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Unit 1. Philosophical Materialism.

Topics covered:

- I. Materialism and idealism. Marxist philosophy.
- II. Matter and movement; space and time.
- III. Freedom and necessity.

Bibliography:

- Marx-Engels:
 - Holy Family. Chapter VI, 3, d
- Engels:
 - Anti-Dühring Philosophy, Chapter V, VI, XI.
 - Ludwig Feuerbach. Chapter II, IV.
 - Dialectics of Nature. Basic Forms of Movement.
- Lenin:
 - Materialism and Empirio-Criticism. Chapter VI, 4.
 - Karl Marx. Materialist Philosophy; Dialectics.
- Mao Tse-tung:
 - On Contradiction. Chapter I.

Selection:

Frederick Engels: Anti-Dühring Part I: Philosophy

Chapter V. Philosophy of Nature: Time and Space

We now come to philosophy of nature. Here again Herr Dühring has every cause for dissatisfaction with his predecessors.

“Natural philosophy sank so low that it became an arid, spurious doggerel founded on ignorance”, and “fell to the prostituted philosophistics of a Schelling and his like, rigging themselves out in the priesthood of the Absolute and hoodwinking the public”. Fatigue has saved us from these “deformities”; but up to now it has only given place to “instability”; “and as far as the public at large is concerned, it is well known that the disappearance of a great charlatan is often only the opportunity for a lesser but commercially more experienced successor to put out again, under another signboard; the products of his predecessor”. Natural scientists themselves feel little “inclination to make excursions into the realm of world-encompassing ideas”, and consequently jump to “wild and hasty conclusions in the theoretical sphere” {D. Ph. 56-57}.

The need for deliverance is therefore urgent, and by a stroke of good luck Herr Dühring is at hand.

In order properly to appreciate the revelations which now follow on the development of the world in time and its limitations in space, we must turn back again to certain passages in "world schematism" {15}.

Infinity — which Hegel calls bad infinity — is attributed to being also in accordance with Hegel (Encyclopedia, § 93), and then this infinity is investigated.

“The clearest form of an infinity which can be conceived without contradiction is the unlimited accumulation of numbers in a numerical series {18} ... As we can add yet another unit to any number, without ever exhausting the possibility of further numbers, so also to every state of being a further state succeeds, and infinity consists in the unlimited begetting of these states. This exactly conceived infinity has consequently only one single basic form with one single direction. For although it is immaterial to our thought whether or not it conceives an opposite direction in the accumulation of states, this retrogressing infinity is nevertheless only a rashly constructed thought-image. Indeed, since this infinity would have to be traversed in reality in the reverse direction, it would in each of its states have an infinite succession of numbers behind itself. But this would involve the impermissible contradiction of a counted infinite numerical series, and so it is contrary to reason to postulate any second direction in infinity” {19}.

The first conclusion drawn from this conception of infinity is that the chain of causes and effects in the world must at some times have had a beginning:

“An infinite number of causes which assumedly already have lined up next to one another is inconceivable, just because it presupposes that the uncountable has been counted” {37}.

And thus, a final cause is proved.

The second conclusion is

“The law of definite number: the accumulation of identities of any actual species of independent things is only conceivable as forming a definite number”. Not only must the number of celestial bodies existing at any point of time be in itself definite, but so must also the total number of all, even the tiniest independent particles of matter existing in the world. This latter requisite is the real reason why no composition can be conceived without atoms. All actual division has always a definite limit, and must have it if the contradiction of the counted uncountable is to be avoided. For the same reason, not only must the number of the earth's revolutions round the sun up to the present time be a definite number, even though it cannot be stated, but all periodical processes of nature must have had some beginning, and all differentiation, all the multifariousness of nature which appears in succession must have its roots in one self-equal state. This state may, without involving a contradiction, have existed from eternity; but even this idea would be excluded if time in itself were composed of real parts and were not, on the contrary, merely arbitrarily divided up by our minds owing to the variety of conceivable possibilities. The case is quite different with the real, and in itself distinguished content of time; this real filling of time with distinguishable facts and the forms of being of this sphere belong, precisely because of their distinguishability, to the realm of the countable {64-65}. If we imagine a state in which no change occurs and which in its self-equality provides no differences of succession whatever, the more specialized idea of time transforms itself into the more general idea of being. What the accumulation of empty duration would mean is quite unimaginable {70}.

Thus far Herr Dühring, and he is not a little edified by the significance of these revelations. At first, he hopes that they will “at least not be regarded as paltry truths” {64}; but later we find:

“Recall to your mind the extremely simple methods by which we helped forward the concepts of infinity and their critique to a hitherto unknown import... the elements of the universal conception of space and time, which have been given such simple form by the sharpening and deepening now effected” {427-28}.

We helped forward! The deepening and sharpening now effected! Who are "we", and when is this "now"? Who is deepening and sharpening?

"Thesis: The world has a beginning in time, and with regard to space is also limited. — Proof: For if it is assumed that the world has no beginning in time, then an eternity must have elapsed up to every given point of time, and consequently an infinite series of successive states of things must have passed away in the world. The infinity of a series, however, consists precisely in this, that it can never be completed by means of a successive synthesis. Hence an infinite elapsed series of worlds is impossible, and consequently a beginning of the world is a necessary condition of its existence. And this was the first thing to be proved. — With regard to the second, if the opposite is again assumed, then the world must be an infinite given total of co-existent things. Now we cannot conceive the dimensions of a quantum, which is not given within certain limits of an intuition, in any other way than by means of the synthesis of its parts, and can conceive the total of such a quantum only by means of a completed synthesis, or by the repeated addition of a unit to itself. Accordingly, to conceive the world, which fills all spaces, as a whole, the successive synthesis of the parts of an infinite world would have to be looked upon as completed; that is, an infinite time would have to be regarded as elapsed in the enumeration of all co-existing things. This is impossible. For this reason, an infinite aggregate of actual things cannot be regarded as a given whole nor, therefore, as given at the same time. Hence it follows that the world is not infinite, as regards extension in space, but enclosed in limits. And this was the second thing" (to be proved).

These sentences are copied word for word from a well-known book which first appeared in 1781 and is called: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* by Immanuel Kant, where all and sundry can read them, in the first part, Second Division, Book II, Chapter II, Section II: The First Antinomy of Pure Reason. So that Herr Dühring's fame rests solely on his having tacked on the name — Law of Definite Number — to an idea expressed by Kant, and on having made the discovery that there was once a time when as yet there was no time, though there was a world. As regards all the rest, that is, anything in Herr Dühring's exegesis which has some meaning, "We" — is Immanuel Kant, and the "now" is only ninety-five years ago. Certainly "extremely simple"! Remarkable "hitherto unknown import"!

Kant, however, does not at all claim that the above propositions are established by his proof. On the contrary; on the opposite page he states and proves the reverse: that the world has no beginning in time and no end in space; and it is precisely in this that he finds the antinomy, the insoluble contradiction, that the one is just as demonstrable as the other. People of smaller caliber might perhaps fuel a little doubt here on account of "a Kant" having found an insoluble difficulty. But not so our valiant fabricator of "from the ground up original conclusions and views" {D. Ph. 525}; he indefatigably copies down as much of Kant's antinomy as suits his purpose, and throws the rest aside.

The problem itself has a very simple solution. Eternity in time, infinity in space, signify from the start, and in the simple meaning of the words, that there is no end in any direction neither forwards nor backwards, upwards or downwards, to the right or to the left. This infinity is something quite different

from that of an infinite series, for the latter always starts from one, with a first term. The inapplicability of this idea of series to our object becomes clear directly we apply it to space. The infinite series, transferred to the sphere of space, is a line drawn from a definite point in a definite direction to infinity. Is the infinity of space expressed in this even in the remotest way? On the contrary, the idea of spatial dimensions involves six lines drawn from this one point in three opposite directions, and consequently we would have six of these dimensions. Kant saw this so clearly that he transferred his numerical series only indirectly, in a roundabout way, to the space relations of the world. Herr Dühring, on the other hand, compels us to accept six dimensions in space, and immediately afterwards can find no words to express his indignation at the mathematical mysticism of Gauss, who would not rest content with the usual three dimensions of space ² {See D. Ph. 67-68}.

As applied to time, the line or series of units infinite in both directions has a certain figurative meaning. But if we think of time as a series counted from one forward, or as a line starting from a definite point, we imply in advance that time has a beginning: we put forward as a premise precisely what we are to prove. We give the infinity of time a one-sided, halved character; but a one-sided, halved infinity is also a contradiction in itself, the exact opposite of an “infinity conceived without contradiction”. We can only get past this contradiction if we assume that the one from which we begin to count the series, the point from which we proceed to measure the line is any one in the series, that it is any one of the points in the line, and that it is a matter of indifference to the line or to the series where we place this one or this point.

But what of the contradiction of “the counted infinite numerical series”? We shall be in a position to examine this more closely as soon as Herr Dühring has performed for us the clever trick of counting it. When he has completed the task of counting from (minus infinity) to 0 let him come again. It is certainly obvious that, at whatever point he begins to count, he will leave behind him an infinite series and, with it, the task which he is to fulfil. Let him just reverse his own infinite series $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 \dots$ and try to count from the infinite end back to 1; it would obviously only be attempted by a man who has not the faintest understanding of what the problem is. And again: if Herr Dühring states that the infinite series of elapsed time has been counted, he is thereby stating that time has a beginning; for otherwise he would not have been able to start “counting” at all. Once again, therefore, he puts into the argument, as a premise, the thing that he has to prove.

The idea of an infinite series which has been counted, in other words, the world-encompassing Dühringian law of definite number, is therefore a *contradictio in adjecto*, [“contradiction in definition” — ed.] contains within itself a contradiction, and in fact an absurd contradiction.

It is clear that an infinity which has an end but no beginning is neither more nor less infinite than that which has a beginning but no end. The slightest dialectical insight should have told Herr Dühring that beginning and end necessarily belong together, like the north pole and the south pole, and that if the end is left out, the beginning just becomes the end — the one end which the series has; and vice versa. The whole deception would be impossible but for the mathematical usage of working with infinite series. Because in mathematics it is necessary to start from definite, finite terms in order to reach the indefinite, the infinite, all mathematical series, positive or negative, must start from 1, or they cannot be used for calculation. The

² A reference to the research carried out by the German mathematician Karl Friedrich Gauss into non-Euclidean geometry.

abstract requirement of a mathematician is, however, far from being a compulsory law for the world of reality.

For that matter, Herr Dühring will never succeed in conceiving real infinity without contradiction. Infinity is a contradiction, and is full of contradictions. From the outset it is a contradiction that an infinity is composed of nothing but finites, and yet this is the case. The limitedness of the material world leads no less to contradictions than its unlimitedness, and every attempt to get over these contradictions leads, as we have seen, to new and worse contradictions. It is just because infinity is a contradiction that it is an infinite process, unrolling endlessly in time and in space. The removal of the contradiction would be the end of infinity. Hegel saw this quite correctly, and for that reason treated with well-merited contempt the gentlemen who subtilized over this contradiction.

Let us pass on. So, time had a beginning. What was there before this beginning? The universe, which was then in a self-equal, unchanging state. And as in this state no changes succeed one another, the more specialized idea of time transforms itself into the more general idea of being. In the first place, we are here not in the least concerned with what ideas change in Herr Dühring's head. The subject at issue is not the idea of time, but real time, which Herr Dühring cannot rid himself of so cheaply. In the second place, however much the idea of time may convert itself into the more general idea of being, this does not take us one step further. For the basic forms of all being are space and time, and being out of time is just as gross an absurdity as being out of space. The Hegelian "being past away non-temporally" and the neo-Schellingian "unpremeditated being" are rational ideas compared with this being out of time. And for this reason Herr Dühring sets to work very cautiously; actually it is of course time, but of such a kind as cannot really be called time, time, indeed, in itself does not consist of real parts, and is only divided up at will by our mind — only an actual filling of time with distinguishable facts is susceptible of being counted — what the accumulation of empty duration means is quite unimaginable. What this accumulation is supposed to mean is here beside the point; the question is, whether the world, in the state here assumed, has duration, passes through a duration in time. We have long known that we can get nothing by measuring such a duration without content just as we can get nothing by measuring without aim or purpose in empty space; and Hegel, just because of the weariness of such an effort, calls such an infinity bad. According to Herr Dühring time exists only through change; change in and through time does not exist. Just because time is different from change, is independent of it, it is possible to measure it by change, for measuring always requires something different from the thing to be measured. And time in which no recognizable changes occur is very far removed from not being time; it is rather pure time, unaffected by any foreign admixtures, that is, real time, time as such. In fact, if we want to grasp the idea of time in all its purity, divorced from all alien and extraneous admixtures, we are compelled to put aside, as not being relevant here, all the various events which occur simultaneously or one after another in time, and in this way to form the idea of a time in which nothing happens. In doing this, therefore, we have not let the concept of time be submerged in the general idea of being, but have thereby for the first time arrived at the pure concept of time.

But all these contradictions and impossibilities are only mere child's play compared with the confusion into which Herr Dühring falls with his self-equal initial state of the world. If the world had ever been in a state in which no change whatever was taking place, how could it pass from this state to alteration? The absolutely unchanging, especially when it has been in this state from eternity, cannot possibly get out of such a state by itself and pass over into a state of motion and change. An initial impulse

must therefore have come from outside, from outside the universe, an impulse which set it in motion. But as everyone knows, the “initial impulse” is only another expression for God. God and the beyond, which in his world schematism Herr Dühring pretended to have so beautifully dismantled, are both introduced again by him here, sharpened and deepened, into natural philosophy.

Further, Herr Dühring says:

“Where magnitude is attributed to a constant element of being, it will remain unchanged in its determinateness. This holds good ... of matter and mechanical force” {D. Ph. 26}.

The first sentence, it may be noted in passing, is a precious example of Herr Dühring's axiomatic-tautological grandiloquence: where magnitude does not change, it remains the same. Therefore, the amount of mechanical force which exists in the world remains the same for all eternity. We will overlook the fact that, in so far as this is correct, Descartes already knew and said it in philosophy nearly three hundred years ago; that in natural science the theory of the conservation of energy has held sway for the last twenty years; and that Herr Dühring, in limiting it to mechanical force, does not in any way improve on it. But where was the mechanical force at the time of the unchanging state? Herr Dühring obstinately refuses to give us any answer to this question.

Where, Herr Dühring, was the eternally self-equal mechanical force at that time, and what did it put in motion? The reply:

“The original state of the universe, or to put it more plainly, of an unchanging existence of matter which comprised no accumulation of changes in time, is a question which can be spurned only by a mind that sees the acme of wisdom in the self-mutilation of its own generative power.” {78-79}.

Therefore: either you accept without examination my unchanging original state, or I, Eugen Dühring, the possessor of creative power, will certify you as intellectual eunuchs. That may, of course, deter a good many people. But we, who have already seen some examples of Herr Dühring's generative power, can permit ourselves to leave this genteel abuse unanswered for the moment, and ask once again: But Herr Dühring, if you please, what about that mechanical force?

Herr Dühring at once grows embarrassed.

In actual fact, he stammers, “the absolute identity of that initial extreme state does not in itself provide any principle of transition. But we must remember that at bottom the position is similar with every new link, however small, in the chain of existence with which we are familiar. So that whoever wants to raise difficulties in the fundamental case now under consideration must take care that he does not allow himself to pass them by on less obvious occasions. Moreover, there exists the possibility of interposing successively graduated intermediate stages, and also a bridge of continuity by which it is possible to move backwards and reach the extinction of the process of change. It is true that from a purely conceptual standpoint this continuity does not help us pass the main difficulty, but to us it is the basic form of all regularity and of every known form of transition in general, so that we are entitled to use it also as a medium between that first equilibrium and the disturbance of it. But if we had conceived the so to speak” (!) “motionless equilibrium on the model of the ideas which are accepted without any particular objection” (!) “in our present-day mechanics, there would be no way of explaining how matter could have reached the process of change.” Apart

from the mechanics of masses there is, however, we are told, also a transformation of mass movement into the movement of extremely small particles, but as to how this takes place — “for this up to the present we have no general principle at our disposal and consequently we should not be surprised if these processes take place somewhat in the dark” {79-80, 81}.

That is all Herr Dühring has to say. And in fact, we would have to see the acme of wisdom not only in the “self-mutilation of our generative power” {79}, but also in blind, implicit faith, if we allowed ourselves to be put off with these really pitiable rank subterfuges and circumlocutions. Herr Dühring admits that absolute identity cannot of itself effect the transition to change. Nor is there any means whereby absolute equilibrium can of itself pass into motion. What is there, then? Three lame, false arguments.

Firstly: it is just as difficult to show the transition from each link, however small, in the chain of existence with which we are familiar, to the next one. — Herr Dühring seems to think his readers are infants. The establishment of individual transitions and connections between the tiniest links in the chain of existence is precisely the content of natural science, and when there is a hitch at some point in its work no one, not even Herr Dühring, thinks of explaining prior motion as having arisen out of nothing, but always only as a transfer, transformation or transmission of some previous motion. But here the issue is admittedly one of accepting motion as having arisen out of immobility, that is, out of nothing.

In the second place, we have the “bridge of continuity”. From a purely conceptual standpoint, this, to be sure, does not help us over the difficulty, but all the same we are entitled to use it as a medium between immobility and motion. Unfortunately, the continuity of immobility consists in not moving; how therefore it is to produce motion remains more mysterious than ever. And however infinitely small the parts into which Herr Dühring minces his transition from complete non-motion to universal motion, and however long the duration he assigns to it, we have not got a ten-thousandth part of a millimeter further. Without an act of creation, we can never get from nothing to something, even if the something were as small as a mathematical differential. The bridge of continuity is therefore not even an asses’ bridge³; it is passable only for Herr Dühring.

Thirdly: so long as present-day mechanics holds good — and this science, according to Herr Dühring, is one of the most essential levers for the formation of thought — it cannot be explained at all how it is possible to pass from immobility to motion. But the mechanical theory of heat shows us that the movement of masses under certain conditions changes into molecular movement (although here too one motion originates from another motion, but never from immobility); and this, Herr Dühring shyly suggests, may possibly furnish a bridge between the strictly static (in equilibrium) and dynamic (in motion). But these processes take place “somewhat in the dark”. And it is in the dark that Herr Dühring leaves us sitting.

This is the point we have reached with all his deepening and sharpening — that we have perpetually gone deeper into ever sharper nonsense, and finally land up where of necessity we had to land up — “in the dark”. But this does not abash Herr Dühring much. Right on the next page he has the effrontery to declare that he has

³ In the original a play on words: Eslesbrücke (asses' bridge) means in German also an unauthorized aid in study used by dull-headed or lazy students; a crib or pony.

“Been able to provide a real content for the idea of self-equal stability directly from the behavior of matter and the mechanical forces” {D. Ph. 82}.

And this man describes other people as “charlatans”!

Fortunately, in spite of all this helpless wandering and confusion “in the dark”, we are left with one consolation, and this is certainly edifying to the soul:

“The mathematics of the inhabitants of other celestial bodies can rest on no other axioms than our own!” {69}.

Chapter VI. Philosophy of Nature: Cosmogony, Physics, Chemistry

Passing on, we come now to the theories concerning the manner in which the present world came into existence.

A state of universal dispersion of matter, we are told, was the point of departure of the ionic philosophers, but later, particularly from the time of Kant, the assumption of a primordial nebula played a new role, gravitation and the radiation of heat having been instrumental in the gradual formation of separate solid celestial bodies. The contemporary mechanical theory of heat makes it possible to deduce the earlier states of the universe in a far more definite form. However, “the state of gaseous dispersion can be a starting-point for serious deductions only when it is possible to characterize beforehand more definitely the mechanical system existing in it. Otherwise not only does the idea in fact remain extremely nebulous, but also the original nebula, as the deductions progress, really becomes ever thicker and more impenetrable; ... meanwhile it all still remains in the vagueness and formlessness of an idea of diffusion that cannot be more closely determined”, and so “this gaseous universe” provides us with “only an extremely airy conception” {D. Ph. 85-87}.

The Kantian theory of the origin of all existing celestial bodies from rotating nebular masses was the greatest advance made by astronomy since Copernicus. For the first time the conception that nature had no history in time began to be shaken. Until then the celestial bodies were believed to have been always, from the very beginning, in the same states and always to have followed the same courses; and even though individual organisms on the various celestial bodies died out, nevertheless genera and species were held to be immutable. It is true that nature was obviously in constant motion, but this motion appeared as an incessant repetition of the same processes. Kant made the first breach in this conception, which corresponded exactly to the metaphysical mode of thought, and he did it in such a scientific way that most of the proofs furnished by him still hold good today. At the same time, the Kantian theory is still, strictly considered, only a hypothesis. But the Copernican world system, too, is still no more than this,⁴ and since the spectroscopic proof of the existence of such red-hot gaseous masses in the starry heavens, proof that brooks no contradiction, the scientific opposition to Kant’s theory has been silenced. Even Herr Dühring cannot complete his construction of the world without such a nebular stage, but takes his revenge for this by demanding to be shown the mechanical system existing in this nebular stage, and because no one can

⁴In 1886, in his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Engels wrote the following on the Copernican system: “For three hundred years the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand chances to one in its favor, but still always a hypothesis. But when Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when Galle really found this planet, the Copernican system was proved”. The planet mentioned in the quotation is Neptune, which was discovered in 1846 by Johann Galle of the Berlin Observatory.

show him this, he applies all kinds of depreciatory epithets to this nebular stage of the universe. Contemporary science unfortunately cannot describe this system to Herr Dühring's satisfaction. Just as little is it able to answer many other questions. To the question: Why do toads have no tails? — up to now it has only been able to answer: Because they have lost them. But should anyone get excited over that and say that this is to leave the whole question in the vagueness and formlessness of an idea of loss which cannot be determined more closely, and that it is an extremely airy conception, such an application of morality to natural science does not take us one step further. Such expressions of dislike and bad temper can be used always and everywhere, and just for that reason they should never be used anywhere. After all, who is stopping Herr Dühring from himself discovering the mechanical system of the primordial nebula?

Fortunately, we now learn that

the Kantian nebular mass "is far from coinciding with a completely identical state of the world medium, or, to put it another way, with the self-equal state of matter" {D. Ph. 87}.

It was really fortunate for Kant that he was able to content himself with going back from the existing celestial bodies to the nebular ball, and did not even dream of the self-equal state of matter! It may be remarked in passing that when contemporary natural science describes the Kantian nebular ball as primordial nebula, this, it goes without saying, is only to be understood in a relative sense. It is primordial nebula, on the one hand, in that it is the origin of the existing celestial bodies, and on the other hand because it is the earliest form of matter which we have up to now been able to work back to. This certainly does not exclude but rather implies the supposition that before the nebular stage matter passed through an infinite series of other forms.

Herr Dühring sees his advantage here. Where we, with science, stand still for the time being at what for the time being is deemed primordial nebula, his science of sciences helps him much further back to that

"State of the world medium which cannot be understood either as purely static in the present meaning of the idea, or as dynamic" {87} —

which therefore cannot be understood at all.

"The unity of matter and mechanical force which we call the world medium is what might be termed a logical-real formula for indicating the self-equal state of matter as the prerequisite of all innumerable stages of evolution" {87-88}.

We are clearly not by a long shot rid of the self-equal primordial state of matter. Here it is spoken of as the unity of matter and mechanical force, and this as a logical-real formula, etc. Hence, as soon as the unity of matter and mechanical force comes to an end, motion begins.

The logical-real formula is nothing but a lame attempt to make the Hegelian categories "in itself" [An sich] and "for itself" [Für sich] usable in the philosophy of reality. With Hegel, "in itself" covers the original identity of the hidden, undeveloped contradictions within a thing, a process or an idea, and "for itself" contains the distinction and separation of these hidden elements and the starting-point of their conflict. We are therefore to think of the motionless primordial state as the unity of matter and mechanical force, and of the transition to movement as their separation and opposition. What we have gained by this is not any proof of the reality of that fantastic primordial state, but only the fact that it is possible to bring

this state under the Hegelian category of “in itself”, and its equally fantastic termination under the category of “for itself”. Hegel help us!

Matter, Herr Dühring says, is the bearer of all reality; accordingly, there can be no mechanical force apart from matter. Mechanical force is furthermore a state of matter {See D. Ph. 73}. In the original state, when nothing happened, matter and its state, mechanical force, were one. Afterwards, when something began to happen, this state must apparently have become different from matter. So, we are to let ourselves be dismissed with these mystical phrases and with the assurance that the self-equal state was neither static nor dynamic, neither in equilibrium nor in motion. We still do not know where mechanical force was in that state, and how we are to get from absolute immobility to motion without an impulse from outside, that is, without God.

The materialists before Herr Dühring spoke of matter and motion. He reduces motion to mechanical force as its supposed basic form, and thereby makes it impossible for himself to understand the real connection between matter and motion, which moreover was also unclear to all former materialists. And yet it is simple enough. *Motion is the mode of existence of matter.* Never anywhere has there been matter without motion, nor can there be. Motion in cosmic space, mechanical motion of smaller masses on the various celestial bodies, the vibration of molecules as heat or as electrical or magnetic currents, chemical disintegration and combination, organic life — at each given moment each individual atom of matter in the world is in one or other of these forms of motion, or in several forms at once. All rest, all equilibrium, is only relative, only has meaning in relation to one or other definite form of motion. On the earth, for example, a body may be in mechanical equilibrium, may be mechanically at rest; but this in no way prevents it from participating in the motion of the earth and in that of the whole solar system, just as little as it prevents its most minute physical particles from carrying out the vibrations determined by its temperature, or its atoms from passing through a chemical process. Matter without motion is just as inconceivable as motion without matter. Motion is therefore as uncreatable and indestructible as matter itself; as the older philosophy (Descartes) expressed it, the quantity of motion existing in the world is always the same. Motion therefore cannot be created; it can only be transferred. When motion is transferred from one body to another, it may be regarded, in so far as it transfers itself, is active, as the cause of motion, in so far as the latter is transferred, is passive. We call this active motion *force*, and the passive, the *manifestation of force*. Hence it is as clear as daylight that a force is as great as its manifestation, because in fact the *same* motion takes place in both.

A motionless state of matter is therefore one of the most empty and nonsensical of ideas — a “delirious fantasy” of the purest water. In order to arrive at such an idea, it is necessary to conceive the relative mechanical equilibrium, a state in which a body on the earth may be, as absolute rest, and then to extend this equilibrium over the whole universe. This is certainly made easier if universal motion is reduced to purely mechanical force. And the restriction of motion to purely mechanical force has the further advantage that a force can be conceived as at rest, as tied up, and therefore for the moment inoperative. For if, as is very often the case, the transfer of a motion is a somewhat complex process containing a number of intermediate links, it is possible to postpone the actual transmission to any moment desired by omitting the last link in the chain. This is the case, for instance, if a man loads a gun and postpones the moment when, by the pulling of the trigger, the discharge, the transfer of the motion set free by the combustion of the powder, takes place. It is therefore possible to imagine that during its motionless, self-equal state, matter was loaded with force, and this, if anything at all, seems to be what

Herr Dühring understands by the unity of matter and mechanical force. This conception is nonsensical, because it transfers to the entire universe a state as absolute, which by its nature is relative and therefore can only affect *a part* of matter at any one time. Even if we overlook this point, the difficulty still remains: first, how did the world come to be loaded, since nowadays guns do not load themselves; and second, whose finger was it then that pulled the trigger? We may turn and twist as much as we like, but under Herr Dühring's guidance we always come back again to — the finger of God.

From astronomy our philosopher of reality passes on to mechanics and physics, and voices the lament that the mechanical theory of heat has not, in the generation since its discovery, been materially advanced beyond the point to which Robert Mayer had himself developed it, bit by bit. Apart from this, the whole business is still very obscure;

we must “always remember that in the states of motion of matter, static relations are also present, and that these latter are not measurable by the mechanical work ... if previously we described nature as a great worker, and if we now construe this expression strictly, we must furthermore add that the self-equal states and static relations do not represent mechanical work. So once again we miss the bridge from the static to the dynamic, and if so-called latent heat has up to now remained a stumbling-block for the theory, we must recognize a defect in this too, which can least be denied in its cosmic applications” {D. Ph. 90}.

This whole oracular discourse is once again nothing but the outpouring of a bad conscience, which is very well aware that with its creation of motion out of absolute immobility it got irretrievably stuck in the mud, but is nevertheless ashamed to appeal to the only possible savior, namely, the creator of heaven and earth. If the bridge from the static to the dynamic, from equilibrium to motion, cannot be found even in mechanics, including the mechanics of heat, under what obligations is Herr Dühring to find the bridge from his motionless state to motion? That would be a fortunate way for him to get out of his plight.

In ordinary mechanics the bridge from the static to the dynamic is — the external impulse. If a stone weighing a hundredweight is raised from the ground ten yards into the air and is freely suspended in such a way that it remains hanging there in a self-equal state and in a condition of rest, it would be necessary to have an audience of sucklings to be able to maintain that the present position of this body does not represent any mechanical work, or that its distance from its previous position is not measurable by mechanical work. Any passer-by will easily explain to Herr Dühring that the stone did not rise of itself to the rope and any manual of mechanics will tell him that if he lets the stone fall again it performs in falling just as much mechanical work as was necessary to raise it the ten yards in the air. Even the simple fact that the stone is hanging up there represents mechanical work, for if it remains hanging long enough the rope breaks, as soon as chemical decomposition makes it no longer strong enough to bear the weight of the stone. But it is to such simple basic forms, to use Herr Dühring's language, that all mechanical processes can be reduced, and the engineer is still to be born who cannot find the bridge from the static to the dynamic, so long as he has at his disposal a sufficient external impulse.

To be sure, it is a hard nut and a bitter pill for our metaphysician that motion should find its measure in its opposite, in rest. That is indeed a crying contradiction, and every *contradiction*, according to Herr Dühring, is *nonsense* {D. Ph. 30}. It is none the less a fact that a suspended stone represents a definite quantity of mechanical motion, which is measurable exactly by the stone's weight and its distance from the ground, and may be used in various ways at will, for example, by its direct fall, by sliding down an

inclined plane, or by turning a shaft. The same is true of a loaded gun. From the dialectical standpoint, the possibility of expressing motion in its opposite, in rest, presents absolutely no difficulty. From the dialectical standpoint the whole antithesis, as we have seen, is only relative; there is no such thing as absolute rest, unconditional equilibrium. Each separate movement strives towards equilibrium, and the motion as a whole puts an end again to the equilibrium. When therefore rest and equilibrium occur, they are the result of limited motion, and it is self-evident that this motion is measurable by its result, can be expressed in it, and can be restored out of it again in one form or another. But Herr Dühring cannot allow himself to be satisfied with such a simple presentation of the matter. As a good metaphysician he first tears open, between motion and equilibrium, a yawning gulf which does not exist in reality and is then surprised that he cannot find any bridge across this self-fabricated gulf. He might just as well mount his metaphysical Rosinante [Don Quixote's horse] and chase the Kantian "thing-in-itself"; for it is that and nothing else which in the last analysis is hiding behind this undiscoverable bridge.

But what about the mechanical theory of heat and the tied-up or latent heat which "has remained a stumbling-block" for this theory?

If, under normal atmospheric pressure, a pound of ice at the temperature of the freezing point is transformed by heat into a pound of water of the same temperature, a quantity of heat disappears which would be sufficient to warm the same pound of water from 0° to 79.4° C, or to raise the temperature of 79.4 pounds of water by one degree. If this pound of water is heated to boiling point, that is, to 100° C, and is then transformed into steam of 100° C, the amount of heat that disappears, by the time the last of the water has changed into steam, is almost seven times greater, sufficient to raise the temperature of 537.2 pounds of water by one degree. The heat that disappears is called *tied-up*. If, by cooling, the steam is again transformed into water, and the water, in its turn, into ice, the same quantity of heat as was previously tied up is now again set *free*, i.e., can be felt and measured as heat. This setting free of heat on the condensation of steam and the freezing of water is the reason why steam, when cooled to 100° , is only gradually transformed into water, and why a mass of water of freezing point temperature is only very gradually transformed into ice. These are the facts. The question is, what happens to the heat while it is tied up?

The mechanical theory of heat, according to which heat consists in a greater or lesser vibration, depending on the temperature and state of aggregation, of the smallest physically active particles (molecules) of a body — a vibration which under certain conditions can change into any other form of motion — explains that the heat that has disappeared has done work, has been transformed into work. When ice melts, the close and firm connection between the individual molecules is broken, and transformed into a loose juxtaposition; when water at boiling point becomes steam a state is reached in which the individual molecules no longer have any noticeable influence on one another, and under the influence of heat even fly apart in all directions. It is clear that the single molecules of a body are endowed with far greater energy in the gaseous state than they are in the fluid state, and in the fluid state again more than in the solid state. The tied-up heat, therefore, has not disappeared; it has merely been transformed, and has assumed the form of molecular tension. As soon as the condition under which the separate molecules are able to maintain their absolute or relative freedom in regard to one another ceases to exist — that is, as soon as the temperature falls below the minimum of 100° or 0° , as the case may be, this tension relaxes, the molecules again press towards each other with the same force with which they had previously flown apart; and this force disappears, but only to reappear as heat, and as precisely the same quantity of heat as had previously been tied up. This explanation is of course a hypothesis, as is the whole

mechanical theory of heat, inasmuch as no one has up to now ever seen a molecule, not to mention one in vibration. Just for this reason it is certain to be full of defects as this still very young theory is as a whole, but it can at least explain what happens without in any way coming into conflict with the indestructibility and uncreatability of motion, and it is even able to account for the whereabouts of heat during its transformations. Latent, or tied-up, heat is therefore in no way a stumbling-block for the mechanical theory of heat. On the contrary, this theory provides the first rational explanation of what takes place, and it involves no stumbling-block except in so far as physicists continue to describe heat which has been transformed into another form of molecular energy by means of the term “tied-up”, which has become obsolete and unsuitable.

The self-equal states and conditions of rest in the solid, in the liquid and in the gaseous state of aggregation therefore represent, to be sure, mechanical work, in so far as mechanical work is the measure of heat. Both the solid crust of the earth and the water of the ocean, in their present aggregate states, represent a definite quantity of heat set free, to which of course corresponds an equally definite quantity of mechanical force. In the transition of the gaseous ball, from which the earth has developed, into the liquid and subsequently into the largely solid aggregate state, a definite quantity of molecular energy was radiated as heat into space. The difficulty about which Herr Dühring mumbles in his mysterious manner therefore does not exist, and though even in applying the theory cosmically we may come up against defects and gaps — which must be attributed to our imperfect means of knowledge — we nowhere come up against theoretically insuperable obstacles. The bridge from the static to the dynamic is here, too, the external impulse — the cooling or heating brought about by other bodies acting on an object which is in a state of equilibrium. The further we explore this natural philosophy of Dühring's, the more impossible appear all attempts to explain motion out of immobility or to find the bridge over which the purely static, the resting, can by *itself* pass to the dynamic, to motion.

With this we have fortunately rid ourselves for a time of the self-equal primordial state. Herr Dühring passes on to chemistry, and takes the opportunity to reveal to us three laws of nature's inertness which have so far been discovered by his philosophy of reality, viz.:

(1) the quantity of all matter in general, (2) that of the simple (chemical) elements, and (3) that of mechanical force are constant {D. Ph. 97}

Hence: the uncreatability and indestructibility of matter, and also of its simple component parts, in so far as it is made up of such, as well as the uncreatability and indestructibility of motion — these old facts known the world over and expressed most inadequately — is the only positive thing which Herr Dühring can provide us with as a result of his natural philosophy of the inorganic world. We knew all this long ago. But what we did not know was that they were “laws of inertness” and as such “schematic properties of the system of things”. We are witnessing a repetition of what happened above to Kant: Herr Dühring picks up some old familiar quip, sticks a Dühring label on it, and calls the result:

“From the ground up original conclusions and views ... system-creating ideas {525} deep-rooted science” {200, 219; D. C. 555-56}.

But the need not by any means despair on this account. Whatever defects even the most deep-rooted science and the best-ordered society may have, Herr Dühring can at any rate assert one thing with confidence:

“The amount of gold existing in the universe must at all times have been the same, and it can have increased or diminished just as little as can matter in general” {D. Ph. 96}.

Unfortunately, Herr Dühring does not tell us what we can buy with this “existing gold”.

Chapter XI. Morality and Law: Freedom and Necessity

“In the sphere of politics and law the principles expounded in this course are based on the *most exhaustive specialized studies*. It is therefore ... necessary to proceed from the fact that what we have here ... is a consistent exposition of the *conclusions* reached in the sphere of legal and political science. Jurisprudence was my original special subject and I not only devoted to it the customary three years of theoretical university preparation, but also, during a further three years of court practice continued to study it particularly with a view to the *deepening* of its scientific content... And *certainly*, the critique of private law relationships and the corresponding legal inadequacies could not have been put forward with *such confidence* but the consciousness that all the weaknesses of the subject *were known* to it as well as its stronger sides” {D. Ph. 537}.

A man who is justified in saying this of himself must from the outset inspire confidence, especially in contrast with the

“one-time, admittedly neglected, legal studies of Herr Marx” {D. K. G. 503}.

And for that reason, it must surprise us to find that the critique of private law relationships which steps on to the stage with such confidence is restricted to telling us that

“The scientific character of jurisprudence has not developed far” {D. Ph. 222-23}, that positive civil law is injustice in that it sanctions property based on force {219} and that the “natural basis” of criminal law is *revenge* {224}, —

an assertion of which in any case the only thing new is its mystical wrapping of “natural basis”. The conclusions in political science are limited to the transactions of the famous three men, one of whom has hitherto held down the others by force, with Herr Dühring in all seriousness conducting an investigation into whether it was the second or the third who first introduced violence and subjection {265-66}.

However, let us go a little more deeply into our confident jurist’s most exhaustive specialized studies and his erudition deepened by three years of court practice.

Herr Dühring tells us of Lassalle that

he was prosecuted for “*inciting* to an attempt to steal a cash-box” but that “no sentence by the court could be recorded, as the so-called *acquittal for lack of evidence*, which was *then still possible*, supervened ... this *half acquittal*” {D. K. G. 510}.

The Lassalle case referred to here came up in the summer of 1848, before the assizes at Cologne,⁵ where, as in almost the whole of the Rhine Province, French criminal law was in force. Prussian law had been introduced by way of exception only for political offences and crimes, but already in April 1848 this

⁵ Lassalle was arrested in February 1848 on a charge of inciting to steal a cash-box with documents to be used in the divorce case of Countess Sophie Hatzfeldt, whose lawyer he was from 1846 to 1854. Lassalle's trial took place from August 5 to 11, 1848; he was acquitted by a jury.

exceptional application had been abrogated by Camphausen.⁶ French law has no knowledge whatever of the loose Prussian legal category of “inciting” to a crime, let alone inciting to an attempt to commit a crime. It knows only *instigation* to crime, and this, to be punishable, must have been committed “by means of gifts, promises, threats, abuse of authority or of power, culpable incitements or artifices” (*Code penal*, art. 60).⁷ The Ministry of State, steeped in Prussian law, overlooked, just as Herr Dühring did, the essential difference between the sharply defined French code and the vague indefiniteness of Prussian law and, subjecting Lassalle to a tendentiously conducted trial, egregiously failed in the case. Only a person who is completely ignorant of modern French law can venture to assert that French criminal procedure permitted the Prussian legal form of an acquittal for lack of evidence, this *half* acquittal; criminal procedure under French law provides only for conviction or acquittal, nothing between.

And so, we are forced to say that Herr Dühring would certainly not have been able to perpetrate this “historical depiction in the grand style” {556} against Lassalle if he had ever had the *Code Napoléon*⁸ in his hands. We must therefore state as a fact that modern French law, the *only* modern civil code, which rests on the social achievements of the great French Revolution and translates them into legal form, is *completely unknown* to Herr Dühring.

In another place, in the criticism of trial by jury with majority decision which was adopted throughout the Continent in accordance with the French model, we are taught:

“Yes, it will *even* be possible to familiarize oneself with the idea, which for that matter is not without precedent in history, that a conviction *where opinion is divided* should be one of the impossible institutions in a perfect community {D. Ph. 402} ... This *important* and *profoundly intelligent* mode of thought, however, as already indicated above, must seem unsuitable for the traditional forms, because it is *too good* for them” {D. Ph. 403}.

Once again, Herr Dühring is ignorant of the fact that under English common law, i.e., the unwritten law of custom which has been in force since time immemorial, certainly at least since the fourteenth century, unanimity of the jury is absolutely essential, not only for convictions in criminal cases but also for judgments in civil suits. Thus, the important and profoundly intelligent mode of thought, which according to Herr Dühring is *too good* for the present-day world, had had legal validity in England as far back as the darkest Middle Ages, and from England it was brought to Ireland, the United States of America and all the English colonies. And yet the most exhaustive specialized studies failed to reveal to Herr Dühring even the faintest whisper of all this! The area in which a unanimous verdict by the jury is required is therefore not only infinitely greater than the tiny area where Prussian law is in force, but is also more extensive than all the areas taken together in which juries decide by majority vote. Not only is French law, the only modern law, totally unknown to Herr Dühring; he is equally ignorant of the only Germanic law which has developed independently of Roman authority up to the present day and spread to all parts of the world —

⁶ Gottfried Ludolf Camphausen was a Rhenish banker and politician who served as a Prime Minister of Prussia.

⁷ Code pénal — the French Penal Code, adopted in 1810, which came into force in France and French-conquered regions of Western and South-western Germany in 1811; along with the Civil Code, it remained in force in the Rhine Province after it had been annexed by Prussia in 1815.

⁸ Code Napoléon — the French Civil Code was adopted in 1804. Engels called it “a classical legal code of bourgeois society” in his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (see MECW, Vol. 26). Here Engels is speaking of it in the broad sense, having in mind the five codes adopted under Napoleon from 1804 to 1810: civil, civil-procedure, trade, criminal and criminal-procedure.

English law. And why does Herr Dühring know nothing of it? Because the English brand of the juridical mode of thought

“Would anyhow not be able to stand up against the schooling in the pure concepts of the classical Roman jurists given on German soil” {D. K. G. 456},

says Herr Dühring; and he says further:

“What is the English-speaking world with its childish hodgepodge language as compared with our natural language structure?” {D. Ph. 315.}

To which we might answer with Spinoza: *Ignorantia non est argumentum*. Ignorance is no argument.⁹

We can accordingly come to no other final conclusion than that Herr Dühring's most exhaustive specialized studies consisted in his absorption for three years in the theoretical study of the *Corpus juris*,¹⁰ and for a further three years in the practical study of the noble Prussian law. That is certainly quite meritorious, and would be ample for a really respectable district judge or lawyer in old Prussia. But when a person undertakes to compose a legal philosophy for all worlds and all ages, he should at least have some degree of acquaintance with legal systems like those of the French, English and Americans, nations which have played quite a different role in history from that played by the little corner of Germany in which Prussian law flourishes. But let us follow him further.

“The variegated medley of local, provincial and national laws, which run counter to one another in the most various directions, in very arbitrary fashion, sometimes as common law, sometimes as written law, often cloaking the most important issues in a purely statutory form — this pattern-book of disorder and contradiction, in which particular points override general principles, and then at times general principles override particular points — is really not calculated to enable anyone to form a clear conception of jurisprudence” {278}.

But where does this confusion exist? Once again, within the area where Prussian law holds sway, where alongside, over or under this law there are provincial laws and local statutes, here and there also common law and other trash, ranging through the most diverse degrees of relative validity and eliciting from all practicing jurists that scream for help which Herr Dühring here so sympathetically echoes. He need not even go outside his beloved Prussia — he need only come as far as the Rhine to convince himself that all this ceased to be an issue there for the last seventy years — not to speak of other civilized countries, where these antiquated conditions have long since been abolished.

Further:

⁹ In *Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata et in quinque parses distincta* (first published in Amsterdam in 1677), Part 1, Addendum, Spinoza said that ignorance is no argument, in opposition to the clerical-teleological view that everything is determined by "divine Providence" as the final cause and that the only means of argumentation is the plea of ignorance of other causes.

¹⁰ *Corpus juris civilis* — code of civil laws regulating property relations in Roman slave-owning society; it was drawn up from 528 to 534 under the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. In Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, Engels described it as the "first world law of a commodity-producing society" (see MECW, Vol. 26).

“In a less blunt form the natural responsibility of individuals is screened by means of secret and therefore anonymous collective decisions and actions on the part of *collegia* or other institutions of public authority, which mask the personal share of each separate member” {218}.

And in another passage:

“In our present situation it will be regarded as an *astonishing* and extremely stern demand if one opposes the glossing over and covering up of individual responsibility through the medium of collective bodies” {402}.

Perhaps Herr Dühring will regard it as an astonishing piece of information when we tell him that in the sphere of English law each member of a judicial bench has to give his decision separately and in open court, stating the grounds on which it is based; that administrative collective bodies which are not elected and do not transact business or vote publicly are essentially a *Prussian* institution and are unknown in most other countries, and that therefore his demand can be regarded as astonishing and extremely stern only — in *Prussia*.

Similarly, his complaints about the compulsory introduction of religious practices in birth, marriage, death and burial {407} apply to Prussia alone of all the greater civilized countries, and since the adoption of civil registration they no longer apply even there.¹¹ What Herr Dühring can accomplish only by means of a future “socialitarian” state of things, even Bismarck has meanwhile managed by means of a simple law. — It is just the same with his “plaint over the inadequate preparation of jurists for their profession” {501}, a plaint which could be extended to cover the “administrative officials” {503} — it is a specifically Prussian jeremiad; and even his hatred of the Jews, which he carries to ridiculous extremes and exhibits on every possible occasion, is a feature which if not specifically Prussian is yet specific to the region east of the Elbe. That same philosopher of reality who has a sovereign contempt for all prejudices and superstitions is himself so deeply immersed in personal crotchets that he calls the popular prejudice against the Jews, inherited from the bigotry of the Middle Ages, a “natural judgment” based on “natural grounds”, and he rises to the pyramidal heights of the assertion that

“Socialism is the only power which can oppose population conditions with a rather strong Jewish admixture” {D. Ph. 393}. (Conditions with a Jewish admixture! What “natural” German!)

Enough of this. The grandiloquent boasts of legal erudition have as their basis — at best — only the most commonplace professional knowledge of quite an ordinary jurist of old Prussia. The sphere of legal and political science, the attainments in which Herr Dühring consistently expounds, “coincides” with the area where Prussian law holds sway. Apart from the Roman law, with which every jurist is fairly familiar, now even in England, his knowledge of law is confined wholly and entirely to Prussian law — that legal code of an enlightened patriarchal despotism which is written in a German such as Herr Dühring appears to have been trained in, and which, with its moral glosses, its juristic vagueness and inconsistency, its caning as a means of torture and punishment, belongs entirely to the pre-revolutionary epoch. Whatever exists beyond this Herr Dühring regards as evil [Matthew 5:37 — *Ed.*] — both modern civil French law, and English law with its quite peculiar development and its safeguarding of personal liberty, unknown

¹¹ The law on the compulsory civil registration of births, marriages and deaths was passed in Prussia on October 1, 1874 and a similar one for the whole German Empire on February 6, 1875. The law deprived the Church of the right to such registration, thereby considerably curtailing its influence and income. It was directed primarily against the Catholic Church.

anywhere on the Continent. The philosophy which “does not allow the validity of any merely *apparent* horizon, but in its powerfully revolutionizing movement unfolds all earths and heavens of outer and inner nature” {430} — has as its *real* horizon — the boundaries of the six eastern provinces of old Prussia,¹² and in addition perhaps the few other patches of land where the noble Prussian law holds sway; and beyond this horizon it unfolds neither earths nor heavens, neither outer nor inner nature, but only a picture of the crassest ignorance of what is happening in the rest of the world.

It is hard to deal with morality and law without coming up against the question of so-called free will, of man's mental responsibility, of the relation between necessity and freedom. And the philosophy of reality also has not only one but even two solutions of this problem.

“All false theories of freedom must be replaced by, what we know from experience is the nature of the relation between rational judgment on the one hand and instinctive impulses on the other, a relation which *so to speak* unites them into a resultant force. The fundamental facts of this form of dynamics must be drawn from observation, and for the calculation in advance of events which have not yet occurred must also be estimated, *as closely as possible*, in general both as to their nature and magnitude. In this manner the silly delusions of inner freedom, which people have chewed on and fed on for thousands of years, are not only cleared away in thoroughgoing fashion, but are replaced by something positive, which can be made use of for the practical regulation of life” {187}.

Viewed thus freedom consists in rational judgment pulling a man to the right while irrational impulses pull him to the left, and in this parallelogram of forces the actual movement proceeds in the direction of the diagonal. Freedom is therefore the mean between judgment and impulse, reason and unreason, and its degree in each individual case can be determined on the basis of experience by a “personal equation”, to use an astronomical expression.¹³ But a few pages later on we find:

“We base moral responsibility on freedom, which however means nothing more to us than susceptibility to conscious motives in accordance with our natural and acquired intelligence. All such motives operate with the inevitability of natural law, notwithstanding an awareness of possible contrary actions; but it is precisely on this unavoidable compulsion that we rely when we apply the moral levers” {218}.

This second definition of freedom, which quite unceremoniously gives a knock-out blow to the first one, is again nothing but an extreme vulgarization of the Hegelian conception. Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him, freedom is the insight into necessity (*die Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit*).

"Necessity is *blind* only in so far as it is not understood [begriffen]."

Freedom does not consist in any dreamt-of independence from natural laws, but in the knowledge of these laws, and in the possibility, this gives of systematically making them work towards definite ends. This holds good in relation both to the laws of external nature and to those which govern the bodily and mental existence of men themselves — two classes of laws which we can separate from each other at most only in thought but not in reality. Freedom of the will therefore means nothing but the capacity to make

¹² 59 The reference is to the provinces of Brandenburg, East Prussia, West Prussia, Posen, Pomerania and Silesia, which were part of the Kingdom of Prussia until the Vienna Congress of 1815.

¹³ Personal equation — a correction made for variation in astronomical observation due to a person's individual peculiarities.

decisions with knowledge of the subject. Therefore, the *freer* a man's judgment is in relation to a definite question, the greater is the *necessity* with which the content of this judgment will be determined; while the uncertainty, founded on ignorance, which seems to make an arbitrary choice among many different and conflicting possible decisions, shows precisely by this that it is not free, that it is controlled by the very object it should itself control. Freedom therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature, a control founded on knowledge of natural necessity; it is therefore necessarily a product of historical development. The first men who separated themselves from the animal kingdom were in all essentials as unfree as the animals themselves, but each step forward in the field of culture was a step towards freedom. On the threshold of human history stands the discovery that mechanical motion can be transformed into heat: the production of fire by friction; at the close of the development so far gone through stands the discovery that heat can be transformed into mechanical motion: the steam-engine. — And, in spite of the gigantic liberating revolution in the social world which the steam-engine is carrying through, and which is not yet half completed, it is beyond all doubt that the generation of fire by friction has had an even greater effect on the liberation of mankind. For the generation of fire by friction gave man for the first time control over one of the forces of nature, and thereby separated him forever from the animal kingdom. The steam-engine will never bring about such a mighty leap forward in human development, however important it may seem in our eyes as representing all those immense productive forces dependent on it — forces which alone make possible a state of society in which there are no longer class distinctions or anxiety over the means of subsistence for the individual, and in which for the first time there can be talk of real human freedom, of an existence in harmony with the laws of nature that have become known. But how young the whole of human history still is, and how ridiculous it would be to attempt to ascribe any absolute validity to our present views, is evident from the simple fact that all past history can be characterized as the history of the epoch from the practical discovery of the transformation of mechanical motion into heat up to that of the transformation of heat into mechanical motion.

True, Herr Dühring's treatment of history is different. In general, being a record of error, ignorance and barbarity, of violence and subjugation, history is a repulsive object to the philosophy of reality; but considered in detail it is divided into two great periods, namely (1) from the self-equal state of matter up to the French Revolution, (2) from the French Revolution up to Herr Dühring; the nineteenth century remains

“Still in essence reactionary, indeed from the intellectual standpoint even more so” (!) “than the eighteenth”. Nevertheless, it bears socialism in its womb, and therewith “the germ of a mightier regeneration than was fancied” (!) “by the forerunners and the heroes of the French Revolution” {D. Ph. 301}.

The philosophy of reality's contempt for all past history is justified as follows:

“The few thousand years, the historical retrospection of which has been facilitated by original documents, are, together with the constitution of mankind so far, *of little significance* when one thinks of the succession of thousands of years which are still to come... The human race as a whole is still very young, and when in time to come scientific retrospection has tens of thousands instead of thousands of years to reckon with, the intellectually immature childhood of our institutions becomes a self-evident premise undisputed in relation to our epoch, which will then be revered as hoary antiquity” {302}.

Without dwelling on the really “natural language structure” of the last sentence, we shall note only two points. Firstly, that this “hoary antiquity” will in any case remain a historical epoch of the greatest interest for all future generations, because it forms the basis of all subsequent higher development, because it has for its starting-point the molding of man from the animal kingdom, and for its content the overcoming of obstacles such as will never again confront mankind of the future. And secondly, that the close of this hoary antiquity — in contrast to which the future periods of history, which will no longer be kept back by these difficulties and obstacles, hold the promise of quite other scientific, technical and social achievements — is in any case a very strange moment to choose to lay down the law for these thousands of years that are to come, in the form of final and ultimate truths, immutable truths and deep-rooted conceptions discovered on the basis of the intellectually immature childhood of our so extremely “backward” and “retrogressive” century. Only a Richard Wagner in philosophy — but without Wagner’s talents — could fail to see that all the depreciatory epithets slung at previous historical development remain sticking also on what is claimed to be its final outcome — the so-called philosophy of reality.

One of the most significant morsels of the new deep-rooted science {219} is the section on individualization and increasing the value of life. In this section oracular commonplaces bubble up and gush forth in an irresistible torrent for three full chapters. Unfortunately, we must limit ourselves to a few short samples.

“The deeper essence of all sensation and therefore of all subjective forms of life rests on the *difference* between states... But for a *full*” (!) “life it can be shown without much trouble” (!) “that its appreciation is heightened and the decisive stimuli are developed, not by persistence in a particular state, but by a transition from one situation in life to another... The approximately self-equal state which is *so to speak* in permanent inertia and *as it were* continues in the same position of equilibrium, whatever its nature may be, has but little significance for the testing of existence... Habituation and *so to speak* inurement makes it something of absolute indifference and unconcern, something which is not very distinct from deadness. At most the torment of boredom also enters into it as a kind of negative life impulse... A life of stagnation extinguishes all passion and all interest in existence, both for individuals and for peoples. *But it is our law of difference through which all these phenomena become explicable*” {D. Ph. 362-63}.

The rapidity with which Herr Dühring establishes his from the ground up original conclusions passes all belief. The commonplace that the continued stimulation of the same nerve or the continuation of the same stimulus fatigues each nerve or each nervous system, and that therefore in a normal condition nerve stimuli must be interrupted and varied — which for years has been stated in every textbook of physiology and is known to every philistine from his own experience — is first translated into the language of the philosophy of reality. No sooner has this platitude which is as old as the hills, been translated into the mysterious formula that the deeper essence of all sensation rests on the difference between states, than it is further transformed into “*our law of difference*”. And this law of difference makes “absolutely explicable” a whole series of phenomena which in turn are nothing more than illustrations and examples of the pleasantness of variety and which require no explanation whatever even for the most common philistine understanding and gain not the breadth of an atom in clarity by reference to this alleged law of difference.

But this far from exhausts the deep-rootedness of “*our law of difference*” {219}.

“The sequence of ages in life, and the emergence of different conditions of life bound up with it, furnish a very obvious example with which to illustrate *our* principle of difference... Child, boy, youth and man experience the intensity of their appreciation of life at each stage not so much when the state in which they find themselves has already become fixed, as in the periods of transition from one to another” {363}.

Even this is not enough.

“*Our* law of difference can be given an even more extended application if we take into consideration the fact that a repetition of what has already been tried or done has no attraction” {365}.

And now the reader can himself imagine the oracular twaddle for which sentences of the depth and deep-rootedness of those cited form the starting-point. Herr Dühring may well shout triumphantly at the end of his book:

“The law of difference has become decisive both in theory and in practice for the appraisal and heightening of the value of life!” {558}

This is likewise true of Herr Dühring’s appraisal of the intellectual value of his public: he must believe that it is composed of sheer asses or philistines.

We are further given the following extremely practical rules of life:

“The method whereby total interest in life can be kept active” (a fitting task for philistines and those who want to become such!) “Consists in allowing the particular and *so to speak* elementary interests, of which the total interest is composed, to develop or succeed each other in accordance with natural periods of time. Simultaneously, for the same state the succession of stages may be made use of by replacing the lower and more easily satisfied stimuli by higher and more permanently effective excitations in order to avoid the occurrence of any gaps that are entirely devoid of interest. However, it will be necessary to ensure that the natural tensions or those arising in the normal course of social existence are not arbitrarily accumulated or forced or — the opposite perversion — satisfied by the lightest stimulation, and thus prevented from developing a want which is capable of gratification. In this as in other cases the maintenance of the natural rhythm is the precondition of all harmonious and agreeable movement. Nor should anyone set before himself the insoluble problem of trying to prolong the stimuli of any situation beyond the period allotted them by nature or by the circumstances” {375} — and so on.

The simpleton who takes as his rule for the “testing of life” these solemn oracles of philistine pedantry subtilizing over the shallowest platitudes will certainly not have to complain of “gaps entirely devoid of interest”. It will take him all his time to prepare his pleasures and get them in the right order, so that he will not have a moment left to enjoy them.

We should try out life, full life. There are only two things which Herr Dühring prohibits us:

first “the uncleanness of indulging in tobacco”, and secondly drinks and foods which “have properties that rouse disgust or are in general obnoxious to the more refined feelings” {261}.

In his course of political economy, however, Herr Dühring writes such a dithyramb on the distilling of spirits that it is impossible that he should include spirituous liquor in this category; we are therefore

forced to conclude that his prohibition covers only wine and beer. He has only to prohibit meat, too, and then he will have raised the philosophy of reality to the same height as that on which the late Gustav Struve moved with such great success — the height of pure childishness.

For the rest, Herr Dühring might be slightly more liberal in regard to spirituous liquors. A man who, by his own admission still cannot find the bridge from the static to the dynamic {D. Ph. 80} has surely every reason to be indulgent in judging some poor devil who has for once dipped too deep in his glass and as a result also seeks in vain the bridge from the dynamic to the static.

Frederick Engels: Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy

Part 2: Materialism

The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being. From the very early times when men, still completely ignorant of the structure of their own bodies, under the stimulus of dream apparitions ¹⁴ came to believe that their thinking and sensation were not activities of their bodies, but of a distinct soul which inhabits the body and leaves it at death — from this time men have been driven to reflect about the relation between this soul and the outside world. If, upon death, it took leave of the body and lived on, there was no occasion to invent yet another distinct death for it. Thus arose the idea of immortality, which at that stage of development appeared not at all as a consolation but as a fate against which it was no use fighting, and often enough, as among the Greeks, as a positive misfortune. The quandary arising from the common universal ignorance of what to do with this soul, once its existence had been accepted, after the death of the body, and not religious desire for consolation, led in a general way to the tedious notion of personal immortality. In an exactly similar manner, the first gods arose through the personification of natural forces. And these gods in the further development of religions assumed more and more extramundane form, until finally by a process of abstraction, I might almost say of distillation, occurring naturally in the course of man's intellectual development, out of the many more or less limited and mutually limiting gods there arose in the minds of men the idea of the one exclusive God of the monotheistic religions.

Thus, the question of the relation of thinking to being, the relation of the spirit to nature — the paramount question of the whole of philosophy — has, no less than all religion, its roots in the narrow-minded and ignorant notions of savagery. But this question could for the first time be put forward in its whole acuteness, could achieve its full significance, only after humanity in Europe had awakened from the long hibernation of the Christian Middle Ages. The question of the position of thinking in relation to being, a question which, by the way, had played a great part also in the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, the question: which is primary, spirit or nature — that question, in relation to the church, was sharpened into this: Did God create the world or has the world been in existence eternally?

The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other — and among the philosophers, Hegel, for example, this creation often becomes still

¹⁴ Among savages and lower barbarians, the idea is still universal that the human forms which appear in dreams are souls which have temporarily left their bodies; the real man is, therefore, held responsible for acts committed by his dream apparition against the dreamer. Thus, Imthurn found this belief current, for example, among the Indians of Guiana in 1884.

more intricate and impossible than in Christianity — comprised the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism.

These two expressions, idealism and materialism, originally signify nothing else but this; and here too they are not used in any other sense. What confusion arises when some other meaning is put to them will be seen below.

But the question of the relation of thinking and being had yet another side: in what relation do our thoughts about the world surrounding us stand to this world itself? Is our thinking capable of the cognition of the real world? Are we able in our ideas and notions of the real world to produce a correct reflection of reality? In philosophical language this question is called the question of identity of thinking and being, and the overwhelming majority of philosophers give an affirmative answer to this question. With Hegel, for example, its affirmation is self-evident; for what we cognize in the real world is precisely its thought-content — that which makes the world a gradual realization of the absolute idea, which absolute idea has existed somewhere from eternity, independent of the world and before the world. But it is manifest without further proof that thought can know a content which is from the outset a thought-content. It is equally manifest that what is to be proved here is already tacitly contained in the premises. But that in no way prevents Hegel from drawing the further conclusion from his proof of the identity of thinking and being that his philosophy, because it is correct for his thinking, is therefore the only correct one, and that the identity of thinking and being must prove its validity by mankind immediately translating his philosophy from theory into practice and transforming the whole world according to Hegelian principles. This is an illusion which he shares with well-nigh all philosophers.

In addition, there is yet a set of different philosophers — those who question the possibility of any cognition, or at least of an exhaustive cognition, of the world. To them, among the more modern ones, belong Hume and Kant, and they played a very important role in philosophical development. What is decisive in the refutation of this view has already been said by Hegel, in so far as this was possible from an idealist standpoint. The materialistic additions made by Feuerbach are more ingenious than profound. The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets is practice — namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian ungraspable “thing-in-itself”. The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained just such “things-in-themselves” until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the “thing-in-itself” became a thing for us — as, for instance, alizarin, the coloring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce much more cheaply and simply from coal tar. For 300 years, the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with 100, 1,000, 10,000 to 1 chance in its favor, but still always a hypothesis. But then Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when [Johann] Galle really found this planet [Neptune, discovered 1846, at Berlin Observatory], the Copernican system was proved. If, nevertheless, the neo-Kantians are attempting to resurrect the Kantian conception in Germany, and the agnostics that of Hume in England (where in fact it never became extinct), this is, in view of their theoretical and practical refutation accomplished long ago, scientifically a regression and practically merely a shamefaced way of surreptitiously accepting materialism, while denying it before the world.

But during this long period from Descartes to Hegel and from Hobbes to Feuerbach, these philosophers were by no means impelled, as they thought they were, solely by the force of pure reason. On the contrary, what really pushed them forward most was the powerful and ever more rapidly onrushing progress of natural science and industry. Among the materialists this was plain on the surface, but the idealist systems also filled themselves more and more with a materialist content and attempted pantheistically to reconcile the antithesis between mind and matter. Thus, ultimately, the Hegelian system represents merely a materialism idealistically turned upside down in method and content.

It is, therefore, comprehensible that Starcke in his characterization of Feuerbach first of all investigates the latter's position in regard to this fundamental question of the relation of thinking and being. After a short introduction, in which the views of the preceding philosophers, particularly since Kant, are described in unnecessarily ponderous philosophical language, and in which Hegel, by an all too formalistic adherence to certain passages of his works, gets far less his due, there follows a detailed description of the course of development of Feuerbach's "metaphysics" itself, as this course was successively reflected in those writings of this philosopher which have a bearing here. This description is industriously and lucidly elaborated; only, like the whole book, it is loaded with a ballast of philosophical phraseology by no means everywhere unavoidable, which is the more disturbing in its effect the less the author keeps to the manner of expression of one and the same school, or even of Feuerbach himself, and the more he interjects expressions of very different tendencies, especially of the tendencies now rampant and calling themselves philosophical.

The course of evolution of Feuerbach is that of a Hegelian — a never quite orthodox Hegelian, it is true — into a materialist; an evolution which at a definite stage necessitates a complete rupture with the idealist system of his predecessor. With irresistible force, Feuerbach is finally driven to the realization that the Hegelian premundane existence of the "absolute idea", the "pre-existence of the logical categories" before the world existed, is nothing more than the fantastic survival of the belief in the existence of an extra-mundane creator; that the material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality; and that our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter. This is, of course, pure materialism. But, having got so far, Feuerbach stops short. He cannot overcome the customary philosophical prejudice, prejudice not against the thing but against the name materialism. He says:

"To me materialism is the foundation of the edifice of human essence and knowledge; but to me it is not what it is to the physiologist, to the natural scientists in the narrower sense, for example, to Moleschott, and necessarily is from their standpoint and profession, namely, the edifice itself. Backwards I fully agree with the materialists; but not forwards."

Here, Feuerbach lumps together the materialism that is a general world outlook resting upon a definite conception of the relation between matter and mind, and the special form in which this world outlook was expressed at a definite historical stage — namely, in the 18th century. More than that, he lumps it with the shallow, vulgarized form in which the materialism of the 18th century continues to exist today in the heads of naturalists and physicians, the form which was preached on their tours in the fifties by Buchner, Vogt, and Moleschott. But just as idealism underwent a series of stages of development, so also did materialism. With each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science, it has to

change its form; and after history was also subjected to materialistic treatment, a new avenue of development has opened here, too.

The materialism of the last century was predominantly mechanical, because at that time, of all natural sciences, only mechanics, and indeed only the mechanics of solid bodies — celestial and terrestrial — in short, the mechanics of gravity, had come to any definite close. Chemistry at that time existed only in its infantile, phlogistic form.¹⁵ Biology still lay in swaddling clothes; vegetable and animal organisms had been only roughly examined and were explained by purely mechanical causes. What the animal was to Descartes, man was to the materialists of the 18th century — a machine. This exclusive application of the standards of mechanics to processes of a chemical and organic nature — in which processes the laws of mechanics are, indeed, also valid, but are pushed into the backgrounds by other, higher laws — constitutes the first specific but at that time inevitable limitations of classical French materialism.

The second specific limitation of this materialism lay in its inability to comprehend the universe as a process, as matter undergoing uninterrupted historical development. This was in accordance with the level of the natural science of that time, and with the metaphysical, that is, anti-dialectical manner of philosophizing connected with it. Nature, so much was known, was in eternal motion. But according to the ideas of that time, this motion turned, also eternally, in a circle and therefore never moved from the spot; it produced the same results over and over again. This conception was at that time inevitable. The Kantian theory of the origin of the Solar System [that the Sun and planets originated from incandescent rotating nebulous masses] had been put forward but recently and was still regarded merely as a curiosity. The history of the development of the Earth, geology, was still totally unknown, and the conception that the animate natural beings of today are the result of a long sequence of development from the simple to the complex could not at that time scientifically be put forward at all. The unhistorical view of nature was therefore inevitable. We have the less reason to reproach the philosophers of the 18th century on this account since the same thing is found in Hegel. According to him, nature, as a mere “alienation” of the idea, is incapable of development in time — capable only of extending its manifoldness in space, so that it displays simultaneously and alongside of one another all the stages of development comprised in it, and is condemned to an eternal repetition of the same processes. This absurdity of a development in space, but outside of time — the fundamental condition of all development — Hegel imposes upon nature just at the very time when geology, embryology, the physiology of plants and animals, and organic chemistry were being built up, and when everywhere on the basis of these new sciences brilliant foreshadowings of the later theory of evolution were appearing (for instance, Goethe and Lamarck). But the system demanded it; hence the method, for the sake of the system, had to become untrue to itself.

This same unhistorical conception prevailed also in the domain of history. Here the struggle against the remnants of the Middle Ages blurred the view. The Middle Ages were regarded as a mere interruption of history by a thousand years of universal barbarism. The great progress made in the Middle Ages — the extension of the area of European culture, the viable great nations taking form there next to each other, and finally the enormous technical progress of the 14th and 15th centuries — all this was not seen. Thus, a rational insight into the great historical interconnectedness was made impossible, and history served at best as a collection of examples and illustrations for the use of philosophers.

¹⁵ Phlogistic Theory: The theory prevailing in chemistry during the 17th and 18th centuries that combustion takes place due to the presence in certain bodies of a special substance named phlogiston.

The vulgarizing peddlers, who in Germany in the fifties dabbled in materialism, by no means overcame this limitation of their teachers. All the advances of natural science which had been made in the meantime served them only as new proofs against the existence of a creator of the world; and, indeed, they did not in the least make it their business to develop the theory any further. Though idealism was at the end of its tether and was dealt a death-blow by the Revolution of 1848, it had the satisfaction of seeing that materialism had for the moment fallen lower still. Feuerbach was unquestionably right when he refused to take responsibility for this materialism; only he should not have confounded the doctrines of these itinerant preachers with materialism in general.

Here, however, there are two things to be pointed out. First, even during Feuerbach's lifetime, natural science was still in that process of violent fermentation which only during the last 15 years had reached a clarifying, relative conclusion. New scientific data were acquired to a hitherto unheard-of extent, but the establishing of interrelations, and thereby the bringing of order into this chaos of discoveries following closely upon each other's heels, has only quite recently become possible. It is true that Feuerbach had lived to see all three of the decisive discoveries — that of the cell, the transformation of energy, and the theory of evolution named after Darwin. But how could the lonely philosopher, living in rural solitude, be able sufficiently to follow scientific developments in order to appreciate at their full value discoveries which natural scientists themselves at that time either still contested or did not know how to make adequate use of? The blame for this, falls solely upon the wretched conditions in Germany, in consequence of which cobweb-spinning eclectic flea-crackers had taken possession of the chairs of philosophy, while Feuerbach, who towered above them all, had to rusticate and grow sour in a little village. It is therefore not Feuerbach's fault that this historical conception of nature, which had now become possible and which removed all the one-sidedness of French materialism, remained inaccessible to him.

Secondly, Feuerbach is quite correct in asserting that exclusively natural-scientific materialism is indeed "the foundation of the edifice of human knowledge, but not the edifice itself". For we live not only in nature but also in human society, and this also no less than nature has its history of development and its science. It was therefore a question of bringing the science of society, that is, the sum total of the so-called historical and philosophical sciences, into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon. But it did not fall to Feuerbach's lot to do this. In spite of the "foundation", he remained here bound by the traditional idealist fetters, a fact which he recognizes in these words: "Backwards I agree with the materialists, but not forwards!"

But it was Feuerbach himself who did not go "forwards" here; in the social domain, who did not get beyond his standpoint of 1840 or 1844. And this was again chiefly due to this reclusion which compelled him, who, of all philosophers, was the most inclined to social intercourse, to produce thoughts out of his solitary head instead of in amicable and hostile encounters with other men of his caliber. Later, we shall see in detail how much he remained an idealist in this sphere.

It need only be added here that Starcke looks for Feuerbach's idealism in the wrong place.

"Feuerbach is an idealist; he believes in the progress of mankind." (p.19)

"The foundation, the substructure of the whole, remains nevertheless idealism. Realism for us is nothing more than a protection against aberrations, while we follow our ideal trends. Are not compassion, love, and enthusiasm for truth and justice ideal forces?" (p.VIII)

In the first place, idealism here means nothing, but the pursuit of ideal aims. But these necessarily have to do at the most with Kantian idealism and its “categorical imperative”; however, Kant himself called his philosophy “transcendental idealism” by no means because he dealt therein also with ethical ideals, but for quite other reasons, as Starcke will remember. The superstition that philosophical idealism is pivoted round a belief in ethical, that is, social, ideals, arose outside philosophy, among the German philistines, who learned by heart from Schiller’s poems the few morsels of philosophical culture they needed. No one has criticized more severely the impotent “categorical imperative” of Kant — impotent because it demands the impossible, and therefore never attains to any reality — no one has more cruelly derided the philistine sentimental enthusiasm for unrealizable ideals purveyed by Schiller than precisely the complete idealist Hegel (see, for example, his *Phenomenology*).

In the second place, we simply cannot get away from the fact that everything that sets men acting must find its way through their brains — even eating and drinking, which begins as a consequence of the sensation of hunger or thirst transmitted through the brain, and ends as a result of the sensation of satisfaction likewise transmitted through the brain. The influences of the external world upon man express themselves in his brain, are reflected therein as feelings, impulses, volitions — in short, as “ideal tendencies”, and in this form become “ideal powers”. If, then, a man is to be deemed an idealist because he follows “ideal tendencies” and admits that “ideal powers” have an influence over him, then every person who is at all normally developed is a born idealist and how, in that case, can there still be any materialists?

In the third place, the conviction that humanity, at least at the present moment, moves on the whole in a progressive direction has absolutely nothing to do with the antagonism between materialism and idealism. The French materialists no less than the deists Voltaire and Rousseau held this conviction to an almost fanatical degree, and often enough made the greatest personal sacrifices for it. If ever anybody dedicated his whole life to the “enthusiasm for truth and justice” — using this phrase in the good sense — it was Diderot, for instance. If, therefore, Starcke declares all this to be idealism, this merely proves that the word materialism, and the whole antagonism between the two trends, has lost all meaning for him here.

The fact is that Starcke, although perhaps unconsciously, in this makes an unpardonable concession to the traditional philistine prejudice against the word materialism resulting from its long-continued defamation by the priests. By the word materialism, the philistine understands gluttony, drunkenness, lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, arrogance, cupidity, avarice, covetousness, profit-hunting, and stock-exchange swindling — in short, all the filthy vices in which he himself indulges in private. By the word idealism he understands the belief in virtue, universal philanthropy, and in a general way a “better world”, of which he boasts before others but in which he himself at the utmost believes only so long as he is having the blues or is going through the bankruptcy consequent upon his customary “materialist” excesses. It is then that he sings his favorite song, what is man? — Half beast, half angel.

For the rest, Starcke takes great pains to defend Feuerbach against the attacks and doctrines of the vociferous assistant professors who today go by the name of philosophers in Germany. For people who are interested in this afterbirth of classical German philosophy this is, of course, a matter of importance; for Starcke himself it may have appeared necessary. We, however, will spare the reader this.

Strauss, Bauer, Stirner, Feuerbach — these were the offshoots of Hegelian philosophy, in so far as they did not abandon the field of philosophy. Strauss, after his *Life of Jesus* and *Dogmatics*, produced only literary studies in philosophy and ecclesiastical history after the fashion of Renan. Bauer only achieved something in the field of the history of the origin of Christianity, though what he did here was important. Stirner remained a curiosity, even after Bakunin blended him with Proudhon and labelled the blend “anarchism”. Feuerbach alone was of significance as a philosopher. But not only did philosophy — claimed to soar above all special sciences and to be the science of sciences connecting them — remain to him an impassable barrier, an inviolable holy thing, but as a philosopher, too, he stopped half-incapable of disposing of Hegel through criticism; he simply threw him aside as useless, while he himself, compared with the encyclopedic wealth of the Hegelian system, achieved nothing positive beyond a turgid religion of love and a meagre, impotent morality.

Out of the dissolution of the Hegelian school, however, there developed still another tendency, the only one which has borne real fruit. And this tendency is essentially connected with the name of Marx.¹⁶

The separation from Hegelian philosophy was here also the result of a return to the materialist standpoint. That means it was resolved to comprehend the real world — nature and history — just as it presents itself to everyone who approaches it free from preconceived idealist crotchets. It was decided mercilessly to sacrifice every idealist fancy which could not be brought into harmony with the facts conceived in their own and not in a fantastic interconnection. And materialism means nothing more than this. But here the materialistic world outlook was taken really seriously for the first time and was carried through consistently — at least in its basic features — in all domains of knowledge concerned.

Hegel was not simply put aside. On the contrary, a start was made from his revolutionary side, described above, from the dialectical method. But in its Hegelian form, this method was unusable. According to Hegel, dialectics is the self-development of the concept. The absolute concept does not only exist — unknown where — from eternity, it is also the actual living soul of the whole existing world. It develops into itself through all the preliminary stages which are treated at length in the *Logic* and which are all included in it. Then it “alienates” itself by changing into nature, where, unconscious of itself, disguised as a natural necessity, it goes through a new development and finally returns as man’s consciousness of himself. This self-consciousness then elaborates itself again in history in the crude form until finally the absolute concept again comes to itself completely in the Hegelian philosophy. According to Hegel, therefore, the dialectical development apparent in nature and history — that is, the causal interconnection of the progressive movement from the lower to the higher, which asserts itself through all zigzag movements and temporary retrogression — is only a copy [Abklatsch] of the self-movement of the concept going on from eternity, no one knows where, but at all events independently of any thinking human brain. This ideological perversion had to be done away with. We again took a materialistic view of the thoughts in our heads, regarding them as images [Abbilder] of real things instead of regarding real

¹⁶ Here I may be permitted to make a personal explanation. Lately repeated reference has been made to my share in this theory, and so I can hardly avoid saying a few words here to settle this point. I cannot deny that both before and during my 40 years’ collaboration with Marx I had a certain independent share in laying the foundation of the theory, and more particularly in its elaboration. But the greater part of its leading basic principles, especially in the realm of economics and history, and, above all, their final trenchant formulation, belong to Marx. What I contributed — at any rate with the exception of my work in a few special fields — Marx could very well have done without me. What Marx accomplished I would not have achieved. Marx stood higher, saw further, and took a wider and quicker view than all the rest of us. Marx was a genius; we others were at best talented. Without him the theory would not be by far what it is today. It therefore rightly bears his name.

things as images of this or that stage of the absolute concept. Thus dialectics reduced itself to the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought — two sets of laws which are identical in substance, but differ in their expression in so far as the human mind can apply them consciously, while in nature and also up to now for the most part in human history, these laws assert themselves unconsciously, in the form of external necessity, in the midst of an endless series of seeming accidents. Thereby the dialectic of concepts itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world and thus the dialectic of Hegel was turned over; or rather, turned off its head, on which it was standing, and placed upon its feet. And this materialist dialectic, which for years has been our best working tool and our sharpest weapon, was, remarkably enough, discovered not only by us but also, independently of us and even of Hegel, by a German worker, Joseph Dietzgen.¹⁷

In this way, however, the revolutionary side of Hegelian philosophy was again taken up and at the same time freed from the idealist trimmings which with Hegel had prevented its consistent execution. The great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of readymade *things*, but as a complex of *processes*, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away, in which, in spite of all seeming accidentally and of all temporary retrogression, a progressive development asserts itself in the end — this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things. If, however, investigation always proceeds from this standpoint, the demand for final solutions and eternal truths ceases once for all; one is always conscious of the necessary limitation of all acquired knowledge, of the fact that it is conditioned by the circumstances in which it was acquired. On the other hand, one no longer permits oneself to be imposed upon by the antithesis, insuperable for the still common old metaphysics, between true and false, good and bad, identical and different, necessary and accidental. One knows that these antitheses have only a relative validity; that that which is recognized now as true has also its latent false side which will later manifest itself, just as that which is now regarded as false has also its true side by virtue of which it could previously be regarded as true. One knows that what is maintained to be necessary is composed of sheer accidents and that the so-called accidental is the form behind which necessity hides itself — and so on.

The old method of investigation and thought which Hegel calls “metaphysical”, which preferred to investigate *things* as given, as fixed and stable, a method the relics of which still strongly haunt people’s minds, had a great deal of historical justification in its day. It was necessary first to examine things before it was possible to examine processes. One had first to know what a particular thing was before one could observe the changes it was undergoing. And such was the case with natural science. The old metaphysics, which accepted things as finished objects, arose from a natural science which investigated dead and living things as finished objects. But when this investigation had progressed so far that it became possible to take the decisive step forward, that is, to pass on the systematic investigation of the changes which these things undergo in nature itself, then the last hour of the old metaphysic struck in the realm of philosophy also. And in fact, while natural science up to the end of the last century was predominantly a *collecting* science, a science of finished things, in our century it is essentially a *systematizing* science, a science of the processes,

¹⁷ See *Das Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit*, dargestellt von einem Handarbeiter [The Nature of Human Brainwork, Described by a Manual Worker]. Hamburg, Meissner.

of the origin and development of these things and of the interconnection which binds all these natural processes into one great whole. Physiology, which investigates the processes occurring in plant and animal organisms; embryology, which deals with the development of individual organisms from germs to maturity; geology, which investigates the gradual formation of the Earth's surface — all these are the offspring of our century.

But, above all, there are three great discoveries which have enabled our knowledge of the interconnection of natural processes to advance by leaps and bounds:

First, the discovery of the cell as the unit from whose multiplication and differentiation the whole plant and animal body develops. Not only are the development and growth of all higher organisms recognized to proceed according to a single general law, but the capacity of the cell to change indicates the way by which organisms can change their species and thus go through a more than individual development.

Second, the transformation of energy, which has demonstrated to us that all the so-called forces operative in the first instance in inorganic nature — mechanical force and its complement, so-called potential energy, heat, radiation (light, or radiant heat), electricity, magnetism, and chemical energy — are different forms of manifestation of universal motion, which pass into one another in definite proportions so that in place of a certain quantity of the one which disappears, a certain quantity of another makes its appearance and thus the whole motion of nature is reduced to this incessant process of transformation from one form into another.

Finally, the proof which Darwin first developed in connected form that the stock of organic products of nature environing us today, including man, is the result of a long process of evolution from a few originally unicellular germs, and that these again have arisen from protoplasm or albumen, which came into existence by chemical means.

Thanks to these three great discoveries, and the other immense advances in natural science, we have now arrived at the point where we can demonstrate the interconnection between the processes in nature not only in particular spheres but also the interconnection of these particular spheres on the whole, and so can present in an approximately systematic form a comprehensive view of the interconnection in nature by means of the facts provided by an empirical science itself. To furnish this comprehensive view was formerly the task of so-called natural philosophy. It could do this only by putting in place of the real but as yet unknown interconnections ideal, fancied ones, filling in the missing facts by figments of the mind and bridging the actual gaps merely in imagination. In the course of this procedure, it conceived many brilliant ideas and foreshadowed many later discoveries, but it also produced a considerable amount of nonsense, which indeed could not have been otherwise. Today, when one needs to comprehend the results of natural scientific investigation only dialectically, that is, in the sense of their own interconnection, in order to arrive at a "system of nature" sufficient for our time; when the dialectical character of this interconnection is forcing itself against their will even into the metaphysically-trained minds of the natural scientists, today natural philosophy is finally disposed of. Every attempt at resurrecting it would be not only superfluous but a *step backwards*.

But what is true of nature, which is hereby recognized also as a historical process of development, is likewise true of the history of society in all its branches and of the totality of all sciences which occupy themselves with things human (and divine). Here, too, the philosophy of history, of right, of religion, etc.,

has consisted in the substitution of an interconnection fabricated in the mind of the philosopher for the real interconnection to be demonstrated in the events; has consisted in the comprehension of history as a whole as well as in its separate parts, as the gradual realization of ideas — and naturally always only the pet ideas of the philosopher himself. According to this, history worked unconsciously but of necessity towards a certain ideal goal set in advance — as, for example, in Hegel, towards the realization of his absolute idea — and the unalterable trend towards this absolute idea formed the inner interconnection in the events of history. A new mysterious providence — unconscious or gradually coming into consciousness — was thus put in the place of the real, still unknown interconnection. Here, therefore, just as in the realm of nature, it was necessary to do away with these fabricated, artificial interconnections by the discovery of the real ones — a task which ultimately amounts to the discovery of the general laws of motion which assert themselves as the ruling ones in the history of human society.

In one point, however, the history of the development of society proves to be essentially different from that of nature. In nature — in so far as we ignore man's reaction upon nature — there are only blind, unconscious agencies acting upon one another, out of whose interplay the general law comes into operation. Nothing of all that happens — whether in the innumerable apparent accidents observable upon the surface, or in the ultimate results which confirm the regularity inherent in these accidents — happens as a consciously desired aim. In the history of society, on the contrary, the actors are all endowed with consciousness, are men acting with deliberation or passion, working towards definite goals; nothing happens without a conscious purpose, without an intended aim. But this distinction, important as it is for historical investigation, particularly of single epochs and events, cannot alter the fact that the course of history is governed by inner general laws. For here, also, on the whole, in spite of the consciously desired aims of all individuals, accident apparently reigns on the surface. That which is willed happens but rarely; in the majority of instances the numerous desired ends cross and conflict with one another, or these ends themselves are from the outset incapable of realization, or the means of attaining them are insufficient. thus, the conflicts of innumerable individual wills and individual actions in the domain of history produce a state of affairs entirely analogous to that prevailing in the realm of unconscious nature. The ends of the actions are intended, but the results which actually follow from these actions are not intended; or when they do seem to correspond to the end intended, they ultimately have consequences quite other than those intended. Historical events thus appear on the whole to be likewise governed by chance. But where on the surface accident holds sway, there actually it is always governed by inner, hidden laws, and it is only a matter of discovering these laws.

Men make their own history, whatever its outcome may be, in that each person follows his own consciously desired end, and it is precisely the resultant of these many wills operating in different directions, and of their manifold effects upon the outer world, that constitutes history. Thus, it is also a question of what the many individuals desire. The will is determined by passion or deliberation. But the levers which immediately determine passion or deliberation are of very different kinds. Partly they may be external objects, partly ideal motives, ambition, “enthusiasm for truth and justice”, personal hatred, or even purely individual whims of all kinds. But, on the one hand, we have seen that the many individual wills active in history for the most part produce results quite other than those intended — often quite the opposite; that their motives, therefore, in relation to the total result are likewise of only secondary importance. On the other hand, the further question arises: What driving forces in turn stand behind these

motives? What are the historical forces which transform themselves into these motives in the brains of the actors?

The old materialism never put this question to itself. Its conception of history, in so far as it has one at all, is therefore essentially pragmatic; it divides men who act in history into noble and ignoble and then finds that as a rule the noble are defrauded and the ignoble are victorious. hence, it follows for the old materialism that nothing very edifying is to be got from the study of history, and for us that in the realm of history the old materialism becomes untrue to itself because it takes the ideal driving forces which operate there as ultimate causes, instead of investigating what is behind them, what are the driving forces of these driving forces. This inconsistency does not lie in the fact that *ideal* driving forces are recognized, but in the investigation not being carried further back behind these into their motive causes. On the other hand, the philosophy of history, particularly as represented by Hegel, recognizes that the ostensible and also the really operating motives of men who act in history are by no means the ultimate causes of historical events; that behind these motives are other motive powers, which have to be discovered. But it does not seek these powers in history itself, it imports them rather from outside, from philosophical ideology, into history. Hegel, for example, instead of explaining the history of ancient Greece out of its own inner interconnections, simply maintains that it is nothing more than the working out of “forms of beautiful individuality”, the realization of a “work of art” as such. He says much in this connection about the old Greeks that is fine and profound, but that does not prevent us today from refusing to be put off with such an explanation, which is a mere manner of speech.

When, therefore, it is a question of investigating the driving powers which — consciously or unconsciously, and indeed very often unconsciously — lie behind the motives of men who act in history and which constitute the real ultimate driving forces of history, then it is not a question so much of the motives of single individuals, however eminent, as of those motives which set in motion great masses, whole people, and again whole classes of the people in each people; and this, too, not merely for an instant, like the transient flaring up of a straw-fire which quickly dies down, but as a lasting action resulting in a great historical transformation. To ascertain the driving causes which here in the minds of acting masses and their leaders — to so-called great men — are reflected as conscious motives, clearly or unclearly, directly or in an ideological, even glorified, form — is the only path which can put us on the track of the laws holding sway both in history as a whole, and at particular periods and in particular lands. Everything which sets men in motion must go through their minds; but what form it will take in the mind will depend very much upon the circumstances. The workers have by no means become reconciled to capitalist machine industry, even though they no longer simply break the machines to pieces, as they still did in 1848 on the Rhine.

But while in all earlier periods the investigation of these driving causes of history was almost impossible — on account of the complicated and concealed interconnections between them and their effects — our present period has so far simplified these interconnections that the riddle could be solved. Since the establishment of large-scale industry — that is, at least since the European peace of 1815 — it has been no longer a secret to any man in England that the whole political struggle there pivoted on the claims to supremacy of two classes: the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie (middle class). In France, with the return of the Bourbons, the same fact was perceived, the historians of the Restoration period, from Thierry to Guisot, Mignet, and Thiers, speak of it everywhere as the key to the understanding of all French history since the Middle Ages. And since 1830, the working class, the proletariat, has been recognized in both

countries as a third competitor for power. Conditions had become so simplified that one would have had to close one's eyes deliberately not to see in the light of these three great classes and in the conflict of their interests the driving force of modern history — at least in the two most advanced countries.

But how did these classes come into existence? If it was possible at first glance still to ascribe the origin of the great, formerly feudal landed property — at least in the first instance — to political causes, to taking possession by force, this could not be done in regard to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Here, the origin and development of two great classes was seen to lie clearly and palpably in purely economic causes. And it was just as clear that in the struggle between landed property and the bourgeoisie, no less than in the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, it was a question, first and foremost, of economic interests, to the furtherance of which political power was intended to serve merely as a means. Bourgeoisie and proletariat both arose in consequences of a transformation of the economic conditions, more precisely, of the mode of production. The transition, first from guild handicrafts to manufacture, and then from manufacture to large-scale industry, with steam and mechanical power, had caused the development of these two classes. At a certain stage, the new productive forces set in motion by the bourgeoisie — in the first place the division of labor and the combination of many detail laborers [Teilarbeiter] in one general manufactory — and the conditions and requirements of exchange, developed through these productive forces, became incompatible with the existing order of production handed down by history and sanctified by law — that is to say, incompatible with the privileges of the guild and the numerous other personal and local privileges (which were only so many fetters to the unprivileged estates) of the feudal order to society. The productive forces represented by the bourgeoisie rebelled against the order of production represented by the feudal landlords and the guild-masters. The result is known, the feudal fetters were smashed, gradually in England, at one blow in France. In Germany, the process is not yet finished. But just as, at a definite stage of its development, manufacture came into conflict with the feudal order of production, so now large-scale industry has already come into conflict with the bourgeois order of production established in its place. Tied down by this order, by the narrow limits of the capitalist mode of production, this industry produces, on the one hand, an ever-increasingly proletarianization of the great mass of the people, and on the other hand, an ever-greater mass of unsalable products. Overproduction and mass misery, each the cause of the other — that is the absurd contradiction which is its outcome, and which of necessity calls for the liberation of the productive forces by means of a change in the mode of production.

In modern history at least it is, therefore, proved that all political struggles are class struggles, and all class struggles for emancipation, despite their necessarily political form — for every class struggle is a political struggle — turn ultimately on the question of *economic* emancipation. Therefore, here at least, the state — the political order — is the subordination, and civil society — the realm of economic relations — the decisive element. The traditional conception, to which Hegel, too, pays homage, saw in the state the determining element, and in civil society the element determined by it. Appearances correspond to this. As all the driving forces of the actions of any individual person must pass through his brain, and transform themselves into motives of his will in order to set him into action, so also all the needs of civil society — no matter which class happens to be the ruling one — must pass through the will of the state in order to secure general validity in the form of laws. That is the formal aspect of the matter — the one which is self-evident. The question arises, however, what is the content of this merely formal will — of the individual as well as of the state — and whence is this content derived? Why is just this willed and not something else?

If we enquire into this, we discover that in modern history the will of the state is, on the whole, determined by the changing needs of civil society, but the supremacy of this or that class, in the last resort, by the development of the productive forces and relations of exchange.

But if even in our modern era, with its gigantic means of production and communication, the state is not an independent domain with an independent development, but one whose existence as well as development is to be explained in the last resort by the economic conditions of life of society, then this must be still more true of all earlier times when the production of the material life of man was not yet carried on with these abundant auxiliary means, and when, therefore, the necessity of such production must have exercised a still greater mastery over men. If the state even today, in the era of big industry and of railways, is on the whole only a reflection, in concentrated form, of the economic needs of the class controlling production, then this must have been much more so in an epoch when each generation of men was forced to spend a far greater part of its aggregate lifetime in satisfying material needs, and was therefore much more dependent on them than we are today. An examination of the history of earlier periods, as soon as it is seriously undertaken from this angle, most abundantly confirms this. But, of course, this cannot be gone into here.

If the state and public law are determined by economic relations, so, too, of course, is private law, which indeed in essence only sanctions the existing economic relations between individuals which are normal in the given circumstances. The form in which this happens can, however, vary considerably. It is possible, as happened in England, in harmony with the whole national development, to retain in the main the forms of the old feudal laws while giving them a bourgeois content; in fact, directly reading a bourgeois meaning into the feudal name. But, also, as happened in Western continental Europe, roman law, the first world law of a commodity-producing society, with its unsurpassably fine elaboration of all the essential legal relations of simple commodity owners (of buyers and sellers, debtors and creditors, contracts, obligations, etc.) can be taken as the foundation. In which case, for the benefit of a still petty-bourgeois and semi-feudal society, it can either be reduced to the level of such a society simply through judicial practice (common law) or, with the help of allegedly enlightened, moralizing jurists it can be worked into a special code of law to correspond with such social level — a code which in these circumstances will be a bad one also from the legal standpoint (for instance, Prussian Landrecht). But after a great bourgeois revolution it is, however, also possible for such a classic law code of bourgeois society as the French *Code Civile* to be worked out upon the basis of this same Roman Law. If, therefore, bourgeois legal rules merely express the economic life conditions of society in legal form, then they can do so well or ill according to circumstances.

The state presents itself to us as the first ideological power over man. Society creates for itself an organ for the safeguarding of its common interests against internal and external attacks. This organ is the state power. Hardly come into being, this organ makes itself independent vis-a-vis society; and, indeed, the more so, the more it becomes the organ of a particular class, the more it directly enforces the supremacy of that class. The fight of the oppressed class against the ruling class becomes necessarily a political fight, a fight first of all against the political dominance of this class. The consciousness of the interconnection between this political struggle and its economic basis becomes dulled and can be lost altogether. While this is not wholly the case with the participants, it almost always happens with the historians. Of the ancient sources on the struggles within the Roman Republic, only Appian tells us clearly and distinctly what was at issue in the last resort — namely, landed property.

But once the state has become an independent power vis-a-vis society, it produces forthwith a further ideology. It is indeed among professional politicians, theorists of public law, and jurists of private law, that the connection with economic facts gets lost for fair. Since in each particular case, the economic facts must assume the form of juristic motives in order to receive legal sanction; and since, in so doing, consideration of course has to be given to the whole legal system already in operation, the juristic form is, in consequence, made everything and the economic content nothing. Public law and private law are treated as independent spheres, each being capable of and needing a systematic presentation by the consistent elimination of all inner contradictions.

Still higher ideologies, that is, such as are still further removed from the material, economic basis, take the form of philosophy and religion. Here the interconnection between conceptions and their material conditions of existence becomes more and more complicated, more and more obscured by intermediate links. But the interconnection exists. Just as the whole Renaissance period, from the middle of the 15th century, was an essential product of the towns and, therefore, of the burghers, so also was the subsequently newly-awakened philosophy. Its content was in essence only the philosophical expression of the thoughts corresponding to the development of the small and middle burghers into a big bourgeoisie. Among last century's Englishmen and Frenchmen who in many cases were just as much political economists as philosophers, this is clearly evident; and we have proved it above in regard to the Hegelian school.

We will now in addition deal only briefly with religion, since the latter stands further away from material life and seems to be most alien to it. Religion arose in very primitive times from erroneous, primitive conceptions of men about their own nature and external nature surrounding them. Every ideology, however, once it has arisen, develops in connection with the given concept-material, and develops this material further; otherwise, it would not be an ideology, that is, occupation with thoughts as with independent entities, developing independently and subject only to their own laws. In the last analysis, the material life conditions of the persons inside whose heads this thought process goes on determine the course of the process, which of necessity remains unknown to these persons, for otherwise there would be an end to all ideology. These original religious notions, therefore, which in the main are common to each group of kindred peoples, develop, after the group separates, in a manner peculiar to each people, according to the conditions of life falling to their lot. For a number of groups of peoples, and particularly for the Aryans (so-called Indo-Europeans) this process has been shown in detail by comparative mythology. The gods thus fashioned within each people were national gods, whose domain extended no farther than the national territory which they were to protect; on the other side of its boundaries, other gods held undisputed sway. They could continue to exist, in imagination, only as long as the nation existed; they fell with its fall. The Roman world empire, the economic conditions of whose origin we do not need to examine here, brought about this downfall of the old nationalities. The old national gods decayed, even those of the Romans, which also were patterned to suit only the narrow confines of the city of Rome. The need to complement the world empire by means of a world religion was clearly revealed in the attempts made to recognize all foreign gods that were the least bit respectable and provide altars for them in Rome alongside the native gods. But a new world religion is not to be made in this fashion, by imperial decree. The new world religion, Christianity, had already quietly come into being, out of a mixture of generalized Oriental, particularly Jewish, theology, and vulgarized Greek, particularly Stoic, philosophy. What it originally looked like has to be first laboriously discovered, since its official

form, as it has been handed down to us, is merely that in which it became the state religion to which purpose it was adapted by the Council of Nicaea. The fact that already after 250 years it became the state religion suffices to show that it was the religion in correspondence with the conditions of the time. In the Middle Ages, in the same measure as feudalism developed, Christianity grew into the religious counterpart to it, with a corresponding feudal hierarchy. And when the burghers began to thrive, there developed, in opposition to feudal Catholicism, the Protestant heresy, which first appeared in Southern France among the Albigenses,¹⁸ at the time the cities there reached the highest point of their florescence. The Middle Ages had attached to theology all the other forms of ideology — philosophy, politics, jurisprudence — and made them subdivision of theology. It thereby constrained every social and political movement to take on a theological form. The sentiments of the masses were fed with religion to the exclusion of all else; it was therefore necessary to put forward their own interests in a religious guise in order to produce a great tempest. And just as the burghers from the beginning brought into being an appendage of propertyless urban plebeians, day laborers and servants of all kinds, belonging to no recognized social estate, precursors of the later proletariat, so likewise heresy soon became divided into a burgher-moderate heresy and a plebeian-revolutionary one, the latter an abomination to the burgher heretics themselves.

The ineradicability of the Protestant heresy corresponded to the invincibility of the rising burghers. When these burghers had become sufficiently strengthened, their struggle against the feudal nobility, which till then had been predominantly local, began to assume national dimensions. The first great action occurred in Germany — the so-called reformation. The burghers were neither powerful enough nor sufficiently developed to be able to unite under their banner the remaining rebellious estates — the plebeians of the towns, the lower nobility, and the peasants on the land. At first, the nobles were defeated; the peasants rose in a revolt which formed the peak of the whole revolutionary struggle; the cities left them in the lurch, and thus the revolution succumbed to the armies of the secular princes who reaped the whole profit. Thenceforward, Germany disappears for three centuries from the ranks of countries playing an independent active part in history. But, beside the German Luther appeared the Frenchman Calvin. With true French acuity, he put the bourgeois character of the Reformation in the forefront, republicanized and democratized the Church. While the Lutheran Reformation in Germany degenerated and reduced the country to rack and ruin, the Calvinist Reformation served as a banner for the republicans in Geneva, in Holland, and in Scotland, freed Holland from Spain and from the German Empire, and provided the ideological costume for the second act of the bourgeois revolution, which was taking place in England. Here, Calvinism justified itself as the true religious disguise of the interests of the bourgeoisie of that time, and on this account did not attain full recognition when the revolution ended in 1689 in a compromise between one part of the nobility and the bourgeoisie. The English state Church was re-established; but not in its earlier form of a Catholicism which had the king for its pope, being, instead, strongly Calvinized. The old state Church had celebrated the merry Catholic Sunday and had fought against the dull Calvinist one. The new, bourgeoisified Church introduced the latter, which adorns England to this day.

In France, the Calvinist minority was suppressed in 1685 and either Catholized or driven out of the country. But what was the good? Already at that time the freethinker Pierre Bayle was at the height of his activity, and in 1694 Voltaire was born. The forcible measures of Louis XIV only made it easier

¹⁸ Albigensian: A religious sect which, during the 12th and 13th centuries, directed a movement against the Roman Catholic Church. The name is derived from the town of Albi, in the south of France

for the French bourgeoisie to carry through its revolution in the irreligious, exclusively political form which alone was suited to a developed bourgeoisie. Instead of Protestants, freethinkers took their seats in the national assemblies. Thereby Christianity entered into its final stage. It was incapable of doing any future service to any progressive class as the ideological garb of its aspirations. It became more and more the exclusive possession of the ruling classes; they apply it as a mere means of government, to keep the lower classes within bounds. Moreover, each of the different classes uses its own appropriate religion: the landed nobility — Catholic Jesuitism, or Protestant orthodoxy; the liberal and radical bourgeoisie — rationalism; and it makes little difference whether these gentlemen themselves believe in their respective religions or not.

We see, therefore: religion, once formed, always contains traditional material, just as in all ideological domains tradition forms a great conservative force. But the transformations which this material undergoes spring from class relations — that is to say, out of the economic relations of the people who execute these transformations. And here that is sufficient.

In the above, it could only be a question of giving a general sketch of the Marxist conception of history, at most with a few illustrations, as well. The proof must be derived from history itself; and, in this regard, it may be permitted to say that it has been sufficiently furnished in other writings. This conception, however, puts an end to philosophy in the realm of history, just as the dialectical conception of nature makes all-natural philosophy both unnecessary and impossible. It is no longer a question anywhere of inventing interconnections from out of our brains, but of discovering them in the facts. For philosophy, which has been expelled from nature and history, there remains only the realm of pure thought, so far as it is left: the theory of the laws of the thought process itself, logic and dialectics.

With the Revolution of 1848, “educated” Germany said farewell to theory and went over to the field of practice. Small production and manufacture, based upon manual labor, were superseded by real large-scale industry. Germany again appeared on the world market. The new little German Empire ¹⁹ abolished at least the most crying of the abuses with which this development had been obstructed by the system of petty states, the relics of feudalism, and bureaucratic management. But to the same degree that speculation abandoned the philosopher’s study in order to set up its temple in the Stock Exchange, educated Germany lost the great aptitude for theory which had been the glory of Germany in the days of its deepest political humiliation — the aptitude for purely scientific investigation, irrespective of whether the result obtained was practically applicable or not, whether likely to offend the police authorities or not. Official German natural science, it is true, maintained its position in the front rank, particularly in the field of specialized research. But even the American journal *Science* rightly remarks that the decisive advances in the sphere of the comprehensive correlation of particular facts and their generalization into laws are now being made much more in England, instead of, as formerly, in Germany. And in the sphere of the historical sciences, philosophy included, the old fearless zeal for theory has now disappeared completely, along with classical philosophy. Inane eclecticism and an anxious concern for career and income, descending to the most vulgar job-hunting, occupy its place. The official representatives of these sciences have become the

¹⁹ “The new little German Empire”: This term is applied to the German Empire without Austria, which arose in 1871, under Prussian hegemony.

undisguised ideologists of the bourgeoisie and the existing state — but at a time when both stand in open antagonism to the working class.

Only among the working class does the German aptitude for theory remain unimpaired. Here, it cannot be exterminated. Here, there is no concern for careers, for profit-making, or for gracious patronage from above. On the contrary, the more ruthlessly and disinterestedly science proceeds the more it finds itself in harmony with the interest and aspirations of the workers. The new tendency, which recognized that the key to the understanding of the whole history of society lies in the history of the development of labor, from the outset addressed itself by preference to the working class and here found the response which it neither sought nor expected from officially recognized science. The German working-class movement is the inheritor of German classical philosophy.

Marx-Engels: The Holy Family

Chapter: VI Section: 3) Sub-Section: d) Critical Battle Against French Materialism

“Spinozism dominated the eighteenth century both in its later French variety, which made matter into substance, and in deism, which conferred on matter a more spiritual name.... Spinoza’s French school and the supporters of deism were but two sects disputing over the true meaning of his system.... The simple fate of this Enlightenment was its decline in romanticism after being obliged to surrender to the reaction which began after the French movement.”

That is what *Criticism* says.

To the Critical history of French materialism, we shall oppose a brief outline of its ordinary, mass-type history. We shall acknowledge with due respect the abyss between history as it really happened and history as it takes place according to the decree of *“Absolute Criticism”*, the creator equally of the old and of the new. And finally, obeying the prescriptions of *Criticism*, we shall make the *“Why?”*, *“Whence?”* and *“Whither?”* of Critical history the *“object of a persevering study”*.

“Speaking exactly and in the prosaic sense”, the French Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and in particular *French materialism*, was not only a struggle against the existing political institutions and the existing religion and theology; it was just as much an *open, clearly expressed* struggle against the *metaphysics of the seventeenth century*, and against all *metaphysics*, in particular that of *Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza and Leibniz*. Philosophy was counterposed to *metaphysics*, just as *Feuerbach*, in his first resolute attack on *Hegel*, counterposed *sober philosophy* to *wild speculation*. Seventeenth century *metaphysics*, driven from the field by the *French Enlightenment*, notably, by *French materialism* of the eighteenth century, experienced a *victorious and substantial restoration* in *German philosophy*, particularly in the *speculative German philosophy* of the nineteenth century. After *Hegel* linked it in a masterly fashion with all subsequent metaphysics and with German idealism and founded a metaphysical universal kingdom, the attack on theology again corresponded, as in the eighteenth century, to an attack on *speculative metaphysics* and *metaphysics in general*. It will be defeated forever by *materialism*, which has now been perfected by the work of *speculation* itself and coincides with *humanism*. But just as *Feuerbach* is the representative of *materialism* coinciding with *humanism* in the *theoretical* domain, French and English *socialism* and *communism* represent *materialism* coinciding with *humanism* in the *practical* domain.

“Speaking exactly and in the prosaic sense”, there are *two trends* in *French materialism*; one traces its origin to *Descartes*, the other to *Locke*. The latter is *mainly* a *French* development and leads directly to *socialism*. The

former, *mechanical* materialism, merges with French *natural science* proper. The two trends intersect in the course of development. We have no need here to go more deeply into the French materialism that derives directly from *Descartes*, any more than into the French school of *Newton* and the development of French natural science in general.

We shall therefore merely say the following:

Descartes in his *physics* endowed *matter* with self-creative power and conceived *mechanical* motion as the manifestation of its life. He completely separated his *physics* from his *metaphysics*. Within his *physics*, *matter* is the sole *substance*, the sole basis of being and of knowledge.

Mechanical French materialism adopted *Descartes' physics* in opposition to his metaphysics. His followers were by profession *anti-metaphysicians*, i.e., *physicists*.

This school begins with the *physician* *Le Roy*, reaches its zenith with the physician *Cabanis*, and the physician *La Mettrie* is its centre. *Descartes* was still living when *Le Roy*, like *La Mettrie* in the eighteenth century, transposed the Cartesian structure of the animal to the human soul and declared that the soul is a *modus of the body* and *ideas* are *mechanical motions*. *Le Roy* even though *Descartes* had kept his real opinion secret. *Descartes* protested. At the end of the eighteenth century *Cabanis* perfected Cartesian materialism in his treatise: *Rapport du physique et du moral de l'homme*.

Cartesian materialism still exists today in France. It has achieved great successes in *mechanical natural science* which, "speaking *exactly* and in the *prosaic sense*", will be least of all reproached with *romanticism*.

The *metaphysics* of the seventeenth century, represented in France by *Descartes*, had *materialism* as its *antagonist* from its very birth. The latter's opposition to *Descartes* was personified by *Gassendi*, the restorer of *Epicurean* materialism. French and English materialism was always closely related to *Democritus* and *Epicurus*. Cartesian metaphysics had another opponent in the *English* materialist *Hobbes*. *Gassendi* and *Hobbes* triumphed over their opponent long after their death at the very time when metaphysics was already officially dominant in all French schools.

Voltaire pointed out that the indifference of the French of the eighteenth century to the disputes between the Jesuits and the Jansenists^[32] was due less to philosophy than to *Law's* financial speculations. So, the downfall of seventeenth-century metaphysics can be explained by the materialistic theory of the eighteenth century only in so far as this theoretical movement itself is explained by the practical nature of French life at that time. This life was turned to the immediate present, to worldly enjoyment and worldly interests, to the *earthly* world. Its anti-theological, anti-metaphysical, materialistic practice demanded corresponding anti-theological, anti-metaphysical, materialistic theories. Metaphysics had *in practice* lost all credit. Here we have only to indicate briefly the *theoretical* course of events.

In the seventeenth century metaphysics (cf. *Descartes*, *Leibniz*, and others) still contained a *positive*, secular element. It made discoveries in mathematics, physics and other exact sciences which seemed to come within its scope. This semblance was done away with as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century. The positive sciences broke away from metaphysics and marked out their independent fields. The whole wealth of metaphysics now consisted only of beings of thought and heavenly things, at the very time when real beings and earthly things began to be the centre of all interest. Metaphysics had become insipid. In the

very year in which Malebranche and Arnauld, the last great French metaphysicians of the seventeenth century, died, *Helvétius* and *Condillac* were born.

The man who deprived seventeenth-century metaphysics and metaphysics in general of all *credit* in the domain of *theory* was *Pierre Bayle*. His weapon was *skepticism*, which he forged out of metaphysics' own magic formulas. He himself proceeded at first from Cartesian metaphysics. Just as *Feuerbach* by combating speculative theology was driven further to combat *speculative philosophy*, precisely because he recognized in speculation the last drop of theology, because he had to force theology to retreat from pseudo-science to *crude*, repulsive *faith*, so Bayle too was driven by religious doubt to doubt about the metaphysics which was the prop of that faith. He therefore critically investigated metaphysics in its entire historical development. He became its historian in order to write the history of its death. He refuted chiefly *Spinoza* and *Leibniz*.

Pierre Bayle not only prepared the reception of materialism and of the philosophy of common sense in France by shattering metaphysics with his skepticism. He heralded the *atheistic society* which was soon to come into existence by proving that a society consisting only of atheists is *possible*, that an atheist can be a man worthy of respect, and that it is not by atheism but by superstition and idolatry that man debases himself.

To quote a French writer, *Pierre Bayle* was "the last metaphysician in the sense of the seventeenth century and the first philosopher in the sense of the eighteenth century".

Besides the negative refutation of seventeenth-century theology and metaphysics, a *positive, anti-metaphysical* system was required. A book was needed which would systematize and theoretically substantiate the life practice of that time. *Locke's* treatise *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* came from across the Channel as if in answer to a call. It was welcomed enthusiastically like a long-awaited guest.

The question arises: Is *Locke* perhaps a disciple of *Spinoza*? "Profane" history can answer:

Materialism is the *natural-born* son of *Great Britain*. Already the British schoolman, *Duns Scotus*, asked, "*whether it was impossible for matter to think?*"

In order to affect this miracle, he took refuge in God's omnipotence, i.e., he made *theology* preach *materialism*. Moreover, he was a nominalist. Nominalism, the *first form* of materialism, is chiefly found among the *English* schoolmen.

The real progenitor of *English materialism* and all *modern experimental* science is *Bacon*. To him natural philosophy is the only true philosophy, and *physics* based upon the experience of the senses is the most chief part of natural philosophy. *Anaxagoras* and his *homoeomeriae*, *Democritus* and his atoms, he often quotes as his authorities. According to him the *senses* are infallible and the *source* of all knowledge. All science is based on *experience*, and consists in subjecting the data furnished by the senses to a *rational method* of investigation. Induction, analysis, comparison, observation, experiment, are the principal forms of such a rational method. Among the qualities inherent in *matter*, *motion* is the first and foremost, not only in the form of *mechanical* and *mathematical* motion, but chiefly in the form of an *impulse*, a *vital spirit*, a *tension* — or a '*Qual*', to use a term of *Jakob Böhme's* — of matter. The primary forms of matter are the living, individualizing *forces of being* inherent in it and producing the distinctions between the species.

In *Bacon*, its first creator, materialism still holds back within itself in a naive way the germs of a many-sided development. On the one hand, matter, surrounded by a sensuous, poetic glamour, seems to attract man's whole entity by winning smiles. On the other, the aphoristically formulated doctrine pullulates with inconsistencies imported from theology.

In its further evolution, materialism becomes *one-sided*. *Hobbes* is the man who *systematizes Baconian* materialism. Knowledge based upon the senses loses its poetic blossom, it passes into the abstract experience of the *geometrician*. *Physical* motion is sacrificed to *mechanical* or *mathematical* motion; *geometry* is proclaimed as the queen of sciences. Materialism takes to *misanthropy*. If it is to overcome its opponent, *misanthropic*, *fleshless* spiritualism, and that on the latter's own ground, materialism has to chastise its own flesh and turn *ascetic*. Thus, it passes into an *intellectual entity*; but thus, too, it evolves all the consistency, regardless of consequences, characteristic of the intellect.

Hobbes, as Bacon's continuator, argues thus: if all human knowledge is furnished by the senses, then our concepts, notions, and ideas are but the phantoms of the real world, more or less divested of its sensual form. Philosophy can but give names to these phantoms. One name may be applied to more than one of them. There may even be names of names. But it would imply a contradiction if, on the one hand, we maintained that all ideas had their origin in the world of sensation, and, on the other, that a word was more than a word; that besides the beings known to us by our senses, beings which are one and all individuals, there existed also beings of a general, not individual, nature. An *unbodily substance* is the same absurdity as an *unbodily body*. *Body*, *being*, *substance*, are but different terms for the same *reality*. It is impossible to separate thought from matter *that* thinks. This matter is the substratum of all changes going on in the world. The word *infinite* is *meaningless*, unless it states that our mind is capable of performing an endless process of addition. Only material things being perceptible, knowable to us, we cannot know *anything* about the existence of God. My own existence alone is certain. Every human passion is a mechanical movement which has a beginning and an end. The objects of impulse are what we call good. Man is subject to the same laws as nature. Power and freedom are identical.

Hobbes had systematized Bacon without, however, furnishing a proof for Bacon's fundamental principle, the origin of all human knowledge and ideas from the world of sensation.

It was *Locke* who, in his *Essay on the Humane Understanding*, supplied this proof.

Hobbes had shattered the *theistic* prejudices of Baconian materialism; Collins, Dodwell, Coward, Hartley, Priestley, similarly shattered the last theological bars that still hemmed in Locke's sensationalism. At all events, for materialists, deism is but an easy-going way of getting rid of religion.

We have already mentioned how opportune Locke's work was for the French. Locke founded the philosophy of *bon sens*, of common sense; i.e., he said indirectly that there cannot be any philosophy at variance with the healthy human senses and reason based on them.

Locke's *immediate* pupil, *Condillac*, who translated him into *French*, at once applied Locke's sensualism against seventeenth-century *metaphysics*. He proved that the French had rightly rejected this metaphysics as a mere botch work of fancy and theological prejudice. He published a refutation of the systems of *Descartes*, *Spinoza*, *Leibniz* and *Malebranche*.

In his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* he expounded Locke's ideas and proved that not only the soul, but the senses too, not only the art of creating ideas, but also the art of sensuous perception, are matters of *experience* and *habit*. The whole development of man therefore depends on *education* and *external circumstances*. It was only by *eclectic* philosophy that Condillac was ousted from the French schools.

The difference between *French* and *English* materialism reflects the difference between the two nations. The French imparted to English materialism wit, flesh and blood, and eloquence. They gave it the temperament and grace that it lacked. They *civilized* it.

In *Helvétius*, who also based himself on Locke, materialism assumed a really French character. Helvétius conceived it immediately in its application to social life (Helvétius, *De l'homme*). The sensory qualities and self-love, enjoyment and correctly understood personal interest are the basis of all morality. The natural equality of human intelligences, the unity of progress of reason and progress of industry, the natural goodness of man, and the omnipotence of education, are the main features in his system.

In *Lamettrie's* works we find a synthesis of Cartesian and English materialism. He makes use of Descartes' physics in detail. His *Man Machine*^[33] is a treatise after the model of Descartes' animal-machine. The physical part of Holbach's *Système de la nature* is also a result of the combination of French and English materialism, while the moral part is based essentially on the morality of Helvétius. *Robinet (De la nature)*, the French materialist who had the most connection with metaphysics and was therefore praised by Hegel, refers explicitly to *Leibniz*.

We need not dwell on Volney, Dupuis, Diderot and others, any more than on the physiocrats, after we have proved the dual origin of French materialism from Descartes' physics and English materialism, and the opposition of French materialism to seventeenth-century *metaphysics*, to the metaphysics of Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, and Leibniz. This opposition only became evident to the Germans after they themselves had come into opposition to *speculative metaphysics*.

Just as *Cartesian* materialism passes into *natural science proper*, the other trend of French materialism leads directly to *socialism* and *communism*.

There is no need for any great penetration to see from the teaching of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism. If man draws all his knowledge, sensation, etc., from the world of the senses and the experience gained in it, then what has to be done is to arrange the empirical world in such a way that man experiences and becomes accustomed to what is truly human in it and that he becomes aware of himself as man. If correctly understood interest is the principle of all morality, man's private interest must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity. If man is unfree in the materialistic sense, i.e., is free not through the negative power to avoid this or that, but through the positive power to assert his true individuality, crime must not be punished in the individual, but the anti-social sources of crime must be destroyed, and each man must be given social scope for the vital manifestation of his being. If man is shaped by environment, his environment must be made human. If man is social by nature, he will develop his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of the separate individual but by the power of society. These and similar propositions are to be found almost literally even in the oldest French materialists. This is not the place to

assess them. The apologia of vices by Mandeville, one of Locke's early English followers, is typical of the socialist tendencies of materialism. He proves that in *modern* society vice is *indispensable* and *useful*. [Bernard de. Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*] This was by no means an apologia for modern society.

Fourier proceeds directly from the teaching of the French materialists. The *Babouvists* were crude, uncivilized materialists, but developed communism, too, derives *directly* from *French materialism*. The latter returned to its mother-country, *England*, in the form *Helvétius* gave it. *Bentham* based his system of *correctly understood interest* on *Helvétius'* morality, and *Owen* proceeded from *Bentham's* system to found English communism. Exiled to England, the Frenchman *Cabet* came under the influence of communist ideas there and on his return to France became the most popular, if the most superficial, representative of communism. Like *Owen*, the more scientific French Communists, *Dézamy*, *Gay* and others, developed the teaching of *materialism* as the teaching of *real humanism* and the *logical basis of communism*.

Where, then, did Herr Bauer or, *Criticism*, manage to acquire the documents for the Critical history of French materialism?

1) Hegel's [*Vorlesungen über die*] *Geschichte der Philosophie* presents French materialism as the *realization* of the Substance of Spinoza, which at any rate is far more comprehensible than "the French school of Spinoza'.

2) Herr Bauer read Hegel's *Geschichte der Philosophie* as saying that French materialism was the *school* of Spinoza. Then, as he found in another of Hegel's works that deism and materialism are *two parties* representing *one and the same* basic principle, he concluded that Spinoza had *two* schools which disputed over the meaning of his system. Herr Bauer could have found the supposed explanation in Hegel's *Phänomenologie*, where it is said:

"Regarding that Absolute Being, *Enlightenment* itself fails out with itself ... and is divided between the views of *two parties*.... The one ... calls *Absolute Being* that predicateless Absolute ... the other calls it *matter* Both are entirely the *same* notion — the distinction lies not in the objective fact, but purely in the diversity of starting-point adopted by the two developments" (Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, pp. 420, 421, 422)

3) Finally, Herr Bauer could find, again in Hegel, that when Substance does not develop into a concept and self-consciousness, it degenerates into "romanticism". The journal *Hallische Jahrbücher* at one time developed a similar theory.

But at all costs the "*Spirit*" had to decree a "*foolish destiny*" for its "*adversary*", *materialism*.

Note. French materialism's connection with Descartes and Locke and the opposition of eighteenth-century philosophy to seventeenth-century metaphysics are presented in detail in most recent *French* histories of philosophy. In this respect, we had only to repeat against Critical Criticism what was already known. But the connection of eighteenth-century materialism with English and French *communism* of the nineteenth century still needs to be presented in detail. We confine ourselves here to quoting a few typical passages from *Helvétius*, *Holbach* and *Bentham*.

1) *Helvétius*. "Man is not wicked, but he is subordinate to his interests. One must not therefore complain of the wickedness of man but of the ignorance of the legislators, who have always placed the particular interest in opposition to the general interest." — "The moralists have so far had no

success because we have to dig into legislation to pull out the roots which create vice. In New Orleans women have the right to repudiate their husbands as soon as they are tired of them. In countries like that women are not faithless, because they have no interest in being so." – "Morality is but a frivolous science when not combined with politics and legislation The hypocritical moralists can be recognized on the one hand by the equanimity with which they consider vices which undermine the state, and on the other by the fury with which they condemn private vice" – "Human beings are born neither good nor bad but ready to become one or the other according as a common interest unites or divides them." – "If citizens could not achieve their own particular good without achieving the general good, there would be no vicious people except fools" (*De l'esprit*. 1, Paris, 1822, pp. 117, 240, 241, 249, 251, 369 and 339).

As, according to Helvétius, it is education, by which he means (cf. loc. cit., p. 390) not only education in the ordinary sense but the totality of the individual's conditions of life, which forms man, if a reform is necessary to abolish the contradiction between particular interests and those of society, so, on the other hand, a transformation of consciousness is necessary to carry out such a reform:

"Great reforms can be implemented only by weakening the stupid respect of peoples for old laws and customs" (loc. cit., p. 260)

or, as he says elsewhere, by abolishing ignorance.

2) *Holbach*. "Man can only love himself in the objects he loves: he can have affection only for himself in the other beings of his-kind." "Man can never separate himself from himself for a single instant in his life, he cannot lose sight of himself." "It is always our convenience, our interest ... that makes us hate or love things." (*Système social*, t. 1, Paris, 1822, 56 pp. 80, 112), but "In his own interest man must love other men, because they are necessary to welfare.... Morality proves to him that of all beings the most necessary to man is man." (p. 76). "True morality, and true politics as well, is that which seeks to bring men nearer to one another to make them work by united efforts for their common happiness. Any morality which separates our interests from *those of* our associates, is false, senseless, unnatural." (p. 116). "To love others ... is to merge our interests with *those of* our associates, to work for the common benefit.... Virtue is but the usefulness of men united in *society*". (p. 77). "A man without desires or passions would cease to be a man.... Perfectly detached from himself, how could one make him decide to attach himself to others? A man indifferent to everything and having no passions, sufficient to himself, would cease to be a social being.... Virtue is but the communication of good." (loc. cit., p. 118). "Religious morality never served to make mortals more sociable." (loc. cit., p. 36).

3) *Bentham*. We only quote one passage from Bentham in which he opposes "*intérêt général* in the political sense" "The interest of individuals ... must give way to the public interest. But ... what does that mean? Is not each individual part of the public as much as any other? This public interest that you personify is but an abstract term: it represents but the mass of individual interests.... If it were good to sacrifice the fortune of one individual to increase that of others, it would be better to sacrifice that of a second, a third, and so on ad infinitum.... Individual interests are the only real interests." (Bentham, *Théorie des peines et des récompenses*, Paris, 1826, 3ème 6d., II, p. [229], 230).

III. Basic Forms of Motion

Motion in the most general sense, conceived as the mode of existence, the inherent attribute of matter, comprehends all changes and processes occurring in the universe, from mere change of place right up to thinking. The investigation of the nature of motion had, as a matter of course, to start from the lowest, simplest forms of this motion and to learn to grasp these before it could achieve anything in the way of explanation of the higher and more complicated forms. Hence, in the historical evolution of the natural sciences we see how first of all the theory of simplest change of place, the mechanics of heavenly bodies and terrestrial masses, was developed; it was followed by the theory of molecular motion, physics, and immediately afterwards, almost alongside of it and in some places in advance of it, the science of the motion of atoms, chemistry. Only after these different branches of the knowledge of the forms of motion governing non-living nature had attained a high degree of development could the explanation of the processes of motion represented by the life process be successfully tackled. This advanced in proportion with the progress of mechanics, physics, and chemistry. Consequently, while mechanics has for a fairly long time already been able adequately to refer to the effects in the animal body of the bony levers set into motion by muscular contraction and to the laws that prevail also in non-living nature, the physio-chemical establishment of the other phenomena of life is still pretty much at the beginning of its course. Hence, in investigating here the nature of motion, we are compelled to leave the organic forms of motion out of account. We are compelled to restrict ourselves - in accordance with the state of science - to the forms of motion of non-living nature.

All motion is bound up with some change of place, whether it be change of place of heavenly bodies, terrestrial masses, molecules, atoms, or ether particles. The higher the form of motion, the smaller this change of place. It in no way exhausts the nature of the motion concerned, but it is inseparable from the motion. It, therefore, has to be investigated before anything else.

The whole of nature accessible to us forms a system, an interconnected totality of bodies, and by bodies we understand here all material existence extending from stars to atoms, indeed right to ether particles, in so far as one grants the existence of the last named. In the fact that these bodies are interconnected is already included that they react on one another, and it is precisely this mutual reaction that constitutes motion. It already becomes evident here that matter is unthinkable without motion. And if, in addition, matter confronts us as something given, equally uncreatable as indestructible, it follows that motion also is as uncreatable as indestructible. It became impossible to reject this conclusion as soon as it was recognized that the universe is a system, an interconnection of bodies. And since this recognition had been reached by philosophy long before it came into effective operation in natural science, it is explicable why philosophy, fully two hundred years before natural science, drew the conclusion of the uncreatability and indestructibility of motion. Even the form in which it did so is still superior to the present-day formulation of natural science. Descartes' principle, that the amount of motion present in the universe is always the same, has only the formal defect of applying a finite expression to an infinite magnitude. On the other hand, two expressions of the same law are at present current in natural science: Helmholtz's law of the conservation of force, and the newer, more precise, one of the conservations of energy. Of these, the one, as we shall see, says the exact opposite of the other, and moreover each of them expresses only one side of the relation.

When two bodies act on each other so that a change of place of one or both of them results, this change of place can consist only in an approach or a separation. They either attract each other or they repel each other. Or, as mechanics expresses it, the forces operating between them are central, acting along the line joining their centers. That this happens, that it is the case throughout the universe without exception, however complicated many movements may appear to be, is nowadays accepted as a matter of course. It would seem nonsensical to us to assume, when two bodies act on each other and their mutual interaction is not opposed by any obstacle or the influence of a third body, that this action should be affected otherwise than along the shortest and most direct path, i.e. along the straight line joining their centers. It is well known, moreover, that Helmholtz (*Erhaltung der Kraft* [*The Conservation of Force*], Berlin, 1847, Sections 1 and 2) has provided the mathematical proof that central action and inalterability of the quantity of motion are reciprocally conditioned and that the assumption of other than central actions leads to results in which motion could be either created or destroyed. Hence the basic form of all motion is approximation and separation, contraction and expansion - in short, the old polar opposites of *attraction* and *repulsion*.

It is expressly to be noted that attraction and repulsion are not regarded here as so-called "*forces*" but as *simple forms of motion*, just as Kant had already conceived matter as the unity of attraction and repulsion. What is to be understood by the conception of "*forces*" will be shown in due course.

All motion consists in the interplay of attraction and repulsion. Motion, however, is only possible when each individual attraction is compensated by a corresponding repulsion somewhere else. Otherwise in time one side would get the preponderance over the other and then motion would finally cease. Hence all attractions and all repulsions in the universe must mutually balance one another. Thus, the law of the indestructibility and uncreatability of motion takes the form that each movement of attraction in the universe must have as its complement an equivalent movement of repulsion and *vice versa*; or, as ancient philosophy - long before the natural scientific formulation of the law of conservation of force or energy - expressed it: the sum of all attractions in the universe is equal to the sum of all repulsions.

However, it appears that there are still two possibilities for all motion to cease at some time or other, either by repulsion and attraction finally cancelling each other out in actual fact, or by the total repulsion finally taking possession of one part of matter and the total attraction of the other part. For the dialectical conception, these possibilities are excluded from the outset. Dialectics has proved from the results of our experience of nature so far that all polar opposites in general are determined by the mutual action of the two opposite poles on one another, that the separation and opposition of these poles exist only within their unity and inter-connection, and, conversely, that their inter-connection exists only in their separation and their unity only in their opposition. This once established, there can be no question of a final cancelling out of repulsion and attraction, or of a final partition between the one form of motion in one half of matter and the other form in the other half, consequently there can be no question of mutual penetration or of absolute separation of the two poles. It would be equivalent to demanding in the first case that the north and south poles of a magnet should mutually cancel themselves out or, in the second case, that dividing a magnet in the middle between the two poles should produce on one side a north half without a south pole, and on the other side a south half without a north pole. Although, however, the impermissibility of such assumptions follows at once from the dialectical nature of polar opposites, nevertheless, thanks to the prevailing metaphysical mode of thought of natural scientists, the second assumption at least plays a certain part in physical theory. This will be dealt with in its place.

How does motion present itself in the interaction of attraction and repulsion? We can best investigate this in the separate forms of motion itself. At the end, the general aspect of the matter will show itself.

Let us take the motion of a planet about its central body. The ordinary school textbook of astronomy follows Newton in explaining the ellipse described as the result of the joint action of two forces, the attraction of the central body and a tangential force driving the planet along the normal to the direction of this attraction. Thus, it assumes, besides the form of motion directed centrally, also another direction of motion or so-called "force" perpendicular to the line joining the central points. Thereby it contradicts the above-mentioned basic law according to which all motion in our universe can only take place along the line joining the central points of the bodies acting on one another, or, as one says, is caused only by centrally acting forces. Equally, it introduces into the theory an element of motion which, as we have likewise seen, necessarily leads to the creation and destruction of motion, and therefore presupposes a creator. What had to be done, therefore, was to reduce this mysterious tangential force to a form of motion acting centrally, and this the Kant-Laplace theory of cosmogony accomplished. As is well known, according to this conception the whole solar system arose from a rotating, extremely tenuous, gaseous mass by gradual contraction. The rotational motion is obviously strongest at the equator of this gaseous sphere, and individual gaseous rings separate themselves from the mass and clump themselves together into planets, planetoids, etc., which revolve round the central body in the direction of the original rotation. This rotation itself is usually explained from the motion characteristic of the individual particles of gas. This motion takes place in all directions, but finally an excess in one particular direction makes itself evident and so causes the rotating motion, which is bound to become stronger and stronger with the progressive contraction of the gaseous sphere. But whatever hypothesis is assumed of the origin of the rotation, it abolishes the tangential force, dissolving it in a special form of the phenomena of centrally acting motion. If the one element of planetary motion, the directly central one, is represented by gravitation, the attraction between the planet and the central body, then the other tangential element appears as a relic, in a derivative or altered form, of the original repulsion of the individual particles of the gaseous sphere. Then the life process of a solar system presents itself as an interplay of attraction and repulsion, in which attraction gradually more and more gets the upper hand owing to repulsion being radiated into space in the form of heat and thus more and more becoming lost to the system.

One sees at a glance that the form of motion here conceived as repulsion is the same as that which modern physics terms "*energy*." By the contraction of the system and the resulting detachment of the individual bodies of which it consists to-day, the system has lost "*energy*," and indeed this loss, according to Helmholtz's well-known calculation, already amounts to 453/454 of the total quantity of motion originally present in the form of repulsion.

Let us take now a mass in the shape of a body on our earth itself. It is connected with the earth by gravitation, as the earth in turn is with the sun; but unlike the earth it is incapable of a free planetary motion. It can be set in motion only by an impulse from outside, and even then, as soon as the impulse ceases, its movement speedily comes to a standstill, whether by the effect of gravity alone or by the latter in combination with the resistance of the medium in which it moves. This resistance also is in the last resort an effect of gravity, in the absence of which the earth would not have on its surface any resistant medium, any atmosphere. Hence in pure mechanical motion on the earth's surface we are concerned with a situation in which gravitation, attraction, decisively predominates, where therefore the production of the motion

shows both phases: first counteracting gravity and then allowing gravity to act - in a word, production of rising and falling.

Thus, we have again mutual action between attraction on the one hand and a form of motion taking place in the opposite direction to it, hence a repelling form of motion, on the other hand. But within the sphere of terrestrial *pure* mechanics (which deals with masses of *given* states of aggregation and cohesion taken by it as unalterable) this repelling form of motion does not occur in nature. The physical and chemical conditions under which a lump of rock becomes separated from a mountain top, or a fall of water becomes possible, lie outside our sphere. Therefore, in terrestrial pure mechanics, the repelling, raising motion must be produced artificially: by human force, animal force, water or steam power, etc. And this circumstance, this necessity to combat the natural attraction artificially, causes the mechanicians to adopt the view that attraction, gravitation, or, as they say, the force of gravity, is the most important, indeed the basic, form of motion in nature.

When, for instance, a weight is raised and communicates motion to other bodies by falling directly or indirectly, then according to the usual view of mechanics it is not the raising of the weight which communicates this motion but the force of gravity. Thus Helmholtz, for instance, makes "the force which is the simplest and the one with which we are best acquainted, viz. gravity, act as the driving force... for instance in grandfather clocks that are actuated by a weight. The weight... cannot comply with the pull of gravity without setting the whole clockwork in motion." But it cannot set the clockwork in motion without itself sinking and it goes on sinking until the string from which it hangs is completely unwound:

"Then the clock comes to a stop, for the operative capacity of the weight is exhausted for the time being. Its weight is not lost or diminished, it remains attracted to the same extent by the earth, but the capacity of this weight to produce movements has been lost.... We can, however, wind up the clock by the power of the human arm, whereby the weight is once more raised up. As soon as this has happened, it regains its previous operative capacity and can again keep the clock in motion."
(Helmholtz, *Popular Lectures*, German Edition, II. pp. 144 - 5.)

According to Helmholtz, therefore, it is not the active communication of motion, the raising of the weight, that sets the clock into motion, but the passive heaviness of the weight, although this same heaviness is only withdrawn from its passivity by the raising, and once again returns to passivity after the string of the weight has unwound. If then according to the modern conception, as we saw above, energy is only another expression for repulsion, here in the older Helmholtz conception force appears as another expression for the opposite of repulsion, for attraction. For the time being we shall simply put this on record.

When this process, as far as terrestrial mechanics is concerned, has reached its end, when the heavy mass has first of all been raised and then again let fall through the same height, what becomes of the motion that constituted it? For pure mechanics, it has disappeared. But we know now that it has by no means been destroyed. To a lesser extent it has been conveyed into the air as oscillations of sound waves, to a much greater extent into heat - which has been communicated in part to the resisting atmosphere, in part to the falling body itself, and finally in part to the floor, on which the weight comes to rest. The clock weight has also gradually given up its motion in the form of frictional heat to the separate driving wheels of the clockwork. But, although usually expressed in this way, it is not the falling motion, i.e. the attraction, that has passed into heat, and therefore into a form of repulsion. On the contrary, as Helmholtz correctly

remarks, the attraction, the heaviness, remains what it previously was and, accurately speaking, becomes even greater. Rather it is the repulsion communicated to the raised body by rising that is mechanically destroyed by falling and reappears as heat. The repulsion of masses is transformed into molecular repulsion.

Heat, as already stated, is a form of repulsion. It sets the molecules of solid bodies into oscillation, thereby loosening the connections of the separate molecules until finally the transition to the liquid state takes place. In the liquid state also, on continued addition of heat, it increases the motion of the molecules until a degree is reached at which the latter split off altogether from the mass and, at a definite velocity determined for each molecule by its chemical constitution, they move away individually in the free state. With a still further addition of heat, this velocity is further increased, and so the molecules are more and more repelled from one another.

But heat is a form of so-called "energy"; here once again the latter proves to be identical with repulsion.

In the phenomena of static electricity and magnetism, we have a polar division of attraction and repulsion. Whatever hypothesis may be adopted of the *modus operandi* of these two forms of motion, in view of the facts no one has any doubt that attraction and repulsion, in so far as they are produced by static electricity or magnetism and are able to develop unhindered, completely compensate one another, as in fact necessarily follows from the very nature of the polar division. Two poles whose activities did not completely compensate each other would indeed not be poles, and also have so far not been discovered in nature. For the time being we will leave galvanism out of account, because in its case the process is determined by chemical reactions, which makes it more complicated. Therefore, let us investigate rather the chemical processes of motion themselves.

When two parts by weight of hydrogen combine with 15.96 parts by weight of oxygen to form water vapor, an amount of heat of 68,924 heat units is developed during the process. Conversely, if 17.96 parts by weight of water vapor are to be decomposed into 2 parts by weight of hydrogen and 15.96 parts by weight of oxygen, this is only possible on condition that the water vapor has communicated to it an amount of motion equivalent to 68,924 heat units - whether in the form of heat itself or of electrical motion. The same thing holds for all other chemical processes. In the overwhelming majority of cases, motion is given off on combination and must be supplied on decomposition. Here, too, as a rule, repulsion is the active side of the process more endowed with motion or requiring the addition of motion, while attraction is the passive side producing a surplus of motion and giving off motion. On this account, the modern theory also declares that, on the whole, energy is set free on the combination of elements and is bound up on decomposition. And Helmholtz declares:

"This force (chemical affinity) can be conceived as a force of *attraction*.... This force of attraction between the atoms of carbon and oxygen performs work quite as much as that exerted on a raised weight by the earth in the form of gravitation.... When carbon and oxygen atoms rush at one another and combine to form carbonic acid, the newly-formed particles of carbonic acid must be in very violent molecular motion, i.e. in heat motion.... When after they have given up their heat to the environment, we still have in the carbonic acid all the carbon, all the oxygen, and in addition the affinity of both continuing to exist just as powerfully as before. But this affinity now expresses itself

solely in the fact that the atoms of carbon and oxygen stick fast to one another, and do not allow of their being separated" (Helmholtz, *loc. cit.*, p. 169).

It is just as before: Helmholtz insists that in chemistry as in mechanics *force* consists only in *attraction*, and therefore is the exact opposite of what other physicists call energy and which is identical with repulsion.

Hence, we have now no longer the two simple basic forms of attraction and repulsion, but a whole series of sub-forms in which the winding up and running down process of universal motion goes on in opposition to both attraction and repulsion. It is, however, by no means merely in our mind that these manifold forms of appearance are comprehended under the single expression of motion. On the contrary, they themselves prove in action that they are forms of one and the same motion by passing into one another under given conditions. Mechanical motion of masses passes into heat, into electricity, into magnetism; heat and electricity pass into chemical decomposition; chemical combination in turn develops heat and electricity and, by means of the latter, magnetism; and finally, heat and electricity produce once more mechanical movement of masses. Moreover, these changes take place in such a way that a given quantity of motion of one form always has corresponding to it an exactly fixed quantity of another form. Further, it is a matter of indifference which form of motion provides the unit by which the amount of motion is measured, whether it serves for measuring mass motion, heat, so-called electromotive force, or the motion undergoing transformation in chemical processes.

We base ourselves here on the theory of the "conservation of energy" established by J. R. Mayer ²⁰ in 1842 and afterwards worked out internationally with such brilliant success, and we have now to investigate the fundamental concepts nowadays made use of by this theory. These are the concepts of "force", "energy", and "work".

It has been shown above that according to the modern view, now fairly generally accepted, energy is the term used for repulsion, while Helmholtz generally uses the word force to express attraction. One could regard this as a mere distinction of form, inasmuch as attraction and repulsion compensate each other in the universe, and accordingly it would appear a matter of indifference which side of the relation is taken as positive and which as negative, just as it is of no importance in itself whether the positive abscissae are counted to the right or the left of a point in a given line. Nevertheless, this is not absolutely so.

For we are concerned here, first of all, not with the universe, but with phenomena occurring on the earth and conditioned by the exact position of the earth in the solar system, and of the solar system in the

²⁰ Helmholtz, in his Pop. Vorlesungen [Popular Lectures], II, p. 113, appears to ascribe a certain share in the natural scientific proof of Descartes' principle of the quantitative immutability of motion to himself as well as to Mayer, Joule, and Codling. "I myself, without knowing anything of Mayer and Codling, and only becoming acquainted with Joule's experiments at the end of my work, proceeded along the same path; I occupied myself especially with searching out all the relations between the various processes of nature that could be deduced from the given mode of consideration, and I published my investigations in 1847 in a little work entitled *Über die Erhaltung der Kraft* [On the Conservation of Force]." - But in this work, there is to be found nothing new for the position in 1847 beyond the above-mentioned, mathematically very valuable, development that "conservation of force" and central action of the forces active between the various bodies of a system are only two different expressions for the same thing, and further a more accurate formulation of the law that the sum of the live and tensional forces in a given mechanical system is constant. In every other respect, it was already superseded since Mayer's second paper of 1845. Already in 1842 Mayer maintained the "indestructibility of force", and from his new standpoint in 1845 he had much more brilliant things to say about the "relations between the various processes of nature" than Helmholtz had in 1847.

universe. At every moment, however, our solar system gives out enormous quantities of motion into space, and motion of a very definite quality, viz. the sun's heat, *i.e.* repulsion. But our earth itself allows of the existence of life on it only owing to the sun's heat, and it in turn finally radiates into space the sun's heat received, after it has converted a portion of this heat into other forms of motion. Consequently, in the solar system and above all on the earth, attraction already considerably preponderates over repulsion. Without the repulsive motion radiated to us from the sun, all motion on the earth would cease. If to-morrow the sun was to become cold, the attraction on the earth would still, other circumstances remaining the same, be what it is to-day. As before, a stone of 100 kilograms, wherever situated, would weigh 100 kilograms. But the motion, both of masses and of molecules and atoms, would come to what we would regard as an absolute standstill. Therefore, it is clear that for processes occurring on the *earth* to-day it is by no means a matter of indifference whether attraction or repulsion is conceived as the active side of motion, hence as "force" or "energy." On the contrary, on the earth to-day attraction has already become *altogether passive* owing to its decisive preponderance over repulsion; we owe all active motion to the supply of repulsion from the sun. Therefore, the modern school - even if it remains unclear about the nature of the relation constituting motion - nevertheless, in point of fact and for *terrestrial* processes, indeed for the whole solar system, is absolutely right in conceiving energy as repulsion.

The expression "energy" by no means correctly expresses all the relationships of motion, for it comprehends only one aspect, the action but not the reaction. It still makes it appear as if "energy" was something external to matter, something implanted in it. But in all circumstances, it is to be preferred to the expression "force."

As conceded on all hands (from Hegel to Helmholtz), the notion of force is derived from the activity of the human organism within its environment. We speak of muscular force, of the lifting force of the arm, of the leaping power of the legs, of the digestive force of the stomach and intestinal canal, of the sensory force of the nerves, of the secretory force of the glands, etc. In other words, in order to save having to give the real cause of a change brought about by a function of our organism, we fabricate a fictitious cause, a so-called force corresponding to the change. Then we carry this convenient method over to the external world also, and so invent as many forces as there are diverse phenomena.

In Hegel's time natural science (with the exception perhaps of heavenly and terrestrial mechanics) was still in this naive state, and Hegel quite correctly attacks the prevailing way of denoting forces (passage to be quoted).²¹ Similarly in another passage:

"It is better (to say) that a magnet has a *Soul* (as Thales expresses it) than that it has an attracting force; force is a kind of property which is *separable from matter* and put forward as a predicate - while soul, on the other hand, *is its movement, identical with the nature of matter*." (*Geschichte der Philosophie* [History of Philosophy], I, p. 208.)

To-day we no longer make it so easy for ourselves in regard to forces. Let us listen to Helmholtz:

"If we are fully acquainted with a natural law, we must also demand that it should operate without exception.... Thus, the law confronts us as an objective power, and accordingly we term it a *force*. For instance, we objectivize the law of the refraction of light as a refractive power of transparent substances, the law of chemical affinities as a force of affinity of the various substances for one

²¹ See Appendix II, p. 881.

another. Thus, we speak of the electrical force of contact of metals, of the force of adhesion, capillary force, and so on. These names objectivize laws which in the first place embrace only a limited series of natural processes, *the conditions for which are still rather complicated....* Force is only the objectivized law of action.... The abstract idea of force introduced by us only makes the addition that we have not arbitrarily invented this law but that it is a compulsory law of phenomena. Hence our demand to *understand* the phenomena of nature, *i.e.* to find out their laws, takes on another form of expression, *viz.* that we have to seek out the *forces* which are the causes of the phenomena." (*lLoc. cit.*, pp. 189 - 191. Innsbruck lecture of 1869.)

Firstly, it is certainly a peculiar manner of "objectivizing" if the *purely subjective* notion of *force* is introduced into a natural law that has already been established as independent of our subjectivity and therefore completely *objective*. At most an Old-Hegelian of the strictest type might permit himself such a thing, but not a Neo-Kantian like Helmholtz. Neither the law, when once established, nor its objectivity, nor that of its action, acquires the slightest new objectivity by our interpolating a force into it; what is added is our *subjective assertion* that it acts in virtue of some so far entirely unknown force. The secret meaning, however, of this interpolating is seen as soon as Helmholtz gives us examples: refraction of light, chemical affinity, contact electricity, adhesion, capillarity, and confers on the laws that govern these phenomena the "objective" honorary rank of *forces*. "These names objectivize laws which in the first place embrace only a limited series of natural processes, the conditions for which *are still rather complicated.*" And it is just here that the "objectivizing," which is rather subjectivizing, gets its meaning; not because we have become fully acquainted with the law, but just because this is *not* the case. Just because we are *not* yet clear about the "rather complicated conditions" of these phenomena, we often resort here to the word force. We express thereby not our scientific knowledge, but our *lack* of scientific knowledge of the nature of the law and its mode of action. In this sense, as a short expression for a causal connection that has not yet been explained, as a makeshift expression, it may pass for current usage. Anything more than that is bad. With just as much right as Helmholtz explains physical phenomena from so-called refractive force, electrical force of contact, etc., the medieval scholastics explained temperature changes by means of a *vis calorifica* and a *vis frigifaciens* and thus saved themselves all further investigation of heat phenomena.

And even in this sense it is one-sided, for it expresses everything in a one-sided manner. All natural processes are two-sided, they rest on the relation of at least two effective parts, action and reaction. The notion of force, however, owing to its origin from the action of the human organism on the external world, and further because of terrestrial mechanics, implies that only one part is active, effective, the other part being passive, receptive; hence it lays down a not yet demonstrable extension of the difference between the sexes to non-living objects. The reaction of the second part, on which the force works, appears at most as a passive reaction, as a *resistance*. This mode of conception is permissible in a number of fields even outside pure mechanics, namely where it is a matter of the simple transference of motion and its quantitative calculation. But already in the more complicated physical processes it is no longer adequate, as Helmholtz's own examples prove. The refractive force lies just as much in the light itself as in the transparent bodies. In the case of adhesion and capillarity, it is certain that the "force" is just as much situated in the surface of the solid as in the liquid. In contact electricity, at any rate, it is certain that *both* metals contribute to it, and "chemical affinity" also is situated, if anywhere, in *both* the parts entering into combination. But a force which consists of separated forces, an action which does not evoke its reaction, but which exists solely by itself, is no force in the sense of terrestrial mechanics, the only science in which

one really knows what is meant by a force. For the basic conditions of terrestrial mechanics are, firstly, refusal to investigate the causes of the impulse, *i.e.* the nature of the particular force, and, secondly, the view of the one-sidedness of the force, it being everywhere opposed by an identical gravitational force, such that in comparison with any terrestrial distance of fall the earth's radius = (*infinity*).

But let us see further how Helmholtz, "objectivizes" his "forces" into natural laws.

In a lecture of 1854 (*loc. cit.*, p. 119) he examines the "store of working force" originally contained in the nebular sphere from which our solar system was formed. "In point of fact it received an enormously large legacy in this respect, if only in the form of the general force of attraction of all its parts for one another." This indubitably is so. But it is equally indubitable that the whole of this legacy of gravitation is present undiminished in the solar system to-day, apart perhaps from the minute quantity that was lost together with the matter ' We should now call this potential energy. which was flung out, possibly irrevocably, into space. Further, "The chemical forces too must have been already present and ready to act; but as these forces could become effective only on intimate contact of the various kinds of masses, condensation had to take place before they came into play." If, as Helmholtz does above, we regard these chemical forces as forces of affinity, hence as *attraction*, then again, we are bound to say that the sum-total of these chemical forces of attraction still exists undiminished within the solar system.

But on the same page Helmholtz gives us the results of his calculations "that perhaps only the 454th part of the original mechanical force exists as such" - that is to say, in the solar system. How is one to make sense of that? The force of attraction, general as well as chemical, is still present unimpaired in the solar system. Helmholtz does not mention any other certain source of force. In any case, according to Helmholtz, these forces have performed tremendous work. But they have neither increased nor diminished on that account. As it is with the clock weight mentioned above, so it is with every molecule in the solar system and with the solar system itself. "Its gravitation is neither lost nor diminished." What happens to carbon and oxygen as previously mentioned holds good for all chemical elements: the total given quantity of each one remains, and "the total force of affinity continues to exist just as powerfully as before." What have we lost then? And what "force" has performed the tremendous work which is 453 times as big as that which, according to his calculation, the solar system is still able to perform? Up to this point Helmholtz has given no answer. But further on he says:

"Whether a further *reserve of force in the shape of heat* was present, we do not know." - But, if we may be allowed to mention it, heat is a repulsive "force," it acts therefore *against* the direction of both gravitation and chemical attraction, being minus if these are put as plus. Hence if, according to Helmholtz, the original store of force is composed of general and chemical attraction, an extra reserve of heat would have to be, not added to that reserve of force, but subtracted from it. Otherwise, the sun's heat would have had to *strengthen* the force of attraction of the earth when it causes water to evaporate in direct opposition to this attraction, and the water vapor to rise; or the heat of an incandescent iron tube through which steam is passed would *strengthen* the chemical attraction of oxygen and water, whereas it puts it out of action. Or, to make the same thing clear in another form: let us assume that the nebular sphere with radius r , and therefore with volume $\frac{4}{3}(\pi)r^3$ has a temperature t . Let us further assume a second nebular sphere of equal mass having at the higher temperature T the larger radius R and volume $\frac{4}{3}(\pi)R^3$. Now it is obvious that in the second nebular sphere the attraction, mechanical as well as physical and chemical, can act with the same force as in the first only when it has shrunk from radius R to radius r , *i.e.* when it has

radiated into world space heat corresponding to the temperature difference $T - t$. A hotter nebular sphere will therefore condense later than a colder one; consequently, the heat, considered from Helmholtz's standpoint as an obstacle to condensation, is no plus but a minus of the "reserve of force." Helmholtz, by pre-supposing the possibility of a quantum of *repulsive* motion in the form of heat becoming added to the *attractive* forms of motion and increasing the total of these latter, commits a definite error of calculation.

Let us now bring the whole of this "reserve of force", possible as well as demonstrable, under the same mathematical sign so that an addition is possible. Since for the time being we cannot reverse the heat and replace its repulsion by the equivalent attraction, we shall have to perform this reversal with the two forms of attraction. Then, instead of the general force of attraction, instead of the chemical affinity, and instead of the heat, which moreover possibly already exists as such at the outset, we have simply to put - the sum of the repulsive motion or so-called energy present in the gaseous sphere at the moment when it becomes independent. And by so doing Helmholtz's calculation will also hold, in which he wants to calculate "the heating that must arise from the assumed initial condensation of the heavenly bodies of our system from nebulously scattered matter." By thus reducing the whole "reserve of force" to heat, repulsion, he also makes it possible to add on the assumed "heat reserve force". The calculation then asserts that 453/454 of all the energy, *i.e.* repulsion, originally present in the gaseous sphere has been radiated into space in the form of heat, or, to put it accurately, that the sum of all attraction in the present solar system is to the sum of all repulsion, still present in the same, as 453: 1. But then it directly contradicts the text of the lecture to which it is added as proof.

If then the notion of force, even in the case of a physicist like Helmholtz, gives rise to such confusion of ideas, this is the best proof that it is in general not susceptible of scientific use in all branches of investigation which go beyond the calculations of mechanics. In mechanics the causes of motion are taken as given and their origin is disregarded, only their effects being taken into account. Hence if a cause of motion is termed a force, this does no damage to mechanics as such; but it becomes the custom to transfer this term also to physics, chemistry, and biology, and then confusion is inevitable. We have already seen this and shall frequently see it again.

For the concept of work, see the next chapter.

V. I. Lenin: MATERIALISM and EMPIRIO-CRITICISM

Chapter Six: Empirio-Criticism and Historical Materialism: Section 4. Parties in Philosophy and Philosophical Blockheads

It remains for us to examine the relation between Machism and religion. But this broadens into the question of whether there are parties generally in philosophy, and what is meant by non-partisanship in philosophy.

Throughout the preceding exposition, in connection with every problem of epistemology touched upon and in connection with every philosophical question raised by the new physics, we traced the struggle between *materialism* and *idealism*. Behind the mass of new terminological devices, behind the litter of erudite scholasticism, we invariably discerned *two* principal alignments, two fundamental trends in the solution of philosophical problems. Whether nature, matter, the physical, the external world should be taken as primary, and consciousness, mind, sensation (experience – as the *widespread* terminology of our time has it), the psychical, etc., should be regarded as secondary – that is the root question which *in fact*

continues to divide the philosophers into *two great camps*. The source of thousands upon thousands of errors and of the confusion reigning in this sphere is the fact that beneath the envelope of terms, definitions, scholastic devices and verbal articles, these two fundamental trends are *overlooked*. (Bogdanov, for instance, refuses to acknowledge his idealism, because, you see, instead of the “metaphysical” concepts “nature” and “mind,” he has taken the “experiential”: physical and psychical. A word has been changed!)

The genius of Marx and Engels consisted in the very fact that in the course of a long period, *nearly half a century*, they developed materialism, that they further advanced one fundamental trend in philosophy, that they did not stop at reiterating epistemological problems that had already been solved, but consistently applied – and showed *how* to apply – *this same* materialism in the sphere of the social sciences, mercilessly brushing aside as litter and rubbish the pretentious rigmarole, the innumerable attempts to “discover” a “new” line in philosophy, to invent a “new” trend and so forth. The verbal nature of such attempts, the scholastic play with new philosophical “isms,” the clogging of the issue by pretentious devices, the inability to comprehend and clearly present the struggle between the two fundamental epistemological trends – this is what Marx and Engels persistently pursued and fought against throughout their entire activity.

We said, “nearly half a century.” And, indeed, as far back as 1843, when Marx was only becoming Marx, *i.e.*, the founder of scientific socialism, the founder of *modern materialism*, which is immeasurably richer in content and in comparably more consistent than all preceding forms of materialism, even at that time Marx pointed out with amazing clarity the basic trends in philosophy. Karl Grün quotes a letter from Marx to Feuerbach dated October 20, 1843,²² in which Marx invites Feuerbach to write an article for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*²³ against Schelling. This Schelling, writes Marx, is a shallow braggart with his claims to having embraced and transcended all previous philosophical trends. “To the French romanticists and mystics, he [Schelling] says: I am the union of philosophy and theology; to the French materialists: I am the union of the flesh and the idea; to the French sceptics: I am the destroyer of dogmatism.”²⁴ That the “sceptics,” be they called Humeans or Kantians (or, in the twentieth century, Machians), cry out against the “dogmatism” of both materialism and idealism, Marx at that time already realized; and, without letting himself be diverted by any one of a thousand wretched little philosophical systems, he was able through Feuerbach to take the direct materialist road as against idealism. Thirty years later, in the afterword to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital*, Marx just as clearly and definitely contrasted *his materialism* to Hegel’s *idealism*, the most consistent and developed idealism of all; he contemptuously brushed Comtean “positivism” aside and dubbed as wretched epigoni the contemporary philosophers who imagined that they had destroyed Hegel when in reality they had reverted to a repetition of the pre-Hegelian errors of Kant and Hume.²⁵ In the letter to Kugelmann of June 27, 1870, Marx refers just as contemptuously to “Büchner, Lange, Dühring, Fechner, etc.,” because they understood

²² See Early Writings of K. Marx and F. Engels, 1956, Russian edition, pp. 257-58.

²³ *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French. Yearbooks) – an annual published in Paris in German, edited by Karl Marx and Arnold Ruge. Only the first, double number was issued in February 1844. It contained Marx’s works “The Jewish Question” and “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right. Introduction”, as well as Engels “Outlines of a Criticism of Political Economy” and “The Position of England. Thomas Carlyle. ‘Past and Present’”. These works mark the definitive adoption of the standpoint of materialism and communism by Marx and Engels. Marx’s disagreement in principle with the bourgeois radical Ruge was the main reason why the journal ceased to appear.

²⁴ Karl Grün, Ludwig Feuerbach in seinem Briefwechsel und Nachlass, sowie in seiner philosophischen Charakterentwicklung, I. Bd., Leipzig 1874, S. 361. – Lenin

²⁵ See K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, p. 19.

nothing of Hegel's dialectics and treated him with scorn.²⁶ And finally, take the various philosophical utterances by Marx in *Capital* and other works, and you will find an *invariable* basic motif, *viz.*, insistence upon materialism and contemptuous derision of all obscurity, of all confusion and all deviations towards *idealism*. All Marx's philosophical utterances revolve within these two fundamental opposites, and, in the eyes of professorial philosophy, their defect lies in this "narrowness" and "one-sidedness." As a matter of fact, this refusal to recognize the hybrid projects for reconciling materialism and idealism constitutes the great merit of Marx, who moved *forward* along a sharply-defined philosophical road.

Entirely in the spirit of Marx, and in close collaboration with him, Engels in all his philosophical works briefly and clearly contrasts the materialist and idealist lines in regard to *all* questions, without, either in 1878, or 1888, or 1892,²⁷ taking seriously the endless attempts to "transcend" "one-sidedness" of materialism and idealism, to proclaim a *new* trend – "positivism," "realism," or some other professorial charlatanism. Engels based his *whole* fight against Dühring on the demand for consistent adherence to materialism, accusing the materialist Dühring of verbally confusing the issue, of phrase mongering, of methods of reasoning which involved a compromise with idealism and adoption of the position of idealism. Either materialism consistent to the end, or the falsehood and confusion of philosophical idealism – such is the formulation of the question given in *every paragraph* of *Anti-Dühring*; and only people whose minds had already been corrupted by reactionary professorial philosophy could fail to notice it. And right down to 1894, when the last preface was written to *Anti-Dühring*, revised and enlarged by the author for the last time, Engels continued to follow the latest developments both in philosophy and science, and continued with all his former resoluteness to hold to his lucid and firm position, brushing away the litter of new systems, big and little.

That Engels followed the new developments in philosophy is evident from *Ludwig Feuerbach*. In the 1888 preface, mention is even made of such a phenomenon as the rebirth of classical German philosophy in England and Scandinavia, whereas Engels (both in the preface and in the text of the book) has nothing but the most extreme contempt for the prevailing Neo-Kantianism and Humism. It is quite obvious that Engels, observing the repetition by *fashionable* German and English philosophy of the old pre-Hegelian errors of Kantianism and Humism, was prepared to expect some good even *from the turn to Hegel* (in England and Scandinavia), hoping that the great idealist and dialectician would help to disclose petty idealist and metaphysical errors.²⁸

²⁶ Of the positivist Beesly, Marx, in the letter of December 13, 1870, speaks as follows: "Professor Beesly is a Comtist and as such obliged to think up all sorts of crotchets." Compare this with the opinion given of the positivists of the Huxley type by Engels in 1892.[14] – Lenin

²⁷ Lenin is referring to Engels' works *Anti-Dühring* (1878), *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1888), "Special Introduction to the English Edition of 1892" of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (see F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring* and K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, pp. 358-402, 93-115).

²⁸ See K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 359.

The turn to Hegel in the second half of the nineteenth century was characteristic of the development of bourgeois philosophy in a number of European countries and the U.S.A. In Britain it began with the appearance in 1865 of James Hutchison Stirling's book *The Secret of Hegel*. The bourgeois ideologists were attracted by Hegel's absolute idealism, which offered wide opportunities for a theoretical justification of religion. There developed a special philosophical trend which was given the name of Anglo-Hegelianism, whose representatives (Thomas Green, the brothers Edward and John Caird, Francis Bradley and others) vigorously attacked materialism, making use of the reactionary aspects of Hegel's doctrine.

Without undertaking an examination of the vast number of shades of Neo-Kantianism in Germany and of Humism in England, Engels *from the very outset* refutes their fundamental deviation from materialism. Engels declares that the *entire tendency* of these two schools is “*scientifically a step backward.*” And what is his opinion of the undoubtedly “positivist,” according to the current terminology, the undoubtedly “realist” tendencies of these Neo-Kantians and Humeans, among whose number, for instance, he could not help knowing Huxley? That “positivism” and that “realism” which attracted, and which continue to attract, an infinite number of muddleheads, Engels declared to be *at best a philistine method of smuggling in materialism* while abusing and abjuring it publicly! One has to reflect only very little on *such* an appraisal of Thomas Huxley – a very great scientist and an incomparably more realistic realist and positive positivist than Mach, Avenarius and Co. – in order to understand how contemptuously Engels would have greeted the present infatuation of a group of Marxists with “recent positivism,” the “latest realism,” etc.

Marx and Engels were partisans in philosophy from start to finish, they were able to detect the deviations from materialism and concessions to idealism and fideism in each and every “new” tendency. They therefore appraised Huxley *exclusively* from the standpoint of his materialist consistency. They therefore rebuked Feuerbach for not pursuing materialism to the end, for renouncing materialism because of the errors of individual materialists, for combating religion in order to renovate it or invent a new religion, for being unable, in sociology, to rid himself of idealist phraseology and become a materialist.

And whatever particular mistakes he committed in his exposition of dialectical materialism, J. Dietzgen fully appreciated and took over this great and most precious tradition of his teachers. Dietzgen sinned much by his clumsy deviations from materialism, but he never attempted to dissociate himself from it in principle, he never attempted to hoist a “new” standard and always at the decisive moment he firmly and categorically declared: I am a materialist; our philosophy is a materialist philosophy. “Of all parties,” our Joseph Dietzgen justly said, “the middle party is the most repulsive. . . . Just as parties in politics are more and more becoming divided into two camps . . . so science too is being divided into two general classes (*Generalklassen*): metaphysicians on the one hand, and physicists, or materialists, on the other.”²⁹ The intermediate elements and conciliatory quacks, with their various appellations – spiritualists, sensationalists, realists, etc., etc. – fall into the current on their way. We aim at definiteness and clarity. The reactionaries who sound a retreat (*Retraiteblaser*) call themselves idealists,³⁰ and materialists should be the

In the Scandinavian countries, too, Hegelian philosophy became more influential in the second half of the eighteenth century. In Sweden its revival was sponsored by Johann Borelius who counterposed Hegelianism to the prevailing subjective-idealist philosophy. In Norway the Right-wing Hegelians Marcus Jacob Monrad, G. W. Ling and others interpreted Hegel’s philosophy in the spirit of mysticism, discarding its rationalism and trying to subordinate science to religion. In Denmark, where Hegelian philosophy began to spread even during Hegel’s lifetime, it was criticized from the same standpoint.

The spread of Hegel’s philosophy did not lead to its revival; the bourgeois epigones of Hegel “developed” (mainly in the spirit of subjective idealism) various aspects of his conservative philosophical system. All this paved the way for the emergence at the turn of the century of neo-Hegelian – a reactionary trend of bourgeois philosophical thought in the imperialist era that attempted to adapt Hegel’s philosophy to fascist ideology.

²⁹ Here again we have a clumsy and inexact expression: instead of “metaphysicians,” he should have said “idealists.” Elsewhere Dietzgen himself contrasts the metaphysicians and the dialecticians. – Lenin

³⁰ Note that Dietzgen has corrected himself and now explains more exactly which is the party of the enemies of materialism. – Lenin

name for all who are striving to liberate the human mind from the metaphysical spell. . . . If we compare the two parties respectively to solid and liquid, between them there is a mush.”³¹

True! The “realists,” etc., including the “positivists,” the Machians, etc., are all a wretched mush; they are a contemptible *middle party* in philosophy, who confuse the materialist and idealist trends on every question. The attempt to escape these two basic trends in philosophy is nothing but “conciliatory quackery.”

J. Dietzgen had not the slightest doubt that the “scientific priestcraft” of idealist philosophy is simply the antechamber to open priestcraft. “Scientific priestcraft,” he wrote, “is seriously endeavoring to assist religious priestcraft” (op. cit., p. 51). “In particular, the sphere of epistemology, the misunderstanding of the human mind, is such a louse-hole” (*Lausgrube*) in which both kinds of priests “lay their eggs.” “Graduated flunkys,” who with their talk of “ideal blessings” stultify the people by their tortuous (*geschraubte*) “idealism” (p. 53) — that is J. Dietzgen’s opinion of the professors of philosophy. “Just as the antipodes of the good God is the devil, so the professorial priest (*Kathederpfaffen*) has his opposite pole in the materialist.” The materialist theory of knowledge is “a universal weapon against religious belief” (p. 55), and not only against the “notorious, formal and common religion of the priests, but also against the most refined, elevated professorial religion of muddled (*benebelte*) idealists” (p. 58).

Dietzgen was ready to prefer “religious honesty” to the “half-heartedness” of freethinking professors (p. 60), for “there at least there is a system,” there we find integral people, people who do not separate theory from practice. For the Herr Professors “philosophy is not a science, but a means of defense against Social-Democracy . . .” (p. 107). “All who call themselves philosophers, professors, and university lecturers are, despite their apparent freethinking, more or less immersed in superstition and mysticism . . . and in relation to Social-Democracy constitute a single . . . reactionary mass” (p. 108). “Now, in order to follow the true path, without being led astray by all the religious and philosophical gibberish (*Welsch*), it is necessary to study the falsest of all false paths (*der Holzweg der Holzwege*), philosophy” (p. 103).

Let us now examine Mach, Avenarius and their school from the standpoint of parties in philosophy. Oh, these gentlemen *boast* of their *non-partisanship*, and if they have an antipode, it is the *materialist* . . . and *only* the materialist. A red thread that runs through *all* the writings of *all* the Machians is the stupid claim to have “risen above” materialism and idealism, to have transcended this “obsolete” antithesis; but *in fact*, the whole fraternity are *continually* sliding into idealism and are conducting a steady and incessant struggle against materialism. The subtle epistemological crotchets of a man like Avenarius are but professorial inventions, an attempt to form a small philosophical sect “of his own”; but, *as a matter of fact*, in the general circumstances of the struggle of ideas and trends in modern society, the *objective* part played by these epistemological artifices is in every case the same, namely, to clear the way for idealism and fideism, and to serve them faithfully. In fact, it cannot be an accident that the small school of Empirio-critics is acclaimed by the English spiritualists, like Ward, by the French neo-critics, who praise Mach for his attack on materialism, and by the German immanentists! Dietzgen’s expression, “graduated flunkys of fideism,” hits the nail on the head in the case of Mach, Avenarius and their whole school.³²

³¹ See the article, “Social-Democratic Philosophy,” written in 1876, *Kleinere philosophische Schriften*, 1903, S. 135.] — Lenin

³² Here is another example of how the widespread currents of reactionary bourgeois philosophy make use of Machism in practice. Perhaps the “latest fashion” in the latest American philosophy is “pragmatism” (from the Greek word “pragm” — action; that is, a philosophy of action). The philosophical journals perhaps speak more of pragmatism than of anything else.

It is the misfortune of the Russian Machians, who undertook to “reconcile” Machism and Marxism, that they trusted the reactionary professors of philosophy and as a result slipped down an inclined plane. The methods of operation employed in the various attempts to develop and supplement Marx were not very ingenious. They read Ostwald, believe Ostwald, paraphrase Ostwald and call it Marxism. They read Mach, believe Mach, paraphrase Mach and call it Marxism. They read Poincaré, believe Poincaré, paraphrase Poincaré and call it Marxism! *Not a single one* of these professors, who are capable of making very valuable contributions in the special fields of chemistry, history, or physics, *can be trusted one iota* when it comes to philosophy. Why? For the same reason that *not a single* professor of political economy, who may be capable of very valuable contributions in the field of factual and specialized investigations, can be trusted *one iota* when it comes to the general theory of political economy. For in modern society the latter is as much a *partisan* science as is *epistemology*. Taken as a whole, the professors of economics are nothing but learned salesmen of the capitalist class, while the professors of philosophy are learned salesmen of the theologians.

The task of Marxists in both cases is to be able to master and adapt the achievements of these “salesmen” (for instance, you will not make the slightest progress in the investigation of new economic phenomena unless you have recourse to the works of these salesmen) and *to be able* to lop off their reactionary tendency, to pursue your *own* line and to combat the *whole alignment* of forces and classes hostile to us. And this is just what our Machians were unable to do, they *slavishly* follow the lead of the reactionary professorial philosophy. “Perhaps we have gone astray, but we are seeking,” wrote Lunacharsky in the name of the authors of the *Studies*. The trouble is that it is not *you* who are seeking, but you who are *being sought*! You do not go with your, *i.e.*, Marxist (for you want to be Marxists), standpoint to every change in the bourgeois philosophical fashion; the fashion comes to you, foists upon you its new surrogates got up in the idealist taste, one day *à la* Ostwald, the next day *à la* Mach, and the day after *à la* Poincaré. These silly “theoretical” devices (“energetics,” “elements,” “introjections,” etc.) in which you so naïvely believe are confined to a narrow and tiny school, while the ideological and *social tendency* of these devices is immediately spotted by the Wards, the neo-critics, the immanentists, the Lopatins and the pragmatists, and *it serves their purposes*. The infatuation for Empirio-criticism and “physical” idealism passes as rapidly as the infatuation for Neo-Kantianism and “physiological” idealism; but fideism takes its toll from every such infatuation and modifies its devices in a thousand ways for the benefit of philosophical idealism.

The attitude towards religion and the attitude towards natural science excellently illustrate the *actual* class use made of Empirio-criticism by bourgeois reactionaries.

Take the first question. Do you think it is an accident that in a collective work directed *against* the philosophy of Marxism Lunacharsky went so far as to speak of the “deification of the higher human

Pragmatism ridicules the metaphysics both of idealism and materialism, acclaims experience and only experience, recognizes practice as the only criterion, refers to the positivist movement in general, especially turns for support to Ostwald, Mach, Pearson, Poincaré and Duhem for the belief that science is not an “absolute copy of reality” and . . . successfully deduces from all this a God for practical purposes, and only for practical purposes, without any metaphysics, and without transcending the bounds of experience (cf. William James, *Pragmatism. A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, New York and London, 1907, pp. 57 and 106 especially). From the standpoint of materialism, the difference between Machism and pragmatism is as insignificant and unimportant as the difference between Empirio-criticism and Empirio-monism. Compare, for example, Bogdanov’s definition of truth with the pragmatist definition of truth, which is: “Truth for a pragmatist becomes a class-name for all sorts of definite working values in experience” (ibid., p. 68). — Lenin

potentialities,” of “religious atheism,” etc.? ³³ If you do, it is only because the Russian Machians have not informed the public correctly regarding the *whole* Machian current in Europe and the attitude of this current to religion. Not only is this attitude in no way similar to the attitude of Marx, Engels, J. Dietzgen and even Feuerbach, but it is the *very opposite*, beginning with Petzoldt’s statement to the effect that Empirio-criticism “contradicts neither theism nor atheism” (*Einführung in die Philosophie der reinen Erfahrung*, Bd. I, S. 351), or Mach’s declaration that “religious opinion is a private affair” (French trans., p. 434), and ending with the *explicit fideism*, the explicitly *arch-reactionary* views of Cornelius, who praises Mach and whom Mach praises, of Carus and of all the immanentists. The neutrality of a *philosopher* in this question is *in itself* servility to fideism, and Mach and Avenarius, because of the very premises of their epistemology, do not and cannot rise above neutrality.

Once you deny objective reality, given us in sensation, you have already lost every one of your weapons against fideism, for you have slipped into agnosticism or subjectivism – and that is all fideism wants. If the perceptual world is objective reality, then the door is closed to every other “reality” or quasi-reality (remember that Bazarov believed the “realism” of the immanentists, who declare God to be a “real concept”). If the world is matter in motion, matter can and must be infinitely studied in the infinitely complex and detailed manifestations and ramifications of *this* motion, the motion of *this* matter; but beyond it, beyond the “physical,” external world, with which everyone is familiar, there can be nothing. And the hostility to materialism and the showers of abuse heaped on the materialists are all in the order of things in civilized and democratic Europe. All this is going on to this day. All this is being *concealed* from the public by the Russian Machians, who have *not once* attempted even simply to compare the attacks made on materialism by Mach, Avenarius, Petzoldt and Co., with the statements made *in favor* of materialism by Feuerbach, Marx, Engels and J. Dietzgen.

But this “concealment” of the attitude of Mach and Avenarius to fideism will not avail. The facts speak for themselves. No efforts can release these reactionary professors from the pillory in which they have been placed by the kisses of Ward, the neo-critics, Schuppe, Schubert-Soldern, Leclair, the pragmatists, etc. And the influence of the persons mentioned, as philosophers and professors, the popularity of their ideas among the “educated,” *i.e.*, the bourgeois, public and the specific literature they have created are ten times wider and richer than the particular little school of Mach and Avenarius. The little school serves those it should serve, and it is exploited as it deserves to be exploited.

The shameful things to which Lunacharsky has stooped are not exceptional; they are the product of Empirio-criticism, both Russian and German. They cannot be defended on the grounds of the “good intentions” of the author, or the “special meaning” of his words; if it were the direct and common, *i.e.*, the directly fideistic meaning, we should not stop to discuss matters with the author, for most likely not a single Marxist could be found in whose eyes such statements would *not* have placed Anatole Lunacharsky *exactly* in the same category as Peter Struve. If this is not the case (and it is not the case *yet*), it is exclusively because we perceive the “special” meaning and are *fighting while there is still ground* for a fight on comradely lines. This is just the disgrace of Lunacharsky’s statements – that he *could* connect them with his “good” intentions. This is just the evil of his “theory” – that it permits the use of *such* methods or of *such*

³³ Studies, pp. 157, 159. In the *Zagranichnaya Gazeta* the same author speaks of “scientific socialism in its religious significance” (No. 3, p. 5) and in *Obrazovaniye*, 1908, No. 1, p. 164, he explicitly says: “For a long time a new religion has been maturing within me.” – Lenin

conclusions in the pursuit of good intentions. This is just the trouble – that *at best* “good” intentions are the subjective affair of Tom, Dick or Harry, while the *social significance* of such statements is undeniable and indisputable, and no reservation or explanation can mitigate it.

One must be blind not to see the ideological affinity between Lunacharsky’s “deification of the higher human potentialities” and Bogdanov’s “general substitution” of the psychical for all physical nature. This is one and the same thought; in the one case it is expressed principally from the aesthetic standpoint, and in the other from the epistemological standpoint. “Substitution,” approaching the subject *tacitly* and from a different angle, *already deifies* the “higher human potentialities,” by divorcing the “psychical” from man and by substituting an immensely extended, abstract, divinely-lifeless “psychical in general” for *all physical nature*. And what of Yushkevich’s “Logos” introduced into the “irrational stream of experience”?

A single claw ensnared, and the bird is lost. And our Machians have all become ensnared in idealism, that is, in a diluted and subtle fideism; they became ensnared from the moment they took “sensation” not as an image of the external world but as a special “element.” It is nobody’s sensation, nobody’s mind, nobody’s spirit, nobody’s will – this is what one inevitably comes to if one does not recognize the materialist theory that the human mind *reflects* an objectively real external world.

V. I. Lenin: Karl Marx

Chapter: The Marxists Doctrines: Section: Dialectics

As the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, and the richest in content, Hegelian dialectics was considered by Marx and Engels the greatest achievement of classical German philosophy. They thought that any other formulation of the principle of development, of evolution, was one-sided and poor in content, and could only distort and mutilate the actual course of development (which often proceeds by leaps, and via catastrophes and revolutions) in Nature and in society.

“Marx and I were pretty well the only people to rescue conscious dialectics [from the destruction of idealism, including Hegelianism] and apply it in the materialist conception of Nature.... Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich [this was written before the discovery of radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements, etc.!] and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis Nature’s process is dialectical and not metaphysical.

“The great basic thought,” Engels writes, “that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away... this great fundamental thought has, especially since the time of Hegel, so thoroughly permeated ordinary consciousness that in this generality it is now scarcely ever contradicted. But to acknowledge this fundamental thought in words and to apply it in reality in detail to each domain of investigation are two different things.... For dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the

thinking brain." Thus, according to Marx, dialectics is "the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought." ³⁴

This revolutionary aspect of Hegel's philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism "does not need any philosophy standing above the other sciences." From previous philosophy there remains "the science of thought and its laws – formal logic and dialectics." Dialectics, as understood by Marx, and also in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, studying and generalizing the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from *non*-knowledge to knowledge.

In our times, the idea of development, of evolution, has almost completely penetrated social consciousness, only in other ways, and not through Hegelian philosophy. Still, this idea, as formulated by Marx and Engels on the basis of Hegel's philosophy, is far more comprehensive and far richer in content than the current idea of evolution is. A development that repeats, as it were, stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher basis ("the negation of the negation"), a development, so to speak, that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, and revolutions; "breaks in continuity"; the transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses towards development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society; the interdependence and the closest and indissoluble connection between *all* aspects of any phenomenon (history constantly revealing ever new aspects), a connection that provides a uniform, and universal process of motion, one that follows definite laws – these are some of the features of dialectics as a doctrine of development that is richer than the conventional one. (Cf. Marx's letter to Engels of January 8, 1868, in which he ridicules Stein's "wooden trichotomies," which it would be absurd to confuse with materialist dialectics.)

Mao Zedong: On Contradictions

[This essay on philosophy was written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung after his essay "On Practice" and with the same object of overcoming the serious error of dogmatist thinking to be found in the Party at the time. Originally delivered as lectures at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yenan, it was revised by the author on its inclusion in his *Selected Works*.]

The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics. Lenin said, "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction in *the very essence of objects*." ³⁵ Lenin often called this law the essence of dialectics; he also called it the kernel of dialectics. ³⁶ In studying this law, therefore, we cannot but touch upon a variety of questions, upon a number of

³⁴ Frederick Engels: Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy – Lenin

³⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy" Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 249.

³⁶ In his essay "On the Question of Dialectics", Lenin said, "The splitting in two of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts (see the quotation from Philo on Heraclitus at the beginning of Section 3 'On Cognition' in Lassalle's book on Heraclitus) is the essence (one of the 'essentials', one of the principals, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics." (Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357.) In his "Conspectus of Hegel's The Science of Logic", he said, "In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This grasps the kernel of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development." (Ibid., p. 215.)

philosophical problems. If we can become clear on all these problems, we shall arrive at a fundamental understanding of materialist dialectics. The problems are: the two world outlooks, the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction, and the place of antagonism in contradiction.

The criticism to which the idealism of the Deborin school has been subjected in Soviet philosophical circles in recent years has aroused great interest among us. Deborin's idealism has exerted a very bad influence in the Chinese Communist Party, and it cannot be said that the dogmatist thinking in our Party is unrelated to the approach of that school. Our present study of philosophy should therefore have the eradication of dogmatist thinking as its main objective.

Chapter 1: THE TWO WORLD OUTLOOKS

Throughout the history of human knowledge, there have been two conceptions concerning the law of development of the universe, the metaphysical conception and the dialectical conception, which form two opposing world outlooks. Lenin said:

The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).³⁷

Here Lenin was referring to these two different world outlooks.

In China another name for metaphysics is *hsuan-hsueh*. For a long period in history whether in China or in Europe, this way of thinking, which is part and parcel of the idealist world outlook, occupied a dominant position in human thought. In Europe, the materialism of the bourgeoisie in its early days was also metaphysical. As the social economy of many European countries advanced to the stage of highly developed capitalism, as the forces of production, the class struggle and the sciences developed to a level unprecedented in history, and as the industrial proletariat became the greatest motive force in historical development, there arose the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. Then, in addition to open and barefaced reactionary idealism, vulgar evolutionism emerged among the bourgeoisie to oppose materialist dialectics.

The metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external. Metaphysicians hold that all the different kinds of things in the universe and all their characteristics have been the same ever since they first came into being. All subsequent changes have simply been increases or decreases in quantity. They contend that a thing can only keep on repeating itself as the same kind of thing and cannot change into anything different. In their opinion, capitalist exploitation, capitalist competition, the individualist ideology of capitalist society, and so on, can all be found in ancient slave society, or even in primitive society, and will exist for ever unchanged. They ascribe the causes of social development to factors external to society, such as geography

³⁷ V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

and climate. They search in an over-simplified way outside a thing for the causes of its development, and they deny the theory of materialist dialectics which holds that development arises from the contradictions inside a thing. Consequently, they can explain neither the qualitative diversity of things, nor the phenomenon of one quality changing into another. In Europe, this mode of thinking existed as mechanical materialism in the 17th and 18th centuries and as vulgar evolutionism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying "Heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not", ³⁸ and it was supported by the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time. Mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism, which were imported from Europe in the last hundred years, are supported by the bourgeoisie.

As opposed to the metaphysical world outlook, the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. Thus, materialist dialectics effectively combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force, advanced by metaphysical mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism. It is evident that purely external causes can only give rise to mechanical motion, that is, to changes in scale or quantity, but cannot explain why things differ qualitatively in thousands of ways and why one thing changes into another. As a matter of fact, even mechanical motion under external force occurs through the internal contradictoriness of things. Simple growth in plants and animals, their quantitative development, is likewise chiefly the result of their internal contradictions. Similarly, social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes. Countries with almost the same geographical and climatic conditions display great diversity and unevenness in their development. Moreover, great social changes may take place in one and the same country although its geography and climate remain unchanged. Imperialist Russia changed into the socialist Soviet Union, and feudal Japan, which had locked its doors against the world, changed into imperialist Japan, although no change occurred in the geography and climate of either country. Long dominated by feudalism, China has undergone great changes in the last hundred years and is now changing in the direction of a new China, liberated and free, and yet no change has occurred in her geography and climate. Changes do take place in the geography and climate of the earth as a whole and in every part of it, but they are insignificant when compared with changes in society; geographical and climatic changes manifest themselves in terms of tens of thousands of years, while social changes manifest themselves in thousands, hundreds or tens of years, and even in a few years or months in times of revolution. According to materialist dialectics, changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in nature. Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and

³⁸ A saying of Tung Chung-shu (179-104 B.C.), a well-known exponent of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty.

internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken, because each has a different basis. There is constant interaction between the peoples of different countries. In the era of capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great. The October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history as well as in Russian history. It exerted influence on internal changes in the other countries in the world and, similarly and in a particularly profound way, on internal changes in China. These changes, however, were affected through the inner laws of development of these countries, China included. In battle, one army is victorious and the other is defeated, both the victory and the defeat are determined by internal causes. The one is victorious either because it is strong or because of its competent generalship, the other is vanquished either because it is weak or because of its incompetent generalship; it is through internal causes that external causes become operative. In China in 1927, the defeat of the proletariat by the big bourgeoisie came about through the opportunism then to be found within the Chinese proletariat itself (inside the Chinese Communist Party). When we liquidated this opportunism, the Chinese revolution resumed its advance. Later, the Chinese revolution again suffered severe setbacks at the hands of the enemy, because adventurism had risen within our Party. When we liquidated this adventurism, our cause advanced once again. Thus, it can be seen that to lead the revolution to victory, a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidity of its own organization.

The dialectical world outlook emerged in ancient times both in China and in Europe. Ancient dialectics, however, had a somewhat spontaneous and naive character; in the social and historical conditions then prevailing, it was not yet able to form a theoretical system, hence it could not fully explain the world and was supplanted by metaphysics. The famous German philosopher Hegel, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, made most important contributions to dialectics, but his dialectics was idealist. It was not until Marx and Engels, the great protagonists of the proletarian movement, had synthesized the positive achievements in the history of human knowledge and, in particular, critically absorbed the rational elements of Hegelian dialectics and created the great theory of dialectical and historical materialism that an unprecedented revolution occurred in the history of human knowledge. This theory was further developed by Lenin and Stalin. As soon as it spread to China, it wrought tremendous changes in the world of Chinese thought.

This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyze the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions. It is therefore most important for us to understand the law of contradiction in things in a concrete way.

Unit 2. Problems of Knowledge.

Topics covered:

- I. The process of knowledge.
- II. The problem of truth.
- III. Science and intellectuals.

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Selection

Frederick Engels: Anti-Dühring Part I: Philosophy

Chapter III. Classification: Apriorism

Philosophy, according to Herr Dühring, is the development of the highest form of consciousness of the world and of life {D. Ph. 2}, and in a wider sense embraces the *principles* of all knowledge and volition. Wherever a series of cognitions or stimuli or a group of forms of being come to be examined by human consciousness, the *principles* underlying these manifestations of necessity become an object of philosophy. These principles are the simple, or until now assumed to be simple, constituents of manifold knowledge and volition {8}. Like the chemical composition of bodies, the general constitution of things can be reduced to basic forms and basic elements. These ultimate constituents or principles, once they have been discovered, are valid not only for what is immediately known and accessible, but also for the world which is unknown and inaccessible to us. Philosophical principles consequently provide the final supplement required by the sciences in order to become a uniform system by which nature and human life can be explained {9}. Apart from the fundamental forms of all existence, philosophy has only two specific subjects of investigation – nature and the world of man {14}. Accordingly, our material arranges itself *quite naturally* into three groups, namely, the general scheme of the universe, the science of the principles of nature, and finally the science of mankind. This succession at the same time contains *an inner logical sequence*, for the formal principles which are valid for all being take precedence, and the realms of the objects to which they are *to be applied* then follow in the degree of their subordination {15}.

So far Herr Dühring, and almost entirely word for word.

What he is dealing with are therefore *principles*, formal tenets derived from *thought* and not from the external world, which are to be applied to nature and the realm of man, and to which therefore nature and man have to conform. But whence does thought obtain these principles? From itself? No, for Herr Dühring himself says: the realm of pure thought is limited to logical schemata and mathematical forms {42} (the latter, moreover, as we shall see, is wrong). Logical schemata can only relate to *forms of thought*; but what we are dealing with here is solely forms of *being*, of the external world, and these forms can never be created and derived by thought out of itself, but only from the external world. But with this the whole

relationship is inverted: the principles are not the starting-point of the investigation, but its final result; they are not applied to nature and human history, but abstracted from them, it is not nature and the realm of man which conform to these principles, but the principles are only valid in so far as they are in conformity with nature and history. That is the only materialist conception of the matter, and Herr Dühring's contrary conception is idealistic, makes things stand completely on their heads, and fashions the real world out of ideas, out of schemata, schemes or categories existing somewhere before the world, from eternity — just like a *Hegel*.

In fact, let us compare Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* ³⁹ and all its delirious fantasies with Herr Dühring's final and ultimate truths. With Herr Dühring we have in the first-place general world schematism, which Hegel calls *Logic*. Then with both of them we have the application of these schemata or logical categories to nature: the philosophy of nature; and finally, their application to the realm of man, which Hegel calls the philosophy of mind. The "inner logical sequence" of the Dühring succession therefore leads us "quite naturally" {D. Ph. 15} back to Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, from which it has been taken with a loyalty which would move that wandering Jew of the Hegelian school, Professor Michelet of Berlin, to tears. ⁴⁰

That is what comes of accepting "consciousness", "thought", quite naturalistically, as something given, something opposed from the outset to being, to nature. If that were so, it must seem extremely strange that consciousness and nature, thinking and being, the laws of thought and the laws of nature, should correspond so closely. But if the further question is raised what thought and consciousness really are and where they come from, it becomes apparent that they are products of the human brain and that man himself is a product of nature, which has developed in and along with its environment; hence it is self-evident that the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis also products of nature, do not contradict the rest of nature's interconnections but are in correspondence with them.

But Herr Dühring cannot permit himself such a simple treatment of the subject. He thinks not only in the name of humanity — in itself no small achievement — but in the name of the conscious and reasoning beings on all celestial bodies. Indeed, it would be

"a degradation of the basic forms of consciousness and knowledge to attempt to rule out or even to put under suspicion their sovereign validity and their unconditional claim to truth, by applying the epithet 'human' to them" {2}.

Hence, in order that no suspicion may arise that on some celestial body or other twice two makes five {30-31}, Herr Dühring dare not designate thought as being human, and so he has to sever it from the only real foundation on which we find it, namely, man and nature; and with that he tumbles hopelessly into an ideology ⁴¹ which reveals him as the epigone of the "epigone" Hegel {197}. By the way, we shall often meet Herr Dühring again on other celestial bodies.

³⁹ G. W. F. Hegel's *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Heidelberg, 1817 consists of three parts: 1) logic, 2) philosophy of nature, 3) philosophy of the mind.

In his work on *Anti-Dühring and Dialectics of Nature*, Engels used Hegel's writings primarily published after Hegel's death by his pupils in: G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke. Vollständige Ausgabe durch einen Verein von Freunden des Verewigten*: Ph. Marheineke, J. Schulze, Ed. Gans, Lp. v. Henning, H. Hotho, C. Michelet, F. Förster, Bd. I-XVIII, Berlin, 1832-1845.

⁴⁰ Engels is presumably alluding to *Die Epiphanie der ewigen Persönlichkeit des Christes* (published in separate installments in 1844, 1847 and 1852), the work of the Hegelian philosopher K. L. Michelet, who published the works of his teacher.

⁴¹ In the original, here and elsewhere, the term "Ideologie" is used, as a rule, as a synonym for "idealism".

It goes without saying that no materialist doctrine can be founded on such an ideological basis. Later on, we shall see that Herr Dühring is forced more than once to endow nature surreptitiously with conscious activity, with what in plain language is called God.

However, our philosopher of reality had also other motives for shifting the basis of all reality from the real world to the world of thought. The science of this general world schematism, of these formal principles of being, is precisely the foundation of Herr Dühring's philosophy. If we deduce world schematism not from our minds, but only *through* our minds from the real world, if we deduce principles of being from what is, we need no philosophy for this purpose, but positive knowledge of the world and of what happens in it; and what this yields is also not philosophy, but positive science. In that case, however, Herr Dühring's whole volume would be nothing but love's labor lost.

Further: if no philosophy as such is any longer required, then also there is no more need of any system, not even of any natural system of philosophy. The perception that all the processes of nature are systematically connected drives science on to prove this systematic connection throughout, both in general and in particular. But an adequate, exhaustive scientific exposition of this interconnection, the formation of an exact mental image of the world system in which we live, is impossible for us, and will always remain impossible. If at any time in the development of mankind such a final, conclusive system of the interconnections within the world — physical as well as mental and historical — were brought about, this would mean that human knowledge had reached its limit, and, from the moment when society had been brought into accord with that system, further historical development would be cut short — which would be an absurd idea, sheer nonsense. Mankind therefore finds itself faced with a contradiction: on the one hand, it has to gain an exhaustive knowledge of the world system in all its interrelations; and on the other hand, because of the nature both of men and of the world system, this task can never be completely fulfilled. But this contradiction lies not only in the nature of the two factors — the world, and man — it is also the main lever of all intellectual advance, and finds its solution continuously, day by day, in the endless progressive development of humanity, just as for example mathematical problems find their solution in an infinite series or continued fractions. Each mental image of the world system is and remains in actual fact limited, objectively by the historical conditions and subjectively by the physical and mental constitution of its originator. But Herr Dühring explains in advance that his mode of reasoning is such that it excludes any tendency to a subjectively limited conception of the world. We saw above that he was omnipresent — on all possible celestial bodies. We now see that he is also omniscient. He has solved the ultimate problems of science and thus nailed boards across the future of all science.

As with the basic forms of being, so also with the whole of pure mathematics: Herr Dühring thinks that he can produce it *a priori* that is, without making use of the experience offered us by the external world, can construct it in his head.

In pure mathematics the mind deals “with its own free creations and imaginations” {D. Ph. 43}; the concepts of number and figure are “the adequate object of that pure science which it can create of itself” {42}, and hence it has a “validity which is independent of *particular* experience and of the real content of the world” {43}.

That pure mathematics has a validity which is independent of the *particular* experience of each individual is, for that matter, correct, and this is true of all established facts in every science, and indeed of all facts whatsoever. The magnetic poles, the fact that water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen, the fact

that Hegel is dead and Herr Dühring alive, hold good independently of my own experience or that of any other individual, and even independently of Herr Dühring's experience, when he begins to sleep the sleep of the just. But it is not at all true that in pure mathematics the mind deals only with its own creations and imaginations. The concepts of number and figure have not been derived from any source other than the world of reality. The ten fingers on which men learnt to count, that is, to perform the first arithmetical operation, are anything but a free creation of the mind. Counting requires not only objects that can be counted, but also the ability to exclude all properties of the objects considered except their number — and this ability is the product of a long historical development based on experience. Like the idea of number, so the idea of figure is borrowed exclusively from the external world, and does not arise in the mind out of pure thought. There must have been things which had shape and whose shapes were compared before anyone could arrive at the idea of figure. Pure mathematics deals with the space forms and quantity relations of the real world — that is, with material which is very real indeed. The fact that this material appears in an extremely abstract form can only superficially conceal its origin from the external world. But in order to make it possible to investigate these forms and relations in their pure state, it is necessary to separate them entirely from their content, to put the content aside as irrelevant; thus we get points without dimensions, lines without breadth and thickness, a and b and x and y , constants and variables; and only at the very end do we reach the free creations and imaginations of the mind itself, that is to say, imaginary magnitudes. Even the apparent derivation of mathematical magnitudes from each other does not prove their *a priori* origin, but only their rational connection. Before one came upon the idea of deducing the *form* of a cylinder from the rotation of a rectangle about one of its sides, a number of real rectangles and cylinders, however imperfect in form, must have been examined. Like all other sciences, mathematics arose out of the *needs* of men: from the measurement of land and the content of vessels, from the computation of time and from mechanics. But, as in every department of thought, at a certain stage of development the laws, which were abstracted from the real world, become divorced from the real world, and are set up against it as something independent, as laws coming from outside, to which the world has to conform. That is how things happened in society and in the state, and in this way, and not otherwise, *pure* mathematics was subsequently *applied* to the world, although it is borrowed from this same world and represents only one part of its forms of interconnection — and it is only *just because of this* that it can be applied at all.

But just as Herr Dühring imagines that, out of the axioms of mathematics,

“Which also in accordance with pure logic neither require nor are capable of substantiation” {34},

he can deduce the whole of pure mathematics without any kind of empirical admixture, and then apply it to the world, so he likewise imagines that he can, in the first place, produce out of his head the basic forms of being, the simple elements of all knowledge, the axioms of philosophy, deduce from these the whole of philosophy or world schematism, and then, by sovereign decree, impose this constitution of his on nature and humanity. Unfortunately, nature is not at all, and humanity only to an infinitesimal degree, composed of the Manteuffelite Prussians of 1850. ⁴²

⁴² This is an allusion to the servile submissiveness of the Prussians, who accepted the Constitution granted by King Frederick William IV on December 5, 1848, when the Prussian Constituent Assembly was dissolved. The Constitution drawn up with the participation of the Minister of the Interior, Baron Manteuffel, was finally approved by Frederick William IV on January 31, 1850, after numerous amendments had been introduced.

Mathematical axioms are expressions of the scantiest thought-content, which mathematics is obliged to borrow from logic. They can be reduced to two:

1) The whole is greater than its part. This statement is pure tautology, as the quantitatively conceived idea “part” is from the outset definitely related to the idea “whole”, and in fact in such a way that “part” simply means that the quantitative “whole” consists of several quantitative “parts”. In stating this explicitly, the so-called axiom does not take us a step further. This tautology can even in a way *be proved* by saying: a whole is that which consists of several parts; a part is that of which several make a whole; hence the part is less than the whole — in which the inanity of repetition brings out even more clearly the inanity of content.

2) If two quantities are equal to a third, they are equal to each other. This statement, as Hegel has already shown, is a conclusion, the correctness of which is vouched for by logic, and which is therefore proved, although outside of pure mathematics. The remaining axioms relating to equality and inequality are merely logical extensions of this conclusion.

These meagre principles do not cut much ice, either in mathematics or anywhere else. In order to get any further, we are obliged to bring in real relations, relations and space forms which are taken from real bodies. The ideas of lines, planes, angles, polygons, cubes, spheres, etc., are all taken from reality, and it requires a pretty good portion of naive ideology to believe the mathematicians that the first line came into existence through the movement of a point in space, the first plane through the movement of a line, the first solid through the movement of a plane, and so on. Even language rebels against such a conception. A mathematical figure of three dimensions is called a solid body, *corpus solidum*, hence, in Latin, even a tangible object; it therefore has a name derived from sturdy reality and by no means from the free imagination of the mind.

But why all this prolixity? After Herr Dühring, on pages 42 and 43,⁴³ has enthusiastically sung the independence of pure mathematics from the world of experience, its apriority, its preoccupation with the mind’s own free creations and imaginations, he says on page 63:

“It is, of course, easily overlooked that those mathematical elements (number, magnitude, time, space and geometric motion) are *ideal only in their form*, ... *absolute magnitudes* are therefore something completely *empirical*, no matter to what species they belong”, ... but “mathematical schemata are capable of characterization which is adequate even though *divorced* from experience.”

The last statement is more or less true of *every* abstraction, but does not by any means prove that it is not abstracted from reality. In world schematism pure mathematics arose out of pure thought — in the philosophy of nature it is something completely empirical, taken from the external world and then divorced from it. Which are we to believe?

⁴³ In Part I of Anti-Dühring, all page references made by Engels are to Dühring's *Cursus der Philosophie*.

I

The Germans have long since shown that in all spheres of science they are equal, and in most of them superior, to other civilized nations. Only one branch of science, political economy, had no German name among its foremost scholars. The reason is obvious. Political economy is the theoretical analysis of modern bourgeois society and therefore presupposes developed bourgeois conditions, conditions which for centuries, following the wars in the wake of the Reformation and the peasant wars and especially the Thirty Years' War, could not establish themselves in Germany. The separation of the Netherlands from the Empire removed Germany from the international trade routes and restricted her industrial development from the very beginning to the pettiest scale. While the Germans painfully and slowly recovered from the devastations of the civil wars, while they used up their store of civic energy, which had never been very large, in futile struggle against the customs barriers and absurd commercial regulations which every petty princeling and imperial baron inflicted upon the industry of his subjects, while the imperial cities with their craft-guild practices and patrician spirit went to ruin — Holland, England and France meanwhile conquered the leading positions in international trade, established one colony after another and brought manufactory production to the height of its development, until finally England, with the aid of steam power, which made her coal and iron deposits valuable, headed modern bourgeois development. But political economy could not arise in Germany so long as a struggle had still to be waged against so preposterously antiquated remnants of the Middle Ages as those which hampered the bourgeois development of her material forces until 1830. Only the establishment of the Customs Union enabled the Germans to *comprehend* political economy at all. It was indeed at this time that English and French economic works began to be imported for the benefit of the German middle class. Men of learning and bureaucrats soon got hold of the imported material and treated it in a way which does little credit to the "German intellect." The literary efforts of a hotchpotch of *chevaliers d'industrie*, traders, schoolmasters and bureaucrats produced a bunch of German economic publications which as regards triteness, banality, frivolity, verbosity and plagiarism are equaled only by the German novel. Among people pursuing practical objectives there arose first the protectionist school of the industrialists, whose chief spokesman, List, is still the best that German bourgeois political economy has produced although his celebrated work is entirely copied from the Frenchman Ferrier, the theoretical creator of the Continental System. In opposition to this trend the free-trade school was formed in the forties by merchants from the Baltic provinces, who fumblingly repeated the arguments of the English Free Traders with childlike, but not disinterested, faith. Finally, among the schoolmasters and bureaucrats who had to handle the theoretical aspects there were uncritical and desiccated collectors of herbaria, like Herr Rau, pseudo-clever speculators who translated foreign propositions into undigested Hegelian language like Herr Stein, or gleaners with literary pretensions in the field of so-called history of civilization, like Herr Riehl. The upshot of all this was cameralistics, an eclectic economic sauce covering a hotchpotch of sundry trivialities, of the sort a junior civil servant might find useful to remember during his final examination.

While in this way in Germany the bourgeoisie, the schoolmasters and the bureaucrats were still making great exertions to learn by rote, and in some measure to understand, the first elements of Anglo-French political economy, which they regarded as incontestable dogmas, the German proletarian party appeared on the scene. Its theoretical aspect was wholly based on a study of political economy, and *German political economy* as an independent science dates also from the emergence of this party. The essential

foundation of this German political economy is the *materialist conception of history* whose principal features are briefly outlined in the "Preface" to the above-named work. Since the "Preface" has in the main already been published in *Das Volk*, we refer to it. The proposition that "the process of social, political and intellectual life is altogether necessitated by the mode of production of material life"; that all social and political relations, all religious and legal systems, all theoretical conceptions which arise in the course of history can only be understood if the material conditions of life obtaining during the relevant epoch have been understood and the former are traced back to these material conditions, was a revolutionary discovery not only for economics but also for all historical sciences — and all branches of science which are not natural sciences are historical. "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness." This proposition is so simple that it should be self-evident to anyone not bogged down in idealist humbug. But it leads to highly revolutionary consequences not only in the theoretical sphere but also in the practical sphere. "At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or — this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms — with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of *social revolution*. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.... The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production — antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence — but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism." The prospect of a gigantic revolution, the most gigantic revolution that has ever taken place, accordingly presents itself to us as soon as we pursue our materialist thesis further and apply it to the present time.

Closer consideration shows immediately that already the first consequences of the apparently simple proposition, that the consciousness of men is determined by their existence and not the other way round, spurn all forms of idealism, even the most concealed ones, rejecting all conventional and customary views of historical matters. The entire traditional manner of political reasoning is upset; patriotic magnanimity indignantly objects to such an unprincipled interpretation. It was thus inevitable that the new point of view should shock not only the exponents of the bourgeoisie but also the mass of French socialists who intended to revolutionize the world by virtue of the magic words, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. But it utterly enraged the vociferous German vulgar democrats. They nevertheless have a partiality for attempting to plagiarize the new ideas in their own interest, although with an exceptional lack of understanding.

The demonstration of the materialist conception even upon a single historical example was a scientific task requiring years of quiet research, for it is evident that mere empty talk can achieve nothing in this context and that only an abundance of critically examined historical material which has been completely mastered can make it possible to solve such a problem. Our party was propelled on to the political stage by the February Revolution and thus prevented from pursuing purely scientific aims. The fundamental conception, nevertheless, runs like an unbroken thread through all literary productions of the party. Every one of them shows that the actions in each particular case were invariably initiated by material causes and not by the accompanying phrases, that on the contrary the political and legal phrases, like the political actions and their results, originated in material causes.

After the defeat of the Revolution of 1848-49, at a time when it became increasingly impossible to exert any influence on Germany from abroad, our party relinquished the field of emigrant squabbles — for that was the only feasible action left — to the vulgar democrats. While these were chasing about to their heart's content, scuffling today, fraternizing tomorrow and the day after once more washing their dirty linen in public, while they went begging throughout America and immediately afterwards started another row over the division of the few coins they had collected — our party was glad to find once more some quiet time for research work. It had the great advantage that its theoretical foundation was a new scientific conception the elaboration of which provided adequate work; even for this reason alone it could never become so demoralized as the “great men” of the emigration.

The book under consideration is the first result of these studies.

II

[*Das Volk*, No. 16, August 20, 1859]

The purpose of a work like the one under review cannot simply be desultory criticism of separate sections of political economy or the discussion of one or another economic issue in isolation. On the contrary, it is from the beginning designed to give a systematic *résumé* of the whole complex of political economy and a coherent elaboration of the laws governing bourgeois production and bourgeois exchange. This elaboration is at the same time a comprehensive critique of economic literature, for economists are nothing but interpreters of and apologists for these laws.

Hardly any attempt has been made since Hegel's death to set forth any branch of science in its specific inner coherence. The official Hegelian school had assimilated only the simplest devices of the master's dialectics and applied them to everything and anything, often moreover with ridiculous incompetence. Hegel's whole heritage was, so far as they were concerned, confined exclusively to a template, by means of which any subject could be knocked into shape, and a set of words and phrases whose only remaining purpose was to turn up conveniently whenever they experienced a lack of ideas and of concrete knowledge. Thus, it happened, as a professor at Bonn has said, that these Hegelians knew nothing but could write about everything. The results were, of course, accordingly. For all their conceit these gentlemen were, however, sufficiently conscious of their failings to avoid major problems as far as possible. The superannuated fossilized type of learning held its ground because of its superior factual knowledge, and after Feuerbach's renunciation of the speculative method, Hegelianism gradually died away, and it seemed that science was once more dominated by antiquated metaphysics with its rigid categories.

For this there were quite natural reasons. The rule of the Hegelian Diadochi, which ended in empty phrases, was naturally followed by a period in which the concrete content of science predominated once more over the formal aspect. Moreover, Germany at the same time applied itself with quite extraordinary energy to the natural sciences, in accordance with the immense bourgeois development setting in after 1848; with the coming into fashion of these sciences, in which the speculative trend had never achieved any real importance, the old metaphysical mode of thinking, even down to the extreme triviality of Wolff, gained ground rapidly. Hegel was forgotten and a new materialism arose in the natural sciences; it differed in principle very little from the materialism of the eighteenth century and its main advantage was merely a greater stock of data relating to the natural sciences, especially chemistry and physiology. The narrow-minded mode of thinking of the pre-Kantian period in its most banal form is reproduced by

Büchner and Vogt, and even Moleschott, who swears by Feuerbach, frequently flounders in a highly diverting manner through the simplest categories. The jaded cart-horse of the commonplace bourgeois mind falters of course in confusion in front of the ditch separating substance from appearance, and cause from effect; but one should not ride carthorses if one intends to go coursing over the very rough ground of abstract reasoning.

In this context, therefore, a question had to be solved which was not connected with political economy as such. Which scientific method should be used? There was, on the one hand, the Hegelian dialectics in the quite abstract “speculative” form in which Hegel had left it, and on the other hand the ordinary, mainly Wolffian, metaphysical method, which had come again into vogue, and which was also employed by the bourgeois economists to write their bulky rambling volumes. The second method had been theoretically demolished by Kant and particularly by Hegel so that its continued use in practice could only be rendered possible by inertia and the absence of an alternative simple method. The Hegelian method, on the other hand, was in its existing form quite inapplicable. It was essentially idealist and the main point in this case was the elaboration of a world outlook that was more materialist than any previous one. Hegel’s method took as its point of departure pure thought, whereas here the starting point was to be inexorable facts. A method which, according to its own avowal, “came from nothing through nothing to nothing” was in this shape by no means suitable. It was, nevertheless, the only element in the entire available logical material which could at least serve as a point of origin. It had not been subjected to criticism, not been overthrown; none of the opponents of the great dialectician had been able to make a breach in the proud edifice. It had been forgotten because the Hegelian school did not know how to apply it. Hence, it was first of all essential to carry through a thorough critique of the Hegelian method.

It was the exceptional historical sense underlying Hegel’s manner of reasoning which distinguished it from that of all other philosophers. However abstract and idealist the form employed, yet his evolution of ideas runs always parallel with the evolution of universal history, and the latter was indeed supposed to be only the proof of the former. Although this reversed the actual relation and stood it on its head, yet the real content was invariably incorporated in his philosophy, especially since Hegel — unlike his followers — did not rely on ignorance, but was one of the most erudite thinkers of all time. He was the first to try to demonstrate that there is an evolution, an intrinsic coherence in history, and however strange some things in his philosophy of history may seem to us now, the grandeur of the basic conception is still admirable today, compared both with his predecessors and with those who following him ventured to advance general historical observations. This monumental conception of history pervades the *Phänomenologien*, *Asthetik* and *Geschichte der Philosophie*, and the material is everywhere set forth historically, in a definite historical context, even if in an abstract distorted manner.

This epoch-making conception of history was a direct theoretical pre-condition of the new materialist outlook, and already this constituted a connecting link with the logical method as well. Since, even from the standpoint of “pure reasoning,” this forgotten dialectics had led to such results, and had moreover with the greatest ease coped with the whole of the former logic and metaphysics, it must at all events comprise more than sophistry and hairsplitting. But the critique of this method, which the entire official philosophy had evaded and still evades, was no small matter.

Marx was and is the only one who could undertake the work of extracting from the Hegelian logic the nucleus containing Hegel’s real discoveries in this field, and of establishing the dialectical method,

divested of its idealist wrappings, in the simple form in which it becomes the only correct mode of conceptual evolution. The working out of the method which underlies Marx's critique of political economy is, we think, a result hardly less significant than the basic materialist conception.

Even after the determination of the method, the critique of economics could still be arranged in two ways — historically or logically. Since in the course of history, as in its literary reflection, the evolution proceeds by and large from the simplest to the more complex relations, the historical development of political economy constituted a natural clue, which the critique could take as a point of departure, and then the economic categories would appear on the whole in the same order as in the logical exposition. This form seems to have the advantage of greater lucidity, for it traces the actual development, but in fact it would thus become, at most, more popular. History moves often in leaps and bounds and in a zigzag line, and as this would have to be followed throughout, it would mean not only that a considerable amount of material of slight importance would have to be included, but also that the train of thought would frequently have to be interrupted; it would, moreover, be impossible to write the history of economy without that of bourgeois society, and the task would thus become immense, because of the absence of all preliminary studies. The logical method of approach was therefore the only suitable one. This, however, is indeed nothing but the historical method, only stripped of the historical form and diverting chance occurrences. The point where this history begins must also be the starting point of the train of thought, and its further progress will be simply the reflection, in abstract and theoretically consistent form, of the historical course. Though the reflection is corrected, it is corrected in accordance with laws provided by the actual historical course, since each factor can be examined at the stage of development where it reaches its full maturity, its classical form.

With this method we begin with the first and simplest relation which is historically, actually available, thus in this context with the first economic relation to be found. We analyze this relation. The fact that it is a *relation* already implies that it has two aspects which are *related to each other*. Each of these aspects is examined separately; this reveals the nature of their mutual behavior, their reciprocal action. Contradictions will emerge demanding a solution. But since we are not examining an abstract mental process that takes place solely in our mind, but an actual event which really took place at some time or other, or which is still taking place, these contradictions will have arisen in practice and have probably been solved. We shall trace the mode of this solution and find that it has been affected by establishing a new relation, whose two contradictory aspects we shall then have to set forth, and so on.

Political economy begins with *commodities*, with the moment when products are exchanged, either by individuals or by primitive communities. The product being exchanged is a commodity. But it is a commodity merely by virtue of the *thing*, the product being linked with a *relation* between two persons or communities, the relation between producer and consumer, who at this stage are no longer united in the same person. Here is at once an example of a peculiar fact, which pervades the whole economy and has produced serious confusion in the minds of bourgeois economists — economics is not concerned with things but with relations between persons, and in the final analysis between classes; these relations however are always *bound to things* and *appear as things*. Although a few economists had an inkling of this connection in isolated instances, Marx was the first to reveal its significance for the entire economy thus making the most difficult problems so simple and clear that even bourgeois economists will now be able to grasp them.

If we examine the various aspects of the commodity, that is of the fully evolved commodity and not as it at first slowly emerges in the spontaneous barter of two primitive communities, it presents itself to us from two angles, that of use-value and of exchange-value, and thus we come immediately to the province of economic debate. Anyone wishing to find a striking instance of the fact that the German dialectic method at its present stage of development is at least as superior to the old superficially glib metaphysical method as railways are to the mediaeval means of transport, should look up Adam Smith or any other authoritative economist of repute to see how much distress exchange-value and use-value caused these gentlemen, the difficulty they had in distinguishing the two properly and in expressing the determinate form peculiar to each, and then compare the clear, simple exposition given by Marx.

After use-value and exchange-value have been expounded, the commodity as a direct unity of the two is described as it enters the *exchange process*. The contradictions arising here may be found on pp. 20 and 21. We merely note that these contradictions are not only of interest for theoretical, abstract reasons, but that they also reflect the difficulties originating from the nature of direct interchange, i.e., simple barter, and the impossibilities inevitably confronting this first crude form of exchange. The solution of these impossibilities is achieved by investing a specific commodity — *money* — with the attribute of representing the exchange-value of all other commodities. Money or simple circulation is then analyzed in the second chapter, namely (1) money as a measure of value, and, at the same time, value measured in terms of money, i.e., *price*, is more closely defined; (2) money as *means of circulation* and (3) the unity of the two aspects, *real money* which represents bourgeois material wealth as a whole. This concludes the first part, the conversion of money into capital is left for the second part.

One can see that with this method, the logical exposition need by no means be confined to the purely abstract sphere. On the contrary, it requires historical illustration and continuous contact with reality. A great variety of such evidence is therefore inserted, comprising references both to different stages in the actual historical course of social development and to economic works, in which the working out of lucid definitions of economic relations is traced from the outset. The critique of particular, more or less one-sided or confused interpretations is thus substantially given already in the logical exposition and can be kept quite short.

The economic content of the book will be discussed in a third article.

V. I. Lenin: On the Significance of Militant Materialism

Comrade Trotsky has already said everything necessary, and said it very well, about the general purposes of *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* ⁴⁴ in issue No. 1-2 of that journal. I should like to deal with certain questions that more closely define the content and programme of the work which its editors have set forth in the introductory statement in this issue.

This statement says that not all those gathered round the journal *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* are Communists but that they are all consistent materialists. I think that this alliance of Communists and non-Communists is absolutely essential and correctly defines the purposes of the journal. One of the biggest and most dangerous mistakes made by Communists (as generally by revolutionaries who have successfully accomplished the beginning of a great revolution) is the idea that a revolution can be made by revolutionaries alone. On the contrary, to be successful, all serious revolutionary work requires that the

⁴⁴ "Under the Banner of Marxism"

idea that revolutionaries are capable of playing the part only of the vanguard of the truly virile and advanced class must be understood and translated into action. A vanguard performs its task as vanguard only when it is able to avoid being isolated from the mass of the people it leads and is able really to lead the whole mass forward. Without an alliance with non-Communists in the most diverse spheres of activity there can be no question of any successful communist construction.

This also applies to the defense of materialism and Marxism, which has been undertaken *Pod Znamenem Marksizma*. Fortunately, the main trends of advanced social thinking in Russia have a solid materialist tradition. Apart from G. V. Plekhanov, it will be enough to mention Chernyshevsky, from whom the modern Narodniks (the Popular Socialists, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.) have frequently retreated in quest of fashionable reactionary philosophical doctrines, captivated by the tinsel of the so-called last word in European science, and unable to discern beneath this tinsel some variety of servility to the bourgeoisie, to bourgeois prejudice and bourgeois reaction.

At any rate, in Russia we still have — and shall undoubtedly have for a fairly long time to come — materialists from the non-communist camp, and it is our absolute duty to enlist all adherents of consistent and militant materialism in the joint work of combating philosophical reaction and the philosophical prejudices of so-called educated society. Dietzgen senior — not to be confused with his writer son, who was as pretentious as he was unsuccessful — correctly, aptly and clearly expressed the fundamental Marxist view of the philosophical trends which prevail in bourgeois countries and enjoy the regard of their scientists and publicists, when he said that in effect the professors of philosophy in modern society are in the majority of cases nothing but “graduated flunkies of clericalism”.

Our Russian intellectuals, who, like their brethren in all other countries, are fond of thinking themselves advanced, are very much averse to shifting the question to the level of the opinion expressed in Dietzgen’s words. But they are averse to it because they cannot look the truth in the face. One has only to give a little thought to the governmental and also the general economic, social and every other kind of dependence of modern educated people on the ruling bourgeoisie to realize that Dietzgen’s scathing description was absolutely true. One has only to recall the vast majority of the fashionable philosophical trends that arise so frequently in European countries, beginning for example with those connected with the discovery of radium and ending with those which are now seeking to clutch at the skirts of Einstein, to gain an idea of the connection between the class interests and the class position of the bourgeoisie and its support of all forms of religion on the one hand, and the ideological content of the fashionable philosophical trends on the other.

It will be seen from the above that a journal that sets out to be a militant materialist organ must be primarily a militant organ, in the sense of unflinchingly exposing and indicting all modern “graduated flunkies of clericalism”, irrespective of whether they act as representatives of official science or as free lances calling themselves “democratic Left or ideologically socialist” publicists.

In the second place, such a journal must be a militant atheist organ. We have departments, or at least state institutions, which are in charge of this work. But the work is being carried on with extreme apathy and very unsatisfactorily, and is apparently suffering from the general conditions of our truly Russian (even though Soviet) bureaucratic ways. It is therefore highly essential that in addition to the work of these state institutions, and in order to improve and infuse life into that work, a journal which sets out to propagandize militant materialism must carry on untiring atheist propaganda and an untiring atheist

fight. The literature on the subject in all languages should be carefully followed and everything at all valuable in this sphere should be translated, or at least reviewed.

Engels long ago advised the contemporary leaders of the proletariat to translate the militant atheist literature of the late eighteenth century for mass distribution among the people. We have not done this up to the present, to our shame be it said (this is one of the numerous proofs that it is much easier to seize power in a revolutionary epoch than to know how to use this power properly). Our apathy, inactivity and incompetence are sometimes excused on all sorts of “lofty” grounds, as, for example, that the old atheist literature of the eighteenth century is antiquated, unscientific, naive, etc. There is nothing worse than such pseudo-scientific sophistry, which serves as a screen either for pedantry or for a complete misunderstanding of Marxism. There is, of course, much that is unscientific and naive in the atheist writings of the eighteenth-century revolutionaries. But nobody prevents the publishers of these writings from abridging them and providing them with brief postscripts pointing out the progress made by mankind in the scientific criticism of religions since the end of the eighteenth century, mentioning the latest writings on the subject, and so forth. It would be the biggest and most grievous mistake a Marxist could make to think that the millions of the people (especially the peasants and artisans), who have been condemned by all modern society to darkness, ignorance and superstitions — can extricate themselves from this darkness only along the straight line of a purely Marxist education. These masses should be supplied with the most varied atheist propaganda material, they should be made familiar with facts from the most diverse spheres of life, they should be approached in every possible way, so as to interest them, rouse them from their religious torpor, stir them from the most varied angles and by the most varied methods, and so forth.

The keen, vivacious and talented writings of the old eighteenth-century atheists wittily and openly attacked the prevailing clericalism and will very often prove a thousand times more suitable for arousing people from their religious torpor than the dull and dry paraphrases of Marxism, almost completely unillustrated by skillfully selected facts, which predominate in our literature and which (it is no use hiding the fact) frequently distort Marxism. We have translations of all the major works of Marx and Engels. There are absolutely no grounds for fearing that the old atheism and old materialism will remain unsupplemented by the corrections introduced by Marx and Engels. The most important thing — and it is this that is most frequently overlooked by those of our Communists who are supposedly Marxists, but who in fact mutilate Marxism — is to know how to awaken in the still undeveloped masses an intelligent attitude towards religious questions and an intelligent criticism of religions.

On the other hand, take a glance at modern scientific critics of religion. These educated bourgeois writers almost invariably “supplement” their own refutations of religious superstitions with arguments which immediately expose them as ideological slaves of the bourgeoisie, as “graduated flunkies of clericalism”.

Two examples. Professor R. Y. Wipper published in 1918 a little book entitled *Vozniknovenie Khristianstva* (*The Origin of Christianity* — Pharos Publishing House, Moscow). In his account of the principal results of modern science, the author not only refrains from combating the superstitions and deception which are the weapons of the church as a political organisation, not only evades these questions, but makes the simply ridiculous and most reactionary claim that he is above both “extremes” — the idealist and the materialist. This is toadying to the ruling bourgeoisie, which all over the world devotes to

the support of religion hundreds of millions of rubles from. the profits squeezed out of the working people.

The well-known German scientist, Arthur Drews, while refuting religious superstitions and fables in his book, *Die Christusmythe* (*The Christ Myth*), and while showing that Christ never existed, at the end of the book declares in favor of religion, albeit a renovated, purified and more subtle religion, one that would be capable of withstanding “the daily growing naturalist torrent” (fourth German edition, 1910, p. 238). Here we have an out-spoken and deliberate reactionary, who is openly helping the exploiters to replace the old, decayed religious superstitions by new, more odious and vile superstitions.

This does not mean that Drews should not be translated. It means that while in a certain measure effecting an alliance with the progressive section of the bourgeoisie, Communists and all consistent materialists should unflinchingly expose that section when it is guilty of reaction. It means that to shun an alliance with the representatives of the bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century, i.e., the period when it was revolutionary, would be to betray Marxism and materialism; for an “alliance” with the Drewses, in one form or another and in one degree or another, is essential for our struggle against the predominating religious obscurantists.

Pod Znamenem Marksizma, which sets out to be an organ of militant materialism, should devote much of its space to atheist propaganda, to reviews of the literature on the subject and to correcting the immense shortcomings of our governmental work in this field. It is particularly important to utilize books and pamphlets which contain many concrete facts and comparisons showing how the class interests and class organisations of the modern bourgeoisie are connected with the organisations of religious institutions and religious propaganda.

All material relating to the United States of America, where the official. state connection between religion and capital is less manifest, is extremely important. But, on the other hand, it becomes all the clearer to us that so-called modern democracy (which the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, partly also the anarchists, etc., so unreasonably worship) is nothing but the freedom to preach whatever is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie, to preach, namely, the most reactionary ideas, religion, obscurantism, defense of the exploiters, etc.

One would like to hope that a journal which sets out to be a militant materialist organ will provide our reading public with reviews of atheist literature, showing for which circle of readers any particular writing might be suitable and in what respect, and mentioning what literature has been published in our country (only decent translations should be given notice, and they are not so many), and what is still to be published.

In addition to the alliance with consistent materialists who do not belong to the Communist Party, of no less and perhaps even of more importance for the work which militant materialism should perform is an alliance with those modern natural scientists who incline towards materialism and are not afraid to defend and preach it as against the modish philosophical wanderings into idealism and skepticism which are prevalent in so-called educated society.

The article by A. Timiryazev on Einstein's theory of relativity published in *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* No. 1-2 permits us to hope that the journal will succeed in effecting this second alliance too. Greater attention should be paid to it. It should be remembered that the sharp upheaval which modern natural science is undergoing very often gives rise to reactionary philosophical schools and minor schools. trends and minor trends. Unless, therefore, the problems raised by the recent revolution in natural science are followed, and unless natural scientists are enlisted in the work of a philosophical journal, militant materialism can be neither militant nor materialism. Timiryazev was obliged to observe in the first issue of the journal that the theory of Einstein, who, according to Timiryazev, is himself not making any active attack on the foundations of materialism, has already been seized upon by a vast number of bourgeois intellectuals of all countries; it should be noted that this applies not only to Einstein, but to a number, if not to the majority, of the great reformers of natural science since the end of the nineteenth century.

For our attitude towards this phenomenon to be a politically conscious one, it must be realized that no natural science and no materialism can hold its own in the struggle against the onslaught of bourgeois ideas and the restoration of the bourgeois world outlook unless it stands on solid philosophical ground. In order to hold his own in this struggle and carry it to a victorious finish, the natural scientist must be a modern materialist, a conscious adherent of the materialism represented by Marx, i.e., he must be a dialectical materialist. In order to attain this aim, the contributors to *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* must arrange for the systematic study of Hegelian dialectics from a materialist standpoint, i.e., the dialectics which Marx applied practically in his *Capital* and in his historical and political works, and applied so successfully that now every day of the awakening to life and struggle of new classes in the East (Japan, India, and China) — i.e., the hundreds of millions of human beings who form the greater part of the world population and whose historical passivity and historical torpor have hitherto conditioned the stagnation and decay of many advanced European countries — every day of the awakening to life of new peoples and new classes serves as a fresh confirmation of Marxism.

Of course, this study, this interpretation, this propaganda of Hegelian dialectics is extremely difficult, and the first experiments in this direction will undoubtedly be accompanied by errors. But only he who never does anything never makes mistakes. Taking as our basis Marx's method of applying materialistically conceived Hegelian dialectics, we can and should elaborate this dialectics from all aspects, print in the journal excerpts from Hegel's principal works, interpret them materialistically and comment on them with the help of examples of the way Marx applied dialectics, as well as of examples of dialectics in the sphere of economic and political relations, which recent history, especially modern imperialist war and revolution, provides in unusual abundance. In my opinion, the editors and contributors of *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* should be a kind of "Society of Materialist Friends of Hegelian Dialectics". Modern natural scientists (if they know how to seek, and if we learn to help them) will find in the Hegelian dialectics, materialistically interpreted, a series of answers to the philosophical problems which are being raised by the revolution in natural science and which make the intellectual admirers of bourgeois fashion "stumble" into reaction.

Unless it sets itself such a task and systematically fulfills it, materialism cannot be militant materialism. It will be not so much the fighter as the fought, to use an expression of Shchedrin's. Without this, eminent natural scientists will as often as hitherto be helpless in making their philosophical deductions and generalizations. For natural science is progressing so fast and is undergoing such a

profound revolutionary upheaval in all spheres that it cannot possibly dispense with philosophical deductions.

In conclusion, I will cite an example which has nothing to do with philosophy, but does at any rate concern social questions, to which *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* also desires, to devote attention.

It is an example of the way in which modern pseudo-science actually serves as a vehicle for the grossest and most infamous reactionary views.

I was recently sent a copy of *Ekonomist* No. 1 (1922), published by the Eleventh Department of the Russian Technical 'Society. The young Communist who sent me this journal (he probably had no time to read it) rashly expressed considerable agreement with it. In reality the journal is — I do not know to what extent deliberately — an organ of the modern feudalists, disguised of course under a cloak of science, democracy and so forth.

A certain Mr. P. A. Sorokin publishes in this journal an extensive, so-called "sociological", inquiry on "The Influence of the War". This learned article abounds in learned references to the "sociological" works of the author and his numerous teachers and colleagues abroad. Here is an example of his learning.

On page 83, I read:

"For every 10,000 marriages in Petrograd there are now 92.2 divorces — a fantastic figure. Of every 100 annulled marriages, 51.1 had lasted less than one year, 11 per cent less than one month, 22 per cent less than two months, 41 per cent less than three to six months and only 26 per cent over six months. These figures show that modern legal marriage is a form which conceals what is in effect extra-marital sexual intercourse, enabling lovers of 'strawberries' to satisfy their appetites in a 'legal' way" (*Ekonomist* No. 1, p. 83)

Both this gentleman and the Russian Technical Society, which publishes this journal and gives space to this kind of talk, no doubt regard themselves as adherents of democracy and would consider it a great insult to be called what they are in fact, namely, feudalists, reactionaries, "graduated. flunkies of clericalism".

Even the slightest acquaintance with the legislation of bourgeois countries on marriage, divorce and illegitimate children, and with the actual state of affairs in this field, is enough to show anyone interested in the subject that modern bourgeois democracy, even in all the most democratic bourgeois republics, exhibits a truly feudal attitude in this respect towards women and towards children born out of wedlock.

This, of course, does not prevent the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, a part of the anarchists and all the corresponding parties in the West from shouting about democracy and how it is being violated by the Bolsheviks. But as a matter of fact, the Bolshevik revolution is the only consistently democratic revolution in respect to such questions as marriage, divorce and the position of children born out of wedlock. And this is a question which most directly affects the interests of more than half the population of any country. Although a large number of bourgeois revolutions preceded it and called themselves democratic, the Bolshevik revolution was the first and only revolution to wage a resolute struggle in this respect both against reaction and feudalism and against the usual hypocrisy of the ruling and propertied classes.

If 92 divorces for every 10,000 marriages seem to Mr. Sorekin a fantastic figure, one can only suppose that either the author lived and was brought up in a monastery so entirely walled off from life that hardly anyone will believe such a monastery ever existed, or that he is distorting the truth in the interest of reaction and the bourgeoisie. Anybody in the least acquainted with social conditions in bourgeois countries knows that the real number of actual divorces (of course, not sanctioned by church and law) is everywhere immeasurably greater. The only difference between Russia and other countries in this respect is that our laws do not sanctify hypocrisy and the debasement of the woman and her child, but openly and in the name of the government declare systematic war on all hypocrisy and all debasement.

The Marxist journal will have to wage war also on these modern "educated" feudalists. Not a few of them, very likely, are in receipt of government money and are employed by our government to educate our youth, although they are no more fitted for this than notorious perverts are fitted for the post of superintendents of educational establishments for the young.

The working class of Russia proved able to win power; but it has not yet learned to utilize it, for otherwise it would have long ago very politely dispatched such teachers and members of learned societies to countries with a bourgeois "democracy" That is the proper place for such feudalists.

But it will learn, given the will to learn.

March 12, 1922

Mao Zedong: On Practice

[There used to be a number of comrades in our Party who were dogmatists and who for a long period rejected the experience of the Chinese revolution, denying the truth that "Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action" and overawing people with words and phrases from Marxist works, torn out of context. There were also a number of comrades who were empiricists and who for a long period restricted themselves to their own fragmentary experience and did not understand the importance of theory for revolutionary practice or see the revolution as a whole, but worked blindly though industriously. The erroneous ideas of these two types of comrades, and particularly of the dogmatists, caused enormous losses to the Chinese revolution during 1931-34, and yet the dogmatists cloaking themselves as Marxists, confused a great many comrades. "On Practice" was written in order to expose the subjectivist errors of dogmatism and empiricism in the Party, and especially the error of dogmatism, from the standpoint of the Marxist theory of knowledge. It was entitled "On Practice" because its stress was on exposing the dogmatist kind of subjectivism, which belittles practice. The ideas contained in this essay were presented by Comrade Mao Tse-tung in a lecture at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yen-an.]

Before Marx, materialism examined the problem of knowledge apart from the social nature of man and apart from his historical development, and was therefore incapable of understanding the dependence of knowledge on social practice, that is, the dependence of knowledge on production and the class struggle.

Above all, Marxists regard man's activity in production as the most fundamental practical activity, the determinant of all his other activities. Man's knowledge depends mainly on his activity in material production, through which he comes gradually to understand the phenomena, the properties and the laws

of nature, and the relations between himself and nature; and through his activity in production, he also gradually comes to understand, in varying degrees, certain relations that exist between man and man. None of this knowledge can be acquired apart from activity in production. In a classless society every person, as a member of society, joins in common effort with the other members, enters into definite relations of production with them and engages in production to meet man's material needs. In all class societies, the members of the different social classes also enter, in different ways, into definite relations of production and engage in production to meet their material needs. This is the primary source from which human knowledge develops.

Man's social practice is not confined to activity in production, but takes many other forms--class struggle, political life, scientific and artistic pursuits; in short, as a social being, man participates in all spheres of the practical life of society. Thus man, in varying degrees, comes to know the different relations between man and man, not only through his material life but also through his political and cultural life (both of which are intimately bound up with material life). Of these other types of social practice, class struggle in particular, in all its various forms, exerts a profound influence on the development of man's knowledge. In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class.

Marxists hold that in human society activity in production develops step by step from a lower to a higher level and that consequently man's knowledge, whether of nature or of society, also develops step by step from a lower to a higher level, that is, from the shallower to the deeper, from the one-sided to the many-sided. For a very long period in history, men were necessarily confined to a one-sided understanding of the history of society because, for one thing, the bias of the exploiting classes always distorted history and, for another, the small scale of production limited man's outlook. It was not until the modern proletariat emerged along with immense forces of production (large-scale industry) that man was able to acquire a comprehensive, historical understanding of the development of society and turn this knowledge into a science, the science of Marxism.

Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice (material production, class struggle or scientific experiment). If a man wants to succeed in his work, that is, to achieve the anticipated results, he must bring his ideas into correspondence with the laws of the objective external world; if they do not correspond, he will fail in his practice. After he fails, he draws his lessons, corrects his ideas to make them correspond to the laws of the external world, and can thus turn failure into success; this is what is meant by "failure is the mother of success" and "a fall into the pit, a gain in your wit". The dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge places practice in the primary position, holding that human knowledge can in no way be separated from practice and repudiating all the erroneous theories which deny the importance of practice or separate knowledge from practice. Thus, Lenin said, "*Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge*, for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality."⁴⁵ The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism has two outstanding characteristics. One is its class nature: it openly avows that dialectical materialism is in the service of the proletariat. The other is its practicality: it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice, emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice. The truth of any knowledge or

⁴⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's The Science of Logic". Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 205.

theory is determined not by subjective feelings, but by objective results in social practice. Only social practice can be the criterion of truth. The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge.⁴⁶

But how then does human knowledge arise from practice and in turn serve practice? This will become clear if we look at the process of development of knowledge.

In the process of practice, man at first sees only the phenomenal side, the separate aspects, the external relations of things. For instance, some people from outside come to Yen-an on a tour of observation. In the first day or two, they see its topography, streets and houses; they meet many people, attend banquets, evening parties and mass meetings, hear talk of various kinds and read various documents, all these being the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things. This is called the perceptual stage of cognition, namely, the stage of sense perceptions and impressions. That is, these particular things in Yen-an act on the sense organs of the members of the observation group, evoke sense perceptions and give rise in their brains to many impressions together with a rough sketch of the external relations among these impressions: this is the first stage of cognition. At this stage, man cannot as yet form concepts, which are deeper, or draw logical conclusions.

As social practice continues, things that give rise to man's sense perceptions and impressions in the course of his practice are repeated many times; then a sudden change (leap) takes place in the brain in the process of cognition, and concepts are formed. Concepts are no longer the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things; they grasp the essence, the totality and the internal relations of things. Between concepts and sense perceptions there is not only a quantitative but also a qualitative difference. Proceeding further, by means of judgement and inference one is able to draw logical conclusions. The expression in *San Kuo Yen Yi*,⁴⁷ "knit the brows and a stratagem comes to mind", or in everyday language, "let me think it over", refers to man's use of concepts in the brain to form judgements and inferences. This is the second stage of cognition. When the members of the observation group have collected various data and, what is more, have "thought them over", they are able to arrive at the judgement that "the Communist Party's policy of the National United Front Against Japan is thorough, sincere and genuine". Having made this judgement, they can, if they too are genuine about uniting to save the nation, go a step further and draw the following conclusion, "The National United Front Against Japan can succeed." This stage of conception, judgement and inference is the more important stage in the entire process of knowing a thing; it is the stage of rational knowledge. The real task of knowing is, through perception, to arrive at thought, to arrive step by step at the comprehension of the internal contradictions of objective things, of their laws and of the internal relations between one process and another, that is, to arrive at logical knowledge. To repeat, logical knowledge differs from perceptual knowledge in that perceptual knowledge pertains to the separate aspects, the phenomena and the external relations of things, whereas logical knowledge takes a big stride forward to reach the totality, the essence and the internal relations of things and discloses the inner contradictions in the surrounding world. Therefore, logical knowledge is capable of grasping the development of the surrounding world in its totality, in the internal relations of all its aspects.

⁴⁶ See Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in two volumes, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1958, Vol. II, p. 403, and V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1952, pp. 136-4.

⁴⁷ *San Kuo Yen Yi* (Tales of the Three Kingdoms) is a famous Chinese historical novel by Lo Kuan-chung (late 14th and early 15th century).

This dialectical-materialist theory of the process of development of knowledge, basing itself on practice and proceeding from the shallower to the deeper, was never worked out by anybody before the rise of Marxism. Marxist materialism solved this problem correctly for the first time, pointing out both materialistically and dialectically the deepening movement of cognition, the movement by which man in society progresses from perceptual knowledge to logical knowledge in his complex, constantly recurring practice of production and class struggle. Lenin said, "The abstraction of *matter*, of a *law* of nature, the abstraction of *value*, etc., in short, *all* scientific (correct, serious, not absurd) abstractions reflect nature more deeply, truly and *completely*." ⁴⁸ Marxism-Leninism holds that each of the two stages in the process of cognition has its own characteristics, with knowledge manifesting itself as perceptual at the lower stage and logical at the higher stage, but that both are stages in an integrated process of cognition. The perceptual and the rational are qualitatively different, but are not divorced from each other; they are unified on the basis of practice. Our practice proves that what is perceived cannot at once be comprehended and that only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived. Perception only solves the problem of phenomena; theory alone can solve the problem of essence. The solving of both these problems is not separable in the slightest degree from practice. Whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming into contact with it, that is, by living (practicing) in its environment. In feudal society it was impossible to know the laws of capitalist society in advance because capitalism had not yet emerged, the relevant practice was lacking. Marxism could be the product only of capitalist society. Marx, in the era of laissez-faire capitalism, could not concretely know certain laws peculiar to the era of imperialism beforehand, because imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, had not yet emerged and the relevant practice was lacking; only Lenin and Stalin could undertake this task. Leaving aside their genius, the reason why Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin could work out their theories was mainly that they personally took part in the practice of the class struggle and the scientific experimentation of their time; lacking this condition, no genius could have succeeded. The saying, "without stepping outside his gate the scholar knows all the wide world's affairs", was mere empty talk in past times when technology was undeveloped. Even though this saying can be valid in the present age of developed technology, the people with real personal knowledge are those engaged in practice the wide world over. And it is only when these people have come to "know" through their practice and when their knowledge has reached him through writing and technical media that the "scholar" can indirectly "know all the wide world's affairs". If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change reality, to change that thing or class of things, for only thus can you come into contact with them as phenomena; only through personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality can you uncover the essence of that thing or class of things and comprehend them. This is the path to knowledge which every man actually travels, though some people, deliberately distorting matters, argue to the contrary. The most ridiculous person in the world is the "know all" who picks up a smattering of hearsay knowledge and proclaims himself "the world's Number One authority"; this merely shows that he has not taken a proper measure of himself. Knowledge is a matter of science, and no dishonesty or conceit whatsoever is permissible. What is required is definitely the reverse--honesty and modesty. If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself. If you want to know the structure and properties of the atom, you must make physical and chemical experiments to change the state of the atom. If you want

⁴⁸ V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's The Science of Logic", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 161.

to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience. But one cannot have direct experience of everything; as a matter of fact, most of our knowledge comes from indirect experience, for example, all knowledge from past times and foreign lands. To our ancestors and to foreigners, such knowledge was--or is--a matter of direct experience, and this knowledge is reliable if in the course of their direct experience the requirement of "scientific abstraction", spoken of by Lenin, was--or is--fulfilled and objective reality scientifically reflected, otherwise it is not reliable. Hence a man's knowledge consists only of two parts, that which comes from direct experience and that which comes from indirect experience. Moreover, what is indirect experience for me is direct experience for other people. Consequently, considered as a whole, knowledge of any kind is inseparable from direct experience. All knowledge originates in perception of the objective external world through man's physical sense organs. Anyone who denies such perception, denies direct experience, or denies personal participation in the practice that changes reality, is not a materialist. That is why the "know-all" is ridiculous. There is an old Chinese saying, "How can you catch tiger cubs without entering the tiger's lair?" This saying holds true for man's practice and it also holds true for the theory of knowledge. There can be no knowledge apart from practice.

To make clear the dialectical-materialist movement of cognition arising on the basis of the practice which changes reality--to make clear the gradually deepening movement of cognition--a few additional concrete examples are given below.

In its knowledge of capitalist society, the proletariat was only in the perceptual stage of cognition in the first period of its practice, the period of machine-smashing and spontaneous struggle; it knew only some of the aspects and the external relations of the phenomena of capitalism. The proletariat was then still a "class-in-itself". But when it reached the second period of its practice, the period of conscious and organized economic and political struggles, the proletariat was able to comprehend the essence of capitalist society, the relations of exploitation between social classes and its own historical task; and it was able to do so because of its own practice and because of its experience of prolonged struggle, which Marx and Engels scientifically summed up in all its variety to create the theory of Marxism for the education of the proletariat. It was then that the proletariat became a "class-for-itself".

Similarly with the Chinese people's knowledge of imperialism. The first stage was one of superficial, perceptual knowledge, as shown in the indiscriminate anti-foreign struggles of the Movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Yi Ho Tuan Movement, and so on. It was only in the second stage that the Chinese people reached the stage of rational knowledge, saw the internal and external contradictions of imperialism and saw the essential truth that imperialism had allied itself with China's comprador and feudal classes to oppress and exploit the great masses of the Chinese people. This knowledge began about the time of the May 4th Movement of 1919.

Next, let us consider war. If those who lead a war lack experience of war, then at the initial stage they will not understand the profound laws pertaining to the directing of a specific war (such as our Agrarian Revolutionary War of the past decade). At the initial stage they will merely experience a good deal of fighting and, what is more, suffer many defeats. But this experience (the experience of battles won and especially of battles lost) enables them to comprehend the inner thread of the whole war, namely, the laws of that specific war, to understand its strategy and tactics, and consequently to direct the war with

confidence. If, at such a moment, the command is turned over to an inexperienced person, then he too will have to suffer a number of defeats (gain experience) before he can comprehend the true laws of the war.

"I am not sure I can handle it." We often hear this remark when a comrade hesitates to accept an assignment. Why is he unsure of himself? Because he has no systematic understanding of the content and circumstances of the assignment, or because he has had little or no contact with such work, and so the laws governing it are beyond him. After a detailed analysis of the nature and circumstances of the assignment, he will feel surer of himself and do it willingly. If he spends some time at the job and gains experience and if he is a person who is willing to look into matters with an open mind and not one who approaches problems subjectively, one-sidedly and superficially, then he can draw conclusions for himself as to how to go about the job and do it with much more courage. Only those who are subjective, one-sided and superficial in their approach to problems will smugly issue orders or directives the moment they arrive on the scene, without considering the circumstances, without viewing things in their totality (their history and their present state as a whole) and without getting to the essence of things (their nature and the internal relations between one thing and another). Such people are bound to trip and fall.

Thus, it can be seen that the first step in the process of cognition is contact with the objects of the external world; this belongs to the stage of perception. The second step is to synthesize the data of perception by arranging and reconstructing them; this belongs to the stage of conception, judgement and inference. It is only when the data of perception are very rich (not fragmentary) and correspond to reality (are not illusory) that they can be the basis for forming correct concepts and theories.

Here two important points must be emphasized. The first, which has been stated before but should be repeated here, is the dependence of rational knowledge upon perceptual knowledge. Anyone who thinks that rational knowledge need not be derived from perceptual knowledge is an idealist. In the history of philosophy there is the "rationalist" school that admits the reality only of reason and not of experience, believing that reason alone is reliable while perceptual experience is not; this school errs by turning things upside down. The rational is reliable precisely because it has its source in sense perceptions, otherwise it would be like water without a source, a tree without roots, subjective, self-engendered and unreliable. As to the sequence in the process of cognition, perceptual experience comes first; we stress the significance of social practice in the process of cognition precisely because social practice alone can give rise to human knowledge and it alone can start man on the acquisition of perceptual experience from the objective world. For a person who shuts his eyes, stops his ears and totally cuts himself off from the objective world there can be no such thing as knowledge. Knowledge begins with experience--this is the materialism of the theory of knowledge.

The second point is that knowledge needs to be deepened, that the perceptual stage of knowledge needs to be developed to the rational stage--this is the dialectics of the theory of knowledge.⁴⁹ To think that knowledge can stop at the lower, perceptual stage and that perceptual knowledge alone is reliable while rational knowledge is not, would be to repeat the historical error of "empiricism". This theory errs in failing to understand that, although the data of perception reflect certain realities in the objective world (I am not speaking here of idealist empiricism which confines experience to so-called introspection), they are merely one-sided and superficial, reflecting things incompletely and not reflecting their essence. Fully to reflect a

⁴⁹ "In order to understand, it is necessary empirically to begin understanding, study, to rise from empiricism to the universal." (Ibid., p. 197.)

thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception, discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside, in order to form a system of concepts and theories--it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge. Such reconstructed knowledge is not more empty or more unreliable; on the contrary, whatever has been scientifically reconstructed in the process of cognition, on the basis of practice, reflects objective reality, as Lenin said, more deeply, more truly, more fully. As against this, vulgar "practical men" respect experience but despise theory, and therefore cannot have a comprehensive view of an entire objective process, lack clear direction and long-range perspective, and are complacent over occasional successes and glimpses of the truth. If such persons direct a revolution, they will lead it up a blind alley.

Rational knowledge depends upon perceptual knowledge and perceptual knowledge remains to be developed into rational knowledge-- this is the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge. In philosophy, neither "rationalism" nor "empiricism" understands the historical or the dialectical nature of knowledge, and although each of these schools contains one aspect of the truth (here I am referring to materialist, not to idealist, rationalism and empiricism), both are wrong on the theory of knowledge as a whole. The dialectical-materialist movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational holds true for a minor process of cognition (for instance, knowing a single thing or task) as well as for a major process of cognition (for instance, knowing a whole society or a revolution).

But the movement of knowledge does not end here. If the dialectical-materialist movement of knowledge were to stop at rational knowledge, only half the problem would be dealt with. And as far as Marxist philosophy is concerned, only the less important half at that. Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world. From the Marxist viewpoint, theory is important, and its importance is fully expressed in Lenin's statement, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."⁵⁰ But Marxism emphasizes the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action. If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no significance. Knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge is acquired through practice and must then return to practice. The active function of knowledge manifests itself not only in the active leap from perceptual to rational knowledge, but--and this is more important--it must manifest itself in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. The knowledge which grasps the laws of the world, must be redirected to the practice of changing the world, must be applied anew in the practice of production, in the practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle and in the practice of scientific experiment. This is the process of testing and developing theory, the continuation of the whole process of cognition. The problem of whether theory corresponds to objective reality is not, and cannot be, completely solved in the movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, mentioned above. The only way to solve this problem completely is to redirect rational knowledge to social practice, apply theory to practice and see whether it can achieve the objectives one has in mind. Many theories of natural science are held to be true not only because they were so considered when natural scientists originated them, but

⁵⁰ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", Collected Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369.

because they have been verified in subsequent scientific practice. Similarly, Marxism-Leninism is held to be true not only because it was so considered when it was scientifically formulated by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin but because it has been verified in the subsequent practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle. Dialectical materialism is universally true because it is impossible for anyone to escape from its domain in his practice. The history of human knowledge tells us that the truth of many theories is incomplete and that this incompleteness is remedied through the test of practice. Many theories are erroneous and it is through the test of practice that their errors are corrected. That is why practice is the criterion of truth and why "the standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge".⁵¹ Stalin has well said, "Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory."⁵²

When we get to this point, is the movement of knowledge completed? Our answer is: it is and yet it is not. When men in society throw themselves into the practice of changing a certain objective process (whether natural or social) at a certain stage of its development, they can, as a result of the reflection of the objective process in their brains and the exercise of their subjective activity, advance their knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, and create ideas, theories, plans or program which correspond in general to the laws of that objective process. They then apply these ideas, theories, plans or program in practice in the same objective process. And if they can realize the aims, they have in mind, that is, if in that same process of practice, they can translate, or on the whole translate, those previously formulated ideas, theories, plans or program into fact, then the movement of knowledge may be considered completed with regard to this particular process. In the process of changing nature, take for example the fulfilment of an engineering plan, the verification of a scientific hypothesis, the manufacture of an implement or the reaping of a crop; or in the process of changing society, take for example the victory of a strike, victory in a war or the fulfilment of an educational plan. All these may be considered the realization of aims one has in mind. But generally speaking, whether in the practice of changing nature or of changing society, men's original ideas, theories, plans or program are seldom realized without any alteration.

This is because people engaged in changing reality are usually subject to numerous limitations; they are limited not only by existing scientific and technological conditions but also by the development of the objective process itself and the degree to which this process has become manifest (the aspects and the essence of the objective process have not yet been fully revealed). In such a situation, ideas, theories, plans or program are usually altered partially and sometimes even wholly, because of the discovery of unforeseen circumstances in the course of practice. That is to say, it does happen that the original ideas, theories, plans or program fail to correspond with reality either in whole or in part and are wholly or partially incorrect. In many instances, failures have to be repeated many times before errors in knowledge can be corrected and correspondence with the laws of the objective process achieved, and consequently before the subjective can be transformed into the objective, or in other words, before the anticipated results can be achieved in practice. But when that point is reached, no matter how, the movement of human knowledge regarding a certain objective process at a certain stage of its development may be considered completed.

⁵¹ V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, p. 141.

⁵² J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 31.

However, so far as the progression of the process is concerned, the movement of human knowledge is not completed. Every process, whether in the realm of nature or of society, progresses and develops by reason of its internal contradiction and struggle, and the movement of human knowledge should also progress and develop along with it. As far as social movements are concerned, true revolutionary leaders must not only be good at correcting their ideas, theories, plans or program when errors are discovered, as has been indicated above; but when a certain objective process has already progressed and changed from one stage of development to another, they must also be good at making themselves and all their fellow-revolutionaries progress and change in their subjective knowledge along with it, that is to say, they must ensure that the proposed new revolutionary tasks and new working program correspond to the new changes in the situation. In a revolutionary period, the situation changes very rapidly; if the knowledge of revolutionaries does not change rapidly in accordance with the changed situation, they will be unable to lead the revolution to victory.

It often happens, however, that thinking lags behind reality; this is because man's cognition is limited by numerous social conditions. We are opposed to die-hards in the revolutionary ranks whose thinking fails to advance with changing objective circumstances and has manifested itself historically as Right opportunism. These people fail to see that the struggle of opposites has already pushed the objective process forward while their knowledge has stopped at the old stage. This is characteristic of the thinking of all die-hards. Their thinking is divorced from social practice, and they cannot march ahead to guide the chariot of society; they simply trail behind, grumbling that it goes too fast and trying to drag it back or turn it in the opposite direction.

We are also opposed to "Left" phrase-mongering. The thinking of "Leftists" outstrips a given stage of development of the objective process; some regard their fantasies as truth, while others strain to realize in the present an ideal which can only be realized in the future. They alienate themselves from the current practice of the majority of the people and from the realities of the day, and show themselves adventurist in their actions.

Idealism and mechanical materialism, opportunism and adventurism, are all characterized by the breach between the subjective and the objective, by the separation of knowledge from practice. The Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge, characterized as it is by scientific social practice, cannot but resolutely oppose these wrong ideologies. Marxists recognize that in the absolute and general process of development of the universe, the development of each particular process is relative, and that hence, in the endless flow of absolute truth, man's knowledge of a particular process at any given stage of development is only relative truth. The sum total of innumerable relative truths constitutes absolute truth.⁵³ The development of an objective process is full of contradictions and struggles, and so is the development of the movement of human knowledge. All the dialectical movements of the objective world can sooner or later be reflected in human knowledge. In social practice, the process of coming into being, developing and passing away is infinite, and so is the process of coming into being, developing and passing away in human knowledge. As man's practice which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or program, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper. The movement of change in the world of objective reality is never-ending and so is man's cognition of truth through practice. Marxism-Leninism has in no way exhausted truth but

⁵³ See V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, pp. 129-36.

ceaselessly opens up roads to the knowledge of truth in the course of practice. Our conclusion is the concrete, historical unity of the subjective and the objective, of theory and practice, of knowing and doing, and we are opposed to all erroneous ideologies, whether "Left" or right, which depart from concrete history.

In the present epoch of the development of society, the responsibility of correctly knowing and changing the world has been placed by history upon the shoulders of the proletariat and its party. This process, the practice of changing the world, which is determined in accordance with scientific knowledge, has already reached a historic moment in the world and in China, a great moment unprecedented in human history, that is, the moment for completely banishing darkness from the world and from China and for changing the world into a world of light such as never previously existed. The struggle of the proletariat and the revolutionary people to change the world comprises the fulfilment of the following tasks: to change the objective world and, at the same time, their own subjective world--to change their cognitive ability and change the relations between the subjective and the objective world. Such a change has already come about in one part of the globe, in the Soviet Union. There the people are pushing forward this process of change. The people of China and the rest of the world either are going through, or will go through, such a process. And the objective world which is to be changed also includes all the opponents of change, who, in order to be changed, must go through a stage of compulsion before they can enter the stage of voluntary, conscious change. The epoch of world communism will be reached when all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world.

Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.

Jose Carlos Mariátegui: Defense of Marxism (machine translated)

Chapter XV: THE TRIAL OF CONTEMPORARY FRENCH LITERATURE

Exploring a field adjacent to the confessions of Champson, Prevost, and other "young Europeans," to use Drieu la Rochelle's term, I will pause with the reader on another very recent essay, published by Emmanuel Berl under the title **Premier Panphlet. Les litterateurs et la Revolution**,⁵⁴ in issues 73 to 75 of **Europe**. In this essay, Berl attempts to rethink the question of Revolution and Intelligence, which so often preoccupies intellectuals in the post-war era. His study is, in large part, a critique of contemporary French literature, severely accused of conformism and bourgeoisism, which Berl documents copiously and vividly.

Berl begins his investigation from this point of view: "I doubt," he begins, "that the idea of revolution can be clear to anyone who does not understand it as the hope of seizing power for the benefit of the group to which he belongs. Lenin's most solid teaching is perhaps to be found here. The idea of revolution is never obscured in Lenin, because he has a very sure criterion for making it possible to obscure it: all power to the

⁵⁴ First Pamphlet, The Writers and the Revolution.

Soviets, all power to the Bolsheviks. He easily triumphs over Kautsky, because Kautsky no longer knows what he means by the word revolution, whereas Lenin does. In **Les Conquerants**,⁵⁵ Borodine declares, "Revolution is paying the army." Saint-Just would have spoken thus. And here we have the feeling of touching revolutionary evidence. But such definitions cease to be valid once one is no longer in the thick of the action, justified by the events that are unfolding. I cannot accept that the revolutionary idea be reduced to the series of emotions or lyrical effusions that it may arouse in this or that person. Revolution is not the boy who quarrels with his family, nor the gentleman bored by his wife, nor the courtesan eager to leave her lover for a change of lies. We are obliged to analyze as long as we want to think. It is our lot." In the first part of this proposition, Berl's position is fair; but, as we shall see later, it is not equally so in the second. Berl distinguishes and separates times of action from times of waiting, a distinction that does not exist for the "professional revolutionary" of whom Max Eastman speaks. Lenin's secret lies precisely in his ability to continue his work of criticism and preparation without ever slackening in his efforts, after the defeat of 1905, in a time of pessimism and discouragement. Marx and Engels carried out most of their work, great in its spiritual and scientific value, even independently of its revolutionary effectiveness, at a time when they were the first not to consider insurrection imminent. Neither analysis led them to inhibit action, nor action to inhibit analysis.

The author of **Premier Panphlet** remains faithful, at heart, to the vindication of pure intelligence. This is why he accepts M. Beoda's criticisms of contemporary thought, even though he believes that "the most serious illness it suffers from is a lack of courage, not a lack of universality." Berl observes, quite accurately, that "**the cleric**"⁵⁶ is not hindered by politics to the extent that he thinks about it, but to the extent that he does not think about it" and that "the nature of the spirit means that it is never a servant of what it considers, but of what it neglects." But when it comes to the consequences and obligations of thinking about politics, Berl demands that intellectuals necessarily share his pessimism and negative criticism. Avoiding or neglecting politics is undoubtedly a way of betraying the spirit, but in his view, subscribing to the hope of a party or the myth of a revolution is also a betrayal.

More interesting than his thesis on the duties of intelligence are the judgments on current French literature that illustrate it. This literature is, above all, more bourgeois than the bourgeoisie. "The bourgeoisie constantly doubts itself. It does well. To assert oneself as bourgeois is to subscribe to Marxism." Writers, meanwhile, are beginning to engage in an apologetics of the bourgeoisie as a class. Their bourgeoisism is vividly manifested in their distrust of ideology. "Love of history, hatred of ideas" is one of the dominant features. This is precisely the attitude of the bourgeoisie since, its romantic days long gone and its rationalist phase overcome, it takes refuge in that deification of history that Tilgher denounces in such precise terms. Distrust of ideas precedes distrust of man. In this gesture, too, the bourgeoisie does nothing but renounce romanticism. The modern writer searches the arsenal of new psychology for weapons that can be used to demonstrate the impotence, contradiction, and misery of man. "For distrust of man to be complete, the hero must be denigrated." This seems to Berl to be the true purpose of fictionalized biography.

Contemporary French conformist literature feels superior and alien to ideology. However, this does not make it any less saturated with ideas or less governed by impulses that lead it to total compliance with the

⁵⁵ The Conquerors.

⁵⁶ The intellectual

reactionary and decadent spirit of the bourgeoisie that it translates and indulges. Berl astutely notes that "there is nothing as Poincaréist as the books of M. Giraudoux, inspired by the Notary Berrichon, full of cultural allusions like a speech by M. Léon Berard and murmuring with gratitude to the historical and social God who allows these Virgilian leisure activities"... Giraudoux's characters reflect the same sentiment. Eglantine, for example, "has a natural inclination toward rich and noble gentlemen: she possesses that precious fondness for old men that Frosine already praised in Marianne." Cocteau obeys the tastes of the bourgeois public with identical rigor. His love for Picasso and Apollinaire matters little. Even when he seems to be embarking on the most unusual adventure, Cocteau does nothing more than "prepare his fine charades for the Duchess of Guermantes."⁵⁷ Berl dispels Albert Thibaudet's illusion of a literature that is antagonistic and antithetical to politics because of the youth of its leaders. "Young people sing," says Berl, "as old people whistle. M. Maurois writes as M. Poincaré governs, with care and a sense of minimal risk. M. Morand composes as M. Philippe Berthelot administers."

But isn't the technique of today's French novel at least new? Berl denies it. Authors do not, in fact, abandon the recipes of the nineteenth-century novel. "The novel fails to adapt its methods to the findings of modern psychology. Most authors retain or pretend to retain a faith in the construction of their characters that is inadmissible after Freud. They do not want to admit that a character's account of their past reveals more about their present state than the past they are talking about. They continue to represent a person's life as the unfolding of a solitary thing, determined in advance in an empty time. They do not follow the lessons of behaviorism,⁵⁸ which should produce a much more accurate literature than ours, nor even the lessons of psychoanalysis, which should definitively convince authors that a character is prevented, by the laws of repression, from acquiring a clear consciousness of himself. They hardly take into account Bergson's discoveries about the functioning of memory. Bergsonism dictated perhaps for patriotic reasons, one might add, out of deference to the authority of an academic and conservative Bergson. For French reservations about Freud and psychoanalysis will always depend, in no small part, on a certain patriotic unwillingness to adhere to the formulas of a "Boche," even if they are based on Charcot's experiences.

The best part of Emmanuel Berl's work is this indictment. As soon as he begins to defend the autonomy of intellectuals against the formulas and thinking of the Revolution, no less than against reactionary formulas and thinking, he falls into unconditional servitude to the myth of pure Intelligence. All the prejudices of petty-bourgeois criticism and its taste for utopia or its confinement to skepticism are evident in this concept: "The cause of Intelligence and that of the Revolution are not confused except insofar as the Revolution is nonconformity. But it is clear that the Revolution cannot be reduced to this. As a way of negating, it is also a way of fighting and a way of building. It requires a program to be carried out and a group to carry it out. Now, nonconformity would not be able to accept a given program and order, for the sole reason that they oppose the established order." Berl does not want the intellectual to be a party man. He, like Julien Benda, idolizes the clergy. In this, he is surpassed by those surrealists against whom he spares no criticism or irony. And not only the young surrealists, but also the old Bernard Shaw who, although Fabian and heterodox, declared on the most solemn occasion of his life: "Karl Marx made me a man."

⁵⁷ Character from Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*.

⁵⁸ Behaviorism is the tendency to reduce psychology to the study of man's external reactions to stimuli; that is, to his objective behavior.

Berl believes that the primary value of intelligence in this era of transition and crisis must be lucidity. But what really conceals his concerns is the intellectual tendency to evade the class struggle, the pretense of remaining *au dessus de la mêlée*.⁵⁹ All intellectuals who recognize Emmanuel Berl's state of consciousness as their own adhere abstractly to the Revolution, but stop short of the concrete Revolution. They repudiate the bourgeoisie, but cannot bring themselves to march alongside the proletariat. At the heart of their attitude lies a desperate egocentrism. Intellectuals would like to replace Marxism, too technical for some, too materialistic for others, with a theory of their own.

A writer, more or less absent from history, more or less alien to the Revolution in action, imagines himself sufficiently inspired to provide the masses with a new conception of society and politics. Since the masses do not immediately give him sufficient credit, preferring to continue with the Marxist-Leninist method without waiting for the miraculous discovery, the writer becomes disillusioned with socialism and the proletariat, with a doctrine and a class he barely knows and which he approaches with all his prejudices from university, literary circles, or coffee shops. "The drama of the contemporary intellectual," writes Berl, "is that he would like to be a revolutionary and cannot achieve it. He feels the need to shake up the modern world, caught in the webs of nationalism and class, he feels the moral impossibility of accepting the fate of the workers of Europe—a fate perhaps more unacceptable than that of any human group in any period of history—because capitalist civilization, if it does not necessarily condemn them to the utter misery in which Marx saw them thrown, cannot offer them any justification for their existence in relation to any principle or purpose." The prejudices of universities, salons, and cafés demand flirting with the gospels of spiritualism, impose a taste for the magical and the obscure, and restore a mysterious and supernatural meaning to the spirit. It is logical that these feelings hinder the acceptance of Marxism. But it is absurd to see in them anything other than a reactionary mood, from which no contribution to the clarification of the problems of Intelligence and Revolution can be expected.

With the experiment of Dadaism and Surrealism now complete, a group of great artists, whose absolute aesthetic modernity no one would dispute, has realized that, on the social and political level, Marxism unquestionably represents the Revolution. André Breton finds it futile to rise up against the laws of historical materialism and declares false "any attempt at social explanation other than that of Marx." Surrealism, accused by Berl of having taken refuge in a club of despair, in a literature of despair, has in fact demonstrated a much more accurate understanding, a much clearer notion of the mission of the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who has not emerged from the stage of despair is Emmanuel Berl, negative, skeptical, nihilistic, comforted only by the impression that for Intelligence "the hour of perhaps inevitable suicide has not yet struck." And is it not significant that a man of the caliber of Pierre Morhange, after the experiment of *Philosophies*⁶⁰ and *L'Esprit*,⁶¹ ended up joining the founding team of *La Revue Marxiste*?⁶² Morhange, no less than Berl, uncompromisingly defended the rights of the Spirit. But in his severe analysis, in his honest inquiry into the ingredients of all the philosophical theories that claim to represent the Spirit, he must have realized that, in truth, they tended only toward the intellectual sabotage of the Revolution.

⁵⁹ Above the fray.

⁶⁰ *Philosophies*.

⁶¹ *The Spirit*

⁶² Marxist magazine.

Berl surely fears that, by accepting Marxism, intellectuals will renounce that supreme value, lucidity, which he so zealously defended in his treatment of literature. On this point, as on all others, his extreme adherence to the anarchic and anti-dogmatic postulates of "free thought" is evident. Massis is undoubtedly right in his opposition to these systematic heretics when he asserts that progress and freedom are only possible within dogma. The assertion is false as far as Massis' dogma is concerned, which long ago ceased to be susceptible to development, became petrified in eternal formulas, and became alien to social and ideological change; but it becomes valid when applied to the doctrine of a social movement in progress. Individual heresy is fruitless. In general, the fortune of heresy depends on its elements or its possibilities of becoming a dogma or being incorporated into a dogma. Dogma is understood here as the doctrine of historical change. And, as such, while change is taking place, that is, while dogma does not become an archive or a code of a past ideology, nothing guarantees creative freedom, the germinal function of thought, like dogma. Intellectuals need to base their speculation on a belief, a principle, that makes them a factor in history and progress. It is then that their creative power can work with the maximum freedom allowed by their time. Shaw has this intuition when he says, "Karl Marx made me a man; socialism made me a man." Dogma did not prevent Dante, in his time, from being one of the greatest poets of all time; dogma, if you prefer to call it that, broadening the meaning of the term, did not prevent Lenin from being one of the greatest revolutionaries and one of the greatest statesmen. A dogmatist like Marx, like Engels, influences events and ideas more than any great heretic or any great nihilist. This fact alone should dispel any apprehension, any fear about the limitations of dogma. For the contemporary, non-utopian intellectual, the Marxist position is the only one that offers a path to freedom and progress. Dogma has the usefulness of a course, of a map: it is the only guarantee of not repeating the same journey twice, with the illusion of advancing, and of not locking oneself, through misinformation, into an impasse. The extreme free thinker generally condemns himself to the narrowest of servitudes: his speculation flits at a mad but useless speed around a fixed point. Dogma is not an itinerary but a compass on the journey. To think freely, the first condition is to abandon the concern for absolute freedom. Thought has a strict need for direction and purpose. Thinking well is, in large part, a question of direction or orbit. Sorelism, as a return to the original meaning of class struggle, as a protest against the parliamentary and pacifist bourgeoisification of socialism, is the kind of heresy that becomes part of dogma. And in Sorel we recognize the intellectual who, outside of party discipline but faithful to a higher discipline of class and method, serves the revolutionary idea. Sorel achieved an original continuation of Marxism because he began by accepting all the premises of Marxism, not by repudiating them a priori and en bloc, as Henri de Man did in his vain adventure. Lenin proves to us, in practical politics, with the irrefutable testimony of a revolution, that Marxism is the only means of continuing and surpassing Marx.

Karl Marx: Capital Volume One

Preface to the Second German Edition

I must start by informing the readers of the first edition about the alterations made in the second edition. One is struck at once by the clearer arrangement of the book. Additional notes are everywhere marked as notes to the second edition. The following are the most important points with regard to the text itself:

In Chapter I, Section 1, the derivation of value from an analysis of the equations by which every exchange-value is expressed has been carried out with greater scientific strictness; likewise, the connexion between the substance of value and the determination of the magnitude of value by socially necessary

labor-time, which was only alluded to in the first edition, is now expressly emphasized. Chapter I, Section 3 (the Form of Value), has been completely revised, a task which was made necessary by the double exposition in the first edition, if nothing else. — Let me remark, in passing, that that double exposition had been occasioned by my friend, Dr. L. Kugelman in Hanover. I was visiting him in the spring of 1867 when the first proof-sheets arrived from Hamburg, and he convinced me that most readers needed a supplementary, more didactic explanation of the form of value. — The last section of the first chapter, *The Fetishism of Commodities, etc.*, has largely been altered. Chapter III, Section 1 (The Measure of Value), has been carefully revised, because in the first edition this section had been treated negligently, the reader having been referred to the explanation already given in *Zur Kritik der Politischen Oekonomie*, Berlin 1859. Chapter VII, particularly Part 2 [Eng. ed., Chapter IX, Section 2], has been re-written to a great extent.

It would be a waste of time to go into all the partial textual changes, which were often purely stylistic. They occur throughout the book. Nevertheless, I find now, on revising the French translation appearing in Paris, that several parts of the German original stand in need of rather thorough remolding, other parts require rather heavy stylistic editing, and still others painstaking elimination of occasional slips. But there was no time for that. For I had been informed only in the autumn of 1871, when in the midst of other urgent work, that the book was sold out and that the printing of the second edition was to begin in January of 1872.

The appreciation which *Das Kapital* rapidly gained in wide circles of the German working class is the best reward of my labors. Herr Mayer, a Vienna manufacturer, who in economic matters represents the bourgeois point of view, in a pamphlet published during the Franco-German War aptly expounded the idea that the great capacity for theory, which used to be considered a hereditary German possession, had almost completely disappeared amongst the so-called educated classes in Germany, but that amongst its working class, on the contrary, that capacity was celebrating its revival.

To the present moment Political Economy, in Germany, is a foreign science. Gustav von Gülich in his *Historical description of Commerce, Industry, &c.*,⁶³ especially in the two first volumes published in 1830, has examined at length the historical circumstances that prevented, in Germany, the development of the capitalist mode of production, and consequently the development, in that country, of modern bourgeois society. Thus, the soil whence Political Economy springs was wanting. This “science” had to be imported from England and France as a ready-made article; its German professors remained schoolboys. The theoretical expression of a foreign reality was turned, in their hands, into a collection of dogmas, interpreted by them in terms of the petty trading world around them, and therefore misinterpreted. The feeling of scientific impotence, a feeling not wholly to be repressed, and the uneasy consciousness of having to touch a subject in reality foreign to them, was but imperfectly concealed, either under a parade of literary and historical erudition, or by an admixture of extraneous material, borrowed from the so-called “Kameral” sciences, a medley of smatterings, through whose purgatory the hopeful candidate for the German bureaucracy has to pass.

Since 1848 capitalist production has developed rapidly in Germany, and at the present time it is in the full bloom of speculation and swindling. But fate is still unpropitious to our professional economists. At the time when they were able to deal with Political Economy in a straightforward fashion, modern

⁶³ Geschichtliche Darstellung des Handels, der Gewerbe und des Ackerbaus, &c., von Gustav von Gülich. 5 vols., Jena. 1830–45.

economic conditions did not actually exist in Germany. And as soon as these conditions did come into existence, they did so under circumstances that no longer allowed of their being really and impartially investigated within the bounds of the bourgeois horizon. In so far as Political Economy remains within that horizon, in so far, i.e., as the capitalist régime is looked upon as the absolutely final form of social production, instead of as a passing historical phase of its evolution, Political Economy can remain a science only so long as the class struggle is latent or manifests itself only in isolated and sporadic phenomena.

Let us take England. Its Political Economy belongs to the period in which the class struggle was as yet undeveloped. Its last great representative, Ricardo, in the end, consciously makes the antagonism of class interests, of wages and profits, of profits and rent, the starting point of his investigations, naïvely taking this antagonism for a social law of Nature. But by this start the science of bourgeois economy had reached the limits beyond which it could not pass. Already in the lifetime of Ricardo, and in opposition to him, it was met by criticism, in the person of Sismondi.⁶⁴

The succeeding period, from 1820 to 1830, was notable in England for scientific activity in the domain of Political Economy. It was the time as well of the vulgarizing and extending of Ricardo's theory, as of the contest of that theory with the old school. Splendid tournaments were held. What was done then, is little known to the Continent generally, because the polemic is for the most part scattered through articles in reviews, occasional literature and pamphlets. The unprejudiced character of this polemic — although the theory of Ricardo already serves, in exceptional cases, as a weapon of attack upon bourgeois economy — is explained by the circumstances of the time. On the one hand, modern industry itself was only just emerging from the age of childhood, as is shown by the fact that with the crisis of 1825 it for the first time opens the periodic cycle of its modern life. On the other hand, the class struggle between capital and labor is forced into the background, politically by the discord between the governments and the feudal aristocracy gathered around the Holy Alliance on the one hand, and the popular masses, led by the bourgeoisie, on the other; economically by the quarrel between industrial capital and aristocratic landed property — a quarrel that in France was concealed by the opposition between small and large landed property, and that in England broke out openly after the Corn Laws. The literature of Political Economy in England at this time calls to mind the stormy forward movement in France after Dr. Quesnay's death, but only as a Saint Martin's summer reminds us of spring. With the year 1830 came the decisive crisis.

In France and in England the bourgeoisie had conquered political power. Thenceforth, the class struggle, practically as well as theoretically, took on more and more outspoken and threatening forms. It sounded the knell of scientific bourgeois economy. It was thenceforth no longer a question, whether this theorem or that was true, but whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, politically dangerous or not. In place of disinterested inquirers, there were hired prize fighters; in place of genuine scientific research, the bad conscience and the evil intent of apologetic. Still, even the obtrusive pamphlets with which the Anti-Corn Law League, led by the manufacturers Cobden and Bright, deluged the world, have a historic interest, if no scientific one, on account of their polemic against the landed aristocracy. But since then, the Free Trade legislation, inaugurated by Sir Robert Peel, has deprived vulgar economy of this its last sting.

⁶⁴ See my work *Zur Kritik, &c.*, p. 39

The Continental revolution of 1848–9 also had its reaction in England. Men who still claimed some scientific standing and aspired to be something more than mere sophists and sycophants of the ruling classes, tried to harmonize the Political Economy of capital with the claims, no longer to be ignored, of the proletariat. Hence a shallow syncretism, of which John Stuart Mill is the best representative. It is a declaration of bankruptcy by bourgeois economy, an event on which the great Russian scholar and critic, N. Chernyshevsky, has thrown the light of a master mind in his *Outlines of Political Economy according to Mill*.

In Germany, therefore, the capitalist mode of production came to a head, after its antagonistic character had already, in France and England, shown itself in a fierce strife of classes. And meanwhile, moreover, the German proletariat had attained a much clearer class-consciousness than the German bourgeoisie. Thus, at the very moment when a bourgeois science of Political Economy seemed at last possible in Germany, it had in reality again become impossible.

Under these circumstances its professors fell into two groups. The one set, prudent, practical business folk, flocked to the banner of Bastiat, the most superficial and therefore the most adequate representative of the apologetic of vulgar economy; the other, proud of the professorial dignity of their science, followed John Stuart Mill in his attempt to reconcile irreconcilables. Just as in the classical time of bourgeois economy, so also in the time of its decline, the Germans remained mere schoolboys, imitators and followers, petty retailers and hawkers in the service of the great foreign wholesale concern.

The peculiar historical development of German society therefore forbids, in that country, all original work in bourgeois economy; but not the criticism of that economy. So far as such criticism represents a class, it can only represent the class whose vocation in history is the overthrow of the capitalist mode of production and the final abolition of all classes — the proletariat.

The learned and unlearned spokesmen of the German bourgeoisie tried at first to kill *Das Kapital* by silence, as they had managed to do with my earlier writings. As soon as they found that these tactics no longer fitted in with the conditions of the time, they wrote, under pretense of criticizing my book, prescriptions “for the tranquillization of the bourgeois mind.” But they found in the workers’ press — see, e.g., Joseph Dietzgen’s articles in the *Volksstaat* — antagonists stronger than themselves, to whom (down to this very day) they owe a reply.⁶⁵

An excellent Russian translation of *Das Kapital* appeared in the spring of 1872. The edition of 3,000 copies is already nearly exhausted. As early as 1871, N. Sieber, Professor of Political Economy in the University of Kiev, in his work *David Ricardo’s Theory of Value and of Capital*, referred to my theory of value, of money and of capital, as in its fundamentals a necessary sequel to the teaching of Smith and Ricardo.

⁶⁵ The mealy-mouthed babblers of German vulgar economy fell afoul of the style of my book. No one can feel the literary shortcomings in *Das Kapital* more strongly than I myself. Yet I will for the benefit and the enjoyment of these gentlemen and their public quote in this connexion one English and one Russian notice. The *Saturday Review*, always hostile to my views, said in its notice of the first edition: “The presentation of the subject invests the driest economic questions with a certain peculiar charm.” The *St. Petersburg Journal* (*Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti*), in its issue of April 8 (20), 1872, says: “The presentation of the subject, with the exception of one or two exceptionally special parts, is distinguished by its comprehensibility by the general reader, its clearness, and, in spite of the scientific intricacy of the subject, by an unusual liveliness. In this respect the author in no way resembles ... the majority of German scholars who ... write their books in a language so dry and obscure that the heads of ordinary mortals are cracked by it.”

That which astonishes the Western European in the reading of this excellent work, is the author's consistent and firm grasp of the purely theoretical position.

That the method employed in *Das Kapital* has been little understood, is shown by the various conceptions, contradictory one to another, that have been formed of it.

Thus, the Paris *Revue Positiviste* reproaches me in that, on the one hand, I treat economics metaphysically, and on the other hand — imagine! — confine myself to the mere critical analysis of actual facts, instead of writing receipts⁶⁶ (Comtist ones?) for the cook-shops of the future. In answer to the reproach in re metaphysics, Professor Sieber has it:

In so far as it deals with actual theory, the method of Marx is the deductive method of the whole English school, a school whose failings and virtues are common to the best theoretic economists.

M. Block — *Les Théoriciens du Socialisme en Allemagne. Extrait du Journal des Economistes, Juillet et Août 1872* — makes the discovery that my method is analytic and says: Par cet ouvrage M. Marx se classe parmi les esprits analytiques les plus éminents. [By this work, Mr. Marx ranks among the most eminent analytical minds.] German reviews, of course, shriek out at "Hegelian sophistic." The *European Messenger* of St. Petersburg in an article dealing exclusively with the method of *Das Kapital* (May number, 1872, pp. 427–436), finds my method of inquiry severely realistic, but my method of presentation, unfortunately, German-dialectical. It says:

At first sight, if the judgment is based on the external form of the presentation of the subject, Marx is the most ideal of ideal philosophers, always in the German, i.e., the bad sense of the word. But in point of fact, he is infinitely more realistic than all his forerunners in the work of economic criticism. He can in no sense be called an idealist.

I cannot answer the writer better than by aid of a few extracts from his own criticism, which may interest some of my readers to whom the Russian original is inaccessible.

After a quotation from the preface to my *Criticism of Political Economy*, Berlin, 1859, pp. IV–VII, where I discuss the materialistic basis of my method, the writer goes on:

The one thing which is of moment to Marx, is to find the law of the phenomena with whose investigation he is concerned; and not only is that law of moment to him, which governs these phenomena, in so far as they have a definite form and mutual connexion within a given historical period. Of still greater moment to him is the law of their variation, of their development, i.e., of their transition from one form into another, from one series of connexions into a different one. This law once discovered, he investigates in detail the effects in which it manifests itself in social life. Consequently, Marx only troubles himself about one thing: to show, by rigid scientific investigation, the necessity of successive determinate orders of social conditions, and to establish, as impartially as possible, the facts that serve him for fundamental starting-points. For this it is quite enough, if he proves, at the same time, both the necessity of the present order of things, and the necessity of another order into which the first must inevitably pass over; and this all the same, whether men believe or do not believe it, whether they are conscious or unconscious of it. Marx treats the social movement as a process of natural history, governed by laws not only independent of

⁶⁶ Rezepte — translated as "Receipt," which in the 19th Century, meant "recipe" and Ben Fowkes, for example, translates this as "recipe."

human will, consciousness and intelligence, but rather, on the contrary, determining that will, consciousness and intelligence. ... If in the history of civilization, the conscious element plays a part so subordinate, then it is self-evident that a critical inquiry whose subject-matter is civilization, can, less than anything else, have for its basis any form of, or any result of, consciousness. That is to say, that not the idea, but the material phenomenon alone can serve as its starting-point. Such an inquiry will confine itself to the confrontation and the comparison of a fact, not with ideas, but with another fact. For this inquiry, the one thing of moment is, that both facts be investigated as accurately as possible, and that they actually form, each with respect to the other, different momenta of an evolution; but most important of all is the rigid analysis of the series of successions, of the sequences and concatenations in which the different stages of such an evolution present themselves. But it will be said, the general laws of economic life are one and the same, no matter whether they are applied to the present or the past. This Marx directly denies. According to him, such abstract laws do not exist. On the contrary, in his opinion every historical period has laws of its own. ... As soon as society has outlived a given period of development, and is passing over from one given stage to another, it begins to be subject also to other laws. In a word, economic life offers us a phenomenon analogous to the history of evolution in other branches of biology. The old economists misunderstood the nature of economic laws when they likened them to the laws of physics and chemistry. A more thorough analysis of phenomena shows that social organisms differ among themselves as fundamentally as plants or animals. Nay, one and the same phenomenon falls under quite different laws in consequence of the different structure of those organisms as a whole, of the variations of their individual organs, of the different conditions in which those organs function, &c. Marx, e.g., denies that the law of population is the same at all times and in all places. He asserts, on the contrary, that every stage of development has its own law of population. ... With the varying degree of development of productive power, social conditions and the laws governing them vary too. Whilst Marx sets himself the task of following and explaining from this point of view the economic system established by the sway of capital, he is only formulating, in a strictly scientific manner, the aim that every accurate investigation into economic life must have. The scientific value of such an inquiry lies in the disclosing of the special laws that regulate the origin, existence, development, death of a given social organism and its replacement by another and higher one. And it is this value that, in point of fact, Marx's book has.

Whilst the writer pictures what he takes to be actually my method, in this striking and [as far as concerns my own application of it] generous way, what else is he picturing but the dialectic method?

Of course, the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyze its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connexion. Only after this work is done, can the actual movement be adequately described. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere a priori construction.

My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea," he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurges of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.

The mystifying side of Hegelian dialectic I criticized nearly thirty years ago, at a time when it was still the fashion. But just as I was working at the first volume of *Das Kapital*, it was the good pleasure of the peevish, arrogant, mediocre Ἐπίγονοι [Epigones — Büchner, Dühring and others] who now talk large in cultured Germany, to treat Hegel in same way as the brave Moses Mendelssohn in Lessing's time treated Spinoza, i.e., as a "dead dog." I therefore openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker, and even here and there, in the chapter on the theory of value, coquetted with the modes of expression peculiar to him. The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.

In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary.

The contradictions inherent in the movement of capitalist society impress themselves upon the practical bourgeois most strikingly in the changes of the periodic cycle, through which modern industry runs, and whose crowning point is the universal crisis. That crisis is once again approaching, although as yet but in its preliminary stage; and by the universality of its theatre and the intensity of its action it will drum dialectics even into the heads of the mushroom-upstarts of the new, holy Prusso-German empire.

Unit 3. Dialectics.

Topics covered:

- I. Marxist dialectics.
- II. Law of contradiction

Bibliography:

- Engels:
 - Anti-Dühring. Chapter XII, XIII.
 - Dialectics of Nature. Dialectics. A. General Questions at Dialectics
- Lenin:
 - On the Question of Dialectics.
 - Philosophical Notebooks. Conspectus of Hegel's Book *The Science of Logic*. (At least study seriously "Elements of Dialectics").
- Mao Tse-tung:
 - On Contradiction.

Selection:

Frederick Engels: Anti-Dühring

Chapter XII. Dialectics: Quantity and Quality

“The first and most important principle of the basic logical properties of being refers to the *exclusion of contradiction*. Contradiction is a category which can only appertain to a combination of thoughts, but not to reality. There are no contradictions in things, or, to put it another way, contradiction accepted as reality is itself the apex of absurdity {D. Ph. 30} ... The antagonism of forces measured against each other and moving in opposite directions is in fact the basic form of all actions in the life of the world and its creatures. But this opposition of the directions taken by the forces of elements and individuals does not in the slightest degree coincide with the idea of absurd contradictions {31} ... We can be content here with having cleared the fogs which generally rise from the supposed mysteries of logic by presenting a clear picture of the actual absurdity of contradictions in reality and with having shown the uselessness of the incense which has been burnt here and there in honor of the dialectics of contradiction — the very clumsily carved wooden doll which is substituted for the antagonistic world schematism” {32}

This is practically all we are told about dialectics in the *Cursus der Philosophie*. In his *Kritische Geschichte*, on the other hand, the dialectics of contradiction, and with it particularly Hegel, is treated quite differently.

“Contradiction, according to the Hegelian logic, or rather Logos doctrine, is objectively present not in thought, which by its nature can only be conceived as subjective and conscious, but in things and processes themselves and can be met with in so to speak corporeal form, so that absurdity does not remain an impossible combination of thought but becomes an actual force. The reality of the absurd is the first article of faith in the Hegelian unity of the logical and the illogical.... The more contradictory a thing the truer it is, or in other words, the more absurd the more credible it is. This maxim, which is not even newly invented but is borrowed from the theology of the Revelation and from mysticism, is the naked expression of the so-called dialectical principle” {D. K. G. 479-80}.

The thought-content of the two passages cited can be summed up in the statement that contradiction=absurdity, and therefore cannot occur in the real world. People who in other respects show a fair degree of common sense may regard this statement as having the same self-evident validity as the statement that a straight line cannot be a curve and a curve cannot be straight. But, regardless of all protests made by common sense, the differential calculus under certain circumstances nevertheless equates straight lines and curves, and thus obtains results which common sense, insisting on the absurdity of straight lines being identical with curves, can never attain. And in view of the important role which the so-called dialectics of contradiction has played in philosophy from the time of the ancient Greeks up to the present, even a stronger opponent than Herr Dühring should have felt obliged to attack it with other arguments besides one assertion and a good many abusive epithets.

True, so long as we consider things as at rest and lifeless, each one by itself, alongside and after each other, we do not run up against any contradictions in them. We find certain qualities which are partly common to, partly different from, and even contradictory to each other, but which in the last-mentioned case are distributed among different objects and therefore contain no contradiction within. Inside the limits

of this sphere of observation we can get along on the basis of the usual, metaphysical mode of thought. But the position is quite different as soon as we consider things in their motion, their change, their life, their reciprocal influence on one another. Then we immediately become involved in contradictions. Motion itself is a contradiction: even simple mechanical change of position can only come about through a body being at one and the same moment of time both in one place and in another place, being in one and the same place and also not in it. And the continuous origination and simultaneous solution of this contradiction is precisely what motion is.

Here, therefore, we have a contradiction which “is objectively present in things and processes themselves and can be met with in so to speak corporeal form”. And what has Herr Dühring to say about it? He asserts that

up to the present there is “no bridge” whatever “in rational mechanics from the strictly static to the dynamic” {D. Ph. 80}.

The reader can now at last see what is hidden behind this favorite phrase of Herr Dühring’s — it is nothing but this: the mind which thinks metaphysically is absolutely unable to pass from the idea of rest to the idea of motion, because the contradiction pointed out above blocks its path. To it, motion is simply incomprehensible because it is a contradiction. And in asserting the incomprehensibility of motion, it admits against its will the existence of this contradiction, and thus admits the objective presence in things and processes themselves of a contradiction which is moreover an actual force.

If simple mechanical change of position contains a contradiction this is even more true of the higher forms of motion of matter, and especially of organic life and its development. We saw above that life consists precisely and primarily in this — that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end, and death steps in. We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is — at least practically, for us — an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress.

We have already noted that one of the basic principles of higher mathematics is the contradiction that in certain circumstances straight lines and curves may be the same. It also gets up this other contradiction: that lines which intersect each other before our eyes nevertheless, only five or six centimeters from their point of intersection, can be shown to be parallel, that is, that they will never meet even if extended to infinity. And yet, working with these and with even far greater contradictions, it attains results which are not only correct but also quite unattainable for lower mathematics.

But even lower mathematics teems with contradictions. It is for example a contradiction that a root of A should be a power of A , and yet $A^{1/2} = \sqrt{A}$. It is a contradiction that a negative quantity should be the square of anything, for every negative quantity multiplied by itself gives a positive square. The square root of minus one is therefore not only a contradiction, but even an absurd contradiction, a real absurdity. And yet $\sqrt{-1}$ is in many cases a necessary result of correct mathematical operations. Furthermore, where would mathematics — lower or higher — be, if it were prohibited from operation with $\sqrt{-1}$?

In its operations with variable quantities mathematics itself enters the field of dialectics, and it is significant that it was a dialectical philosopher, Descartes, who introduced this advance. The relation between the mathematics of variable and the mathematics of constant quantities is in general the same as the relation of dialectical to metaphysical thought. But this does not prevent the great mass of mathematicians from recognizing dialectics only in the sphere of mathematics, and a good many of them from continuing to work in the old, limited, metaphysical way with methods that were obtained dialectically.

It would be possible to go more closely into Herr Dühring's antagonism of forces and his antagonistic world schematism only if he had given us something more on this theme than the mere *phrase*. After accomplishing this feat this antagonism is not even once shown to us at work, either in his world schematism or in his natural philosophy — the most convincing admission that Herr Dühring can do absolutely nothing of a positive character with his "basic form of all actions in the life of the world and its creatures". When someone has in fact lowered Hegel's "Doctrine of Essence" to the platitude of forces moving in opposite directions but not in contradictions, certainly the best thing he can do is to avoid any application of this commonplace.

Marx's *Capital* furnishes Herr Dühring with another occasion for venting his anti-dialectical spleen.

"The absence of natural and intelligible logic which characterizes these dialectical frills and mazes and conceptual arabesques... Even to the part that has already appeared we must apply the principle that in a certain respect and also in general" (!), "according to a well-known philosophical preconception, all is to be sought in each and each in all, and that therefore, according to this mixed and misconceived idea, it all amounts to one and the same thing in the end" {D. K. G. 496}.

This insight into the well-known philosophical preconception also enables Herr Dühring to prophesy with assurance what will be the "end" of Marx's economic philosophizing, that is, what the following volumes of *Capital* will contain, and this he does exactly seven lines after he has declared that

"Speaking in plain human language it is really impossible to divine what is still to come in the two" (final) "volumes" ⁶⁷ {496}.

This, however, is not the first time that Herr Dühring's writings are revealed to us as belonging to the "things" in which "contradiction is objectively present and can be met with in so to speak corporeal form" {479-80}. But this does not prevent him from going on victoriously as follows:

"Yet sound logic will in all probability triumph over its caricature... This presence of superiority and this mysterious dialectical rubbish will tempt no one who has even a modicum of sound judgment left to have anything to do ... with these deformities of thought and style. With the demise of the last relics of the dialectical follies this means of duping ... will lose its deceptive influence, and no one will any longer believe that he has to torture himself in order to get behind some profound piece of wisdom where the husked kernel of the abstruse things reveals at best the features of ordinary theories if not of absolute commonplaces... It is quite impossible to reproduce the" (Marxian) "maze

⁶⁷ Dühring drew these data on the structure of Marx's *Capital* from the Preface to the first German edition (see present edition, Vol. 35). From 1867 onwards, when Vol. I of *Capital* was published, Marx's plan was to have the entire work brought out in three volumes in four books, the 2nd and the 3rd of which were to comprise Vol. II. After Marx's death, Engels published the 2nd and 3rd books as vols. II and III. The last, fourth book, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, was published after Engels' death.

in accordance with the Logos doctrine without prostituting sound logic" {D. K. C. 497}. Marx's method, according to Herr Dühring, consists in "performing dialectical miracles for his faithful followers" {498}, and so on.

We are not in any way concerned here as yet with the correctness or incorrectness of the economic results of Marx's researches, but only with the dialectical method used by Marx. But this much is certain: most readers of *Capital* will have learnt for the first time from Herr Dühring what it is in fact that they have read. And among them will also be Herr Dühring himself, who in the year 1867 (*Ergänzungsblätter* III, No. 3) was still able to provide what for a thinker of his caliber was a relatively rational review of the book; and he did this without first being obliged as he now declares is indispensable, to translate the Marxian argument into Dühringian language. And though even then he committed the blunder of identifying Marxian dialectics with the Hegelian, he had not quite lost the capacity to distinguish between the method and the results obtained by using it, and to understand that the latter are not refuted in detail by lampooning the former in general.

At any rate, the most astonishing piece of information given by Herr Dühring is the statement that from the Marxian standpoint "it all amounts to one and the same thing in the end" {496}, that therefore to Marx, for example, capitalists and wage-workers, feudal, capitalist and socialist modes of production are also "one and the same thing" — no doubt in the end even Marx and Herr Dühring are "one and the same thing". Such utter nonsense can only be explained if we suppose that the mere mention of the word dialectics throws Herr Dühring into such a state of mental irresponsibility that, as a result of a certain mixed and misconceived idea, what he says and does is "one and the same thing" in the end.

We have here a sample of what Herr Dühring calls

"my historical depiction in the grand style" {556}, or "the summary treatment which settles with genus and type, and does not condescend to honor what a Hume called the learned mob with an exposure in micrological detail; this treatment in a higher and nobler style is the only one compatible with the interests of complete truth and with one's duty to the public which is free from the bonds of the guilds" {507}.

Historical depiction in the grand style and the summary settlement with genus and type is indeed very convenient for Herr Dühring, inasmuch as this method enables him to neglect all known facts as micrological and equate them to zero, so that instead of proving anything he need only use general phrases, make assertions and thunder his denunciations. The method has the further advantage that it offers no real foothold to an opponent, who is consequently left with almost no other possibility of reply than to make similar summary assertions in the grand style, to resort to general phrases and finally thunder back denunciations at Herr Dühring — in a word, as they say, engage in a clanging match, which is not to everyone's taste. We must therefore be grateful to Herr Dühring for occasionally, by way of exception, dropping the higher and nobler style, and giving us at least two examples of the unsound Marxian Logos doctrine.

"How comical is the reference to the confused, hazy Hegelian notion that quantity changes into quality, and that therefore an advance, when it reaches a certain size, becomes capital by this quantitative increase alone" {498}.

In this “expurgated” presentation by Herr Dühring that statement certainly seems curious enough. Let us see how it looks in the original, in Marx. On page 313 (2nd edition of *Capital*), Marx, on the basis of his previous examination of constant and variable capital and surplus-value, draws the conclusion that “not every sum of money, or of value, is at pleasure transformable into capital. To effect this transformation, in fact, a certain minimum of money or of exchange-value must be presupposed in the hands of the individual possessor of money or commodities.” He takes as an example the case of a laborer in any branch of industry, who works daily eight hours for himself — that is, in producing the value of his wages — and the following four hours for the capitalist, in producing surplus-value, which immediately flows into the pocket of the capitalist. In this case, one would have to have at his disposal a sum of values sufficient to enable one to provide two laborers with raw materials, instruments of labor and wages, in order to pocket enough surplus-value every day to live on as well as one of his laborers. And as the aim of capitalist production is not mere subsistence but the increase of wealth, our man with his two laborers would still not be a capitalist. Now in order that he may live twice as well as an ordinary laborer, and turn half of the surplus-value produced again into capital, he would have to be able to employ eight laborers, that is, he would have to possess four times the sum of values assumed above. And it is only after this, and in the course of still further explanations elucidating and substantiating the fact that not every petty sum of values is enough to be transformable into capital, but that in this respect each period of development and each branch of industry has its definite minimum sum, that Marx observes: “Here, as in natural science, is *shown* the correctness of the law discovered by Hegel in his *Logic*, that merely quantitative changes beyond a certain point pass into qualitative differences.”

And now let the reader admire the higher and nobler style, by virtue of which Herr Dühring attributes to Marx the opposite of what he really said. Marx says: The fact that a sum of values can be transformed into capital only when it has reached a certain size, varying according to the circumstances, but in each case definite minimum size — this fact is a *proof of the correctness* of the Hegelian law. Herr Dühring makes him say: *Because*, according to the Hegelian law, quantity changes into quality, “*therefore* an advance, when it reaches a certain size, becomes capital” {D. K. G. 498}. That is to say, the very opposite.

In connection with Herr Dühring’s examination of the Darwin case, we have already got to know his habit, “in the interests of complete truth” and because of his “duty to the public which is free from the bonds of the guilds” {507}, of quoting incorrectly. It becomes more and more evident that this habit is an inner necessity of the philosophy of reality, and it is certainly a very “summary treatment” {507}. Not to mention the fact that Herr Dühring further makes Marx speak of any kind of “advance” whatsoever, whereas Marx only refers to an advance made in the form of raw materials, instruments of labor, and wages; and that in doing this Herr Dühring succeeds in making Marx speak pure nonsense. And then he has the cheek to describe as *comic* the nonsense which he himself has fabricated. Just as he built up a Darwin of his own fantasy in order to try out his strength against him, so here he builds up a fantastic Marx. “Historical depiction in the grand style” {556}, indeed!

We have already seen earlier, when discussing world schematism, that in connection with this Hegelian nodal line of measure relations — in which quantitative change suddenly passes at certain points into qualitative transformation — Herr Dühring had a little accident: in a weak moment he himself recognized and made use of this line. We gave there one of the best-known examples — that of the change of the aggregate states of water, which under normal atmospheric pressure changes at 0° C from the liquid into the solid state, and at 100°C from the liquid into the gaseous state, so that at both these turning-points

the merely quantitative change of temperature brings about a qualitative change in the condition of the water.

In proof of this law, we might have cited hundreds of other similar facts from nature as well as from human society. Thus, for example, the whole of Part IV of Marx's *Capital* — production of relative surplus-value — deals, in the field of co-operation, division of labor and manufacture, machinery and modern industry, with innumerable cases in which quantitative change alters the quality, and also qualitative change alters the quantity, of the things under consideration; in which therefore, to use the expression so hated by Herr Dühring, quantity is transformed into quality and vice versa. As for example the fact that the co-operation of a number of people, the fusion of many forces into one single force, creates, to use Marx's phrase, a “new power”, which is essentially different from the sum of its separate forces.

Over and above this, in the passage which, in the interests of complete truth, Herr Dühring perverted into its opposite, Marx had added a footnote: “The molecular theory of modern chemistry first scientifically worked out by Laurent and Gerhardt rests on no other law.” But what did that matter to Herr Dühring? He knew that:

“The eminently modern educative elements provided by the natural-scientific mode of thought are lacking precisely among those who, like Marx and his rival Lassalle, make half-science and a little philosophistics the meagre equipment with which to vamp up their learning” {D. K. G. 504} —

while with Herr Dühring

“The main achievements of exact knowledge in mechanics, physics and chemistry” {D. Ph. 517} and so forth serve as the basis —

we have seen how. However, in order to enable third persons, too, to reach a decision in the matter, we shall look a little more closely into the example cited in Marx's footnote.

What is referred to here is the homologous series of carbon compounds, of which a great many are already known and each of which has its own algebraic formula of composition. If, for example, as is done in chemistry, we denote an atom of carbon by C, an atom of hydrogen by H, an atom of oxygen by O, and the number of atoms of carbon contained in each compound by n, the molecular formulas for some of these series can be expressed as follows:

C_nH_{2n+2} — the series of normal paraffins

$C_nH_{2n+2}O$ — the series of primary alcohols

$C_nH_{2n}O_2$ — the series of the monobasic fatty acids.

Let us take as an example the last of these series, and let us assume successively that $n=1$, $n=2$, $n=3$, etc. We then obtain the following results (omitting the isomers):

CH_2O_2 — formic acid: boiling point 100° melting point 1°

$C_2H_4O_2$ — acetic acid: 118° melting point 17°

$C_3H_6O_2$ — propionic acid: 140° " "

$C_4H_8O_2$ — butyric acid: 162°

$C_5H_{10}O_2$ — valerianic acid: 175°

and so on to $C_{30}H_{60}O_2$, melissic acid, which melts only at 80° and has no boiling point at all, because it cannot evaporate without disintegrating.

Here therefore we have a whole series of qualitatively different bodies, formed by the simple quantitative addition of elements, and in fact always in the same proportion. This is most clearly evident in cases where the quantity of all the elements of the compound changes in the same proportion. Thus, in the normal paraffins C_nH_{2n+2} , the lowest is methane, CH_4 , a gas; the highest known, hexadecane, $C_{16}H_{34}$, is a solid body forming colorless crystals which melts at 21° and boils only at 278° . Each new member of both series comes into existence through the addition of CH_2 , one atom of carbon and two atoms of hydrogen, to the molecular formula of the preceding member, and this quantitative change in the molecular formula produces each time a qualitatively different body.

These series, however, are only one particularly obvious example; throughout practically the whole of chemistry, even in the various nitrogen oxides and oxygen acids of phosphorus or Sulphur, one can see how “quantity changes into quality”, and this allegedly confused, hazy Hegelian notion appears in so to speak corporeal form in things and processes — and no one but Herr Dühring is confused and befogged by it. And if Marx was the first to call attention to it, and if Herr Dühring read the reference without even understanding it (otherwise he would certainly not have allowed this unparalleled outrage to pass unchallenged), this is enough — even without looking back at the famous Dühringian philosophy of nature — to make it clear which of the two, Marx or Herr Dühring, is lacking in “the eminently modern educative elements provided by the natural-scientific mode of thought” {D. K. G. 504} and in acquaintance with the “main achievements of ... chemistry” {D. Ph. 517}.

In conclusion we shall call one more witness for the transformation of quantity into quality, namely — Napoleon. He describes the combat between the French cavalry, who were bad riders but disciplined, and the Mamelukes, who were undoubtedly the best horsemen of their time for single combat, but lacked discipline, as follows:

“Two Mamelukes were undoubtedly more than a match for three Frenchmen; 100 Mamelukes were equal to 100 Frenchmen; 300 Frenchmen could generally beat 300 Mamelukes, and 1,000 Frenchmen invariably defeated 1,500 Mamelukes.”

Just as with Marx a definite, though varying, minimum sum of exchange-values was necessary to make possible its transformation into capital, so with Napoleon a detachment of cavalry had to be of a definite minimum number in order to make it possible for the force of discipline, embodied in closed order and planned utilization, to manifest itself and rise superior even to greater numbers of irregular cavalry, in spite of the latter being better mounted, more dexterous horsemen and fighters, and at least as brave as the former. But what does this prove as against Herr Dühring? Was not Napoleon miserably vanquished in his conflict with Europe? Did he not suffer defeat after defeat? And why? Solely in consequence of having introduced the confused, hazy Hegelian notion into cavalry tactics!

Mao Zedong: On Contradictions

II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF CONTRADICTION

For convenience of exposition, I shall deal first with the universality of contradiction and then proceed to the particularity of contradiction. The reason is that the universality of contradiction can be explained more briefly, for it has been widely recognized ever since the materialist-dialectical world

outlook was discovered and materialist dialectics applied with outstanding success to analyzing many aspects of human history and natural history and to changing many aspects of society and nature (as in the Soviet Union) by the great creators and continuers of Marxism – Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; whereas the particularity of contradiction is still not clearly understood by many comrades, and especially by the dogmatists. They do not understand that it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides. Nor do they understand how important is the study of the particularity of contradiction in the concrete things confronting us for guiding the course of revolutionary practice. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the study of the particularity of contradiction and to explain it at adequate length. For this reason, in our analysis of the law of contradiction in things, we shall first analyze the universality of contradiction, then place special stress on analyzing the particularity of contradiction, and finally return to the universality of contradiction.

The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end.

Engels said, "Motion itself is a contradiction." ⁶⁸ Lenin defined the law of the unity of opposites as "the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (*including* mind and society)". ⁶⁹ Are these ideas correct? Yes, they are. The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist.

Contradiction is the basis of the simple forms of motion (for instance, mechanical motion) and still more so of the complex forms of motion.

Engels explained the universality of contradiction as follows:

If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of the higher forms of motion of matter, and especially of organic life and its development. ... life consists precisely and primarily in this – that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end, and death steps in. We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is – at least practically, for us – an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress.

... one of the basic principles of higher mathematics is the contradiction that in certain circumstances straight lines and curves may be the same....

But even lower mathematics teems with contradictions. ⁷⁰

Lenin illustrated the universality of contradiction as follows:

⁶⁸ Frederick Engels, "Dialectics. Quantity and Quality", Anti-Duhring, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1959, p. 166.

⁶⁹ V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 357-58.

⁷⁰ Frederick Engels, op. cit., pp. 166-67.

In mathematics: + and - . Differential and integral.

In mechanics: action and reaction.

In physics: positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.

In social science: the class struggle.⁷¹

In war, offence and defense, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality of a war, pushes its development forward and solves its problems.

Every difference in men's concepts should be regarded as reflecting an objective contradiction. Objective contradictions are reflected in subjective thinking, and this process constitutes the contradictory movement of concepts, pushes forward the development of thought, and ceaselessly solves problems in man's thinking.

Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end.

Thus, it is already clear that contradiction exists universally and, in all processes, whether in the simple or in the complex forms of motion, whether in objective phenomena or ideological phenomena. But does contradiction also exist at the initial stage of each process?

Is there a movement of opposites from beginning to end in the process of development of every single thing?

As can be seen from the articles written by Soviet philosophers criticizing it, the Deborin school maintains that contradiction appears not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage. If this were the case, then the cause of the development of the process before that stage would be external and not internal. Deborin thus reverts to the metaphysical theories of external causality and of mechanism. Applying this view in the analysis of concrete problems, the Deborin school sees only differences but not contradictions between the kulaks and the peasants in general under existing conditions in the Soviet Union, thus entirely agreeing with Bukharin. In analyzing the French Revolution, it holds that before the Revolution there were likewise only differences but not contradictions within the Third Estate, which was composed of the workers, the peasants and the bourgeoisie. These views of the Deborin school are anti-Marxist. This school does not understand that each and every difference already contains contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction. Labor and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only at first the contradiction had not yet become intense. Even under the social conditions existing in the Soviet Union, there is a difference between workers and peasants and this very difference is a contradiction, although, unlike the contradiction between labor and capital, it will not become intensified into antagonism or assume the form of class

⁷¹ V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357.

struggle; the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to communism. The question is one of different kinds of contradiction, not of the presence or absence of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute; it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end.

What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites, whereupon a new process emerges to replace the old. The old process ends and the new one begins. The new process contains new contradictions and begins its own history of the development of contradictions.

As Lenin pointed out, Marx in his *Capital* gave a model analysis of this movement of opposites which runs through the process of development of things from beginning to end. This is the method that must be employed in studying the development of all things. Lenin, too, employed this method correctly and adhered to it in all his writings.

In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (*both growth and movement*) of these contradictions and of this society in the [summation] of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.

Lenin added, "Such must also be the method of exposition (or study) of dialectics in general." ⁷²

Chinese Communists must learn this method; only then will they be able correctly to analyze the history and the present state of the Chinese revolution and infer its future.

III. THE PARTICULARITY OF CONTRADICTION

Contradiction is present in the process of development of all things; it permeates the process of development of each thing from beginning to end. This is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction which we have discussed above. Now let us discuss the particularity and relativity of contradiction.

This problem should be studied on several levels.

First, the contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity. Man's knowledge of matter is knowledge of its forms of motion, because there is nothing in this world except matter in motion and this motion must assume certain forms. In considering each form of motion of matter, we must observe the points which it has in common with other forms of motion. But what is especially important and necessary, constituting as it does the foundation of our knowledge of a thing, is to observe what is particular to this form of motion of matter, namely, to observe the qualitative difference between this form of motion and other forms. Only when we have done so can we distinguish between things. Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another. It is the internal cause or, as it may be

⁷² Ibid., pp. 358-59.

called, the basis for the immense variety of things in the world. There are many forms of motion in nature, mechanical motion, sound, light, heat, electricity, dissociation, combination, and so on. All these forms are interdependent, but in its essence, each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular contradiction. This holds true not only for nature but also for social and ideological phenomena. Every form of society, every form of ideology, has its own particular contradiction and particular essence.

The sciences are differentiated precisely on the basis of the particular contradictions inherent in their respective objects of study. Thus, the contradiction peculiar to a certain field of phenomena constitutes the object of study for a specific branch of science. For example, positive and negative numbers in mathematics; action and reaction in mechanics; positive and negative electricity in physics; dissociation and combination in chemistry; forces of production and relations of production, classes and class struggle, in social science; offence and defense in military science; idealism and materialism, the metaphysical outlook and the dialectical outlook, in philosophy; and so on — all these are the objects of study of different branches of science precisely because each branch has its own particular contradiction and particular essence. Of course, unless we understand the universality of contradiction, we have no way of discovering the universal cause or universal basis for the movement or development of things; however, unless we study the particularity of contradiction, we have no way of determining the particular essence of a thing which differentiates it from other things, no way of discovering the particular cause or particular basis for the movement or development of a thing, and no way of distinguishing one thing from another or of demarcating the fields of science.

As regards the sequence in the movement of man's knowledge, there is always a gradual growth from the knowledge of individual and particular things to the knowledge of things in general. Only after man knows the particular essence of many different things can he proceed to generalization and know the common essence of things.

When man attains the knowledge of this common essence, he uses it as a guide and proceeds to study various concrete things which have not yet been studied, or studied thoroughly, and to discover the particular essence of each; only thus is he able to supplement, enrich and develop his knowledge of their common essence and prevent such knowledge from withering or petrifying. These are the two processes of cognition: one, from the particular to the general, and the other, from the general to the particular. Thus, cognition always moves in cycles and (so long as scientific method is strictly adhered to) each cycle advances human knowledge a step higher and so makes it more and more profound. Where our dogmatists err on this question is that, on the one hand, they do not understand that we have to study the particularity of contradiction and know the particular essence of individual things before we can adequately know the universality of contradiction and the common essence of things, and that, on the other hand, they do not understand that after knowing the common essence of things, we must go further and study the concrete things that have not yet been thoroughly studied or have only just emerged. Our dogmatists are lazy-bones. They refuse to undertake any painstaking study of concrete things, they regard general truths as emerging out of the void, they turn them into purely abstract unfathomable formulas, and thereby completely deny and reverse the normal sequence by which man comes to know truth. Nor do they understand the interconnection of the two processes in cognition — from the particular to the general and then from the general to the particular. They understand nothing of the Marxist theory of knowledge.

It is necessary not only to study the particular contradiction and the essence determined thereby of every great system of the forms of motion of matter, but also to study the particular contradiction and the essence of each process in the long course of development of each form of motion of matter. In every form of motion, each process of development which is real (and not imaginary) is qualitatively different. Our study must emphasize and start from this point.

Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution; the contradiction between the great masses of the people and the feudal system is resolved by the method of democratic revolution; the contradiction between the colonies and imperialism is resolved by the method of national revolutionary war; the contradiction between the working class and the peasant class in socialist society is resolved by the method of collectivization and mechanization in agriculture; contradiction within the Communist Party is resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism; the contradiction between society and nature is resolved by the method of developing the productive forces. Processes change, old processes and old contradictions disappear, new processes and new contradictions emerge, and the methods of resolving contradictions differ accordingly. In Russia, there was a fundamental difference between the contradiction resolved by the February Revolution and the contradiction resolved by the October Revolution, as well as between the methods used to resolve them. The principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-Leninists must strictly observe. The dogmatists do not observe this principle; they do not understand that conditions differ in different kinds of revolution and so do not understand that different methods should be used to resolve different contradictions; on the contrary, they invariably adopt what they imagine to be an unalterable formula and arbitrarily apply it everywhere, which only causes setbacks to the revolution or makes a sorry mess of what was originally well done.

In order to reveal the particularity of the contradictions in any process in the development of a thing, in their totality or interconnections, that is, in order to reveal the essence of the process, it is necessary to reveal the particularity of the two aspects of each of the contradictions in that process; otherwise, it will be impossible to discover the essence of the process. This likewise requires the utmost attention in our study.

There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing. For instance, in the course of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, where the conditions are exceedingly complex, there exist the contradiction between all the oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism, the contradiction between the great masses of the people and feudalism, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other, the contradiction between the various reactionary ruling groups, and so on. These contradictions cannot be treated in the same way since each has its own particularity; moreover, the two aspects of each contradiction cannot be treated in the same way since each aspect has its own characteristics. We who are engaged in the Chinese revolution should not only understand the particularity of these contradictions in their totality, that is, in their interconnections, but should also study the two aspects of each contradiction as the only means of understanding the totality. When we speak of understanding each aspect of a contradiction, we mean understanding what specific position each aspect occupies, what concrete forms it assumes in its interdependence and in its contradiction with its opposite, and what concrete methods are employed in the struggle with its opposite,

when the two are both interdependent and in contradiction, and also after the interdependence breaks down. It is of great importance to study these problems. Lenin meant just this when he said that the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.⁷³ Our dogmatists have violated Lenin's teachings; they never use their brains to analyze anything concretely, and in their writings and speeches they always use stereotypes devoid of content, thereby creating a very bad style of work in our Party.

In studying a problem, we must shun subjectivity, one-sidedness and superficiality. To be subjective means not to look at problems objectively, that is, not to use the materialist viewpoint in looking at problems. I have discussed this in my essay "On Practice". To be one-sided means not to look at problems all-sidedly, for example, to understand only China but not Japan, only the Communist Party but not the Kuomintang, only the proletariat but not the bourgeoisie, only the peasants but not the landlords, only the favorable conditions but not the difficult ones, only the past but not the future, only individual parts but not the whole, only the defects but not the achievements, only the plaintiff's case but not the defendant's, only underground revolutionary work but not open revolutionary work, and so on. In a word, it means not to understand the characteristics of both aspects of a contradiction. This is what we mean by looking at a problem one-sidedly. Or it may be called seeing the part but not the whole, seeing the trees but not the forest. That way it is impossible to find the method for resolving a contradiction, it is impossible to accomplish the tasks of the revolution, to carry out assignments well or to develop inner-Party ideological struggle correctly. When Sun Wu Tzu said in discussing military science, "Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat",⁷⁴ he was referring to the two sides in a battle. Wei Cheng⁷⁵ of the Tang Dynasty also understood the error of one-sidedness when he said, "Listen to both sides and you will be enlightened, heed only one side and you will be benighted." But our comrades often look at problems one-sidedly, and so they often run into snags. In the novel *Shui Hu Chuan*, Sung Chiang thrice attacked Chu Village.⁷⁶ Twice he was defeated because he was ignorant of the local conditions and used the wrong method. Later he changed his method; first he investigated the situation, and he familiarized himself with the maze of roads, then he broke up the alliance between the Li, Hu and Chu Villages and sent his men in disguise into the enemy camp to lie in wait, using a stratagem similar to that of the Trojan Horse in the foreign story. And on the third occasion he won. There are many examples of materialist dialectics in *Shui Hu Chuan*, of which the episode of the three attacks on Chu Village is one of the best. Lenin said:

... in order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and "mediations". We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity.⁷⁷

We should remember his words. To be superficial means to consider neither the characteristics of a contradiction in its totality nor the characteristics of each of its aspects; it means to deny the necessity for

⁷³ See "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War", Note 10, p. 251 of this volume.

⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, Note :, p. 249 of this volume.

⁷⁵ Wei Cheng (A.D. 580-643) was a statesman and historian of the Tang Dynasty.

⁷⁶ *Shui Hu Chuan* (Heroes of the Marshes), a famous 14th century Chinese novel, describes a peasant war towards the end of the Northern Sung Dynasty. Chu Village was in the vicinity of Liangshanpo, where Sung Chiang, leader of the peasant uprising and hero of the novel, established his base. Chu Chao-feng, the head of this village, was a despotic landlord.

⁷⁷ V. I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", Selected Works, Eng. ed., International Publishers, New York, 1943, Vol. IX, p. 66.

probing deeply into a thing and minutely studying the characteristics of its contradiction, but instead merely to look from afar and, after glimpsing the rough outline, immediately to try to resolve the contradiction (to answer a question, settle a dispute, handle work, or direct a military operation). This way of doing things is bound to lead to trouble. The reason the dogmatist and empiricist comrades in China have made mistakes lies precisely in their subjectivist, one-sided and superficial way of looking at things. To be one-sided and superficial is at the same time to be subjective. For all objective things are actually interconnected and are governed by inner laws, but instead of undertaking the task of reflecting things as they really are some people only look at things one-sidedly or superficially and who know neither their interconnections nor their inner laws, and so their method is subjectivist.

Not only does the whole process of the movement of opposites in the development of a thing, both in their interconnections and in each of the aspects, have particular features to *which* we must give attention, but each stage in the process has its particular features to which we must give attention too.

The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process. In addition, among the numerous major and minor contradictions which are determined or influenced by the fundamental contradiction, some become intensified, some are temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated, and some new ones emerge; hence the process is marked by stages. If people do not pay attention to the stages in the process of development of a thing, they cannot deal with its contradictions properly.

For instance, when the capitalism of the era of free competition developed into imperialism, there was no change in the class nature of the two classes in fundamental contradiction, namely, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or in the capitalist essence of society; however, the contradiction between these two classes became intensified, the contradiction between monopoly and non-monopoly capital emerged, the contradiction between the colonial powers and the colonies became intensified, the contradiction among the capitalist countries resulting from their uneven development manifested itself with particular sharpness, and thus there arose the special stage of capitalism, the stage of imperialism. Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution precisely because Lenin and Stalin have correctly explained these contradictions and correctly formulated the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution for their resolution.

Take the process of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, which began with the Revolution of 1911; it, too, has several distinct stages. In particular, the revolution in its period of bourgeois leadership and the revolution in its period of proletarian leadership represent two vastly different historical stages. In other words, proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and so on. None of these was possible in the period when the revolution was under bourgeois leadership. Although no change has taken place in the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process as a whole, *i.e.*, in the anti-imperialist, anti-

feudal, democratic-revolutionary nature of the process (the opposite of which is its semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature), nonetheless this process has passed through several stages of development in the course of more than twenty years; during this time many great events have taken place — the failure of the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the regime of the Northern warlords, the formation of the first national united front and the revolution of 1924-27, the break-up of the united front and the desertion of the bourgeoisie to the side of the counterrevolution, the wars among the new warlords, the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the establishment of the second national united front and the War of Resistance Against Japan. These stages are marked by particular features such as the intensification of certain contradictions (*e.g.*, the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the Japanese invasion of the four northeastern provinces), the partial or temporary resolution of other contradictions (*e.g.*, the destruction of the Northern warlords and our confiscation of the land of the landlords), and the emergence of yet other contradictions (*e.g.*, the conflicts among the new warlords, and the landlords' recapture of the land after the loss of our revolutionary base areas in the south).

In studying the particularities of the contradictions at each stage in the process of development of a thing, we must not only observe them in their interconnections or their totality, we must also examine the two aspects of each contradiction.

For instance, consider the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Take one aspect, the Kuomintang. In the period of the first united front, the Kuomintang carried out Sun Yat-sen's Three Great Policies of alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party, and assistance to the peasants and workers; hence it was revolutionary and vigorous, it was an alliance of various classes for the democratic revolution. After 1927, however, the Kuomintang changed into its opposite and became a reactionary bloc of the landlords and big bourgeoisie. After the Sian Incident in December 1936, it began another change in the direction of ending the civil war and co-operating with the Communist Party for joint opposition to Japanese imperialism. Such have been the particular features of the Kuomintang in the three stages. Of course, these features have arisen from a variety of causes. Now take the other aspect, the Chinese Communist Party. In the period of the first united front, the Chinese Communist Party was in its infancy; it courageously led the revolution of 1924-27 but revealed its immaturity in its understanding of the character, the tasks and the methods of the revolution, and consequently it became possible for Chen Tu-hsiuism, which appeared during the latter part of this revolution, to assert itself and bring about the defeat of the revolution. After 1927, the Communist Party courageously led the Agrarian Revolutionary War and created the revolutionary army and revolutionary base areas; however, it committed adventurist errors which brought about very great losses both to the army and to the base areas. Since 1935 the Party has corrected these errors and has been leading the new united front for resistance to Japan; this great struggle is now developing. At the present stage, the Communist Party is a Party that has gone through the test of two revolutions and acquired a wealth of experience. Such have been the particular features of the Chinese Communist Party in the three stages. These features, too, have arisen from a variety of causes. Without studying both these sets of features we cannot understand the particular relations between the two parties during the various stages of their development, namely, the establishment of a united front, the break-up of the united front, and the establishment of another united front. What is even more fundamental for the study of the particular features of the two parties is the examination of the class basis of the two parties and the resultant contradictions which have arisen between each party and other forces at different periods. For instance, in the period of its first cooperation with the Communist Party, the Kuomintang

stood in contradiction to foreign imperialism and was therefore anti-imperialist; on the other hand, it stood in contradiction to the great masses of the people within the country – although in words it promised many benefits to the working people, in fact it gave them little or nothing. In the period when it carried on the anti-Communist war, the Kuomintang collaborated with imperialism and feudalism against the great masses of the people and wiped out all the gains they had won in the revolution, and thereby intensified its contradictions with them. In the present period of the anti-Japanese war, the Kuomintang stands in contradiction to Japanese imperialism and wants co-operation with the Communist Party, without however relaxing its struggle against the Communist Party and the people or its oppression of them. As for the Communist Party, it has always, in every period, stood with the great masses of the people against imperialism and feudalism, but in the present period of the anti-Japanese war, it has adopted a moderate policy towards the Kuomintang and the domestic feudal forces because the Kuomintang has pressed itself in favor of resisting Japan. The above circumstances have resulted now in alliance between the two parties and now in struggle between them, and even during the periods of alliance there has been a complicated state of simultaneous alliance and struggle. If we do not study the particular features of both aspects of the contradiction, we shall fail to understand not only the relations of each party with the other forces, but also the relations between the two parties.

It can thus be seen that in studying the particularity of any kind of contradiction – the contradiction in each form of motion of matter, the contradiction in each of its processes of development, the two aspects of the contradiction in each process, the contradiction at each stage of a process, and the two aspects of the contradiction at each stage – in studying the particularity of all these contradictions, we must not be subjective and arbitrary but must analyze it concretely. Without concrete analysis there can be no knowledge of the particularity of any contradiction. We must always remember Lenin's words, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.

Marx and Engels were the first to provide us with excellent models of such concrete analysis.

When Marx and Engels applied the law of contradiction in things to the study of the socio-historical process, they discovered the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, they discovered the contradiction between the exploiting and exploited classes and also the resultant contradiction between the economic base and its superstructure (politics, ideology, etc.), and they discovered how these contradictions inevitably lead to different kinds of social revolution in different kinds of class society.

When Marx applied this law to the study of the economic structure of capitalist society, he discovered that the basic contradiction of this society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction manifests itself in the contradiction between the organized character of production in individual enterprises and the anarchic character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Because the range of things is vast and there is no limit to their development, what is universal in one context becomes particular in another. Conversely, what is particular in one context becomes universal in another. The contradiction in the capitalist system between the social character of production and the private ownership of the means of production is common to all countries where capitalism exists and develops; as far as capitalism is concerned, this constitutes the universality of contradiction. But this

contradiction of capitalism belongs only to a certain historical stage in the general development of class society; as far as the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society as a whole is concerned, it constitutes the particularity of contradiction. However, in the course of dissecting the particularity of all these contradictions in capitalist society, Marx gave a still more profound, more adequate and more complete elucidation of the universality of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society in general.

Since the particular is united with the universal and since the universality as well as the particularity of contradiction is inherent in everything, universality residing in particularity, we should, when studying an object, try to discover both the particular and the universal and their interconnection, to discover both particularity and universality and also their interconnection within the object itself, and to discover the interconnections of this object with the many objects outside it. When Stalin explained the historical roots of Leninism in his famous work, *The Foundations of Leninism*, he analyzed the international situation in which Leninism arose, analyzed those contradictions of capitalism which reached their culmination under imperialism, and showed how these contradictions made proletarian revolution a matter for immediate action and created favorable conditions for a direct onslaught on capitalism. What is more, he analyzed the reasons why Russia became the cradle of Leninism, why tsarist Russia became the focus of all the contradictions of imperialism, and why it was possible for the Russian proletariat to become the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. Thus, Stalin analyzed the universality of contradiction in imperialism, showing why Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, and at the same time analyzed the particularity of tsarist Russian imperialism within this general contradiction, showing why Russia became the birthplace of the theory and tactics of proletarian revolution and how the universality of contradiction is contained in this particularity. Stalin's analysis provides us with a model for understanding the particularity and the universality of contradiction and their interconnection.

On the question of using dialectics in the study of objective phenomena, Marx and Engels, and likewise Lenin and Stalin, always enjoin people not to be in any way subjective and arbitrary but, from the concrete conditions in the actual objective movement of these phenomena, to discover their concrete contradictions, the concrete position of each aspect of every contradiction and the concrete interrelations of the contradictions. Our dogmatists do not have this attitude in study and therefore can never get anything right. We must take warning from their failure and learn to acquire this attitude, which is the only correct one in study.

The relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction is the relationship between the general character and the individual character of contradiction. By the former we mean that contradiction exists in and runs through all processes from beginning to end; motion, things, processes, thinking — all are contradictions. To deny contradiction is to deny everything. This is a universal truth for all times and all countries, which admits of no exception. Hence the general character, the absoluteness of contradiction. But this general character is contained in every individual character; without individual character there can be no general character. If all individual character were removed, what general character would remain? It is because each contradiction is particular that individual character arises. All individual character exists conditionally and temporarily, and hence is relative.

This truth concerning general and individual character, concerning absoluteness and relativity, is the quintessence of the problem of contradiction in things; failure to understand it is tantamount to abandoning dialectics.

IV. THE PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION AND THE PRINCIPAL ASPECT OF A CONTRADICTION

There are still two points in the problem of the particularity of contradiction which must be singled out for analysis, namely, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction.

There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions.

For instance, in capitalist society the two forces in contradiction, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction. The other contradictions, such as those between the remnant feudal class and the bourgeoisie, between the peasant petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, between the proletariat and the peasant petty bourgeoisie, between the non-monopoly capitalists and the monopoly capitalists, between bourgeois democracy and bourgeois fascism, among the capitalist countries and between imperialism and the colonies, are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction.

In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture.

When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. So, it was in China in the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Yi Ho Tuan War of 1900, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War.

But in another situation, the contradictions change position. When imperialism carries on its oppression not by war, but by milder means – political, economic and cultural – the ruling classes in semi-colonial countries capitulate to imperialism, and the two form an alliance for the joint oppression of the masses of the people. At such a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes, while imperialism often employs indirect methods rather than direct action in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people, and thus the internal contradictions become particularly sharp. This is what happened in China in the Revolutionary War of 1911, the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, and the ten years of Agrarian Revolutionary War after 1927. Wars among the various reactionary ruling groups in the semi-colonial countries, e.g., the wars among the warlords in China, fall into the same category.

When a revolutionary civil war develops to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic reactionaries, imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within or sends armed forces to help the domestic reactionaries directly. At such a time, foreign imperialism and domestic reaction stand quite openly at one pole while the masses of the people stand at the other pole, thus forming the principal contradiction which determines or influences the development of the other contradictions. The assistance

given by various capitalist countries to the Russian reactionaries after the October Revolution is an example of armed intervention. Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in 1927 is an example of splitting the revolutionary front.

But whatever happens, there is no doubt at all that at every stage in the development of a process, there is only one principal contradiction which plays the leading role.

Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. This is the method Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise, Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions.

As we have said, one must not treat all the contradictions in a process as being equal but must distinguish between the principal and the secondary contradictions, and pay special attention to grasping the principal one. But, in any given contradiction, whether principal or secondary, should the two contradictory aspects be treated as equal? Again, no. In any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven. Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position.

But this situation is not static; the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and the nature of the thing changes accordingly. In a given process or at a given stage in the development of a contradiction, A is the principal aspect and B is the non-principal aspect; at another stage or in another process the roles are reversed — a change determined by the extent of the increase or decrease in the force of each aspect in its struggle against the other in the course of the development of a thing.

We often speak of "the new superseding the old". The supersession of the old by the new is a general, eternal and inviolable law of the universe. The transformation of one thing into another, through leaps of different forms in accordance with its essence and external conditions — this is the process of the new superseding the old. In each thing there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects, and this gives rise to a series of struggles with many twists and turns. As a result of these struggles, the new aspect changes from being minor to being major and rises to predominance, while the old aspect changes from being major to being minor and gradually dies out. And the moment the new aspect gains dominance over the old, the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing. It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly.

In capitalist society, capitalism has changed its position from being a subordinate force in the old feudal era to being the dominant force, and the nature of society has accordingly changed from feudal to capitalist. In the new, capitalist era, the feudal forces changed from their former dominant position to a subordinate one, gradually dying out. Such was the case, for example, in Britain and France. With the development of the productive forces, the bourgeoisie changes from being a new class playing a progressive role to being an old class playing a reactionary role, until it is finally overthrown by the proletariat and becomes a class deprived of privately owned means of production and stripped of power, when it, too, gradually dies out. The proletariat, which is much more numerous than the bourgeoisie and grows simultaneously with it but under its rule, is a new force which, initially subordinate to the bourgeoisie, gradually gains strength, becomes an independent class playing the leading role in history, and finally seizes political power and becomes the ruling class. Thereupon the nature of society changes and the old capitalist society becomes the new socialist society. This is the path already taken by the Soviet Union, a path that all other countries will inevitably take.

Look at China, for instance. Imperialism occupies the principal position in the contradiction in which China has been reduced to a semi-colony, it oppresses the Chinese people, and China has been changed from an independent country into a semi-colonial one. But this state of affairs will inevitably change; in the struggle between the two sides, the power of the Chinese people which is growing under the leadership of the proletariat will inevitably change China from a semi-colony into an independent country, whereas imperialism will be overthrown and old China will inevitably change into New China.

The change of old China into New China also involves a change in the relation between the old feudal forces and the new popular forces within the country. The old feudal landlord class will be overthrown, and from being the ruler it will change into being the ruled; and this class, too, will gradually die out. From being the ruled, the people, led by the proletariat, will become the rulers. Thereupon, the nature of Chinese society will change and the old, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society will change into a new democratic society.

Instances of such reciprocal transformation are found in our past experience. The Ching Dynasty which ruled China for nearly three hundred years was overthrown in the Revolution of 1911, and the revolutionary *Tung Meng Hui* under Sun Yat-sen's leadership was victorious for a time. In the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, the revolutionary forces of the Communist-Kuomintang alliance in the south changed from being weak to being strong and won victory in the Northern Expedition, while the Northern warlords who once ruled the roost were overthrown. In 1927, the people's forces led by the Communist Party were greatly reduced numerically under the attacks of Kuomintang reaction, but with the elimination of opportunism within their ranks they gradually grew again. In the revolutionary base areas under Communist leadership, the peasants have been transformed from being the ruled to being the rulers, while the landlords have undergone a reverse transformation. It is always so in the world, the new displacing the old, the old being superseded by the new, the old being eliminated to make way for the new, and the new emerging out of the old.

At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favorable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favorable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favorable new situation; thus, a difficult situation yields place to a favorable one. This is what happened

after the failure of the revolution in China in 1927 and during the Long March of the Chinese Red Army. In the present Sino-Japanese War, China is again in a difficult position, but we can change this and fundamentally transform the situation as between China and Japan. Conversely, favorable conditions can be transformed into difficulty if the revolutionaries make mistakes. Thus, the victory of the revolution of 1924-27 turned into defeat. The revolutionary base areas which grew up in the southern provinces after 1927 had all suffered defeat by 1934.

When we engage in study, the same holds good for the contradiction in the passage from ignorance to knowledge. At the very beginning of our study of Marxism, our ignorance of or scanty acquaintance with Marxism stands in contradiction to knowledge of Marxism. But by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, scanty knowledge into substantial knowledge, and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application.

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."⁷⁸ When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also – and indeed must – recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.

In studying the particularity of contradiction, unless we examine these two facets – the principal and the non-principal contradictions in a process, and the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction – that is, unless we examine the distinctive character of these two facets of contradiction, we shall get bogged down in abstractions, be unable to understand contradiction concretely and consequently be unable to find the correct method of resolving it. The distinctive character or particularity of these two facets of contradiction represents the unevenness of the forces that are in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly; we must oppose the theory of even development or the theory of equilibrium. Moreover, it is these concrete features of a contradiction and the changes in the principal and

⁷⁸ V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", Collected Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369.

non-principal aspects of a contradiction in the course of its development that manifest the force of the new superseding the old. The study of the various states of unevenness in contradictions, of the principal and non-principal contradictions and of the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction constitutes an essential method by which a revolutionary political party correctly determines its strategic and tactical policies both in political and in military affairs. All Communists must give it attention.

V. THE IDENTITY AND STRUGGLE OF THE ASPECTS OF A CONTRADICTION

When we understand the universality and the particularity of contradiction, we must proceed to study the problem of the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction.

Identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpermeation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual co-operation — all these different terms mean the same thing and refer to the following two points: first, the existence of each of the two aspects of a contradiction in the process of the development of a thing presupposes the existence of the other aspect, and both aspects coexist in a single entity; second, in given conditions, each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity.

Lenin said:

Dialectics is the teaching which shows how opposites can be and how they happen to be (how they become) identical — under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another, — why the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another. ⁷⁹

What does this passage mean?

The contradictory aspects in every process exclude each other, struggle with each other and are in opposition to each other. Without exception, they are contained in the process of development of all things and in all human thought. A simple process contains only a single pair of opposites, while a complex process contains more. And in turn, the pairs of opposites are in contradiction to one another.

That is how all things in the objective world and all human thought are constituted and how they are set in motion.

This being so, there is an utter lack of identity or unity. How then can one speak of identity or unity?

The fact is that no contradictory aspect can exist in isolation. Without its opposite aspect, each loses the condition for its existence. Just think, can any one contradictory aspect of a thing or of a concept in the human mind exist independently? Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life. Without "above", there would be no "below" without "below", there would be no "above". Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, there would be no misfortune. Without facility, there would be no difficulty, without difficulty, there would be no facility. Without landlords, there would be no tenant-peasants; without tenant-peasants, there would be no landlords. Without the bourgeoisie, there would be no proletariat; without the proletariat, there would be no bourgeoisie. Without imperialist oppression of nations, there would be no colonies or semi-colonies; without colonies or semi-

⁷⁹ V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's The Science of Logic", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 97-98.

colonies, there would be no imperialist oppression of nations. It is so with all opposites; in given conditions, on the one hand they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent, and this character is described as identity. In given conditions, all contradictory aspects possess the character of non-identity and hence are described as being in contradiction. But they also possess the character of identity and hence are interconnected. This is what Lenin means when he says that dialectics studies "how *opposites* can be ... *identical*". How then can they be identical? Because each is the condition for the other's existence. This is the first meaning of identity.

But is it enough to say merely that each of the contradictory aspects is the condition for the other's existence, that there is identity between them and that consequently they can coexist in a single entity? No, it is not. The matter does not end with their dependence on each other for their existence; what is more important is their transformation into each other. That is to say, in given conditions, each of the contradictory aspects within a thing transforms itself into its opposite, changes its position to that of its opposite. This is the second meaning of the identity of contradiction.

Why is there identity here, too? You see, by means of revolution the proletariat, at one time the ruled, is transformed into the ruler, while the bourgeoisie, the erstwhile ruler, is transformed into the ruled and changes its position to that originally occupied by its opposite. This has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place throughout the world. If there were no interconnection and identity of opposites in given conditions, how could such a change take place?

The Kuomintang, which played a certain positive role at a certain stage in modern Chinese history, became a counter-revolutionary party after 1927 because of its inherent class nature and because of imperialist blandishments (these being the conditions); but it has been compelled to agree to resist Japan because of the sharpening of the contradiction between China and Japan and because of the Communist Party's policy of the united front (these being the conditions). Things in contradiction change into one another, and herein lies a definite identity.

Our agrarian revolution has been a process in which the landlord class owning the land is transformed into a class that has lost its land, while the peasants who once lost their land are transformed into small holders who have acquired land, and it will be such a process once again. In given conditions having and not having, acquiring and losing, are interconnected; there is identity of the two sides. Under socialism, private peasant ownership is transformed into the public ownership of socialist agriculture; this has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place everywhere else. There is a bridge leading from private property to public property, which in philosophy is called identity, or transformation into each other, or interpenetration.

To consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the people is in fact to prepare the conditions for abolishing this dictatorship and advancing to the higher stage when all state systems are eliminated. To establish and build the Communist Party is in fact to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the Communist Party and all political parties. To build a revolutionary army under the leadership of the Communist Party and to carry on revolutionary war is in fact to prepare the conditions for the permanent elimination of war. These opposites are at the same time complementary.

War and peace, as everybody knows, transform themselves into each other. War is transformed into peace; for instance, the First World War was transformed into the post-war peace, and the civil war in

China has now stopped, giving place to internal peace. Peace is transformed into war; for instance, the Kuomintang-Communist co-operation was transformed into war in 1927, and today's situation of world peace may be transformed into a second world war. Why is this so? Because in class society such contradictory things as war and peace have an identity in given conditions.

All contradictory things are interconnected; not only do they coexist in a single entity in given conditions, but in other given conditions, they also transform themselves into each other. This is the full meaning of the identity of opposites. This is what Lenin meant when he discussed "how they happen to be (how they become) *identical* – under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another".

Why is it that "the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another"? Because that is just how things are in objective reality. The fact is that the unity or identity of opposites in objective things is not dead or rigid, but is living, conditional, mobile, temporary and relative; in given conditions, every contradictory aspect transforms itself into its opposite. Reflected in man's thinking, this becomes the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. It is only the reactionary ruling classes of the past and present and the metaphysicians in their service who regard opposites not as living, conditional, mobile and transforming themselves into one another, but as dead and rigid, and they propagate this fallacy everywhere to delude the masses of the people, thus seeking to perpetuate their rule. The task of Communists is to expose the fallacies of the reactionaries and metaphysicians, to propagate the dialectics inherent in things, and so accelerate the transformation of things and achieve the goal of revolution.

In speaking of the identity of opposites in given conditions, what we are referring to is real and concrete opposites and the real and concrete transformations of opposites into one another. There are innumerable transformations in mythology, for instance, Kua Fu's race with the sun in *Shan Hai Ching*,⁸⁰ Yi's shooting down of nine suns in *Huai Nan Tzu*,⁸¹ the Monkey King's seventy-two metamorphoses in *Hsi Yu Chi*,⁸² the numerous episodes of ghosts and foxes metamorphosed into human beings in the *Strange Tales of Liao Chai*,⁸³ etc. But these legendary transformations of opposites are not concrete changes reflecting concrete contradictions. They are naive, imaginary, subjectively conceived transformations conjured up in men's minds by innumerable real and complex transformations of opposites into one another. Marx said, "All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature."⁸⁴ The myriads of changes in mythology (and also in nursery tales) delight people because they imaginatively

⁸⁰ *Shan Hai Ching* (Book of Mountains and Seas) was written in the era of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.). In one of its fables Kua Fu, a superman, pursued and overtook the sun. But he died of thirst, whereupon his staff was transformed into the forest of Teng.

⁸¹ Yi is one of the legendary heroes of ancient China, famous for his archery. According to a legend in *Huai Nan Tzu*, compiled in the 2nd century B.C., there were ten suns in the sky in the days of Emperor Yao. To put an end to the damage to vegetation caused by these scorching suns, Emperor Yao ordered Yi to shoot them down. In another legend recorded by Wang Yi (2nd century A.D.), the archer is said to have shot down nine of the ten suns.

⁸² *Hsi Yu Chi* (Pilgrimage to the West) is a 16th century novel, the hero of which is the monkey god Sun Wu-kung. He could miraculously change at will into seventy-two different shapes, such as a bird, a tree and a stone.

⁸³ *The Strange Tales of Liao Chai*, written by Pu Sung-ling in the 17th century, is a well-known collection of 431 tales, mostly about ghosts and fox spirits.

⁸⁴ Karl Marx, "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy", *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Eng. ed., Chicago, 1904, pp. 310-11.

picture man's conquest of the forces of nature, and the best myths possess "eternal charm", as Marx put it; but myths are not built out of the concrete contradictions existing in given conditions and therefore are not a scientific reflection of reality. That is to say, in myths or nursery tales the aspects constituting a contradiction have only an imaginary identity, not a concrete identity. The scientific reflection of the identity in real transformations is Marxist dialectics.

Why can an egg but not a stone be transformed into a chicken? Why is there identity between war and peace and none between war and a stone? Why can human beings give birth only to human beings and not to anything else? The sole reason is that the identity of opposites exists only in necessary given conditions. Without these necessary given conditions there can be no identity whatsoever.

Why is it that in Russia in 1917 the bourgeois-democratic February Revolution was directly linked with the proletarian socialist October Revolution, while in France the bourgeois revolution was not directly linked with a socialist revolution and the Paris Commune of 1871 ended in failure? Why is it, on the other hand, that the nomadic system of Mongolia and Central Asia has been directly linked with socialism? Why is it that the Chinese revolution can avoid a capitalist future and be directly linked with socialism without taking the old historical road of the Western countries, without passing through a period of bourgeois dictatorship? The sole reason is the concrete conditions of the time. When certain necessary conditions are present, certain contradictions arise in the process of development of things and, moreover, the opposites contained in them are interdependent and become transformed into one another; otherwise, none of this would be possible.

Such is the problem of identity. What then is struggle? And what is the relation between identity and struggle?

Lenin said:

The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.⁸⁵

What does this passage mean?

All processes have a beginning and an end; all processes transform themselves into their opposites. The constancy of all processes is relative, but the mutability manifested in the transformation of one process into another is absolute.

There are two states of motion in all things, that of relative rest and that of conspicuous change. Both are caused by the struggle between the two contradictory elements contained in a thing. When the thing is in the first state of motion, it is undergoing only quantitative and not qualitative change and consequently presents the outward appearance of being at rest. When the thing is in the second state of motion, the quantitative change of the first state has already reached a culminating point and gives rise to the dissolution of the thing as an entity and thereupon a qualitative change ensues, hence the appearance of a conspicuous change. Such unity, solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity, attraction, etc., as we see in daily life, are all the appearances of things in the state of quantitative change. On the other hand, the dissolution of unity, that is, the destruction of this

⁸⁵ V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity and attraction, and the change of each into its opposite are all the appearances of things in the state of qualitative change, the transformation of one process into another. Things are constantly transforming themselves from the first into the second state of motion; the struggle of opposites goes on in both states but the contradiction is resolved through the second state. That is why we say that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and relative, while the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute.

When we said above that two opposite things can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other because there is identity between them, we were speaking of conditionality, that is to say, in given conditions two contradictory things can be united and can transform themselves into each other, but in the absence of these conditions, they cannot constitute a contradiction, cannot coexist in the same entity and cannot transform themselves into one another. It is because the identity of opposites obtains only in given conditions that we have said identity is conditional and relative. We may add that the struggle between opposites permeates a process from beginning to end and makes one process transform itself into another, that it is ubiquitous, and that struggle is therefore unconditional and absolute.

The combination of conditional, relative identity and unconditional, absolute struggle constitutes the movement of opposites in all things.

We Chinese often say, "Things that oppose each other also complement each other."⁸⁶ That is, things opposed to each other have identity. This saying is dialectical and contrary to metaphysics. "Oppose each other" refers to the mutual exclusion or the struggle of two contradictory aspects. "Complement each other" means that in given conditions the two contradictory aspects unite and achieve identity. Yet struggle is inherent in identity and without struggle there can be no identity.

In identity there is struggle, in particularity there is universality, and in individuality there is generality. To quote Lenin, "... there is an absolute in the relative."⁸⁷

VI. THE PLACE OF ANTAGONISM IN CONTRADICTION

The question of the struggle of opposites includes the question of what is antagonism. Our answer is that antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites.

In human history, antagonism between classes exists as a particular manifestation of the struggle of opposites. Consider the contradiction between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Such contradictory classes coexist for a long time in the same society, be it slave society, feudal society or capitalist society, and they struggle with each other; but it is not until the contradiction between the two classes develops to a certain stage that it assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution. The same holds for the transformation of peace into war in class society.

Before it explodes, a bomb is a single entity in which opposites coexist in given conditions. The explosion takes place only when a new condition, ignition, is present. An analogous situation arises in all

⁸⁶ The saying "Things that oppose each other also complement each other" first appeared in the History of the Earlier Han Dynasty by Pan Ku, a celebrated historian in the 1st century A.D. It has long been a popular saying.

⁸⁷ V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

those natural phenomena which finally assume the form of open conflict to resolve old contradictions and produce new things.

It is highly important to grasp this fact. It enables us to understand that revolutions and revolutionary wars are inevitable in class society and that without them, it is impossible to accomplish any leap in social development and to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes and therefore impossible for the people to win political power. Communists must expose the deceitful propaganda of the reactionaries, such as the assertion that social revolution is unnecessary and impossible. They must firmly uphold the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution and enable the people to understand that social revolution is not only entirely necessary but also entirely practicable, and that the whole history of mankind and the triumph of the Soviet Union have confirmed this scientific truth.

However, we must make a concrete study of the circumstances of each specific struggle of opposites and should not arbitrarily apply the formula discussed above to everything. Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones.

As already mentioned, so long as classes exist, contradictions between correct and incorrect ideas in the Communist Party are reflections within the Party of class contradictions. At first, with regard to certain issues, such contradictions may not manifest themselves as antagonistic. But with the development of the class struggle, they may grow and become antagonistic. The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shows us that the contradictions between the correct thinking of Lenin and Stalin and the fallacious thinking of Trotsky, Bukharin and others did not at first manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but that later they did develop into antagonism. There are similar cases in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. At first the contradictions between the correct thinking of many of our Party comrades and the fallacious thinking of Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao and others also did not manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but later they did develop into antagonism. At present the contradiction between correct and incorrect thinking in our Party does not manifest itself in an antagonistic form, and if comrades who have committed mistakes can correct them, it will not develop into antagonism. Therefore, the Party must on the one hand wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, and on the other give the comrades who have committed errors ample opportunity to wake up. This being the case, excessive struggle is obviously inappropriate. But if the people who have committed errors persist in them and aggravate them, there is the possibility that this contradiction will develop into antagonism.

Economically, the contradiction between town and country is an extremely antagonistic one both in capitalist society, where under the rule of the bourgeoisie the towns ruthlessly plunder the countryside, and in the Kuomintang areas in China, where under the rule of foreign imperialism and the Chinese big comprador bourgeoisie the towns most rapaciously plunder the countryside. But in a socialist country and in our revolutionary base areas, this antagonistic contradiction has changed into one that is non-antagonistic; and when communist society is reached it will be abolished.

Lenin said, "Antagonism and contradiction are not at all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain." ⁸⁸ That is to say, antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites; the formula of antagonism cannot be arbitrarily applied everywhere.

VII. CONCLUSION

We may now say a few words to sum up. The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the fundamental law of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought. It stands opposed to the metaphysical world outlook. It represents a great revolution in the history of human knowledge. According to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these processes from beginning to end; this is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. Each contradiction and each of its aspects have their respective characteristics; this is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. In given conditions, opposites possess identity, and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other; this again is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. But the struggle of opposites is ceaseless, it goes on both when the opposites are coexisting and when they are transforming themselves into each other, and becomes especially conspicuous when they are transforming themselves into one another; this again is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. In studying the particularity and relativity of contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions and to the distinction between the principal aspect and the non-principal aspect of a contradiction; in studying the universality of contradiction and the struggle of opposites in contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the different forms of struggle. Otherwise, we shall make mistakes. If, through study, we achieve a real understanding of the essentials explained above, we shall be able to demolish dogmatist ideas which are contrary to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and detrimental to our revolutionary cause, and our comrades with practical experience will be able to organize their experience into principles and avoid repeating empiricist errors. These are a few simple conclusions from our study of the law of contradiction.

Unit 4. Application of Materialist Dialectics to Society.

Topics covered:

- I. Base and superstructure.
- II. Classes and class struggle.
- III. Ideology.

Bibliography:

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 - Anti-Duhring. Socialism, Chapter I.
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- Lenin:
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⁸⁸ V. I. Lenin, "Remarks on N. I. Bukharin's Economics of the Transitional Period" Selected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, Vol. XI, p. 357.

- Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.
- Marx-Engels:
 - The German Ideology. Chapter I

Selection:

Frederick Engels: Anti-Dühring Part I: Philosophy

Part III: Socialism: Chapter I: Historical

We saw in the “Introduction”⁸⁹ how the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, the forerunners of the Revolution, appealed to reason as the sole judge of all that is. A rational government, rational society, were to be founded; everything that ran counter to eternal reason was to be remorselessly done away with. We saw also that this eternal reason was in reality nothing but the idealized understanding of the eighteenth-century citizen, just then evolving into the bourgeois. The French Revolution had realized this rational society and government. But, the new order of things, rational enough as compared with earlier conditions, turned out to be by no means absolutely rational. The state based upon reason completely collapsed. Rousseau’s Contract Social had found its realization in the Reign of Terror, from which the bourgeoisie, who had lost confidence in their own political capacity, had taken refuge first in the corruption of the Directorate, and, finally, under the wing of the Napoleonic despotism.⁹⁰ The promised eternal peace was turned into an endless war of conquest. The society based upon reason had fared no better. The antagonism between rich and poor, instead of dissolving into general prosperity, had become intensified by the removal of the guild and other privileges, which had to some extent bridged it over, and by the removal of the charitable institutions of the Church. The development of industry upon a capitalistic basis made poverty and misery of the working masses conditions of existence of society. The number of crimes increased from year to year. Formerly, the feudal vices had openly stalked about in broad daylight; though not eradicated, they were now at any rate thrust into the background. In their stead, the bourgeois vices, hitherto practiced in secret, began to blossom all the more luxuriantly. Trade became to a greater and greater extent cheating. The “fraternity” of the revolutionary motto⁹¹ was realized in the chicanery and rivalries of the battle of competition. Oppression by force was replaced by corruption; the sword, as the first social lever, by gold. The right of the first night was transferred from the feudal lords to the bourgeois manufacturers. Prostitution increased to an extent never heard of. Marriage itself remained, as before, the legally recognized form, the official cloak of prostitution, and, moreover, was supplemented by rich crops of adultery. In a word, compared with the splendid promises of the philosophers, the social and political institutions born of the “triumph of reason” were bitterly

⁸⁹ Engels is referring to the beginning of Chapter I of the “Introduction”. He wrote this footnote when *Anti-Dühring* was published in the newspaper. It remained unchanged in all editions of the book published during Engels’ lifetime. In all subsequent separate editions, the first two chapters were joined together under the heading “Introduction”. The numbers of the other chapters were not changed, so “Philosophy” now begins with Chapter III.

⁹⁰ The Reign of Terror — the period of Jacobin revolutionary-democratic dictatorship (June 1793-July 1794), which relied on the revolutionary bloc of the urban petty and middle bourgeoisie, the majority of the peasants and plebeians.

The Directorate — the organ of executive power in France (from November 1795), formed under the 1795 Constitution. Existing until the Napoleon’s coup d’état of November 9 (18 Brumaire), 1799 it upheld the interests of big bourgeoisie and brutally suppressed the revolutionary actions of the popular masses.

In 1804, Bonaparte, who actually became the head of the state under the Consulate after 18 Brumaire, was proclaimed Emperor of the French.

⁹¹ A reference to the slogan “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” current during the French Revolution.

disappointing caricatures. All that was wanting was the men to formulate this disappointment and they came with the turn of the century. In 1802 Saint-Simon's Geneva letters appeared; in 1808 appeared Fourier's first work,⁹² although the groundwork of his theory dated from 1799; on January 1, 1800, Robert Owen undertook the direction of New Lanark.

At this time, however, the capitalist mode of production, and with it the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, was still very incompletely developed. Modern industry, which had just arisen in England, was still unknown in France. But modern industry develops, on the one hand, the conflicts which make absolutely necessary a revolution in the mode of production, conflicts not only between the classes begotten of it, but also between the very productive forces and the forms of exchange created by it. And, on the other hand, it develops, in these very gigantic productive forces, the means of ending these conflicts. If, therefore, about the year 1800, the conflicts arising from the new social order were only just beginning to take shape, this holds still more fully as to the means of ending them. The propertyless masses of Paris, during the Reign of Terror, were able for a moment to gain the mastery. But, in doing so, they only proved how impossible it was for their domination to last under the conditions then obtaining. The proletariat, which then for the first time evolved itself from these propertyless masses as the nucleus of a new class, as yet quite incapable of independent political action, appeared as an oppressed, suffering estate, to whom, in its incapacity to help itself, help could, at best, be brought in from without or down from above.

This historical situation also dominated the founders of socialism. To the crude conditions of capitalist production and the crude class conditions corresponded crude theories. The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in undeveloped economic conditions, the utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain. Society presented nothing but wrongs; to remove these was the task of reason. It was necessary, then, to discover a new and more perfect system of social order and to impose this upon society from without by propaganda, and, wherever it was possible, by the example of model experiments. These new social systems were foredoomed as utopian; the more completely they were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure fantasies.

These facts once established, we need not dwell a moment longer upon this side of the question, now wholly belonging to the past. We can leave it to the literary small fry à la Dühring to solemnly quibble over these fantasies, which today only make us smile, and to crow over the superiority of their own bald reasoning, as compared with such "insanity" {D. K. G. 276, 278, 283}. For ourselves, we delight in the stupendously grand thoughts and germs of thought that everywhere break out through their fantastic covering, and to which these philistines are blind.

Already in his Geneva letters, Saint-Simon lays down the proposition that

"All men ought to work".

⁹² Saint-Simon's first work, *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains* was written in Geneva in 1802 and published anonymously in Paris in 1803, without the place and date of publication being indicated. When working on *Anti-Dühring*, Engels made use of: G. Hubbard, *Saint-Simon. Sa vie et ses travaux. Suivi de fragments des plus célèbres écrits de Saint-Simon*, Paris, 1857. This edition contains inaccuracies regarding the publication dates of various works by Saint-Simon.

The first most important work of Charles Fourier was *Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales*, written in the early nineteenth century and published anonymously in Lyons in 1808 (the title page gives Leipzig as the place of publication).

In the same work he recognizes also that the Reign of Terror was the reign of the non-possessing masses.

“See,” says he to them, “what happened in France at the time when your comrades held sway there; they brought about a famine.”

But to recognize the French Revolution as a class war between nobility, bourgeoisie, and the non-possessors, was, in the year 1802, a most pregnant discovery. In 1816, he declares that politics is the science of production, and foretells the complete absorption of politics by economics. The knowledge that economic conditions are the basis of political institutions appears here only in embryo. Yet what is here already very plainly expressed is the idea of the future conversion of political rule over men into an administration of things and a direction of processes of production — that is to say, the “abolition of the state”, about which recently there has been so much noise. Saint-Simon shows the same superiority over his contemporaries, when in 1814, immediately after the entry of the allies into Paris,⁹³ and again in 1815, during the Hundred Days’ War,⁹⁴ he proclaims the alliance of France with England, and then of both these countries with Germany, as the only guarantee for the prosperous development and peace of Europe. To preach to the French in 1815 an alliance with the victors of Waterloo at any rate required somewhat more courage than to declare a war of tittle-tattle on German professors.⁹⁵

If in Saint-Simon we find a comprehensive breadth of view, by virtue of which almost all the ideas of later Socialists, that are not strictly economic, are found in him in embryo, we find in Fourier a criticism of the existing conditions of society, genuinely French and witty, but not upon that account any the less thorough. Fourier takes the bourgeoisie, their inspired prophets before the Revolution, and their interested eulogists after it, at their own word. He lays bare remorselessly the material and moral misery of the bourgeois world. He confronts it with the philosophers’ dazzling promises of a society in which reason alone should reign, of a civilization in which happiness should be universal, of an illimitable human perfectibility, and with the rose-colored phraseology of the bourgeois ideologists of his time. He points out how everywhere the most pitiful reality corresponds with the most high-sounding phrases, and he overwhelms this hopeless fiasco of phrases with his mordant sarcasm. Fourier is not only a critic; his imperturbably serene nature makes him a satirist, and assuredly one of the greatest satirists of all time. He depicts, with equal power and charm, the swindling speculations that blossomed out upon the downfall of the Revolution, and the shopkeeping spirit prevalent in, and characteristic of, French commerce at that time. Still more masterly is his criticism of the bourgeois form of the relations between the sexes, and the position of woman in bourgeois society. He was the first to declare that in any given society the degree of

⁹³ The allied armies of the sixth anti-French coalition (Russia, Austria, Britain, Prussia and other countries) entered Paris on March 31, 1814. Napoleon's empire fell and Napoleon himself, after abdicating, was banished to the Island of Elba. The Bourbon monarchy was restored in France for the first time (1814-15).

⁹⁴ The Hundred Days — the period of brief restoration of the Napoleonic Empire — from the day of Napoleon's return from exile on Elba to Paris on March 20, 1815, until his second abdication on June 22 of the same year, after his army's defeat at Waterloo on June 18, 1815 by Anglo-Dutch forces under Wellington and by the Prussian army under Blücher.

⁹⁵ After Dühring had been deprived of the right to lecture at Berlin University for criticizing university practices and attacking such prominent scientists as Helmholtz, Virchow and others, a just campaign, in the columns of the Social-Democratic press included, grew into an unrestrained apologia for Dühring, owing to the efforts of his supporters. This is what Engels is hinting at. Dühring's attacks on the German Social-Democrats in reactionary newspapers, in the autumn of the same year led, however, to a fall in his authority and influence not only among socialists, but also among people of progressive views in general.

woman's emancipation is the natural measure of the general emancipation.⁹⁶ But Fourier is at his greatest in his conception of the history of society. He divides its whole course, thus far, into four stages of evolution — savagery, the patriarchate barbarism, civilization. This last is identical with the so-called bourgeois society of today. He proves

“That the civilized stage raises every vice practiced by barbarism in a simple fashion into a form of existence, complex, ambiguous, equivocal, hypocritical”,

that civilization moves in a “vicious circle”, in contradictions which it constantly reproduces without being able to solve them; hence it constantly arrives at the very opposite to that which it wants to attain, or pretends to want to attain, so that, e.g.,

“Under civilization *poverty is born of superabundance itself*”.

Fourier, as we see, uses the dialectic method in the same masterly way as his contemporary, Hegel. Using these same dialectics, he argues against the talk about illimitable human perfectibility, that every historical phase has its period of ascent and also its period of descent, and he applies this observation to the future of the whole human race. As Kant introduced into natural science the idea of the ultimate destruction of the earth, Fourier introduced into historical science that of the ultimate destruction of the human race. —

Whilst in France the hurricane of the Revolution swept over the land, in England a quieter, but not on that account less tremendous, revolution was going on. Steam and the new tool-making machinery were transforming manufacture into modern industry, and thus revolutionizing the whole foundation of bourgeois society. The sluggish march of development of the manufacturing period changed into a veritable storm and stress period of production. With constantly increasing swiftness the splitting-up of society into large capitalists and non-possessing proletarians went on. Between these, instead of the former stable middle class, an unstable mass of artisans and small shopkeepers, the most fluctuating portion of the population, now led a precarious existence. The new mode of production was, as yet, only at the beginning of its period of ascent; as yet it was the normal method of production — the only one possible under existing conditions. Nevertheless, even then it was producing crying social abuses — the herding together of a homeless population in the worst quarters of the large towns; the loosening of all traditional moral bonds, of patriarchal subordination, of family relations, overwork, especially of women and children, to a frightful extent; complete demoralization of the working class, suddenly flung into altogether new conditions. At this juncture there came forward as a reformer a manufacturer 29 years old — a man of almost sublime, child-like simplicity of character, and at the same time one of the few born leaders of men. Robert Owen had adopted the teaching of the materialistic philosophers: that man's character is the product, on the one hand, of heredity; on the other, of the environment of the individual during his lifetime, and especially during his period of development. In the industrial revolution most of his class saw only chaos and confusion, and the opportunity of fishing in these troubled waters and making large fortunes quickly. He saw in it the opportunity of putting into practice his favorite theory, and so of

⁹⁶ This idea had been enunciated in Charles Fourier's first book — *Théorie des quatre mouvements* — which contains the following general thesis: "Social progress and changes of a period are accompanied by the progress of women towards freedom, while the decay of the social system brings with it a reduction of the freedoms enjoyed by women." Fourier concludes: "Extension of the rights of women is the basic principle of all social progress" (Fourier, *Oeuvres complètes*, t. I, Paris, 1841, pp. 195-96). p. 248

bringing order out of chaos. He had already tried it with success, as superintendent of more than five hundred men in a Manchester factory. From 1800 to 1829, he directed the great cotton-mill at New Lanark, in Scotland, as managing partner, along the same lines, but with greater freedom of action and with a success that made him a European reputation. A population, originally consisting of the most diverse and, for the most part, very demoralized elements, a population that gradually grew to 2,500, he turned into a model colony, in which drunkenness, police, magistrates, lawsuits, poor laws, charity, were unknown. And all this simply by placing the people in conditions worthy of human beings, and especially by carefully bringing up the rising generation. He was the founder of infant schools, and introduced them first at New Lanark. At the age of two the children came to school, where they enjoyed themselves so much that they could scarcely be got home again. Whilst his competitors worked their people thirteen or fourteen hours a day, in New Lanark the working-day was only ten and a half hours. When a crisis in cotton stopped work for four months, his workers received their full wages all the time. And with all this the business more than doubled in value, and to the last yielded large profits to its proprietors.

In spite of all this, Owen was not content. The existence which he secured for his workers was, in his eyes, still far from being worthy of human beings.

“The people were slaves at my mercy.”

The relatively favorable conditions in which he had placed them were still far from allowing a rational development of the character and of the intellect in all directions, much less of the free exercise of all their faculties.

“And yet the working part of this population of 2,500 persons was producing as much real wealth for society, as, less than half a century before, it would have required the working part of a population of 600,000 to create. I asked myself what became of the difference between the wealth consumed by 2,500 persons and that which would have been consumed by 600,000.”

The answer was clear. It had been used to pay the proprietors of the establishment 5 per cent on the capital they had laid out, in addition to over £300,000 (6,000,000 marks) clear profit. And that which held for New Lanark held to a still greater extent for all the factories in England.

“If this new wealth had not been created by machinery, the wars in opposition to Napoleon, and to support the aristocratic principles of society, could not have been maintained. And yet this new power was the creation of the working class.”⁹⁷

To them, therefore, the fruits of this new power belonged. The newly-created gigantic productive forces hitherto used only to enrich individuals and to enslave the masses, offered to Owen the foundations for a reconstruction of society; they were destined, as the common property of all, to be worked for the common good of all.

Owen's communism was based upon this purely business foundation, the outcome, so to say, of commercial calculation. Throughout, it maintained this practical character. Thus, in 1823, Owen proposed the relief of the distress in Ireland by communist colonies, and drew up complete estimates of costs of

⁹⁷ In a note to the relevant passage in *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, Engels gives the source of the last three quotations: R. Owen, *The Revolution in the Mind and Practice of the Human Race*; or, *the Coming Change from Irrationality to Rationality*, London, 1849, pp. 21, 22. The facts from Owen's biography mentioned above are from the same source.

founding them, yearly expenditure, and probable revenue. And in his definite plan for the future, the technical working out of details is managed with such practical knowledge that the Owen method of social reform once accepted, there is from the practical point of view little to be said against the actual arrangement of details.

His advance in the direction of communism was the turning-point in Owen's life. As long as he was simply a philanthropist, he was rewarded with nothing but wealth, applause, honor, and glory. He was the most popular man in Europe. Not only men of his own class, but statesmen and princes listened to him approvingly. But when he came out with his communist theories, that was quite another thing. Three great obstacles seemed to him especially to block the path to social reform: private property, religion, the present form of marriage. He knew what confronted him if he attacked these — outlawry, excommunication from official society, the loss of his whole social position. But nothing of this prevented him from attacking them without fear of consequences, and what he had foreseen happened. Banished from official society, with a conspiracy of silence against him in the press, ruined by his unsuccessful communist experiments in America, in which he sacrificed all his fortune, he turned directly to the working class and continued working in their midst for thirty years. Every social movement, every real advance in England on behalf of the workers links itself on to the name of Robert Owen. He forced through in 1819, after five years' fighting, the first law limiting the hours of labor for women and children in factories.⁹⁸ He was president of the first congress at which all the Trade Unions of England united in a single great trade association.⁹⁹ He introduced as transition measures to the complete communistic organisation of society, on the one hand, co-operative societies for retail trade and production. These have since that time, at least, given practical proof that the merchant and the manufacturer are socially quite unnecessary. On the other hand, he introduced labor bazaars for the exchange of the products of labor through the medium of labor-notes, whose unit was a single hour of work;¹⁰⁰ institutions necessarily doomed to failure, but completely anticipating Proudhon's bank of exchange [\[112\]](#) of a much later period, and differing entirely from this in that they did not claim to be the panacea for all social ills, but only a first step towards a much more radical revolution of society.

These are the men on whom the sovereign Herr Dühring looks down, from the height of his "final and ultimate truth" {D. Ph. 2}, with a contempt of which we have given a few examples in the Introduction. And in one respect this contempt is not devoid of adequate reason: for its basis is, in essence, a really frightful ignorance of the works of the three utopians. Thus, Herr Dühring says of Saint-Simon that

"His basic idea was, in essentials, correct, and apart from some one-sided aspects, even today provides the directing impulse towards real creation" {D. K. G. 246}.

⁹⁸ The Bill moved on Owen's initiative in June 1815, was passed by Parliament only in July 1819, having been greatly curtailed. The Act regulating labor in cotton mills banned the employment of children under the age of nine, limited the working day to 12 hours for young people under 18 and established for all workers two breaks, one for breakfast and the other for lunch, with a total duration of one and a half hours.

⁹⁹ A Congress of Co-operative Societies and Trades Unions, presided over by Owen, was held in London in October 1833. This Congress formally founded the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, the Charter of which was adopted in February 1834. It was Owen's intention that this Union would take over the management of production and remake society peacefully. This utopian plan collapsed very soon. In the face of strong opposition from employers and the state, the Union ceased to exist in 1834.

¹⁰⁰ Equitable Labor Exchange Bazaars were founded by workers' co-operatives in various towns of England; the first of these bazaars was founded by Owen in London in September 1832 and existed until mid-1834.

But although Herr Dühring does actually seem to have had some of Saint-Simon's works in his hands, our search through the twenty-seven relevant printed pages for Saint-Simon's "basic idea" is just as fruitless as our earlier search for what Quesnay's *Tableau* "meant in Quesnay himself" {105}, and in the end we have to allow ourselves to be put off with the phrase

"That imagination and philanthropic fervor ... along with the extravagant fantasy that goes with it, dominated the whole of Saint-Simon's thought complex" {252}!

As regards Fourier, all that Herr Dühring knows or takes into account is his fantasies of the future, painted in romantic detail. This of course "is far more important" for establishing Herr Dühring's infinite superiority over Fourier than an examination of how the latter "attempts *occasionally* to criticize actual conditions" {282}. Occasionally! In fact, almost every page of his works scintillates with sparkling satire and criticism aimed at the wretchedness of our vaunted civilization. It is like saying that Herr Dühring only "occasionally" declares Herr Dühring to be the greatest thinker of all time. And as for the twelve pages devoted to Robert Owen, Herr Dühring has absolutely no other source for them than the miserable biography of the philistine Sargant, who also did not know Owen's most important works — on marriage and the communist system. Herr Dühring can therefore go the length of boldly asserting that we should not "assume any clear-cut communism" {301} in Owen. Had Herr Dühring ever even fingered Owen's *Book of the New Moral World*, he would most assuredly have found clearly expressed in it not only the most clear-cut communism possible, with equal obligation to labor and equal rights in the product — equal according to age, as Owen always adds — but also the most comprehensive building project of the future communist community, with its ground plan, front and side and bird's-eye views. But if one limits one's "first-hand study of the writings of the representatives of socialist idea-complexes" {XIII} to a knowledge of the title and at most the *motto* {294} of a small number of these works, like Herr Dühring, the only thing left to do is make such a stupid and purely fantastic assertion. Owen did not only preach "clear-cut communism" {301}; for five years (at the end of the thirties and beginning of the forties) he put it into practice in the Harmony Hall Colony [\[113\]](#) in Hampshire, the clear-cut quality of whose communism left nothing to be desired. I myself was acquainted with several former members of this communist model experiment. But Sargant knew absolutely nothing of all this, or of any of Owen's activities between 1836 and 1850, and consequently Herr Dühring's "more profound historical work" {XIII} is also left in pitch-black ignorance. Herr Dühring calls Owen "in every respect a veritable monster of importunate philanthropy" {261}. But when this same Herr Dühring starts to give us information about the contents of books whose title and motto he hardly knows, we must not on any account say that he is "in every respect a veritable monster of importunate ignorance", for on *our* lips this would certainly be "abuse".

The utopians, we saw, were utopians because they could be nothing else at a time when capitalist production was as yet so little developed. They necessarily had to construct the elements of a new society out of their own heads, because within the old society the elements of the new were not as yet generally apparent; for the basic plan of the new edifice, they could only appeal to reason, just because they could not as yet appeal to contemporary history. But when now, almost eighty years after their time, Herr Dühring steps on to the stage and puts forward his claim to an "authoritative" {1} system of a new social order — not evolved out of the historically developed material at his disposal, as its necessary result — oh, no! — but constructed in his sovereign head, in his mind, pregnant with ultimate truths — then he, who scents epigones everywhere, is himself nothing but the epigone of the utopians, the latest utopian. He calls the great utopians "social alchemists" {237}. That may be so. Alchemy was necessary in its epoch. But since

that time modern industry has developed the contradictions lying dormant in the capitalist mode of production into such crying antagonisms that the approaching collapse of this mode of production is, so to speak, palpable; that the new productive forces themselves can only be maintained and further developed by the introduction of a new mode of production corresponding to their present stage of development; that the struggle between the two classes engendered by the hitherto existing mode of production and constantly reproduced in ever sharper antagonism has affected all civilized countries and is daily becoming more violent; and that these historical interconnections the conditions of the social transformation which they make necessary, and the basic features of this transformation likewise determined by them, have also already been apprehended. And if Herr Dühring now manufactures a new utopian social order out of his sovereign brain instead of from the economic material available, he is not practicing mere “social alchemy”. He is acting rather like a person who, after the discovery and establishment of the laws of modern chemistry, attempts to restore the old alchemy and to use atomic weights, molecular formulas, the quantivalence of atoms, crystallography and spectral analysis for the sole purpose of discovering — *the philosopher's stone*.

Frederick Engels: The Part played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man

Labor is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert. And it really is the source – next to nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is even infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labor created man himself.

Many hundreds of thousands of years ago, during an epoch, not yet definitely determinable, of that period of the earth's history known to geologists as the Tertiary period, most likely towards the end of it, a particularly highly-developed race of anthropoid apes lived somewhere in the tropical zone – probably on a great continent that has now sunk to the bottom of the Indian Ocean. [\[1\]](#) Darwin has given us an approximate description of these ancestors of ours. They were completely covered with hair, they had beards and pointed ears, and they lived in bands in the trees.

First, owing to their way of living which meant that the hands had different functions than the feet when climbing, these apes began to lose the habit of using their hands to walk and adopted a more and more erect posture. This was *the decisive step in the transition from ape to man*.

All extant anthropoid apes can stand erect and move about on their feet alone, but only in case of urgent need and in a very clumsy way. Their natural gait is in a half-erect posture and includes the use of the hands. The majority rest the knuckles of the fist on the ground and, with legs drawn up, swing the body through their long arms, much as a cripple moves on crutches. In general, all the transition stages from walking on all fours to walking on two legs are still to be observed among the apes today. The latter gait, however, has never become more than a makeshift for any of them.

It stands to reason that if erect gait among our hairy ancestors became first the rule and then, in time, a necessity, other diverse functions must, in the meantime, have devolved upon the hands. Already among the apes there is some difference in the way the hands and the feet are employed. In climbing, as mentioned above, the hands and feet have different uses. The hands are used mainly for gathering and holding food in the same way as the fore paws of the lower mammals are used. Many apes use their hands to build themselves nests in the trees or even to construct roofs between the branches to protect themselves against the weather, as the chimpanzee, for example, does. With their hands they grasp sticks to defend

themselves against enemies, or bombard their enemies with fruits and stones. In captivity they use their hands for a number of simple operations copied from human beings. It is in this that one sees the great gulf between the undeveloped hand of even the most man-like apes and the human hand that has been highly perfected by hundreds of thousands of years of labor. The number and general arrangement of the bones and muscles are the same in both hands, but the hand of the lowest savage can perform hundreds of operations that no simian hand can imitate – no simian hand has ever fashioned even the crudest stone knife.

The first operations for which our ancestors gradually learned to adapt their hands during the many thousands of years of transition from ape to man could have been only very simple ones. The lowest savages, even those in whom regression to a more animal-like condition with a simultaneous physical degeneration can be assumed, are nevertheless far superior to these transitional beings. Before the first flint could be fashioned into a knife by human hands, a period of time probably elapsed in comparison with which the historical period known to us appears insignificant. But the decisive step had been taken, *the hand had become free* and could henceforth attain ever greater dexterity; the greater flexibility thus acquired was inherited and increased from generation to generation.

Thus, the hand is not only the organ of labor, *it is also the product of labor*. Only by labor, by adaptation to ever new operations, through the inheritance of muscles, ligaments, and, over longer periods of time, bones that had undergone special development and the ever-renewed employment of this inherited finesse in new, more and more complicated operations, have given the human hand the high degree of perfection required to conjure into being the pictures of a Raphael, the statues of a Thorwaldsen, the music of a Paganini.

But the hand did not exist alone, it was only one member of an integral, highly complex organism. And what benefited the hand, benefited also the whole body it served; and this in two ways.

In the first place, the body benefited from the law of correlation of growth, as Darwin called it. This law states that the specialized forms of separate parts of an organic being are always bound up with certain forms of other parts that apparently have no connection with them. Thus, all animals that have red blood cells without cell nuclei, and in which the head is attached to the first vertebra by means of a double articulation (condyles), also without exception possess lacteal glands for suckling their young. Similarly, cloven hoofs in mammals are regularly associated with the possession of a multiple stomach for rumination. Changes in certain forms involve changes in the form of other parts of the body, although we cannot explain the connection. Perfectly white cats with blue eyes are always, or almost always, deaf. The gradually increasing perfection of the human hand, and the commensurate adaptation of the feet for erect gait, have undoubtedly, by virtue of such correlation, reacted on other parts of the organism. However, this action has not as yet been sufficiently investigated for us to be able to do more here than to state the fact in general terms.

Much more important is the direct, demonstrable influence of the development of the hand on the rest of the organism. It has already been noted that our simian ancestors were gregarious; it is obviously impossible to seek the derivation of man, the most social of all animals, from non-gregarious immediate ancestors. Mastery over nature began with the development of the hand, with labor, and widened man's horizon at every new advance. He was continually discovering new, hitherto unknown properties in natural objects. On the other hand, the development of labor necessarily helped to bring the members of

society closer together by increasing cases of mutual support and joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. In short, men in the making arrived at the point where *they had something to say* to each other. Necessity created the organ; the undeveloped larynx of the ape was slowly but surely transformed by modulation to produce constantly more developed modulation, and the organs of the mouth gradually learned to pronounce one articulate sound after another.

Comparison with animals proves that this explanation of the origin of language from and in the process of labor is the only correct one. The little that even the most highly-developed animals need to communicate to each other does not require articulate speech. In its natural state, no animal feels handicapped by its inability to speak or to understand human speech. It is quite different when it has been tamed by man. The dog and the horse, by association with man, have developed such a good ear for articulate speech that they easily learn to understand any language within their range of concept. Moreover, they have acquired the capacity for feelings such as affection for man, gratitude, etc., which were previously foreign to them. Anyone who has had much to do with such animals will hardly be able to escape the conviction that in many cases they now feel their inability to speak as a defect, although, unfortunately, it is one that can no longer be remedied because their vocal organs are too specialized in a definite direction. However, where vocal organs exist, within certain limits even this inability disappears. The buccal organs of birds are as different from those of man as they can be, yet birds are the only animals that can learn to speak; and it is the bird with the most hideous voice, the parrot, that speaks best of all. Let no one object that the parrot does not understand what it says. It is true that for the sheer pleasure of talking and associating with human beings, the parrot will chatter for hours at a stretch, continually repeating its whole vocabulary. But within the limits of its range of concepts it can also learn to understand what it is saying. Teach a parrot swear words in such a way that it gets an idea of their meaning (one of the great amusements of sailors returning from the tropics); tease it and you will soon discover that it knows how to use its swear words just as correctly as a Berlin costermonger. The same is true of begging for titbits.

First labor, after it and then with-it speech – these were the two most essential stimuli under the influence of which the brain of the ape gradually changed into that of man, which, for all its similarity is far larger and more perfect. Hand in hand with the development of the brain went the development of its most immediate instruments – the senses. Just as the gradual development of speech is inevitably accompanied by a corresponding refinement of the organ of hearing, so the development of the brain as a whole is accompanied by a refinement of all the senses. The eagle sees much farther than man, but the human eye discerns considerably more in things than does the eye of the eagle. The dog has a far keener sense of smell than man, but it does not distinguish a hundredth part of the odors that for man are definite signs denoting different things. And the sense of touch, which the ape hardly possesses in its crudest initial form, has been developed only side by side with the development of the human hand itself, through the medium of labor.

The reaction on labor and speech of the development of the brain and its attendant senses, of the increasing clarity of consciousness, power of abstraction and of conclusion, gave both labor and speech an ever-renewed impulse to further development. This development did not reach its conclusion when man finally became distinct from the ape, but on the whole made further powerful progress, its degree and direction varying among different peoples and at different times, and here and there even being interrupted by local or temporary regression. This further development has been strongly urged forward,

on the one hand, and guided along more definite directions, on the other, by a new element which came into play with the appearance of fully-fledged man, namely, *society*.

Hundreds of thousands of years – of no greater significance in the history of the earth than one second in the life of man [Engels note: A leading authority in this respect, Sir William Thomson, has calculated that little more than a hundred million years could have elapsed since the time when the earth had cooled sufficiently for plants and animals to be able to live on it.] – certainly elapsed before human society arose out of a troupe of tree-climbing monkeys. Yet it did finally appear. And what do we find once more as the characteristic difference between the troupe of monkeys and human society? Labor. The ape herd was satisfied to browse over the feeding area determined for it by geographical conditions or the resistance of neighboring herds; it undertook migrations and struggles to win new feeding grounds, but it was incapable of extracting from them more than they offered in their natural state, except that it unconsciously fertilized the soil with its own excrement. As soon as all possible feeding grounds were occupied, there could be no further increase in the ape population; the number of animals could at best remain stationary. But all animals waste a great deal of food, and, in addition, destroy in the germ the next generation of the food supply. Unlike the hunter, the wolf does not spare the doe which would provide it with the young the next year; the goats in Greece, that eat away the young bushes before they grow to maturity, have eaten bare all the mountains of the country. This “predatory economy” of animals plays an important part in the gradual transformation of species by forcing them to adapt themselves to other than the usual food, thanks to which their blood acquires a different chemical composition and the whole physical constitution gradually alters, while species that have remained unadapted die out. There is no doubt that this predatory economy contributed powerfully to the transition of our ancestors from ape to man. In a race of apes that far surpassed all others in intelligence and adaptability, this predatory economy must have led to a continual increase in the number of plants used for food and the consumption of more and more edible parts of food plants. In short, food became more and more varied, as did also the substances entering the body with it, substances that were the chemical premises for the transition to man.

But all that was not yet labor in the proper sense of the word. Labor begins with the making of tools. And what are the most ancient tools that we find – the most ancient judging by the heirlooms of prehistoric man that have been discovered, and by the mode of life of the earliest historical peoples and of the rawest of contemporary savages? They are hunting and fishing implements, the former at the same time serving as weapons. But hunting and fishing presuppose the transition from an exclusively vegetable diet to the concomitant use of meat, and this is another important step in the process of transition from ape to man. A *meat diet* contained in an almost ready state the most essential ingredients required by the organism for its metabolism. By shortening the time required for digestion, it also shortened the other vegetative bodily processes that correspond to those of plant life, and thus gained further time, material and desire for the active manifestation of animal life proper. And the farther man in the making moved from the vegetable kingdom the higher he rose above the animal. Just as becoming accustomed to a vegetable diet side by side with meat converted wild cats and dogs into the servants of man, so also adaptation to a meat diet, side by side with a vegetable diet, greatly contributed towards giving bodily strength and independence to man in the making. The meat diet, however, had its greatest effect on the brain, which now received a far richer flow of the materials necessary for its nourishment and development, and which, therefore, could develop more rapidly and perfectly from generation to generation. With all due respect to the vegetarians man did not come into existence without a meat diet, and if the latter, among all peoples known to us, has led to

cannibalism at some time or other (the forefathers of the Berliners, the Weletabians or Wilzians, used to eat their parents as late as the tenth century), that is of no consequence to us today.

The meat diet led to two new advances of decisive importance – the harnessing of fire and the domestication of animals. The first still further shortened the digestive process, as it provided the mouth with food already, as it were, half-digested; the second made meat more copious by opening up a new, more regular source of supply in addition to hunting, and moreover provided, in milk and its products, a new article of food at least as valuable as meat in its composition. Thus, both these advances were, in themselves, new means for the emancipation of man. It would lead us too far afield to dwell here in detail on their indirect effects notwithstanding the great importance they have had for the development of man and society.

Just as man learned to consume everything edible, he also learned to live in any climate. He spread over the whole of the habitable world, being the only animal fully able to do so of its own accord. The other animals that have become accustomed to all climates – domestic animals and vermin – did not become so independently, but only in the wake of man. And the transition from the uniformly hot climate of the original home of man to colder regions, where the year was divided into summer and winter, created new requirements – shelter and clothing as protection against cold and damp, and hence new spheres of labor, new forms of activity, which further and further separated man from the animal.

By the combined functioning of hand, speech organs and brain, not only in each individual but also in society, men became capable of executing more and more complicated operations, and were able to set themselves, and achieve, higher and higher aims. The work of each generation itself became different, more perfect and more diversified. Agriculture was added to hunting and cattle raising; then came spinning, weaving, metalworking, pottery and navigation. Along with trade and industry, art and science finally appeared. Tribes developed into nations and states. Law and politics arose, and with them that fantastic reflection of human things in the human mind – religion. In the face of all these images, which appeared in the first place to be products of the mind and seemed to dominate human societies, the more modest productions of the working hand retreated into the background, the more so since the mind that planned the labor was able, at a very early stage in the development of society (for example, already in the primitive family), to have the labor that had been planned carried out by other hands than its own. All merit for the swift advance of civilization was ascribed to the mind, to the development and activity of the brain. Men became accustomed to explain their actions as arising out of thought instead of their needs (which in any case are reflected and perceived in the mind); and so, in the course of time there emerged that idealistic world outlook which, especially since the fall of the world of antiquity, has dominated men's minds. It still rules them to such a degree that even the most materialistic natural scientists of the Darwinian school are still unable to form any clear idea of the origin of man, because under this ideological influence they do not recognize the part that has been played therein by labor.

Animals, as has already been pointed out, change the environment by their activities in the same way, even if not to the same extent, as man does, and these changes, as we have seen, in turn react upon and change those who made them. In nature nothing takes place in isolation. Everything affects and is affected by every other thing, and it is mostly because this manifold motion and interaction is forgotten that our natural scientists are prevented from gaining a clear insight into the simplest things. We have seen how goats have prevented the regeneration of forests in Greece; on the island of St. Helena, goats and pigs

brought by the first arrivals have succeeded in exterminating its old vegetation almost completely, and so have prepared the ground for the spreading of plants brought by later sailors and colonists. But animals exert a lasting effect on their environment unintentionally and, as far as the animals themselves are concerned, accidentally. The further removed men are from animals, however, the more their effect on nature assumes the character of premeditated, planned action directed towards definite preconceived ends. The animal destroys the vegetation of a locality without realizing what it is doing. Man destroys it in order to sow field crops on the soil thus released, or to plant trees or vines which he knows will yield many times the amount planted. He transfers useful plants and domestic animals from one country to another and thus changes the flora and fauna of whole continents. More than this. Through artificial breeding both plants and animals are so changed by the hand of man that they become unrecognizable. The wild plants from which our grain varieties originated are still being sought in vain. There is still some dispute about the wild animals from which our very different breeds of dogs or our equally numerous breeds of horses are descended.

It goes without saying that it would not occur to us to dispute the ability of animals to act in a planned, premeditated fashion. On the contrary, a planned mode of action exists in embryo wherever protoplasm, living albumen, exists and reacts, that is, carries out definite, even if extremely simple, movements as a result of definite external stimuli. Such reaction takes place even where there is yet no cell at all, far less a nerve cell. There is something of the planned action in the way insect-eating plants capture their prey, although they do it quite unconsciously. In animals the capacity for conscious, planned action is proportional to the development of the nervous system, and among mammals it attains a fairly high level. While fox-hunting in England one can daily observe how unerringly the fox makes use of its excellent knowledge of the locality in order to elude its pursuers, and how well it knows and turns to account all favorable features of the ground that cause the scent to be lost. Among our domestic animals, more highly developed thanks to association with man, one can constantly observe acts of cunning on exactly the same level as those of children. For, just as the development history of the human embryo in the mother's womb is only an abbreviated repetition of the history, extending over millions of years, of the bodily development of our animal ancestors, starting from the worm, so the mental development of the human child is only a still more abbreviated repetition of the intellectual development of these same ancestors, at least of the later ones. But all the planned action of all animals has never succeeded in impressing the stamp of their will upon the earth. That was left for man.

In short, the animal merely *uses* its environment, and brings about changes in it simply by its presence; man by his changes makes it serve his ends, *masters* it. This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals, and once again it is labor that brings about this distinction.

Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centers and reservoirs of moisture they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries. When the Italians of the Alps used up the pine forests on the southern slopes, so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were cutting at the roots of the dairy industry in their region; they had still less inkling that they were thereby depriving their mountain

springs of water for the greater part of the year, and making it possible for them to pour still more furious torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons. Those who spread the potato in Europe were not aware that with these farinaceous tubers they were at the same time spreading scrofula. Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature – but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly.

And, in fact, with every day that passes we are acquiring a better understanding of these laws and getting to perceive both the more immediate and the more remote consequences of our interference with the traditional course of nature. In particular, after the mighty advances made by the natural sciences in the present century, we are more than ever in a position to realize, and hence to control, also the more remote natural consequences of at least our day-to-day production activities. But the more this progresses the more will men not only feel but also know their oneness with nature, and the more impossible will become the senseless and unnatural idea of a contrast between mind and matter, man and nature, soul and body, such as arose after the decline of classical antiquity in Europe and obtained its highest elaboration in Christianity.

It required the labor of thousands of years for us to learn a little of how to calculate the more remote natural effects of our actions in the field of production, but it has been still more difficult in regard to the more remote social effects of these actions. We mentioned the potato and the resulting spread of scrofula. But what is scrofula compared to the effects which the reduction of the workers to a potato diet had on the living conditions of the popular masses in whole countries, or compared to the famine the potato blight brought to Ireland in 1847, which consigned to the grave a million Irishmen, nourished solely or almost exclusively on potatoes, and forced the emigration overseas of two million more? When the Arabs learned to distil spirits, it never entered their heads that by so doing they were creating one of the chief weapons for the annihilation of the aborigines of the then still undiscovered American continent. And when afterwards Columbus discovered this America, he did not know that by doing so he was giving a new lease of life to slavery, which in Europe had long ago been done away with, and laying the basis for the Negro slave trade. The men who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries labored to create the steam-engine had no idea that they were preparing the instrument which more than any other was to revolutionize social relations throughout the world. Especially in Europe, by concentrating wealth in the hands of a minority and dispossessing the huge majority, this instrument was destined at first to give social and political domination to the bourgeoisie, but later, to give rise to a class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat which can end only in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the abolition of all class antagonisms. But in this sphere too, by long and often cruel experience and by collecting and analyzing historical material, we are gradually learning to get a clear view of the indirect, more remote social effects of our production activity, and so are afforded an opportunity to control and regulate these effects as well.

This regulation, however, requires something more than mere knowledge. It requires a complete revolution in our hitherto existing mode of production, and simultaneously a revolution in our whole contemporary social order.

All hitherto existing modes of production have aimed merely at achieving the most immediately and directly useful effect of labor. The further consequences, which appear only later and become effective through gradual repetition and accumulation, were totally neglected. The original common ownership of land corresponded, on the one hand, to a level of development of human beings in which their horizon was restricted in general to what lay immediately available, and presupposed, on the other hand, a certain superfluity of land that would allow some latitude for correcting the possible bad results of this primeval type of economy. When this surplus land was exhausted, common ownership also declined. All higher forms of production, however, led to the division of the population into different classes and thereby to the antagonism of ruling and oppressed classes. Thus, the interests of the ruling class became the driving factor of production, since production was no longer restricted to providing the barest means of subsistence for the oppressed people. This has been put into effect most completely in the capitalist mode of production prevailing today in Western Europe. The individual capitalists, who dominate production and exchange, are able to concern themselves only with the most immediate useful effect of their actions. Indeed, even this useful effect – inasmuch as it is a question of the usefulness of the article that is produced or exchanged – retreats far into the background, and the sole incentive becomes the profit to be made on selling.

Classical political economy, the social science of the bourgeoisie, in the main examines only social effects of human actions in the fields of production and exchange that are actually intended. This fully corresponds to the social organisation of which it is the theoretical expression. As individual capitalists are engaged in production and exchange for the sake of the immediate profit, only the nearest, most immediate results must first be taken into account. As long as the individual manufacturer or merchant sells a manufactured or purchased commodity with the usual coveted profit, he is satisfied and does not concern himself with what afterwards becomes of the commodity and its purchasers. The same thing applies to the natural effects of the same actions. What cared the Spanish planters in Cuba, who burned down forests on the slopes of the mountains and obtained from the ashes sufficient fertilizer for one generation of very highly profitable coffee trees – what cared they that the heavy tropical rainfall afterwards washed away the unprotected upper stratum of the soil, leaving behind only bare rock! In relation to nature, as to society, the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the immediate, the most tangible result; and then surprise is expressed that the more remote effects of actions directed to this end turn out to be quite different, are mostly quite the opposite in character; that the harmony of supply and demand is transformed into the very reverse opposite, as shown by the course of each ten years' industrial cycle – even Germany has had a little preliminary experience of it in the “crash”; that private ownership based on one's own labor must of necessity develop into the expropriation of the workers, while all wealth becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of non-workers; that [... the manuscript breaks off here.]

Five Later Letters of Engels. (With the exception of the letter to Danielson).

Unclear what this refers to

V. I. Lenin: Karl Marx

Chapter: The Marxists Doctrines: Section: The Materialist Conception of History

A realization of the inconsistency, incompleteness, and one-sidedness of the old materialism convinced Marx of the necessity of “bringing the science of society... into harmony with the materialist

foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon.”¹⁰¹ Since materialism in general explains consciousness as the outcome of being, and not conversely, then materialism as applied to the social life of mankind has to explain *social* consciousness as the outcome of *social* being. “Technology,” Marx writes (*Capital*, Vol. I), “discloses man’s mode of dealing with Nature, the immediate process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them.”¹⁰² In the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx gives an integral formulation of the fundamental principles of materialism as applied to human society and its history, in the following words:

“In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.

“The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or – what is but a legal expression for the same thing – with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.

“Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so we cannot judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production.... In broad outlines, Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society.”¹⁰³ [Cf. Marx’s brief formulation in a letter to Engels dated July 7, 1866: “Our theory that the organization of labor is determined by the means of production.”]

The discovery of the materialist conception of history, or more correctly, the consistent continuation and extension of materialism into the domain of social phenomena, removed the two chief shortcomings in earlier historical theories. In the first place, the latter at best examined only the ideological motives in the historical activities of human beings, without investigating the origins of those motives, or ascertaining the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations, or seeing the roots of these

¹⁰¹ Frederick Engels: Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy – Lenin

¹⁰² See Karl Marx, *Capital*. Volume I. – Lenin

¹⁰³ Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) – Lenin

relations in the degree of development reached by material production; in the second place, the earlier theories did not embrace the activities of the *masses* of the population, whereas historical materialism made it possible for the first time to study with scientific accuracy the social conditions of the life of the masses, and the changes in those conditions. *At best*, pre-Marxist “sociology” and historiography brought forth an accumulation of raw facts, collected at random, and a description of individual aspects of the historical process. By examining the *totality* of opposing tendencies, by reducing them to precisely definable conditions of life and production of the various *classes* of individual aspects of the historical process. By examining the choice of a particular “dominant” idea or in its interpretation, and by revealing that, without exception, all ideas and all the various tendencies *stem* from the condition of the material forces of production, Marxism indicated the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of the rise, development, and decline of socio-economic systems. People make their own history but what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people – i.e., what is the sum total of all these clashes in the mass of human societies? What are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all man’s historical activity? What is the law of development of these conditions? To all these Marx drew attention and indicated the way to a scientific study of history as a single process which, with all its immense variety and contradictoriness, is governed by definite laws.

Chapter: The Marxists Doctrines: Section: The Class Struggle

It is common knowledge that, in any given society, the striving of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social life is full of contradictions, and that history reveals a struggle between nations and societies, as well as within nations and societies, and, besides, an alternation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline. Marxism has provided the guidance – i.e., the theory of the class struggle – for the discovery of the laws governing this seeming maze and chaos. It is only a study of the sum of the strivings of all the members of a given society or group of societies that can lead to a scientific definition of the result of those strivings. Now the conflicting strivings stem from the difference in the position and mode of life of the *classes* into which each society is divided.

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,” Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* (with the exception of the history of the primitive community, Engels added subsequently). “Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.”

Ever since the Great French Revolution, European history has, in a number of countries, tellingly revealed what actually lies at the bottom of events – the struggle of classes. The Restoration period in France already produced a number of historians (Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, and Thiers) who, in summing up what was taking place, were obliged to admit that the class struggle was taking place, were obliged to

admit that the class struggle was the key to all French history. The modern period – that of complete victory of the bourgeoisie, representative institutions, extensive (if not universal) suffrage, a cheap daily press that is widely circulated among the masses, etc., a period of powerful and ever-expanding unions of workers and unions of employers, etc. – has shown even more strikingly (though sometimes in a very one-sided, “peaceful”, and “constitutional” form) the class struggle as the mainspring of events. The following passage from Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx demanded of social science as regards an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society, with reference to an analysis of each class’s conditions of development:¹⁰⁴

“Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.”

In a number of historical works, Marx gave brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of *each* individual class, and sometimes of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how “every class struggle is a political struggle.”¹⁰⁵ The above-quoted passage is an illustration of what a complex network of social relations and *transitional* stages from one class to another, from the past to the future, was analyzed by Marx so as to determine the resultant of historical development.

Marx’s economic doctrine is the most profound, comprehensive and detailed confirmation and application of his theory.

Karl Marx: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy

Preface

I examine the system of bourgeois economy in the following order: *capital, landed property, wage-labor; the State, foreign trade, world market.*

The economic conditions of existence of the three great classes into which modern bourgeois society is divided are analyzed under the first three headings; the interconnection of the other three headings is self-evident. The first part of the first book, dealing with Capital, comprises the following chapters: 1. The commodity, 2. Money or simple circulation; 3. Capital in general. The present part consists of the first two chapters. The entire material lies before me in the form of monographs, which were written not for publication but for self-clarification at widely separated periods; their remolding into an integrated whole according to the plan I have indicated will depend upon circumstances.

¹⁰⁴ The Restoration – The period in France between 1814 and 1830 when power was in the hands of the Bourbons, restored to the throne after their overthrow by the French bourgeois revolution in 1792. – Ed.

¹⁰⁵ See Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 108-09, 117-18, 116. – Ed.

A general introduction, which I had drafted, is omitted, since on further consideration it seems to me confusing to anticipate results which still have to be substantiated, and the reader who really wishes to follow me will have to decide to advance from the particular to the general. A few brief remarks regarding the course of my study of political economy are appropriate here.

Although I studied jurisprudence, I pursued it as a subject subordinated to philosophy and history. In the year 1842-43, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, I first found myself in the embarrassing position of having to discuss what is known as material interests. The deliberations of the Rhenish Landtag on forest thefts and the division of landed property; the official polemic started by Herr von Schaper, then Oberpräsident of the Rhine Province, against the *Rheinische Zeitung* about the condition of the Moselle peasantry, and finally the debates on free trade and protective tariffs caused me in the first instance to turn my attention to economic questions. On the other hand, at that time when good intentions “to push forward” often took the place of factual knowledge, an echo of French socialism and communism, slightly tinged by philosophy, was noticeable in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. I objected to this dilettantism, but at the same time frankly admitted in a controversy with the *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung* that my previous studies did not allow me to express any opinion on the content of the French theories. When the publishers of the *Rheinische Zeitung* conceived the illusion that by a more compliant policy on the part of the paper it might be possible to secure the abrogation of the death sentence passed upon it, I eagerly grasped the opportunity to withdraw from the public stage to my study.

The first work which I undertook to dispel the doubts assailing me was a critical re-examination of the Hegelian philosophy of law; the introduction to this work being published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* issued in Paris in 1844. My inquiry led me to the conclusion that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel, following the example of English and French thinkers of the eighteenth century, embraces within the term “civil society”; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy. The study of this, which I began in Paris, I continued in Brussels, where I moved owing to an expulsion order issued by M. Guizot. The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, became the guiding principle of my studies can be summarized as follows.

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

In studying such transformations, it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society.

Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient,¹⁰⁶ feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society. The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production – antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence – but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation.

Frederick Engels, with whom I maintained a constant exchange of ideas by correspondence since the publication of his brilliant essay on the critique of economic categories (printed in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, arrived by another road (compare his *Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*) at the same result as I, and when in the spring of 1845 he too came to live in Brussels, we decided to set forth together our conception as opposed to the ideological one of German philosophy, in fact to settle accounts with our former philosophical conscience. The intention was carried out in the form of a critique of post-Hegelian philosophy. The manuscript [The German Ideology], two large octavo volumes, had long ago reached the publishers in Westphalia when we were informed that owing to changed circumstances it could not be printed. We abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly since we had achieved our main purpose – self-clarification. Of the scattered works in which at that time we presented one or another aspect of our views to the public, I shall mention only the *Manifesto*

¹⁰⁶ As a second footnote to the Communist Manifesto, Engels wrote in 1888:

In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organization existing previous to recorded history, [was] all but unknown. Since then, August von Haxthausen (1792-1866) discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Georg Ludwig von Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and, by and by, village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organization of this primitive communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Lewis Henry Morgan's (1818-1861) crowning discovery of the true nature of the gens and its relation to the tribe. With the dissolution of the primeval communities, society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this dissolution in [The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State](#), second edition, Stuttgart, 1886.

Thus, as the science of understanding pre-history progressed (pre-history being that time before written records of human civilization exist), Marx & Engels changed their understanding and descriptions accordingly. In the above text, Marx mentions “Asiatic” modes of production. In the idea of an Asiatic mode of production, Marx and Engels were following Hegel’s schema, see: [The Oriental Realm](#)). They later dropped the idea of a distinctive Asiatic mode of production, and kept four basic forms: tribal, ancient, feudal, and capitalist.

of the Communist Party, jointly written by Engels and myself, and a *Discours sur le libre echange*, which I myself published. The salient points of our conception were first outlined in an academic, although polemical, form in my *Misere de la philosophie...*, this book which was aimed at Proudhon appeared in 1847. The publication of an essay on *Wage-Labor* [Wage-Labor and Capital] written in German in which I combined the lectures I had held on this subject at the German Workers' Association in Brussels, was interrupted by the February Revolution and my forcible removal from Belgium in consequence.

The publication of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1848 and 1849 and subsequent events cut short my economic studies, which I could only resume in London in 1850. The enormous amount of material relating to the history of political economy assembled in the British Museum, the fact that London is a convenient vantage point for the observation of bourgeois society, and finally the new stage of development which this society seemed to have entered with the discovery of gold in California and Australia, induced me to start again from the very beginning and to work carefully through the new material. These studies led partly of their own accord to apparently quite remote subjects on which I had to spend a certain amount of time. But it was in particular the imperative necessity of earning my living which reduced the time at my disposal. My collaboration, continued now for eight years, with the *New York Tribune*, the leading Anglo-American newspaper, necessitated an excessive fragmentation of my studies, for I wrote only exceptionally newspaper correspondence in the strict sense. Since a considerable part of my contributions consisted of articles dealing with important economic events in Britain and on the continent, I was compelled to become conversant with practical detail which, strictly speaking, lie outside the sphere of political economy.

This sketch of the course of my studies in the domain of political economy is intended merely to show that my views – no matter how they may be judged and how little they conform to the interested prejudices of the ruling classes – are the outcome of conscientious research carried on over many years. At the entrance to science, as at the entrance to hell, the demand must be made:

*Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto
Ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta.*

[From Dante, Divina Commedia:
Here must all distrust be left;
All cowardice must here be dead.]

Karl Marx: The German Ideology

Chapter 1: Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks

Preface

Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations. Let us liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas, imaginary beings under the yoke of which they are pining away. Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts. Let us teach men, says one, to exchange these imaginations for thoughts which correspond to the essence of man; says the second, to take up a critical attitude to them; says the third, to knock them out of their heads; and - existing reality will collapse.

These innocent and childlike fancies are the kernel of the modern Young-Hegelian philosophy, which not only is received by the German public with horror and awe, but is announced by our philosophic heroes with the solemn consciousness of its cataclysmic dangerousness and criminal ruthlessness. The first volume of the present publication has the aim of uncloaking these sheep, who take themselves and are taken for wolves; of showing how their bleating merely imitates in a philosophic form the conceptions of the German middle class; how the boasting of these philosophic commentators only mirrors the wretchedness of the real conditions in Germany. It is its aim to debunk and discredit the philosophic struggle with the shadows of reality, which appeals to the dreamy and muddled German nation.

Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this notion out of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water. His whole life long he fought against the illusion of gravity, of whose harmful results all statistics brought him new and manifold evidence. This valiant fellow was the type of the new revolutionary philosophers in Germany.

A. IDEALISM AND MATERIALISM

The Illusions of German Ideology

As we hear from German ideologists, Germany has in the last few years gone through an unparalleled revolution. The decomposition of the Hegelian philosophy, which began with Strauss, has developed into a universal ferment into which all the "powers of the past" are swept. In the general chaos mighty empires have arisen only to meet with immediate doom, heroes have emerged momentarily only to be hurled back into obscurity by bolder and stronger rivals. It was a revolution beside which the French Revolution was child's play, a world struggle beside which the struggles of the Diadochi [successors of Alexander the Great] appear insignificant. Principles ousted one another, heroes of the mind overthrew each other with unheard-of rapidity, and in the three years 1842-45 more of the past was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries.

All this is supposed to have taken place in the realm of pure thought.

Certainly, it is an interesting event we are dealing with: the putrescence of the absolute spirit. When the last spark of its life had failed, the various components of this *caput mortuum* began to decompose, entered into new combinations and formed new substances. The industrialists of philosophy, who till then had lived on the exploitation of the absolute spirit, now seized upon the new combinations. Each with all possible zeal set about retailing his apportioned share. This naturally gave rise to competition, which, to start with, was carried on in moderately staid bourgeois fashion. Later when the German market was glutted, and the commodity in spite of all efforts found no response in the world market, the business was spoiled in the usual German manner by fabricated and fictitious production, deterioration in quality, adulteration of the raw materials, falsification of labels, fictitious purchases, bill-jobbing and a credit system devoid of any real basis. The competition turned into a bitter struggle, which is now being extolled and interpreted to us as a revolution of world significance, the begetter of the most prodigious results and achievements.

If we wish to rate at its true value this philosophic charlatanry, which awakens even in the breast of the honest German citizen a glow of national pride, if we wish to bring out clearly the pettiness, the

parochial narrowness of this whole Young-Hegelian movement and in particular the tragicomic contrast between the illusions of these heroes about their achievements and the actual achievements themselves, we must look at the whole spectacle from a standpoint beyond the frontiers of Germany.

German criticism has, right up to its latest efforts, never quitted the realm of philosophy. Far from examining its general philosophic premises, the whole body of its inquiries has actually sprung from the soil of a definite philosophical system, that of Hegel. Not only in their answers but in their very questions there was a mystification. This dependence on Hegel is the reason why not one of these modern critics has even attempted a comprehensive criticism of the Hegelian system, however much each professes to have advanced beyond Hegel. Their polemics against Hegel and against one another are confined to this -- each extracts one side of the Hegelian system and turns this against the whole system as well as against the sides extracted by the others. To begin with they extracted pure unfalsified Hegelian categories such as "substance" and "self-consciousness", later they desecrated these categories with more secular names such as species "the Unique", "Man", etc.

The entire body of German philosophical criticism from Strauss to Stirner is confined to criticism of religious conceptions. The critics started from real religion and actual theology. What religious consciousness and a religious conception really meant was determined variously as they went along. Their advance consisted in subsuming the allegedly dominant metaphysical, political, juridical, moral and other conceptions under the class of religious or theological conceptions; and similarly in pronouncing political, juridical, moral consciousness as religious or theological, and the political, juridical, moral man -- "man" in the last resort -- as religious. The dominance of religion was taken for granted. Gradually every dominant relationship was pronounced a religious relationship and transformed into a cult, a cult of law, a cult of the State, etc. On all sides it was only a question of dogmas and belief in dogmas. The world was sanctified to an ever-increasing extent till at last our venerable Saint Max was able to canonize it en bloc and thus dispose of it once for all.

The Old Hegelians had comprehended everything as soon as it was reduced to a Hegelian logical category. The Young Hegelians criticized everything by attributing to it religious conceptions or by pronouncing it a theological matter. The Young Hegelians are in agreement with the Old Hegelians in their belief in the rule of religion, of concepts, of a universal principle in the existing world. Only, the one party attacks this dominion as usurpation. while the other extols it as legitimate.

Since the Young Hegelians consider conceptions, thoughts, ideas, in fact all the products of consciousness, to which they attribute an independent existence, as the real chains of men (just as the Old Hegelians declared them the true bonds of human society) it is evident that the Young Hegelians have to fight only against these illusions of consciousness. Since, according to their fantasy, the relationships of men, all their doings, their chains and their limitations are products of their consciousness, the Young Hegelians logically put to men the moral postulate of exchanging their present consciousness for human, critical or egoistic consciousness, and thus of removing their limitations. This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, i.e. to recognize it by means of another interpretation. The Young-Hegelian ideologists, in spite of their allegedly "world-shattering" statements, are the staunchest conservatives. The most recent of them have found the correct expression for their activity when they declare they are only fighting against "phrases". They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the

real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world. The only results which this philosophic criticism could achieve were a few (and at that thoroughly one-sided) elucidations of Christianity from the point of view of religious history; all the rest of their assertions are only further embellishments of their claim to have furnished, in these unimportant elucidations, discoveries of universal importance.

It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the relation of their criticism to their own material surroundings.

First Premises of Materialist Method

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.

The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus, the first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. Of course, we cannot here go either into the actual physical nature of man, or into the natural conditions in which man finds himself -- geological, hydrographical, climatic and so on. The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men.

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.

This production only makes its appearance with the increase of population. In its turn this presupposes the intercourse [*Verkehr*]¹ of individuals with one another. The form of this intercourse is again determined by production.

The relations of different nations among themselves depend upon the extent to which each has developed its productive forces, the division of labor and internal intercourse. This statement is generally recognized. But not only the relation of one nation to others, but also the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse. How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labor has been carried. Each new productive force, insofar as it is not merely a quantitative extension of productive forces already known (for instance the bringing into cultivation of fresh land), causes a further development of the division of labor.

The division of labor inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labor, and hence to the separation of town and country and to the conflict of their interests. Its further development leads to the separation of commercial from industrial labor. At the same time

through the division of labor inside these various branches there develop various divisions among the individuals co-operating in definite kinds of labor. The relative position of these individual groups is determined by the methods employed in agriculture, industry and commerce (patriarchalism, slavery, estates, classes). These same conditions are to be seen (given a more developed intercourse) in the relations of different nations to one another.

The various stages of development in the division of labor are just so many different forms of ownership, i.e. the existing stage in the division of labor determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labor.

The first form of ownership is tribal [*Stammeigentum*]¹ ownership. It corresponds to the undeveloped stage of production, at which a people lives by hunting and fishing, by the rearing of beasts or, in the highest stage, agriculture. In the latter case it presupposes a great mass of uncultivated stretches of land. The division of labor is at this stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the natural division of labor existing in the family. The social structure is, therefore, limited to an extension of the family; patriarchal family chieftains, below them the members of the tribe, finally slaves. The slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with the increase of population, the growth of wants, and with the extension of external relations, both of war and of barter.

The second form is the ancient communal and State ownership which proceeds especially from the union of several tribes into a city by agreement or by conquest, and which is still accompanied by slavery. Beside communal ownership we already find movable, and later also immovable, private property developing, but as an abnormal form subordinate to communal ownership. The citizens hold power over their laboring slaves only in their community, and on this account alone, therefore, they are bound to the form of communal ownership. It is the communal private property which compels the active citizens to remain in this spontaneously derived form of association over against their slaves. For this reason, the whole structure of society based on this communal ownership, and with it the power of the people, decays in the same measure as, in particular, immovable private property evolves. The division of labor is already more developed. We already find the antagonism of town and country; later the antagonism between those states which represent town interests and those which represent country interests, and inside the towns themselves the antagonism between industry and maritime commerce. The class relation between citizens and slaves is now completely developed.

With the development of private property, we find here for the first time the same conditions which we shall find again, only on a more extensive scale, with modern private property. On the one hand, the concentration of private property, which began very early in Rome (as the Licinian agrarian law proves) and proceeded very rapidly from the time of the civil wars and especially under the emperors; on the other hand, coupled with this, the transformation of the plebeian small peasantry into a proletariat, which, however, owing to its intermediate position between propertied citizens and slaves, never achieved an independent development.

The third form of ownership is feudal or estate property. If antiquity started out from the town and its little territory, the Middle Ages started out from the country. This different starting-point was determined by the sparseness of the population at that time, which was scattered over a large area and which received no large increase from the conquerors. In contrast to Greece and Rome, feudal development at the outset, therefore, extends over a much wider territory, prepared by the Roman conquests and the spread of agriculture at first associated with it. The last centuries of the declining Roman Empire and its conquest

by the barbarians destroyed a number of productive forces; agriculture had declined, industry had decayed for want of a market, trade had died out or been violently suspended, the rural and urban population had decreased. From these conditions and the mode of organisation of the conquest determined by them, feudal property developed under the influence of the Germanic military constitution. Like tribal and communal ownership, it is based again on a community; but the directly producing class standing over against it is not, as in the case of the ancient community, the slaves, but the enserfed small peasantry. As soon as feudalism is fully developed, there also arises antagonism to the towns. The hierarchical structure of land ownership, and the armed bodies of retainers associated with it, gave the nobility power over the serfs. This feudal organisation was, just as much as the ancient communal ownership, an association against a subjected producing class; but the form of association and the relation to the direct producers were different because of the different conditions of production.

This feudal system of land ownership had its counterpart in the towns in the shape of corporative property, the feudal organisation of trades. Here property consisted chiefly in the labor of each individual person. The necessity for association against the organized robber-nobility, the need for communal covered markets in an age when the industrialist was at the same time a merchant, the growing competition of the escaped serfs swarming into the rising towns, the feudal structure of the whole country: these combined to bring about the guilds. The gradually accumulated small capital of individual craftsmen and their stable numbers, as against the growing population, evolved the relation of journeyman and apprentice, which brought into being in the towns a hierarchy similar to that in the country.

Thus, the chief form of property during the feudal epoch consisted on the one hand of landed property with serf labor chained to it, and on the other of the labor of the individual with small capital commanding the labor of journeymen. The organisation of both was determined by the restricted conditions of production -- the small-scale and primitive cultivation of the land, and the craft type of industry. There was little division of labor in the heyday of feudalism. Each country bore in itself the antithesis of town and country; the division into estates was certainly strongly marked; but apart from the differentiation of princes, nobility, clergy and peasants in the country, and masters, journeymen, apprentices and soon also the rabble of casual laborers in the towns, no division of importance took place. In agriculture it was rendered difficult by the strip-system, beside which the cottage industry of the peasants themselves emerged. In industry there was no division of labor at all in the individual trades themselves, and very little between them. The separation of industry and commerce was found already in existence in older towns; in the newer it only developed later, when the towns entered into mutual relations.

The grouping of larger territories into feudal kingdoms was a necessity for the landed nobility as for the towns. The organisation of the ruling class, the nobility, had, therefore, everywhere a monarch at its head.

The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the

life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behavior. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. -- real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical

life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retains the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first method of approach the starting-point is consciousness taken as the living individual; in the second method, which conforms to real life, it is the real living individuals themselves, and consciousness is considered solely as their consciousness.

This method of approach is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation and rigidity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.

Where speculation ends -- in real life -- there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases,

and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of knowledge loses its medium of existence. At the best its place can only be taken by a summing-up of the most general results, abstractions which arise from the observation of the historical development of men. Viewed apart from real history, these abstractions have in themselves no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its separate strata. But they by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history. On the contrary, our difficulties begin only when we set about the observation and the arrangement -- the real depiction -- of our historical material, whether of a past epoch or of the present. The removal of these difficulties is governed by premises which it is quite impossible to state here, but which only the study of the actual life-process and the activity of the individuals of each epoch will make evident. We shall select here some of these abstractions, which we use in contradistinction to the ideologists, and shall illustrate them by historical examples.

History: Fundamental Conditions

Since we are dealing with the Germans, who are devoid of premises, we must begin by stating the first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premise, namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history". But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed, this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life. Even when the sensuous world is reduced to a minimum, to a stick as with Saint Bruno [Bauer], it presupposes the action of producing the stick. Therefore, in any interpretation of history one has first of all to observe this fundamental fact in all its significance and all its implications and to accord it its due importance. It is well known that the Germans have never done this, and they have never, therefore, had an earthly basis for history and consequently never an historian. The French and the English, even if they have conceived the relation of this fact with so-called history only in an extremely one-sided fashion, particularly as long as they remained in the toils of political ideology, have nevertheless made the first attempts to give the writing of history a materialistic basis by being the first to write histories of civil society, of commerce and industry.

The second point is that the satisfaction of the first need (the action of satisfying, and the instrument of satisfaction which has been acquired) leads to new needs; and this production of new needs is the first historical act. Here we recognize immediately the spiritual ancestry of the great historical wisdom of the Germans who, when they run out of positive material and when they can serve up neither theological nor political nor literary rubbish, assert that this is not history at all, but the "prehistoric era". They do not, however, enlighten us as to how we proceed from this nonsensical "prehistory" to history proper; although, on the other hand, in their historical speculation they seize upon this "prehistory" with especial eagerness because they imagine themselves safe there from interference on the part of "crude facts", and, at the same time, because there they can give full rein to their speculative impulse and set up and knock down hypotheses by the thousand.

The third circumstance which, from the very outset, enters into historical development, is that men, who daily remake their own life, begin to make other men, to propagate their kind: the relation between man and woman, parents and children, the family. The family, which to begin with is the only social relationship, becomes later, when increased needs create new social relations and the increased population

new needs, a subordinate one (except in Germany), and must then be treated and analyzed according to the existing empirical data, not according to "the concept of the family", as is the custom in Germany.¹⁰⁷ These three aspects of social activity are not of course to be taken as three different stages, but just as three aspects or, to make it clear to the Germans, three "moments", which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today.

The production of life, both of one's own in labor and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship. By social we understand the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows from this that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a "Productive force". Further, that the multitude of productive forces accessible to men determines the nature of society, hence, that the "history of humanity" must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange. But it is also clear how in Germany it is impossible to write this sort of history, because the Germans lack not only the necessary power of comprehension and the material but also the "evidence of their senses", for across the Rhine you cannot have any experience of these things since history has stopped happening. Thus, it is quite obvious from the start that there exists a materialistic connection of men with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production, and which is as old as men themselves. This connection is ever taking on new forms, and thus presents a "history" independently of the existence of any political or religious nonsense which in addition may hold men together.

Only now, after having considered four moments, four aspects of the primary historical relationships, do we find that man also possesses "consciousness", but, even so, not inherent, not "pure" consciousness. From the start the "spirit" is afflicted with the curse of being "burdened" with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal does not enter into "relations" with anything, it does not enter into any relation at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. Consciousness is at first, of course, merely consciousness concerning the immediate sensuous environment and consciousness of the limited connection with other persons and things outside the individual who is growing self-conscious. At the

¹⁰⁷] The building of houses. With savages each family has as a matter of course its own cave or hut like the separate family tent of the nomads. This separate domestic economy is made only the more necessary by the further development of private property. With the agricultural peoples a communal domestic economy is just as impossible as a communal cultivation of the soil. A great advance was the building of towns. In all previous periods, however, the abolition of individual economy, which is inseparable from the abolition of private property, was impossible for the simple reason that the material conditions governing it were not present. The setting-up of a communal domestic economy presupposes the development of machinery, of the use of natural forces and of many other productive forces -- e.g. of water-supplies, of gas-lighting, steam-heating, etc., the removal [of the antagonism] of town and country. Without these conditions a communal economy would not in itself form a new productive force; lacking any material basis and resting on a purely theoretical foundation, it would be a mere freak and would end in nothing more than a monastic economy -- What was possible can be seen in the towns brought about by condensation and the erection of communal buildings for various definite purposes (prisons, barracks, etc.). That the abolition of individual economy is inseparable from the abolition of the family is self-evident.

same time, it is consciousness of nature, which first appears to men as a completely alien, all-powerful and unassailable force, with which men's relations are purely animal and by which they are overawed like beasts; it is thus a purely animal consciousness of nature (natural religion) just because nature is as yet hardly modified historically. (We see here immediately: this natural religion or this particular relation of men to nature is determined by the form of society and vice versa. Here, as everywhere, the identity of nature and man appears in such a way that the restricted relation of men to nature determines their restricted relation to one another, and their restricted relation to one another determines men's restricted relation to nature.) On the other hand, man's consciousness of the necessity of associating with the individuals around him is the beginning of the consciousness that he is living in society at all. This beginning is as animal as social life itself at this stage. It is mere herd-consciousness, and at this point man is only distinguished from sheep by the fact that with him consciousness takes the place of instinct or that his instinct is a conscious one. This sheep-like or tribal consciousness receives its further development and extension through increased productivity, the increase of needs, and, what is fundamental to both of these, the increase of population. With these there develops the division of labor, which was originally nothing but the division of labor in the sexual act, then that division of labor which develops spontaneously or "naturally" by virtue of natural predisposition (e.g. physical strength), needs, accidents, etc. etc. Division of labor only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labor appears. (The first form of ideologists, priests, is concurrent.) From this moment onwards consciousness can really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness 'of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of "pure" theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. But even if this theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc. comes into contradiction with the existing relations, this can only occur because existing social relations

have come into contradiction with existing forces of production; this, moreover, can also occur in a particular national sphere of relations through the appearance of the contradiction, not within the national orbit, but between this national consciousness and the practice of other nations, i.e. between the national and the general consciousness of a nation (as we see it now in Germany).

Moreover, it is quite immaterial what consciousness starts to do on its own: out of all such muck we get only the one inference that these three moments, the forces of production, the state of society, and consciousness, can and must come into contradiction with one another, because the division of labor implies the possibility, nay the fact that intellectual and material activity -- enjoyment and labor, production and consumption -- devolve on different individuals, and that the only possibility of their not coming into contradiction lies in the negation in its turn of the division of labor. It is self-evident, moreover, that "specters", "bonds", "the higher being", "concept", "scruple", are merely the idealistic, spiritual expression, the conception apparently of the isolated individual, the image of very empirical fetters and limitations, within which the mode of production of life and the form of intercourse coupled with it move.

Private Property and Communism

With the division of labor, in which all these contradictions are implicit, and which in its turn is based on the natural division of labor in the family and the separation of society into individual families opposed to one another, is given simultaneously the distribution, and indeed the unequal distribution, both quantitative and qualitative, of labor and its products, hence property: the nucleus, the first form, of

which lies in the family, where wife and children are the slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family, though still very crude, is the first property, but even at this early stage it corresponds perfectly to the definition of modern economists who call it the power of disposing of the labor-power of others. Division of labor and private property are, moreover, identical expressions: in the one the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other with reference to the product of the activity.

Further, the division of labor implies the contradiction between the interest of the separate individual or the individual family and the communal interest of all individuals who have intercourse with one another. And indeed, this communal interest does not exist merely in the imagination, as the "general interest", but first of all in reality, as the mutual interdependence of the individuals among whom the labor is divided. And finally, the division of labor offers us the first example of how, as long as man remains in natural society, that is, as long as a cleavage exists between the particular and the common interest, as long, therefore, as activity is not voluntarily, but naturally, divided, man's own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. For as soon as the distribution of labor comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic. This fixation of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an

objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now. ¹⁰⁸

The social power, i.e., the multiplied productive force, which arises through the co-operation of different individuals as it is determined by the division of labor, appears to these individuals, since their

¹⁰⁸ [This paragraph appears as a marginal note in the manuscript – *Ed.*] And out of this very contradiction between the interest of the individual and that of the community the latter takes an independent form as the *State*, divorced from the real interests of individual and community, and at the same time as an illusory communal life, always based, however, on the real ties existing in every family and tribal conglomeration – such as flesh and blood, language, division of labor on a larger scale, and other interests – and especially, as we shall enlarge upon later, on the classes, already determined by the division of labor, which in every such mass of men separate out, and of which one dominates all the others. It follows from this that all struggles within the State, the struggle between democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, the struggle for the franchise, etc., etc., are merely the illusory forms in which the real struggles of the different classes are fought out among one another (of this the German theoreticians have not the faintest inkling, although they have received a sufficient introduction to the subject in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* and *Die heilige Familie*). Further, it follows that every class which is struggling for mastery, even when its domination, as is the case with the proletariat, postulates the abolition of the old form of society in its entirety and of domination itself, must first conquer for itself political power in order to represent its interest in turn as the general interest, which in the first moment it is forced to do. Just because individuals seek only their particular interest, which for them does not coincide with their communal interest (in fact the general is the illusory form of communal life), the latter will be imposed on them as an interest "alien" to them, and "independent" of them as in its turn a particular, peculiar "general" interest; or they themselves must remain within this discord, as in democracy. On the other hand, too, the practical struggle of these particular interests, which constantly really run counter to the communal and illusory communal interests, makes practical intervention and control necessary through the illusory "general" interest in the form of the State.

co-operation is not voluntary but has come about naturally, not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant, which they thus cannot control, which on the contrary passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and the action of man, nay even being the prime governor of these.

How otherwise could for instance property have had a history at all, have taken on different forms, and landed property, for example, according to the different premises given, have proceeded in France from parcellation to centralization in the hands of a few, in England from centralization in the hands of a few to parcellation, as is actually the case today? Or how does it happen that trade, which after all is nothing more than the exchange of products of various individuals and countries, rules the whole world through the relation of supply and demand -- a relation which, as an English economist says, hovers over the earth like the fate of the ancients, and with invisible hand allots fortune and misfortune to men, sets up empires and overthrows empires, causes nations to rise and to disappear -- while with the abolition of the basis of private property, with the communistic regulation of production (and, implicit in this, the destruction of the alien relation between men and what they themselves produce), the power of the relation of supply and demand is dissolved into nothing, and men get exchange, production, the mode of their mutual relation, under their own control again?

In history up to the present it is certainly an empirical fact that separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity, become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them (a pressure which they have conceived of as a dirty trick on the part of the so-called universal spirit, etc.), a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the world market. But it is just as empirically established that, by the overthrow of the existing state of society by the communist revolution (of which more below) and the abolition of private property which is identical with it, this power, which so baffles the German theoreticians, will be dissolved; and that then the liberation of each single individual will be accomplished in the measure in which history becomes transformed into world history. From the above it is clear that the real intellectual wealth of the individual depends entirely on the wealth of his real connections. Only then will the separate individuals be liberated from the various national and local barriers, be brought into practical connection with the material and intellectual production of the whole world and be put in a position to acquire the capacity to enjoy this all-sided production of the whole earth (the creations of man). All-round dependence, this natural form of the world-historical co-operation of individuals, will be transformed by this communist revolution into the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which, born of the action of men on one another, have till now overawed and governed men as powers completely alien to them. Now this view can be expressed again in speculative-idealistic, i.e. fantastic, terms as "self-generation of the species" ("society as the subject"), and thereby the consecutive series of interrelated individuals connected with each other can be conceived as a single individual, which accomplishes the mystery of generating itself. It is clear here that individuals certainly make one another, physically and mentally, but do not make themselves.

This "alienation" (to use a term which will be comprehensible to the philosophers) can, of course, only be abolished given two practical premises. For it to become an "intolerable" power, i.e. a power against

which men make a revolution, it must necessarily have rendered the great mass of humanity "propertyless", and produced, at the same time, the contradiction of an existing world of wealth and

culture, both of which conditions presuppose a great increase in productive power, a high degree of its development. And, on the other hand, this development of productive forces (which itself implies the actual empirical existence of men in their world-historical, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it want is merely made general, and with destitution the struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business would necessarily be reproduced; and furthermore, because only with this universal development of productive forces is a universal intercourse between men established, which produces in all nations simultaneously the phenomenon of the "propertyless" mass (universal competition), makes each nation dependent on the revolutions of the others, and finally has put world-historical, empirically universal individuals in place of local ones. Without this, (i) communism could only exist as a local event; (2) the forces of intercourse themselves could not have developed as universal, hence intolerable powers: they would have remained home-bred conditions surrounded by superstition; and (3) each extension of intercourse would abolish local communism. Empirically, communism is only possible as the act of the dominant peoples "all at once" and simultaneously, which presupposes the universal development of productive forces and the world intercourse bound up with communism. Moreover, the mass of propertyless workers -- the utterly precarious position of labor -- power on a mass scale cut off from capital or from even a limited satisfaction and, therefore, no longer merely temporarily deprived of work itself as a secure source of life -- presupposes the world market through competition. The proletariat can thus only exist

world-historically, just as communism, its activity, can only have a "world-historical" existence. World-historical existence of individuals means existence of individuals which is directly linked up with world history.

Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.

B. THE ILLUSION OF THE EPOCH

Civil Society and the Conception of History

The form of intercourse determined by the existing productive forces at all previous historical stages, and in its turn determining these, is civil society. The latter, as is clear from what we have said above, has as its premises and basis the simple family and the multiple, the so-called tribe, the more precise determinants of this society are enumerated in our remarks above. Already here we see how this civil society is the true source and theatre of all history, and how absurd is the conception of history held hitherto, which neglects the real relationships and confines itself to high-sounding dramas of princes and states.

Civil society embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces. It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage and, insofar, transcends the State and the nation, though, on the other hand again, it must assert itself in its foreign relations as nationality, and inwardly must organize itself as State. The word "civil society" [*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*] emerged in the eighteenth century, when property relationships had already extricated themselves from the ancient and medieval communal society. Civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie; the social organisation evolving directly out of production and commerce,

which in all ages forms the basis of the State and of the rest of the idealistic superstructure, has, however, always been designated by the same name.

History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity. This can be speculatively distorted so that later history is made the goal of earlier history, e.g. the goal ascribed to the discovery of America is to further the eruption of the French Revolution. Thereby history receives its own special aims and becomes "a person rating with other persons" (to wit: "Self-Consciousness, Criticism, the Unique", etc.), while what is designated with the words "destiny", "goal", "germ", or "idea" of earlier history is nothing more than an abstraction formed from later history, from the active influence which earlier history exercises on later history.

The further the separate spheres, which interact on one another, extend in the course of this development,

the more the original isolation of the separate nationalities is destroyed by the developed mode of production and intercourse and the division of labor between various nations naturally brought forth by these, the more history becomes world history. Thus, for instance, if in England a machine is invented, which deprives countless workers of bread in India and China, and overturns the whole form of existence of these empires, this invention becomes a world-historical fact. Or again, take the case of sugar and coffee which have proved their world-historical importance in the nineteenth century by the fact that the lack of these products, occasioned by the Napoleonic Continental System, caused the Germans to rise against Napoleon, and thus became the real basis of the glorious Wars of liberation of 1813. From this it follows that this transformation of history into world history is not indeed a mere abstract act on the part of the "self-consciousness", the world spirit, or of any other metaphysical specter, but a quite material, empirically verifiable act, an act the proof of which every individual furnishes as he comes and goes, eats, drinks and clothes himself.

This conception of history depends on our ability to expound the real process of production, starting out from the material production of life itself, and to comprehend the form of intercourse connected with this and created by this mode of production (i.e. civil society in its various stages), as the basis of all history; and to show it in its action as State, to explain all the different theoretical products and forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics, etc. etc. and trace their origins and growth from that basis; by which means, of course, the whole thing can be depicted in its totality (and therefore, too, the reciprocal action of these various sides on one another). It has not, like the idealistic view of history, in every period to look for a category, but remains constantly on the real ground of history; it does not explain practice from the idea but explains the formation of ideas from material practice; and accordingly it comes to the conclusion that all forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism, by resolution into "self-consciousness" or transformation into "apparitions", "specters", "fancies", etc. but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which gave rise to this idealistic humbug; that not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history, also of religion, of philosophy and all other types of theory. It shows that history does not end by being resolved into "self-consciousness as spirit of the spirit", but that in it at each stage there is found a material result: a sum of productive forces,

an historically created relation of individuals to nature and to one another, which is handed down to each generation from its predecessor; a mass of productive forces, capital funds and conditions, which, on the one hand, is indeed modified by the new generation, but also on the other prescribes for it its conditions of life and gives it a definite development, a special character. It shows that circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances.

This sum of productive forces, capital funds and social forms of intercourse, which every individual and generation finds in existence as something given, is the real basis of what the philosophers have conceived as "substance" and "essence of man", and what they have deified and attacked; a real basis which is not in the least disturbed, in its effect and influence on the development of men, by the fact that these philosophers revolt against it as "self-consciousness" and the "Unique". These conditions of life, which different generations find in existence, decide also whether or not the periodically recurring revolutionary convulsion will be strong enough to overthrow the basis of the entire existing system. And if these material elements of a complete revolution are not present (namely, on the one hand the existing productive forces, on the other the formation of a revolutionary mass, which revolts not only against separate conditions of society up till then, but against the very "production of life" till then, the "total activity" on which it was based), then, as far as practical development is concerned, it is absolutely immaterial whether the idea of this revolution has been expressed a hundred times already, as the history of communism proves.

In the whole conception of history up to the present this real basis of history has either been totally neglected or else considered as a minor matter quite irrelevant to the course of history. History must, therefore, always be written according to an extraneous standard; the real production of life seems to be primeval history, while the truly historical appears to be separated from ordinary life, something

extra-superterrestrial. With this the relation of man to nature is excluded from history and hence the antithesis of nature and history is created. The exponents of this conception of history have consequently only been able to see in history the political actions of princes and States, religious and all sorts of theoretical struggles, and in particular in each historical epoch have had to share the illusion of that epoch. For instance, if an epoch imagines itself to be actuated by purely "political" or "religious" motives, although "religion" and "politics" are only forms of its true motives, the historian accepts this opinion. The "idea", the "conception" of the people in question about their real practice, is transformed into the sole determining, active force, which controls and determines their practice. When the crude form in which the division of labor appears with the Indians and Egyptians calls forth the caste-system in their State and religion, the historian believes that the caste-system is the power which has produced this crude social form. While the French and the English at least hold by the political illusion, which is moderately close to reality, the Germans move in the realm of the "pure spirit", and make religious illusion the driving force of history. The Hegelian philosophy of history is the last consequence, reduced to its "finest expression", of all this German historiography, for which it is not a question of real, nor even of political, interests, but of pure thoughts, which consequently must appear to Saint Bruno as a series of "thoughts" that devour one another and are finally swallowed up in "self-consciousness". ----- [(So-called objective historiography just consists in treating the historical conditions independent of activity. Reactionary character.) *marginal note by Marx -- Ed.*)]

[. . .] It is also clear from these arguments how grossly Feuerbach is deceiving himself when (Wigand's *Vierteljahrsschrift*, 1845, Band 2) by virtue of the qualification "common man" he declares himself a communist, transforms the latter into a predicate of "man", and thereby thinks it possible to change the word "communist", which in the real world means the follower of a definite revolutionary party, into a mere category. Feuerbach's whole deduction with regard to the relation of men to one another goes only so far as to prove that men need and always have needed each other. He wants to establish consciousness of this fact, that is to say, like the other theorists, merely to produce a correct consciousness about an existing fact; whereas for the real communist it is a question of overthrowing the existing state of things. We thoroughly appreciate, moreover, that Feuerbach, in endeavoring to produce consciousness of just this fact, is going as far as a theorist possibly can, without ceasing to be a theorist and philosopher....

As an example of Feuerbach's acceptance and at the same time misunderstanding of existing reality, which he still shares with our opponents, we recall the passage in the *Philosophie der Zukunft* where he develops the view that the existence of a thing or a man is at the same time its or his essence, that the conditions of existence, the mode of life and activity of an animal or human individual are those in which its "essence" feels itself satisfied. Here every exception is expressly conceived as an unhappy chance, as an abnormality which cannot be altered. Thus, if millions of proletarians feel by no means contented with

their living conditions, if their "existence" does not in the least correspond to their "essence", then, according to the passage quoted, this is an unavoidable misfortune, which must be borne quietly. The millions of proletarians and communists, however, think differently and will prove this in time, when they bring their "existence" into harmony with their "essence" in a practical way, by means of a revolution. Feuerbach, therefore, never speaks of the world of man in such cases, but always takes refuge in external nature, and moreover in nature which has not yet been subdued by men. But every new invention, every advance made by industry, detaches another piece from this domain, so that the ground which produces examples illustrating such Feuerbachian propositions is steadily shrinking.

[. . .] We shall, of course, not take the trouble to enlighten our wise philosophers by explaining to them that the "liberation" of man is not advanced a single step by reducing philosophy, theology, substance and all the trash to "self-consciousness" and by liberating man from the domination of these phrases, which have never held him in thrall. Nor will we explain to them that it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employing real means, that slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and that, in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. "Liberation" is an historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, the conditions of intercourse. . . .¹⁰⁹

In Germany, a country where only a trivial historical development is taking place, these mental developments, these glorified and ineffective trivialities, naturally serve as a substitute for the lack of historical development, and they take root and have to be combated. But this fight is of local importance.

¹⁰⁹ There is here a gap in the manuscript.

In reality and for the practical materialist, i.e. the communist, it is a question of revolutionizing the existing world, of practically attacking and changing existing things. When occasionally we find such views with Feuerbach, they are never more than isolated surmises and have much too little influence on his general outlook to be considered here as anything else than embryos capable of development. Feuerbach's conception of the sensuous world is confined on the one hand to mere contemplation of it, and on the other to mere feeling; he says "Man" instead of "real historical man". "Man" is really "the German". In the first case, the contemplation of the sensuous world, he necessarily lights on things which contradict his consciousness and feeling, which disturb the harmony he presupposes, the harmony of all parts of the sensuous world and especially of man and nature. To remove this disturbance, he must take refuge in a double perception, a profane one which only perceives the "flatly obvious" and a higher, philosophical, one which perceives the "true essence" of things. He does not see how the sensuous world around him is, not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and, indeed, in the sense that it is an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, modifying its social system according to the changed needs. Even the objects of the simplest "sensuous certainty" are only given him through social development, industry and commercial intercourse. The cherry-tree, like almost all fruit-trees, was, as is well known, only a few centuries ago transplanted by commerce into our zone, and therefore only by this action of a definite society in a definite age it has become "sensuous certainty" for Feuerbach.

Incidentally, when we conceive things thus, as they really are and happened, every profound philosophical problem is resolved, as will be seen even more clearly later, quite simply into an empirical fact. For instance, the important question of the relation of man to nature (Bruno [Bauer] goes so far as to speak of "the antitheses in nature and history" (p. 110), as though these were two separate "things" and man did not always have before him an historical nature and a natural history) out of which all the "unfathomably lofty works" on "substance" and "self-consciousness" were born, crumbles of itself when we understand that the celebrated "unity of man with nature" has always existed in industry and has existed in varying forms in every epoch according to the lesser or greater development of industry, just like the "struggle" of man with nature, right up to the development of his productive powers on a corresponding basis. Industry and commerce, production and the exchange of the necessities of life, themselves determine distribution, the structure of the different social classes and are, in turn, determined by it as to the mode in which they are carried on; and so it happens that in Manchester, for instance, Feuerbach sees only factories and machines, where a hundred years ago only spinning-wheels and weaving-rooms were to be seen, or in the Campagna of Rome he finds only pasture lands and swamps, where in the time of Augustus he would have found nothing but the vineyards and villas of Roman capitalists. Feuerbach speaks in particular of the perception of natural science; he mentions secrets which are disclosed only to the eye of the physicist and chemist; but where would natural science be without industry and commerce? Even this pure natural science is provided with an aim, as with its material, only through trade and industry, through the sensuous activity of men. So much is this activity, this unceasing sensuous labor and creation, this production, the basis of the whole sensuous world as it now exists, that, were it interrupted only for a year, Feuerbach would not only find an enormous change in the natural world, but would very soon find that the whole world of men and his own perceptive faculty, nay his own existence, were missing. Of course, in all this the priority of external nature remains unassailed, and all this has no application to the original men produced by *generatio aequivoca*; [Spontaneous generation. -- Ed.] but this differentiation has meaning

only insofar as man is considered to be distinct from nature. For that matter, nature, the nature that preceded human history, is not by any means the nature in which Feuerbach lives, it is nature which today no longer exists anywhere (except perhaps on a few Australian coral-islands of recent origin) and which, therefore, does not exist for Feuerbach.

Certainly, Feuerbach has a great advantage over the "pure" materialists in that he realizes how man too is an "object of the senses. But apart from the fact that he only conceives him as an "object of the senses, not as sensuous activity", because he still remains in the realm of theory and conceives of men not in their given social connection, not under their existing conditions of life, which have made them what they are, he never arrives at the really existing active men, but stops at the abstraction "man", and gets no further than recognizing "the true,

individual, corporeal man,' emotionally, i.e. he knows no other "human relationships" "of man to man" than love and friendship, and even then, idealized. He gives no criticism of the present conditions of life. Thus he never manages to conceive the sensuous world as the total living sensuous activity of the individuals composing it; and therefore when, for example, he sees instead of healthy men a crowd of scrofulous, overworked and consumptive starvelings, he is compelled to take refuge in the "higher perception" and in the ideal "compensation in the species", and thus to relapse into idealism at the very point where the communist materialist sees the necessity, and at the same time the condition, of a transformation both of industry and of the social structure.

As far as Feuerbach is a materialist he does not deal with history, and as far as he considers history, he is not a materialist. With him materialism and history diverge completely, a fact which incidentally is already obvious from what has been said.

Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus, their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. For instance, in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy, and bourgeoisie are contending for mastery and where, therefore, mastery is shared, the doctrine of the separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an "eternal law".

The division of labor, which we already saw above as one of the chief forces of history up till now, manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labor, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and

have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves. Within this class this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts, which, however, in the case of a practical collision, in which the class itself is endangered, automatically comes to nothing, in which case there also vanishes the semblance that the ruling ideas were not the ideas of the ruling class and had a power distinct from the power of this class. The existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular period presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class; about the premises for the latter sufficient has already been said above.

If now in considering the course of history we detach the ideas of the ruling class from the ruling class itself and attribute to them an independent existence, if we confine ourselves to saying that these or those ideas were dominant at a given time, without bothering ourselves about the conditions of production and the producers of these ideas, if we thus ignore the individuals and world conditions which are the source of the ideas, we can say, for instance, that during the time that the aristocracy was dominant, the concepts honor, loyalty, etc. were dominant, during the dominance of the bourgeoisie the concepts freedom, equality, etc. The ruling class itself on the whole imagines this to be so. This conception of history, which is common to all historians, particularly since the eighteenth century, will necessarily come up against the phenomenon that increasingly abstract ideas hold sway, i.e. ideas which increasingly take on the form of universality. For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. The class making a revolution appears from the very start, if only because it is opposed to a class, not as a class but as the representative of the whole of society; it appears as the whole mass of society confronting the one ruling class.¹¹⁰ It can do this because, to start with, its interest really is more connected with the common interest of all other non-ruling classes, because under the pressure of hitherto existing conditions its interest has not yet been able to develop as the particular interest of a particular class. Its victory, therefore, benefits also many individuals of the other classes which are not winning a dominant position, but only insofar as it now puts these individuals in a position to raise themselves into the ruling class. When the French bourgeoisie overthrew the power of the aristocracy, it thereby made it possible for many proletarians to raise themselves above the proletariat, but only insofar as they become bourgeois. Every new class, therefore, achieves its hegemony only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously, whereas the opposition of the non-ruling class against the new ruling class later develops all the more sharply and profoundly. Both these things determine the fact that the struggle to be waged against this new ruling class, in its turn, aims at a more decided and radical negation of the previous conditions of society than could all previous classes which sought to rule.

This whole semblance, that the rule of a certain class is only the rule of certain ideas, comes to a natural end, of course, as soon as class rule in general ceases to be the form in which society is organized, that is to say, as soon as it is no longer necessary to represent a particular interest as general or the "general interest" as ruling.

¹¹⁰ [Marginal note by Marx:] Universality corresponds to (1) the class versus the estate, (2) the competition, world-wide intercourse, etc., (3) the great numerical strength of the ruling class, (4) the illusion of the common interests (in the beginning this illusion is true), (5) the delusion of the ideologists and the division of labor.

Once the ruling ideas have been separated from the ruling individuals and, above all, from the relationships which result from a given stage of the mode of production, and in this way the conclusion has been reached that history is always under the sway of ideas, it is very easy to abstract from these various ideas "the idea", the notion, etc. as the dominant force in history, and thus to understand all these separate ideas and concepts as "forms of self-determination" on the part of the concept developing in history. It follows then naturally, too, that all the relationships of men can be derived from the concept of man, man as conceived, the essence of man, Man. This has been done by the speculative philosophers. Hegel himself confesses at the end of the *Geschichtsphilosophie* that he "has considered the progress of the concept only" and has represented in history the "true theodicy". (p.446.) Now one can go back again to the producers of the "concept", to the theorists, ideologists and philosophers, and one comes then to the conclusion that the philosophers, the thinkers as such, have at all times been dominant in history: a conclusion, as we see, already expressed by Hegel. The whole trick of proving the hegemony of the spirit in history (hierarchy Stirner calls it) is thus confirmed to the following three efforts.

No. 1. One must separate the ideas of those ruling for empirical reasons, under empirical conditions and as empirical individuals, from these actual rulers, and thus recognize the rule of ideas or illusions in history.

No. 2. One must bring an order into this rule of ideas, prove a mystical connection among the successive ruling ideas, which is managed by understanding them as "acts of self-determination on the part of the concept" (this is possible because by virtue of their empirical basis these ideas are really connected with one another and because, conceived as mere ideas, they become self-distinctions, distinctions made by thought).

No. 3. To remove the mystical appearance of this "self-determining concept" it is changed into a person -- "Self-Consciousness" -- or, to appear thoroughly materialistic, into a series of persons, who represent the "concept" in history, into the "thinkers", the "philosophers", the ideologists, who again are understood as the manufacturers of history, as the "council of guardians", as the rulers. Thus, the whole body of materialistic elements has been removed from history and now full rein can be given to the speculative

stead.

Whilst in ordinary life every shopkeeper is very well able to distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he really is, our historians have not yet won even this trivial insight. They take every epoch at its word and believe that everything it says and imagines about itself is true.

This historical method which reigned in Germany, and especially the reason why, must be understood from its connection with the illusion of ideologists in general, e.g. the illusions of the jurist, politicians (of the practical statesmen among them, too), from the dogmatic dreaming and distortions of these fellows; this is explained perfectly easily from their practical position in life, their job, and the division of labor.

Division of Labor: Town and Country

[. . .] ¹¹¹ From the first there follows the premise of a highly developed division of labor and an extensive commerce; from the second, the locality. In the first case the individuals must be brought together; in the second they find themselves alongside the given instrument of production as instruments of production themselves. Here, therefore, arises the difference between natural instruments of production and those created by civilization. The field (water, etc.) can be regarded as a natural instrument of production. In the first case, that of the natural instrument of production, individuals are subservient to nature; in the second, to a product of labor. In the first case, therefore, property (landed property) appears as direct natural domination, in the second, as domination of labor, particularly of accumulated labor, capital. The first case presupposes that the individuals are united by some bond: family, tribe, the land itself, etc.; the second, that they are independent of one another and are only held together by exchange. In the first case, what is involved is chiefly an exchange between men and nature in which the labor of the former is exchanged for the products of the latter; in the second, it is predominantly an exchange of men among themselves. In the first case, average, human common sense is adequate -- physical activity is as yet not separated from mental activity; in the second, the division between physical and mental labor must already be practically completed. In the first case, the domination of the proprietor over the propertyless may be based on a personal relationship, on a kind of community; in the second, it must have taken on a material shape in a third party-money. In the first case, small industry exists, but determined by the utilization of the natural instrument of production and therefore without the distribution of labor among various individuals; in the second, industry exists only in and through the division of labor.

The greatest division of material and mental labor is the separation of town and country. The antagonism between town and country begins with the transition from barbarism to civilization, from tribe to State, from locality to nation, and runs through the whole history of civilization to the present day (the Anti-Corn Law League).

The existence of the town implies, at the same time, the necessity of administration, police, taxes, etc.; in short, of the municipality, and thus of politics in general. Here first became manifest the division of the population into two great classes, which is directly based on the division of labor and on the instruments of production. The town already is in actual fact the concentration of the population, of the instruments of production, of capital, of pleasures, of needs, while the country demonstrates just the opposite fact, isolation and separation. The antagonism between town and country can only exist within the framework of private property. It is the crassest expression of the subjection of the individual under the division of labor, under a definite activity forced upon him -- a subjection which makes one man into a restricted town-animal, the other into a restricted country-animal, and daily creates anew the conflict between their interests. Labor is here again the chief thing, power over individuals, and as long as the latter exists, private property must exist. The abolition of the antagonism between town and country is one of the first conditions of communal life, a condition which again depends on a mass of material premises and which cannot be fulfilled by the mere will, as anyone can see at the first glance. (These conditions have still to be enumerated.) The separation of town and country can also be understood as the separation of

¹¹¹ Four pages of the manuscript are missing here.-Ed.

capital and landed property, as the beginning of the existence and development of capital independent of landed property -- the beginning of property having its basis only in labor and exchange.

In the towns which, in the Middle Ages, did not derive ready-made from an earlier period but were formed anew by the serfs who had become free, each man's own particular labor was his only property apart from the small capital he brought with him, consisting almost solely of the most necessary tools of his craft. The competition of serfs constantly escaping into the town, the constant war of the country against the towns and thus the necessity of an organized municipal military force, the bond of common ownership in a particular kind of labor, the necessity of common buildings for the sale of their wares at a time when craftsmen were also traders, and the consequent exclusion of the unauthorized from these buildings, the conflict among the interests of the various crafts, the necessity of protecting their laboriously acquired skill, and the feudal organisation of the whole of the country: these were the causes of the union of the workers of each craft in guilds. We have not at this point to go further into the manifold modifications of the guild-system, which arise through later historical developments. The flight of the serfs into the towns went on without interruption right through the Middle Ages. These serfs, persecuted by their lords in the country, came separately into the towns, where they found an organized community, against which they were powerless and in which they had to subject themselves to the station assigned to them by the demand for their labor and the interest of their organized urban competitors. These workers, entering separately, were never able to attain to any power, since, if their labor was of the guild type which had to be learned, the guild-masters bent them to their will and organized them according to their interest; or if their labor was not such as had to be learned, and therefore not of the guild type, they became day-laborers and never managed to organize, remaining an unorganized rabble. The need for day-laborers in the towns created the rabble.

These towns were true "associations", called forth by the direct need, the care of providing for the protection of property, and of multiplying the means of production and defense of the separate members. The rabble of these towns was devoid of any power, composed as it was of individuals strange to one another who had entered separately, and who stood unorganized over against an organized power, armed for war, and jealously watching over them. The journeymen and apprentices were organized in each craft as it best suited the interest of the masters. The patriarchal relationship existing between them and their masters gave the latter a double power -- on the one hand because of their influence on the whole life of the journeymen, and on the other because, for the journeymen who worked with the same master, it was a real bond which held them together against the journeymen of other masters and separated them from these. And finally, the journeymen were bound to the existing order by their simple interest in becoming masters themselves. While, therefore, the rabble at least carried out revolts against the whole municipal

order, revolts which remained completely ineffective because of their powerlessness, the journeymen never got further than small acts of insubordination within separate guilds, such as belong to the very nature of the guild-system. The great risings of the Middle Ages all radiated from the country, but equally remained totally ineffective because of the isolation and consequent crudity of the peasants.

In the towns, the division of labor between the individual guilds was as yet [quite naturally derived] and, in the guilds themselves, not at all developed between the individual workers. Every workman had to be versed in a whole round of tasks, had to be able to make everything that was to be made with his tools. The limited commerce and the scanty communication between the individual towns, the lack of population

and the narrow needs did not allow of a higher division of labor, and therefore every man who wished to become a master had to be proficient in the whole of his craft. Thus, there is found with medieval craftsmen an interest in their special work and in proficiency in it, which was capable of rising to a narrow artistic sense. For this very reason, however, every medieval craftsman was completely absorbed in his work, to which he had a contented, slavish relationship, and to which he was subjected to a far greater extent than the modern worker, whose work is a matter of indifference to him.

Capital in these towns was a naturally derived capital, consisting of a house, the tools of the craft, and the natural, hereditary customers; and not being realizable, on account of the backwardness of commerce and the lack of circulation, it descended from father to son. Unlike modern capital, which can be assessed in money and which may be indifferently invested in this thing or that, this capital was directly connected with the particular work of the owner, inseparable from it and to this extent estate capital.

The next extension of the division of labor was the separation of production and commerce, the formation of a special class of merchants; a separation which, in the towns bequeathed by a former period, had been handed down (among other things with the Jews) and which very soon appeared in the newly formed ones. With this there was given the possibility of commercial communications transcending the immediate neighborhood, a possibility, the realization of which depended on the existing means of communication, the state of public safety in the countryside, which was determined by political conditions (during the whole of the Middle Ages, as is well known, the merchants travelled in armed caravans), and on the cruder or more advanced needs (determined by the stage of culture attained) of the region accessible to intercourse.

With commerce the prerogative of a particular class, with the extension of trade through the merchants beyond the immediate surroundings of the town, there immediately appears a reciprocal action between production and commerce. The towns enter into relations with one another, new tools are brought from one town into the other, and the separation between production and commerce soon calls forth a new division of production between the individual towns, each of which is soon exploiting a predominant branch of industry. The local restrictions of earlier times begin gradually to be broken down.

It depends purely on the extension of commerce whether the productive forces achieved in a locality, especially inventions, are lost for later development or not. As long as there exists no commerce transcending the immediate neighborhood, every invention must be made separately in each locality, and mere chances such as irruptions of barbaric peoples, even ordinary wars, are sufficient to cause a country with advanced productive forces and needs to have to start right over again from the beginning. In primitive history every invention had to be made daily anew and, in each locality, independently. How little highly developed productive forces are safe from complete destruction, given even a relatively very extensive commerce, is proved by the Phoenicians, whose inventions were for the most part lost for a

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long time to come through the ousting of this nation from commerce, its conquest by Alexander and its consequent decline. Likewise, for instance, glass-painting in the Middle Ages. Only when commerce has become world commerce and has as its basis large-scale industry, when all nations are drawn into the competitive struggle, is the permanence of the acquired productive forces assured.

The Rise of Manufacturing

The immediate consequence of the division of labor between the various towns was the rise of manufactures, branches of production which had outgrown the guild-system. Manufactures first flourished, in Italy and later in Flanders, under the historical premise of commerce with foreign nations. In other countries, England and France for example, manufactures were at first confined to the home market. Besides the premises already mentioned manufactures depend on an already advanced concentration of population, particularly in the countryside, and of capital, which began to accumulate in the hands of individuals, partly in the guilds in spite of the guild regulations, partly among the merchants.

That labor which from the first presupposed a machine, even of the crudest sort, soon showed itself the most capable of development. Weaving, earlier carried on in the country by the peasants as a secondary occupation to procure their clothing, was the first labor to receive an impetus and a further development through the extension of commerce. Weaving was the first and remained the principal manufacture. The rising demand for clothing materials, consequent on the growth of population, the growing accumulation and mobilization of natural capital through accelerated circulation, the demand for luxuries called forth by the latter and favored generally by the gradual extension of commerce, gave weaving a quantitative and qualitative stimulus, which wrenched it out of the form of production hitherto existing. Alongside the peasants weaving for their own use, who continued, and still continue, with this sort of work, there emerged a new class of weavers in the towns, whose fabrics were destined for the whole home market and usually for foreign markets too.

Weaving, an occupation demanding in most cases little skill and soon splitting up into countless branches, by its whole nature resisted the trammels of the guild. Weaving was, therefore, carried on mostly in villages and market-centers without guild organisation, which gradually became towns, and indeed the most flourishing towns in each land.

With guild-free manufacture, property relations also quickly changed. The first advance beyond naturally derived estate capital was provided by the rise of merchants whose capital was from the beginning movable, capital in the modern sense as far as one can speak of it, given the circumstances of those times. The second advance came with manufacture, which again made mobile a mass of natural capital, and altogether increased the mass of movable capital as against that of natural capital.

At the same time, manufacture became a refuge of the peasants from the guilds which excluded them or paid them badly, just as earlier the guild-towns had [served] as a refuge for the peasants from [the oppressive landed nobility].

Simultaneously with the beginning of manufactures there was a period of vagabondage caused by the abolition of the feudal bodies of retainers, the disbanding of the swollen armies which had flocked to serve the kings against their vassals, the improvement of agriculture, and the transformation of great strips of tillage into pasture land. From this alone it is clear how this vagabondage is strictly connected

with the disintegration of the feudal system. As early as the thirteenth century we find isolated epochs of this kind, but only at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth does this vagabondage make a general and permanent appearance. These vagabonds, who were so numerous that, for instance, Henry VIII of England had 72,000 of them hanged, were only prevailed upon to work with the

greatest difficulty and through the most extreme necessity, and then only after long resistance. The rapid rise of manufactures, particularly in England, absorbed them gradually.

With the advent of manufactures, the various nations entered into a competitive relationship, the struggle for trade, which was fought out in wars, protective duties and prohibitions, whereas earlier the nations, insofar as they were connected at all, had carried on an inoffensive exchange with each other. Trade had from now on a political significance.

With the advent of manufacture the relationship between worker and employer changed. In the guilds the patriarchal relationship between journeyman and master continued to exist; in manufacture its place was taken by the monetary relation between worker and capitalist -- a relationship which in the countryside and in small towns retained a patriarchal tinge, but in the larger, the real manufacturing towns, quite early lost almost all patriarchal complexion.

Manufacture and the movement of production in general received an enormous impetus through the extension of commerce which came with the discovery of America and the sea-route to the East Indies. The new products imported thence, particularly the masses of gold and silver which came into circulation and totally changed the position of the classes towards one another, dealing a hard blow to feudal landed property and to the workers; the expeditions of adventurers, colonization; and above all the extension of markets into a world market, which had now become possible and was daily becoming more and more a fact, called forth a new phase of historical development, into which in general we cannot here enter further. Through the colonization of the newly discovered countries the commercial struggle of the nations amongst one another was given new fuel and accordingly greater extension and animosity.

The expansion of trade and manufacture accelerated the accumulation of movable capital, while in the guilds, which were not stimulated to extend their production, natural capital remained stationary or even declined. Trade and manufacture created the big bourgeoisie; in the guilds was concentrated the petty bourgeoisie, which no longer was dominant in the towns as formerly, but had to bow to the might of the great merchants and manufacturers. Hence the decline of the guilds, as soon as they came into contact with manufacture.

The intercourse of nations took on, in the epoch of which we have been speaking, two different forms. At first the small quantity of gold and silver in circulation involved the ban on the export of these metals; and industry, for the most part imported from abroad and made necessary by the need for employing the growing urban population, could not do without those privileges which could be granted not only, of course, against home competition, but chiefly against foreign. The local guild privilege was in these original prohibitions extended over the whole nation. Customs duties originated from the tributes which the feudal lords exacted as protective levies against robbery from merchants passing through their territories, tributes later imposed likewise by the towns, and which, with the rise of the modern states, were the Treasury's most obvious means of raising money.

The appearance of American gold and silver on the European markets, the gradual development of industry, the rapid expansion of trade and the consequent rise of the non-guild bourgeoisie and of money, gave these measures another significance. The State, which was daily less and less able to do without

money, now retained the ban on the export of gold and silver out of fiscal considerations; the bourgeois, for whom these masses of money which were hurled onto the market became the chief object of

speculative buying, were thoroughly content with this; privileges established earlier became a source of income for the government and were sold for money; in the customs legislation there appeared the export duty, which, since it only [placed] a hindrance in the way of industry, had a purely fiscal aim.

The second period began in the middle of the seventeenth century and lasted almost to the end of the eighteenth. Commerce and navigation had expanded more rapidly than manufacture, which played a secondary role; the colonies were becoming considerable consumers; and after long struggles the separate nations shared out the opening world market among themselves. This period begins with the Navigation Laws ¹¹² and colonial monopolies. The competition of the nations among themselves was excluded as far as possible by tariffs, prohibitions and treaties; and in the last resort the competitive struggle was carried on and decided by wars (especially naval wars). The mightiest maritime nation, the English, retained preponderance in trade and manufacture. Here, already, we find concentration in one country.

Manufacture was all the time sheltered by protective duties in the home market, by monopolies in the colonial market, and abroad as much as possible by differential duties. The working-up of

home-produced material was encouraged (wool and linen in England, silk in France), the export of home-produced raw material forbidden (wool in England), and the [working-up] of imported material neglected or suppressed (cotton in England). The nation dominant in sea trade and colonial power naturally secured for itself also the greatest quantitative and qualitative expansion of manufacture. Manufacture could not be carried on without protection, since, if the slightest change takes place in other countries, it can lose its market and be ruined; under reasonably favorable conditions it may easily be introduced into a country, but for this very reason can easily be destroyed. At the same time through the mode in which it is carried on, particularly in the eighteenth century, in the countryside, it is to such an extent interwoven with the vital relationships of a great mass of individuals, that no country dare jeopardizes its existence by permitting free competition. Insofar as it manages to export, it therefore depends entirely on the extension or restriction of commerce, and exercises a relatively very small reaction [on the latter]. Hence its secondary [importance] and the influence of [the merchants] in the eighteenth century. It was the merchants and especially the shippers who more than anybody else pressed for State protection and monopolies; the manufacturers also demanded and indeed received protection, but all the time were inferior in political importance to the merchants. The commercial towns, particularly the maritime towns, became to some extent civilized and acquired the outlook of the big bourgeoisie, but in the factory towns an extreme petty-bourgeois outlook persisted. Cf Aikin, ¹¹³ etc. The eighteenth century was the century of trade. Pinto says this expressly: "*Le commerce fait la marotte du siècle*" ; and: "*Depuis quelque temps il n'est plus question que de commerce, de navigation et de marine.*" ["Commerce is the rage of the

¹¹² Navigation Laws -- a series of Acts passed in England from 1381 onwards to protect English shipping against foreign companies. The Navigation Laws were modified in the early nineteenth century and repealed in 1849 except for a reservation regarding coasting trade, which was revoked in 1854.

¹¹³ The movement of capital, although considerably accelerated, still remained, however, relatively slow. The splitting-up of the world market into separate parts, each of which was exploited by a particular nation, the exclusion of competition among themselves on the part of the nations, the clumsiness of production itself and the fact that finance was only evolving from its early stages, greatly impeded circulation. The consequence of this was a haggling, mean and niggardly spirit which still clung to all merchants and to the whole mode of carrying on trade. Compared with the manufacturers, and above all with the craftsmen, they were certainly big bourgeois; compared with the merchants and industrialists of the next period they remain petty bourgeois. Cf. Adam Smith.

century." "For some time now, people have been talking only about commerce, navigation and the navy." - Ed.]

This period is also characterized by the cessation of the bans on the export of gold and silver and the beginning of the trade in money; by banks, national debts, paper money; by speculation in stocks and shares and stockjobbing in all articles; by the development of finance in general. Again, capital lost a great part of the natural character which had still clung to it.

The concentration of trade and manufacture in one country, England, developing irresistibly in the seventeenth century, gradually created for this country a relative world market, and thus a demand for the

manufactured products of this country, which could no longer be met by the industrial productive forces hitherto existing. This demand, outgrowing the productive forces, was the motive power which, by producing big industry -- the application of elemental forces to industrial ends, machinery and the most complex division of labor -- called into existence the third period of private ownership since the Middle Ages. There already existed in England the other pre-conditions of this new phase: freedom of competition inside the nation, the development of theoretical mechanics, etc. (Indeed, the science of mechanics perfected by Newton was altogether the most popular science in France and England in the eighteenth century.) (Free competition inside the nation itself had everywhere to be conquered by a revolution -- 1640 and 1688 in England, 1789 in France.) Competition soon compelled every country that wished to retain its historical role to protect its manufactures by renewed customs regulations (the old duties were no longer any good against big industry) and soon after to introduce big industry under protective duties. Big industry universalized competition in spite of these protective measures (it is practical free trade; the protective duty is only a palliative, a measure of defense within free trade), established means of communication and the modern world market, subordinated trade to itself, transformed all capital into industrial capital, and thus produced the rapid circulation (development of the financial system) and the centralization of capital. By universal competition it forced all individuals to strain their energy to the utmost. It destroyed as far as possible ideology, religion, morality, etc. and where it could not do this, made them into a palpable lie. It produced world history for the first time, insofar as it made all civilized nations and every individual member of them dependent for the satisfaction of their wants on the whole world, thus destroying the former natural exclusiveness of separate nations. It made natural science subservient to capital and took from the division of labor the last semblance of its natural character. It destroyed natural growth in general, as far as this is possible while labor exists, and resolved all natural relationships into money relationships. In the place of naturally grown towns it created the modern, large industrial cities which have sprung up overnight. Wherever it penetrated, it destroyed the crafts and all earlier stages of industry. It completed the victory of the commercial town over the countryside. [Its first premise] was the automatic system. [Its development] produced a mass of productive forces, for which private [property] became just as much a fetter as the guild had been for manufacture and the small, rural workshop for the developing craft. These productive forces received under the system of private property a one-sided development only, and became for the majority destructive forces; moreover, a great multitude of such forces could find no application at all within this system. Generally speaking, big industry created everywhere the same relations between the classes of society, and thus destroyed the peculiar individuality of the various nationalities. And finally, while the bourgeoisie of each nation still retained separate national interests, big industry created a class, which in all nations has the same interest and with which nationality is already dead; a class which is really rid of all the old world and at the same time

stands pitted against it. Big industry makes for the worker not only the relation to the capitalist, but labor itself, unbearable.

It is evident that big industry does not reach the same level of development in all districts of a country. This does not, however, retard the class movement of the proletariat, because the proletarians created by big industry assume leadership of this movement and carry the whole mass along with them, and because the workers excluded from big industry are placed by it in a still worse situation than the workers in big industry itself. The countries in which big industry is developed act in a similar manner upon the more or less non-industrial countries, insofar as the latter are swept by universal commerce into the universal competitive struggle.¹¹⁴

These different forms are just so many forms of the organisation of labor, and hence of property. In each period a unification of the existing productive forces takes place, insofar as this has been rendered necessary by needs.

The Relation of State and Law to Property

The first form of property, in the ancient world as in the Middle Ages, is tribal property, determined with the Romans chiefly by war, with the Germans by the rearing of cattle. In the case of the ancient peoples, since several tribes live together in one town, the tribal property appears as State property, and the right of the individual to it as mere "possession which, however, like tribal property as a whole, is confined to landed property only. Real private property began with the ancients, as with modern nations, with movable property. -- (Slavery and community) (*dominium ex jure Quiritum*¹¹⁵). In the case of the nations which grew out of the Middle Ages, tribal property evolved through various stages -- feudal landed property, corporative movable property, capital invested in manufacture -- to modern capital, determined by big industry and universal competition, i.e. pure private property, which has cast off all semblance of a communal institution and has shut out the State from any influence on the development of property. To this modern private property corresponds the modern State, which, purchased gradually by the owners of property by means of taxation, has fallen entirely into their hands through the national debt, and its existence has become wholly dependent on the commercial credit which the owners of property, the bourgeois, extend to it, as reflected in the rise and fall of State funds on the stock exchange. By the mere fact that it is a class and no longer an estate, the bourgeoisie is forced to organize itself no longer locally, but nationally, and to give a general form to its mean average interest. Through the emancipation of private property from the community, the State has become a separate entity, beside and outside civil society; but it is nothing more than the form of organisation which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests. The independence of the State is only found nowadays in those countries where the estates have not yet completely developed into classes, where the estates, done away with in more advanced countries, still have a part to

¹¹⁴ Competition separates individuals from one another, not only the bourgeois but still more the workers, in spite of the fact that it brings them together. Hence it is a long time before these individuals can unite, apart from the fact that for the purposes of this union -- if it is not to be merely local -- the necessary means, the great industrial cities and cheap and quick communications, have first to be produced by big industry. Hence every organized power standing over against these isolated individuals, who live in relationships, daily reproducing this isolation, can only be overcome after long struggles. To demand the opposite would be tantamount to demanding that competition should not exist in this definite epoch of history, or that the individuals should banish from their minds relationships over which in their isolation they have no control.

¹¹⁵ Ownership in accordance with the law applying to full Roman citizens.-Ed.

play, and where there exists a mixture; countries, that is to say, in which no one section of the population can achieve dominance over the others. This is the case particularly in Germany. The most perfect example of the modern State is North America. The modern French, English and American writers all express the opinion that the State exists only for the sake of private property, so that this fact has penetrated into the consciousness of the normal man.

Since the State is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests, and in which the whole civil society of an epoch is epitomized, it follows that the State mediates in the formation of all common institutions and that the institutions receive a political form. Hence the illusion that law is based on the will, and indeed on the will divorced from its real basis -- on free will. Similarly, justice is in its turn reduced to the actual laws.

Civil law develops simultaneously with private property out of the disintegration of the natural community. With the Romans the development of private property and civil law had no further industrial and commercial consequences, because their whole mode of production did not alter. (Usury!)

With modern peoples, where the feudal community was disintegrated by industry and trade, there began with the rise of private property and civil law a new phase, which was capable of further development. The very first town which carried on an extensive maritime trade in the Middle Ages, Amalfi, also

developed maritime law. As soon as industry and trade developed private property further, first in Italy and later in other countries, the highly developed Roman civil law was immediately adopted again and raised, to authority. When later the bourgeoisie had acquired so much power that the princes took up its interests in order to overthrow the feudal nobility by means of the bourgeoisie, there began in all countries -- in France in the sixteenth century -- the real development of law, which in all countries except England proceeded on the basis of the Roman Codex. In England, too, Roman legal principles had to be introduced to further the development of civil law (especially in the case of movable property). (It must not be forgotten that law has just as little an independent history as religion.)

In civil law the existing property relationships are declared to be the result of the general will. The *jus utendi et abutendi* ¹¹⁶ itself asserts on the one hand the fact that private property has become entirely independent of the community, and on the other the illusion that private property itself is based solely on the private will, the arbitrary disposal of the thing. In practice, the abuti has very definite economic limitations for the owner of private property, if he does not wish to see his property and hence his *jus abutendi* pass into other hands, since actually the thing, considered merely with reference to his will, is not a thing at all, but only becomes a thing, true property in intercourse, and independently of the law (a relationship, which the philosophers call an idea). This juridical illusion, which reduces law to the mere will, necessarily leads, in the further development of property relationships, to the position that a man may have a legal title to a thing without really having the thing. If, for instance, the income from a piece of land is lost owing to competition, then the proprietor has certainly his legal title to it along with the *jus utendi et abutendi*. But he can do nothing with it: he owns nothing as a landed proprietor if in addition he has not enough capital to cultivate his ground. This illusion of the jurists also explains the fact that for them, as for every code, it is altogether fortuitous that individuals enter into relationships among themselves (e.g.

¹¹⁶ The right of using and consuming (also: abusing), i.e. of disposing of a thing at will.-Ed.

contracts); it explains why they consider that these relationships [can] be entered into or not at will, and that their content rests purely on the individual [free] will of the contracting parties.

Whenever, through the development of industry and commerce, new forms of intercourse have been evolved (e.g. assurance companies, etc.), the law has always been compelled to admit them among the modes of acquiring property.

D. PROLETARIANS AND COMMUNISM

Individuals, Class, and Community

In the Middle Ages the citizens in each town were compelled to unite against the landed nobility to save their skins. The extension of trade, the establishment of communications, led the separate towns to get to know other towns, which had asserted the same interests in the struggle with the same antagonist. Out of the many local corporations of burghers there arose only gradually the burgher class. The conditions of life of the individual burghers became, on account of their contradiction to the existing relationships and of the mode of labor determined by these, conditions which were common to them all and independent of each individual. The burghers had created the conditions insofar as they had torn themselves free from feudal ties, and were created by them insofar as they were determined by their antagonism to the feudal system which they found in existence. When the individual towns began to enter into associations, these common conditions developed into class conditions. The same conditions, the same contradiction, the same interests necessarily called forth on the whole similar customs everywhere. The bourgeoisie itself with its conditions, develops only gradually, splits according to the division of labor into various fractions and finally absorbs all propertied classes it finds in existence ¹¹⁷ (while it develops the majority of the earlier propertyless and a part of the hitherto propertied classes into a new class, the proletariat) in the measure to which all property found in existence is transformed into industrial or commercial capital. The separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise, they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors. On the other hand, the class in its turn achieves an independent existence over against the individuals, so that the latter find their conditions of existence predestined, and hence have their position in life and their personal development assigned to them by their class, become subsumed under it. This is the same phenomenon as the subjection of the separate individuals to the division of labor and can only be removed by the abolition of private property and of labor itself. We have already indicated several times how this subsuming of individuals under the class brings with it their subjection to all kinds of ideas, etc.

If from a philosophical point of view one considers this evolution of individuals in the common conditions of existence of estates and classes, which followed on one another, and in the accompanying general conceptions forced upon them, it is certainly very easy to imagine that in these individuals the species, or "Man", has evolved, or that they evolved "Man" -- and in this way one can give history some hard clouts on the ear. ¹¹⁸ One can conceive these various estates and classes to be specific terms of the

¹¹⁷ [Marginal note by Marx:] To begin with it absorbs the branches of labor directly belonging to the State and then all ±[more or less] ideological estates.

¹¹⁸ The Statement which frequently occurs with Saint Max that each is all that he is through the State is fundamentally the same as the statement that bourgeois is only a specimen of the bourgeois species; a statement which presupposes that the class of bourgeois existed before the individuals constituting it. [Marginal note by Marx to this sentence:] With the philosophers pre-existence of the class.

general expression, subordinate varieties of the species, or evolutionary phases of "Man".

This subsuming of individuals under definite classes cannot be abolished until a class has taken shape, which has no longer any particular class interest to assert against the ruling class.

The transformation, through the division of labor, of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labor. This is not possible without the community. Only in community [with others has each] individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible. In the previous substitutes for the community, in the State, etc. personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who developed within the relationships of the ruling class, and only insofar as they were individuals of this class. The illusory community, in which individuals have up till now combined, always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and was at the same time, since it was the combination of one class over against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. In a real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association.

Individuals have always built on themselves, but naturally on themselves within their given historical conditions and relationships, not on the "pure" individual in the sense of the ideologists. But in the course of historical evolution, and precisely through the inevitable fact that within the division of labor social relationships take on an independent existence, there appears a division within the life of each individual, insofar as it is personal and insofar as it is determined by some branch of labor and the conditions pertaining to it. (We do not mean it to be understood from this that, for example, the rentier, the capitalist, etc. cease to be persons; but their personality is conditioned and determined by quite definite class relationships, and the division appears only in their opposition to another class and, for themselves, only when they go bankrupt.) In the estate (and even more in the tribe) this is as yet concealed: for instance, a nobleman always remains a nobleman, a commoner always a commoner, apart from his other relationships, a quality inseparable from his individuality. The division between the personal and the class individual, the accidental nature of the conditions of life for the individual, appears only with the emergence of the class, which is itself a product of the bourgeoisie. This accidental character is only engendered and developed by competition and the struggle of individuals among themselves. Thus, in imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental; in reality, of course, they are less free, because they are more subjected to the violence of things. The difference from the estate comes out particularly in the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. When the estate of the urban burghers, the corporations, etc. emerged in opposition to the landed nobility, their condition of existence -- movable property and craft labor, which had already existed latently before their separation from the feudal ties -- appeared as something positive, which was asserted against feudal landed property, and, therefore, in its own way at first took on a feudal form. Certainly, the refugee serfs treated their previous servitude as something accidental to their personality. But here they only were doing what every class that is freeing itself from a fetter does; and they did not free themselves as a class but separately. Moreover, they did not rise above the system of estates, but only formed a new estate, retaining their previous mode of labor even in their new situation,

and developing it further by freeing it from its earlier fetters, which no longer corresponded to the development already attained.¹¹⁹

For the proletarians, on the other hand, the condition of their existence, labor, and with it all the conditions of existence governing modern society, have become something accidental, something over which they, as separate individuals, have no control, and over which no social organisation can give them control. The contradiction between the individuality of each separate proletarian and labor, the condition of life forced upon him, becomes evident to him himself, for he is sacrificed from youth upwards and, within his own class, has no chance of arriving at the conditions which would place him in the other class.

Thus, while the refugee serfs only wished to be free to develop and assert those conditions of existence which were already there, and hence, in the end, only arrived at free labor, the proletarians, if they are to assert themselves as individuals, will have to abolish the very condition of their existence hitherto (which has, moreover, been that of all society up to the present), namely, labor. Thus, they find themselves directly opposed to the form in which, hitherto, the individuals, of which society consists, have given themselves collective expression, that is, the State. In order, therefore, to assert themselves as individuals, they must overthrow the State.

It follows from all we have been saying up till now that the communal relationship into which the individuals of a class entered, and which was determined by their common interests over against a third party, was always a community to which these individuals belonged only as average individuals, only insofar as they lived within the conditions of existence of their class -- a relationship in which they participated not as individuals but as members of a class. With the community of revolutionary proletarians, on the other hand, who take their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control, it is just the reverse; it is as individuals that the individuals participate in it. It is just this combination of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control -- conditions which were previously abandoned to chance and had won an independent existence over against the separate individuals just because of their separation as individuals, and because of the necessity of their combination which had been determined by the division of labor, and through their separation had become a bond alien to them. Combination up till now (by no means an arbitrary one, such as is expounded for example in the Contract social, but a necessary one) was an agreement upon these conditions, within which the individuals were free to enjoy the freaks of fortune (compare, e.g., the formation of the North American State and the South American republics). This right to the undisturbed enjoyment, within certain conditions, of fortuity and chance has up till now been called personal freedom. These conditions of existence are, of course, only the productive forces and forms of intercourse at any particular time.

¹¹⁹ N.B. -- It must not be forgotten that the serf's very need of existing and the impossibility of a large-scale economy, which involved the distribution of the allotments among the serfs, very soon reduced the services of the serfs to their lord to an average of payments in kind and statute-labor. This made it possible for the serf to accumulate movable property and hence facilitated his escape out of the possession of his lord and gave him the prospect of making his way as an urban citizen; it also created gradations among the serfs, so that the runaway serfs were already half burghers. It is likewise obvious that the serfs who were masters of a craft had the best chance of acquiring movable property.

Forms of Intercourse

Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all natural premises as the creatures of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals. Its organisation is, therefore, essentially economic, the material production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing conditions into conditions of unity. The reality, which communism is creating, is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is only a product of the preceding intercourse of

individuals themselves. Thus, the communists in practice treat the conditions created up to now by production and intercourse as inorganic conditions, without, however, imagining that it was the plan or the destiny of previous generations to give them material, and without believing that these conditions were inorganic for the individuals creating them. The difference between the individual as a person and what is accidental to him, is not a conceptual difference but an historical fact. This distinction has a different significance at different times -- e.g. the estate as something accidental to the individual in the eighteenth century, the family more or less too. It is not a distinction that we have to make for each age, but one which each age makes itself from among the different elements which it finds in existence, and indeed not according to any theory, but compelled by material collisions in life. What appears accidental to the later age as opposed to the earlier -- and this applies also to the elements handed down by an earlier age -- is a form of intercourse which corresponded to a definite stage of development of the productive forces. The relation of the productive forces to the form of intercourse is the relation of the form of intercourse to the occupation or activity of the individuals. (The fundamental form of this activity is, of course, material, on which depend all other forms-mental, political, religious, etc. The various shaping of material life is, of course, in every case dependent on the needs which are already developed, and the production, as well as the satisfaction, of these needs is an historical process, which is not found in the case of a sheep or a dog (Stirner's refractory principal argument *adversus hominem*), although sheep and dogs in their present form certainly, but *malgré eux*, are products of an historical process.) The conditions under which individuals have intercourse with each other, so long as the above-mentioned contradiction is absent, are conditions appertaining to their individuality, in no way external to them; conditions under which these definite individuals, living under definite relationships, can alone produce their material life and what is connected with it, are thus the conditions of their

self-activity and are produced by this self-activity. The definite condition under which they produce, thus corresponds, as long as the contradiction has not yet appeared, to the reality of their conditioned nature, their one-sided existence, the one-sidedness of which only becomes evident when the contradiction enters on the scene and thus exists for the later individuals. Then this condition appears as an accidental fetter, and the consciousness that it is a fetter is imputed to the earlier age as well.

These various conditions, which appear first as conditions of self-activity, later as fetters upon it, form in the whole evolution of history a coherent series of forms of intercourse, the coherence of which consists in this: in the place of an earlier form of intercourse, which has become a fetter, a new one is put, corresponding to the more developed productive forces and, hence, to the advanced mode of the

self-activity of individuals-a form which in its turn becomes a fetter and is then replaced by another. Since these conditions correspond at every stage to the simultaneous development of the productive

forces, their history is at the same time the history of the evolving productive forces taken over by each new generation, and is, therefore, the history of the development of the forces of the individuals themselves.

Since this evolution takes place naturally, i.e. is not subordinated to a general plan of freely combined individuals, it proceeds from various localities, tribes, nations, branches of labor, etc. each of which to start with develops independently of the others and only gradually enters into relation with the others. Furthermore, it takes place only very slowly; the various stages and interests are never completely overcome, but only subordinated to the prevailing interest and trail along beside the latter for centuries afterwards. It follows from this that within a nation itself the individuals, even apart from their pecuniary circumstances, have quite different developments, and that an earlier interest, the peculiar form of intercourse of which has already been ousted by that belonging to a later interest, remains for a long time

afterwards in possession of a traditional power in the illusory community (State, law), which has won an existence independent of the individuals; a power which in the last resort can only be broken by a revolution. This explains why, with reference to individual points which allow of a more general summing-up, consciousness can sometimes appear further advanced than the contemporary empirical relationships, so that in the struggles of a later epoch one can refer to earlier theoreticians as authorities.

On the other hand, in countries which, like North America, begin in an already advanced historical epoch, the development proceeds very rapidly. Such countries have no other natural premises than the individuals, who settled there and were led to do so because the forms of intercourse of the old countries did not correspond to their wants. Thus, they begin with the most advanced individuals of the old countries, and, therefore, with the correspondingly most advanced form of intercourse, before this form of intercourse has been able to establish itself in the old countries. This is the case with all colonies, insofar as they are not mere military or trading stations. Carthage, the Greek colonies, and Iceland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, provide examples of this. A similar relationship issues from conquest, when a form of intercourse which has evolved on another soil is brought over complete to the conquered country: whereas in its home it was still encumbered with interests and relationships left over from earlier periods, here it can and must be established completely and without hindrance, if only to assure the conquerors' lasting power. (England and Naples after the Norman conquest. when they received the most perfect form of feudal organisation.)

This contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse, which, as we saw, has occurred several times in past history, without, however, endangering the basis, necessarily on each occasion burst out in a revolution, taking on at the same time various subsidiary forms, such as

all-embracing collisions, collisions of various classes, contradiction of consciousness, battle of ideas, etc., political conflict, etc. From a narrow point of view, one may isolate one of these subsidiary forms and consider it as the basis of these revolutions; and this is all the easier as the individuals who started the revolutions had illusions about their own activity according to their degree of culture and the stage of historical development.

Thus, all collisions in history have their origin, according to our view, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of intercourse. Incidentally, to lead to collisions in a country, this contradiction need not necessarily have reached its extreme limit in this particular country. The

competition with industrially more advanced countries, brought about by the expansion of international intercourse, is sufficient to produce a similar contradiction in countries with a backward industry (e.g. the latent proletariat in Germany brought into view by view by the competition of English industry).

Conquest

This whole interpretation of history appears to be contradicted by the fact of conquest. Up till now violence, war, pillage, murder and robbery, etc. have been accepted as the driving force of history. Here we must limit ourselves to the chief points and take, therefore, only the most striking example -- the destruction of an old civilization by a barbarous people and the resulting formation of an entirely new organisation of society. (Rome and the barbarians; feudalism and Gaul; the Byzantine Empire and the Turks.)

With the conquering barbarian people war itself is still, as indicated above, a regular form of intercourse, which is the more eagerly exploited as the increase in population together with the traditional and, for it, the only possible, crude mode of production gives rise to the need for new means of production. In Italy, on the other hand, the concentration of landed property (caused not only by buying-up and indebtedness but also by inheritance, since loose living being rife and marriage rare, the old families gradually died out and their possessions fell into the hands of a few) and its conversion into grazing land (caused not only by the usual economic forces still operative today but by the importation of plundered and tribute-corn and the resultant lack of demand for Italian corn) brought about the almost total disappearance of the free population. The very slaves died out again and again, and had constantly to be replaced by new ones. Slavery remained the basis of the whole productive system. The plebeians, midway between freemen and slaves, never succeeded in becoming more than a proletarian rabble. Rome indeed never became more than a city; its connection with the provinces was almost exclusively political and could, therefore, easily be broken again by political events.

Nothing is more common than the notion that in history up till now it has only been a question of taking. The barbarians take the Roman Empire, and this fact of taking is made to explain the transition from the old world to the feudal system. In this taking by barbarians, however, the question is, whether the nation which is conquered has evolved industrial productive forces, as is the case with modern peoples, or whether their productive forces are based for the most part merely on their association and on the community. Taking is further determined by the object taken. A banker's fortune, consisting of paper, cannot be taken at all, without the taker's submitting to the conditions of production and intercourse of the country taken. Similarly, the total industrial capital of a modern industrial country. And finally, everywhere there is very soon an end to taking, and when there is nothing more to take, you have to set about producing. From this necessity of producing, which very soon asserts itself, it follows that the form of community adopted by the settling conquerors must correspond to the stage of development of the productive forces they find in existence; or, if this is not the case from the start, it must change according to the productive forces. By this, too, is explained the fact, which people profess to have noticed everywhere in the period following the migration of the peoples, namely, that the servant was master, and that the conquerors very soon took over language, culture and manners from the conquered. The feudal system was by no means brought complete from Germany, but had its origin, as far as the conquerors were concerned, in the martial organisation of the army during the actual conquest, and this only evolved after the conquest into the feudal system proper through the action of the productive forces found in the

conquered countries. To what an extent this form was determined by the productive forces is shown by the abortive attempts to realize other forms derived from reminiscences of ancient Rome (Charlemagne, etc.).

Contradictions of Big Industry: Revolution

Our investigation hitherto started from the instruments of production, and it has already shown that private property was a necessity for certain industrial stages. In industry extractive private property still coincides with labor; in small industry and all agriculture up till now property is the necessary consequence of the existing instruments of production; in big industry the contradiction between the instrument of production and private property appears from the first time and is the product of big industry; moreover, big industry must be highly developed to produce this contradiction. And thus, only with big industry does the abolition of private property become possible.

In big industry and competition, the whole mass of conditions of existence, limitations, biases of individuals, are fused together into the two simplest forms: private property and labor. With money every form of intercourse, and intercourse itself, is considered fortuitous for the individuals. Thus, money implies that all previous intercourse was only intercourse of individuals under particular conditions, not of individuals as individuals. These conditions are reduced to two: accumulated labor or private property, and actual labor. If both or one of these ceases, then intercourse comes to a standstill. The modern economists themselves, e.g. Sismondi, Cherbuliez, etc., oppose "association of individuals" to "association of capital". On the other hand, the individuals themselves are entirely subordinated to the division of labor and hence are brought into the most complete dependence on one another. Private property, insofar as within labor itself it is opposed to labor, evolves out of the necessity of accumulation, and has still, to begin with, rather the form of the communality; but in its further development it approaches more and more the modern form of private property. The division of labor implies from the outset the division of the conditions of labor, of tools and materials, and thus the splitting-up of accumulated capital among different owners, and thus, also, the division between capital and labor, and the different forms of property itself. The more the division of labor develops and accumulation grows; the sharper are the forms that this process of differentiation assumes. Labor itself can only exist on the premise of this fragmentation.

Thus, two facts are here revealed. First the productive forces appear as a world for themselves, quite independent of and divorced from the individuals, alongside the individuals: the reason for this is that the individuals, whose forces they are, exist split up and in opposition to one another, whilst, on the other hand, these forces are only real forces in the intercourse and association of these individuals. Thus, on the one hand, we have a totality of productive forces, which have, as it were, taken on a material form and are for the individuals no longer the forces of the individuals but of private property, and hence of the individuals only insofar as they are owners of private property themselves. Never, in any earlier period, have the productive forces taken on a form so indifferent to the intercourse of individuals as individuals, because their intercourse itself was formerly a restricted one. On the other hand, standing over against these productive forces, we have the majority of the individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away, and who, robbed thus of all real life-content, have become abstract individuals, but who are, however, only by this fact put into a position to enter into relation with one another as individuals.

The only connection which still links them with the productive forces and with their own existence - labor -- has lost all semblance of self-activity and only sustains their life by stunting it. While in the earlier periods self-activity and the production of material life were separated, in that they devolved on different

persons, and while, on account of the narrowness of the individuals themselves, the production of material life was considered as a subordinate mode of self-activity, they now diverge to such an extent that altogether material life appears as the end, and what produces this material life, labor (which is now the only possible but, as we see, negative form of self-activity), as the means.

Thus, things have now come to such a pass that the individuals must appropriate the existing totality of productive forces, not only to achieve self-activity, but, also, merely to safeguard their very existence. This appropriation is first determined by the object to be appropriated, the productive forces, which have been developed to a totality and which only exist within a universal intercourse. From this aspect alone, therefore, this appropriation must have a universal character corresponding to the productive forces and the intercourse.

The appropriation of these forces is itself nothing more than the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves.

This appropriation is further determined by the persons appropriating. Only the proletarians of the present day, who are completely shut off from all self-activity, are in a position to achieve a complete and no longer restricted self-activity, which consists in the appropriation of a totality of productive forces and in the thus postulated development of a totality of capacities. All earlier revolutionary appropriations were restricted; individuals, whose self-activity was restricted by a crude instrument of production and a limited intercourse, appropriated this crude instrument of production, and hence merely achieved a new state of limitation. Their instrument of production became their property, but they themselves remained subordinate to the division of labor and their own instrument of production. In all expropriations up to now, a mass of individuals remained subservient to a single instrument of production; in the appropriation by the proletarians, a mass of instruments of production must be made subject to each individual, and property to all. Modern universal intercourse can be controlled by individuals, therefore, only when controlled by all.

This appropriation is further determined by the manner in which it must be affected. It can only be effected through a union, which by the character of the proletariat itself can again only be a universal one, and through a revolution, in which, on the one hand, the power of the earlier mode of production and intercourse and social organisation is overthrown, and, on the other hand, there develops the universal character and the energy of the proletariat, without which the revolution cannot be accomplished; and in which, further, the proletariat rids itself of everything that still clings to it from its previous position in society.

Only at this stage does self-activity coincide with material life, which corresponds to the development of individuals into complete individuals and the casting-off of all natural limitations. The transformation of labor into self-activity corresponds to the transformation of the earlier limited intercourse into the intercourse of individuals as such. With the appropriation of the total productive forces through united individuals, private property comes to an end. Whilst previously in history a particular condition always appeared as accidental, now the isolation of individuals and the particular private gain of each man have themselves become accidental.

The individuals, who are no longer subject to the division of labor, have been conceived by the philosophers as an ideal, under the name "Man". They have conceived the whole process which we have outlined as the evolutionary process of "Man", so that at every historical stage "Man" was substituted for the individuals and shown as the motive force of history. The whole process was thus conceived as a process of the self-estrangement of "Man", and this was essentially due to the fact that the average individual of the later stage was always foisted on to the earlier stage, and the consciousness of a later age on to the individuals of an earlier. Through this inversion, which from the first is an abstract image of the actual conditions, it was possible to transform the whole of history into an evolutionary process of consciousness.

Finally, from the conception of history we have sketched we obtain these further conclusions: (1) In the development of productive forces there comes a stage when productive forces and means of intercourse are brought into being, which, under the existing relationships, only cause mischief, and are no longer productive but destructive forces (machinery and money); and connected with this a class is called forth, which has to bear all the burdens of society without enjoying its advantages, which, ousted from society, is forced into the most decided antagonism to all other classes; a class which forms the majority of all members of society, and from which emanates the consciousness of the necessity of a fundamental revolution, the communist consciousness, which may, of course, arise among the other classes too through the contemplation of the situation of this class. (2) The conditions under which definite productive forces can be applied are the conditions of the rule of a definite class of society, whose social power, deriving from its property, has its practical-idealistic expression in each case in the form of the State; and, therefore, every revolutionary struggle is directed against a class, which till then has been in power.¹²⁰ (3) In all revolutions up till now the mode of activity always remained unscathed and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity, a new distribution of labor to other persons, whilst the communist revolution is directed against the preceding mode of activity, does away with labor, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognized as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc. within present society; and (4) Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is, necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.

¹²⁰ [Marginal note by Marx:] The people are interested in maintaining the present state of production.