

stitute—and also the contributions of allied intellectuals such as Hannah Arendt. Jay shows not only how these aging émigrés helped shape the ideas of America's New Left but also how the American experience left its mark on them. Highly critical of American culture while here, Adorno nevertheless wrote, upon his return to Germany, that “any contemporary consciousness that has not appropriated the American experience, even in opposition, has something reactionary about it.”

Contemporary Affairs

**THE CAPITALIST
REVOLUTION: Fifty
Propositions about
Prosperity, Equality,
and Liberty**

by Peter L. Berger
Basic, 1986
262 pp. \$17.95

Elaborating on 50 propositions (e.g., “There can be no effective market economy without private ownership of the means of production”), Boston University sociologist Berger presents a theory of capitalism explaining how the modern market economy affects the culture, politics, and values of an advanced society.

Such comprehensive theories have mainly been attempted by Marxists, whose findings, Berger says, are flawed by “a priori assumptions.” He claims, however, to work from empirical evidence to show, among other things, that capitalism has generated the greatest productive power and the highest standard of living for mass society of any economic system in history.

Of considerable interest is Berger's analysis of a form of class friction that Marx never anticipated: “protracted conflict” between the old middle class (producers and distributors of goods and services) and a new middle class (manipulators of “symbolic knowledge”). The latter group, which includes journalists and educators, has a vested interest in basing privilege on educational credentials rather than economic clout. Its members typically favor the welfare state. Not surprisingly, Berger concludes, it is a major antagonist of capitalism.

Berger acknowledges that capitalism lacks mythic or ideological luster, “that no poets sing the praises of Dow Jones.” Its emphasis on individual autonomy poses other problems. Capitalism functions best when there are strong institutions (family, church) to balance individual isolation with “communal solidarities.”