work out things for the best interests of humanity; to assume, furthermore, that it