

"BACK TO LANGE" - BERNSTEIN'S NATURAL LAW BASIS

"BACK TO LANGE" - THE NATURAL LAW BASIS FOR
EDUARD BERNSTEIN'S "EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM"

By

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ABSTRACT

Bernstein scholarship has not clearly identified the philosophical intentions of the "arch-Revisionist", but has confined itself to noting general characteristics of his mode of thought and possible influences upon it, as well as situating it vaguely or negatively in terms of contemporary "schools." Justification for not proceeding further with analysis has been sought in the circumstances that Bernstein was self-taught, that he had an enormous range of intellectual contacts, that the Marxism of the Second International was incoherent, and that Marxism is, itself, a protean doctrine.

This thesis attempts to illuminate Bernstein's philosophical intentions by reviewing his development against a much broader intellectual background than has been customary. Following the methods of "comparative philosophy" of Henry Corbin, Hans Jonas, Eric Voegelin and Ernest Tuveson, it outlines several stages in the process of the gradual supplanting of Middle Platonism by the Hermetic gnosis in the modern period, and notes the distinctive attitudes to being characteristic of them. It examines the roots of the Hegelian dialectic, and those of its more philosophically conservative rival, German Romanticism, and points out the affinity of Bernstein's structure of consciousness with the latter movement.

The philosophical content of Bernsteinian Revisionism is presented as the result of the outworking of an essentially Romantic cast of mind, accelerated by Bernstein's period of "socialist scholarship" and close association with Christian Socialists and unorthodox philosophical Naturalists during his years of exile in London.

Bernstein's "evolutionary socialism" is distinguished from the nationalist-socialism of the Blochian Revisionists, the panpsychic evolutionism popular with the German working-class, Anarchist thought, and monistic Naturalism generally. It is shown to be structurally analogous to the pluralistic notion of progress of the "common sense" component of German Romanticism (a residue of Middle Platonic noetic experience), derived from the Scottish Enlightenment.

The call to go "back to Lange" thus appears to have been little more than a groping attempt, on Bernstein's part, to focus his return to what was, in effect, a Pragmatic version of the Aristotelian "natural law" world-view.

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INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of his pioneering study of Bernsteinian Revisionism, published in 1952, Peter Gay concludes that "he who would revise Revisionism, therefore, ought to begin with its philosophic basis."¹ This he identifies as "Naturalism", which, he avers, "is difficult to define . . . 'Naturalists' . . . share a temper, a way of looking at the world."² He does not specify what this temper is, but refers the reader to a collection of essays published in 1944 under the editorship of Yervant H. Krikorian of the City College of New York, Naturalism and the Human Spirit, which confirms his assessment that "Naturalism . . . has been given widely different interpretations".³ The "temper" linking these philosophers (and thus, one would suspect, their admirers) is a suspicion of what might be called extramundane claims; in short, the "Naturalist" appears, to a greater or lesser degree, to be at base simply the non- or anti- Supernaturalist.

Such a broad classification does not really help the analyst, let alone the neo-Revisionist, to identify Bernstein's "philosophic basis" with any degree of precision, and, indeed, Gay himself is able to tell us only what this basis was not:

The core of the Revisionist philosophy has now begun to emerge. We know that Bernstein abandoned dialectical materialism and approached, but did not adopt, neo-Kantianism. He stood between these two major schools and really belongs to a third: Naturalism.⁴

As, on Gay's own account, no such modern "school" of philosophy as "Naturalism" exists, and, in fact, both dialectical materialism and neo-Kantianism are anti-Supernaturalist and hence "Naturalist" schools themselves, the reader is not encouraged to take the exhortation to examine Bernstein's "philosophic basis" very seriously. Clearly, Gay does not himself do so, for while he admires Bernstein's honesty and perspicacity, and defends him against the charge that his lack of formal training in philosophy made him an intellectual light-weight, he, nevertheless, states his belief that had Bernstein "been a metaphysician, he would probably have written off the errors [in Marx's predictions] in detail but [would have] retained the original method."⁵ It is thus not Bernstein's philosophy per se, Gay thinks, that effectively challenged Marxism, but his "common sense" and "powerful skeptical and empiricist sympathies."⁶

Subsequent Bernstein scholarship in both English and German has continued to assume that although he may have been an admirable fellow personally, who made a number of astute observations concerning Marxist theory and actual experience, the arch-Revisionist was fundamentally an eclectic whose theory (and its underlying thought) was a pastiche of "influences" that offered no coherent challenge to Marxism. Roger Fletcher, for example, writes:

One is obliged to conclude, with Gerhard A. Ritter, Hans Mommsen, J.P. Nettl, Gary Steenson and others, that Bernstein, as he himself readily admitted, was not, after all, a theoretician.⁷

Bo Gustafsson sums up his assessment of Bernstein's relationship with the neo-Kantian thinkers amongst the German Social Democrats and with his philosophical mentors in general in the following unflattering terms:

Bernstein war in diesem Punkt nicht nur vom Neukantianismus, sondern auch von Croce (der jedoch seinerseits an die zeitgenössische deutsche Philosophie anknüpfte) beeinflusst. Aber der Neukantianismus scheint doch die Hauptquelle gewesen zu sein. Das darf nicht zu anspruchsvoll interpretiert werden. Bernstein war kein Philosoph. Als er in den Jahren 1898 und 1899 Kontakt zu beiden führenden Neukantianern der deutschen Sozialdemokratie Ludwig Woltmann und Karl Vorländer aufnahm, wurden diese seine 'Helfer und Schildknappen.' Bernstein brauchte nämlich alle philosophische Hilfe, die er bekommen konnte . . .⁸

Thus, after over thirty years of Bernstein scholarship in both English and German (Fletcher's book combines the current results of both), we have been told, in effect, that although Bernsteinian Revisionism seemed, and may still seem, to offer a serious challenge to Marxism, that challenge cannot be identified as philosophical or theoretical at heart.

In one sense this is obviously true. Bernstein had no pretensions to being a philosopher, and he thought of his theory as a modification of Marxism and of himself as a Marxist. It is thus pointless to attempt to attach him to another contemporary "school" of political theory or of philosophy as his Social Democratic enemies did at the time,

and as some scholars do still. Rather, it is better to try to understand what might be called his philosophical intentions or, in Hans Jonas' terminology, his "myth", that is the speculative expression of his "total attitude toward being."⁹ Such an attempt is inevitably an exercise in what Henry Corbin calls "comparative philosophy"¹⁰ or phenomenology, and necessarily requires that the subject of investigation (in this case Bernstein's "myth") be taken seriously as a philosophical and theoretical datum.

A good introduction to Bernstein's "myth" is his memoir, My Years of Exile: Reminiscences of a Socialist, which Bernstein wrote in 1915 specifically "to give utterance to personal impressions and experiences, and, for good or ill, to tell something of the character of the writer."¹¹ The latter purpose is served abundantly even in the first chapter of the book, and the following passage from it ("Across the St. Gotthard [Pass] in 1878") is very revealing of Bernstein's existential stance:

And what a journey it was! First of all came the wonderful Reussthal with its luxuriant vegetation. As on the Lake of the Four Cantons memories of Schiller's Tell had been awakened by the Rütli and the Tell'splatte, so here, as we passed, behind Flüelen, the old market-town of Altdorf, the place of the legendary shooting of the apple, it was impossible not to think of the great poet, who had sung of this neighbourhood to such wonderful effect, although he had never seen it. What a power over the emotions had the legend to which he had given enduring life, and how completely the heart failed to respond to the historical truth, established by careful research! We ought sorely to lament this victory of the glorified legend over the unveiled truth, were

it not at the same time a victory of the struggle to preserve the ideals which uplift us above the littleness and the doubts of every day. The men of the Four Cantons who revolted against the government of the Hapsburgs may in reality have been ignorant stock-farmers, who, historically considered, in comparison with that Government, were reactionaries; yet, their fight was none the less a fight for right, and, as such, is worthy of commemoration. Men see in William Tell the ideal avenger of an oppressed people, and it is well for them that they refuse to allow him to be taken from them.

Such reflections thronged my mind at the sight of the pictures on the house-fronts which one sees on driving through Altdorf, many of which depict incidents of the struggle of the Four Cantons. The inscriptions on the shops and inns, on the other hand, told us that it was the proletarian children of Italy who were building the St. Gotthard Railway, which was then under construction. There was hardly one of these inscriptions that had not the Italian version under the German. From the main highway the coach road climbed upwards in innumerable windings, continually crossing the Reuss on stone bridges so that the traveller had the river now on his right hand, now on his left, but always deep below him, where it made its way onward, foaming and roaring, over a bed full of blocks of stone of every size . . .

On either side, continually assuming fresh forms, were the mighty, upward-shouldering mountains, still wooded here and there; above was the cloudless vault of heaven; by the wayside was the lovely Alpine vegetation; and below us, framed in luxuriously over-grown banks, was the roaring Reuss. The buoyant air was faintly aromatic. All this together worked like magic on the emotions. The fairy-tales which one reads in childhood rose to one's mind; one found one's self in the world which they described; the stillness all around--for I kept, for the most part, at a respectful distance from the other travellers--gave rise to a mood which realised the words of the poet, false as a matter of natural history, yet containing so much truth from the standpoint of human history:

'The world is perfect everywhere
Where man is not with his pain and care',¹²

The experiences described are those of a young man on his first significant trip out of his country. (Bernstein was twenty-eight at the time, and was on his way to Lugano, Switzerland, to join the Socialist publicist Karl Höchberg as his secretary), but, of course, they were recorded when he was elderly (65). Bernstein, however, is fully aware that this circumstance probably colours his recollections:

It is as well that human beings die. Every man becomes a romantic when he has passed his fiftieth year. However closely the intellect keeps step with the time, the emotions are more and more concerned with the past . . .¹³

Nevertheless, Bernstein believes that his account of his 1878 St. Gotthard thoughts and feelings is substantially veracious, for he introduces it with what amounts to an epistemological theory:

When Mother Nature so created me that I belong to the second category of travellers rather than to the first, [he has just classified travellers as either "active", i.e. those who prepare to do and see things, or "passive", i.e. those who don't] she also gave me, in compensation, a higher degree of susceptibility than that with which the average person is blessed, and as makeweight the cognate disposition to reconcile myself readily with any situation. This last is an attribute which from the general point of view cannot be called a virtue. For if it were innate in all of us it would go ill with social and cultural progress. The gift of susceptibility, however, is a gift that hurts no one, but helps one over many a blunder.¹⁴

This constitutes Bernstein's mature analysis of his "St. Gotthard experiences" as well as, by extension, of his experiences in general. It reveals that he believed that there were in humans "innate dispositions" that governed

their actions and their mode of thinking, thus determining character and experience, and that these dispositions were identifiable natural powers that were present in all in varying degrees. This implies, of course, the existence of recognizable general human "types", classifiable on the basis of the preponderance in their character of the various dispositions.

Bernstein's "characterology" certainly reflects a "common sense" mode of thinking, but if applied to his own "St. Gotthard experiences" it shows itself to be complex and subtle. His self-recognized "susceptibility" and adaptability are much in evidence in the account, but other "dispositions" are also at work. The general impression made by the passage, indeed, is of a concert of "dispositions" - which we might name as appreciation of natural beauty, literary and childhood memory, poetic imagination, historical sense, idealism, sense of a "higher law", sympathy with "the People", Romantic awe of the great and rugged, sense of "the faerie" or numinous, Romantic Sehnsucht or longing etc. - working together under the critical control of the reason to produce a coherent understanding of the various imaginal modes that make up the experience.

It is important to notice the underlying existential stance here (the first principle of Bernstein's speculation). It is reason or rationality, which he sees as properly governing the testimony of the senses as filtered through the different

"dispositions" or operations of the imagination. However, Bernstein's "reason" is neither the calculating ratiocinative power that dominates the will and is dominated by sensations, as it is, in varying degrees, for Hobbes and Locke, nor the noetic power of Aristotelian "Right Reason", with its insight into the reality behind appearance. Rather, it is a "critical common sense" that "makes sense" of the other "senses". It is also important to note that Bernstein does not postulate a "moral sense" separate from the reason, as the "moral sentimentalists", such as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Adam Smith do, nor does he elevate the imagination into an "aesthetic sense", or "means of grace", as Ernest Tuveson puts it,¹⁵ independent of, and superior to, the reason, as Romanticism does. Above all, Bernstein's foundational "myth" is obviously radically at odds with the non-epistemological ontology of mind of Hegelian "dialectical" thinking, with its conflation of subject and object.

When Bernstein's "myth" is objectified as political theory, its critical common-sense rationality is still clearly evident. George Lichtheim's succinct description of Bernsteinian Revisionism's chief features indicates that what Peter Gay and others take to be its "anti-metaphysical" bias is, in fact, a teleology of the emergent potentiality of human reason, hostile to dogma of any sort:

The first point to be noted is that Bernstein's 'revision' and [Karl] Kautsky's seemingly orthodox 'interpretation', of Marxism had at least one thing in common: both were equally far removed from the Hegelian origins of Marx's own thought, with the difference that Kautsky was nonetheless at pains to acknowledge the importance of Hegel's philosophy, while Bernstein frankly avowed his distaste for it (Die Voraussetzungen, p.71). Like the great majority of contemporary democrats, both men held an evolutionary view of historical progress. Again, in common with the dominant outlook of the age, their understanding of historical method was coloured by their somewhat uncritical acceptance of the theoretical model employed by the natural sciences. But whereas Kautsky--in conformity with Engels, and under the impulsion of his own life-long preoccupation with Darwin--conceived history as subject to immutable laws, and socialism as the determined goal of this process, Bernstein increasingly shifted the emphasis from causal determination to freedom. Historical necessity, in his view, was gradually giving way to conscious control: men were even now increasingly able to determine their circumstances in accordance with their desires. Indeed, the existence of socialist strivings was proof of this. Paradoxically, Bernstein maintained that the goal was desirable just because it was not inevitable. Socialism represented 'something that ought to be, or a movement toward something that ought to be.' In this sense it could even be described as 'utopian.' And since it was the realization of an ideal, its aims could not be deduced from either science or history. They are autonomous and carried their own justification (Bernstein, Wie ist wissenschaftlicher Sozialismus möglich? Berlin, 1901).¹⁶ [*Italics in original*]

Such rationalism is perhaps better understood as "spilled metaphysics" (on the analogy of Romanticism as "spilled religion"¹⁷) than as anti-metaphysical, for its dislike for an immanentism of either the "idealist" or "materialist" sort stems from the resistance of the "rational governor" to its absorption by process, whether it be "the

dialectic" or "the struggle for survival." Bernstein's attack on both the former and deterministic materialism in Die Voraussetzungen on what can only be called philosophical grounds illustrates the seriousness of what he called "the chief aim of this work," as set out in the preface, "to strengthen equally the realistic and the idealistic element in the socialist movement."¹⁸

Clearly Bernstein had what may be properly thought of as a philosophical intention in his critique of Marx, but his argument has been so little regarded that the core of it - "The Snares of the Hegelian Dialectical Method", - part 'a' of chapter 2 of Die Voraussetzungen was left out of the original English translation of 1909 and all subsequent English editions without explanation, and Bernstein scholarship, at least in English, does not even take any note of this fact.¹⁹ This is particularly ironic in that Rosa Luxemburg's astute observations during the "Revisionist controversy" in 1899 that "Bernstein constructed his theory on the basis of English conditions. He sees the world through 'English spectacles' . . . ,"²⁰ while losing something of their intended polemical force in the interim, have proved to be remarkably anticipatory of the conclusions of current scholarship. Helga Grebing writes, for example, that Bernstein's "decades of expatriate experience, above all in England . . . enabled him to anticipate forces that were transforming capitalism in Germany as well."²¹ H.-C. Schröder concludes that Bernstein "can be wholly comprehended only in the English context. In many ways he was a

'Radical' in the English sense."²² Roger Fletcher thinks that the influence of English theorists on Bernstein during his thirteen-year stay in Britain was not simply great but decisive (all of Bernstein's mature theoretical works issued from this period):

His receptivity to his English environment and contacts was indeed staggering in its range. Cobdenism and J.A. Hobson, Mill, Spencer and positivism, Liberal Imperialism, Fabianism, the national efficiency standpoint, the New Liberalism and ethical or Nonconformist socialism were all superimposed on what he had learnt from Marx, Engels, and Lassalle, to say nothing of F.A. Lange, Eugen Dühring and his liberal Jewish upbringing . . .

Although he was never a neo-Kantian, the inspiration behind both his revisionism and his international relations theory was essentially ethical, liberal-democratic and British . . .²³

The irony of the situation is that Bernstein's only systematic foray into the realm of formal philosophy is largely unavailable, and, in fact, generally unknown to British scholars, whereas most German historians, who have the second chapter of Die Voraussetzungen available as a matter of course, have, according to Fletcher, shown "a persistent refusal . . . to contemplate Bernstein in any but his German context."²⁴ Accordingly, European commentators who tend to take Bernstein's philosophical pretensions more seriously, see his fundamental attitudes as derivative from German sources, and writers in English take very little notice of them at all. The Swedish scholar Bo Gustafsson, for example, devotes several pages of his extensive study of Bernstein's

theory and its roots specifically to "Bernstein's Philosophy."²⁵ This he sees as at base a rationalization for a reformist programme²⁶ that Bernstein tacked together from bits of Kant, neo-Kantianism, Croce, Sorel, and particularly F.A. Lange, Hermann Cohen and his early mentor Karl Höchberg. Indeed, Gustafsson thinks that the philosophical development that was responsible for the outpouring of critical books and articles by Bernstein in the eighteen-nineties and early nineteen-hundreds was really only an elaboration of the mind of the young "Höchbergist", as Bebel accused Bernstein of being. As Gustafsson succinctly concludes: "Der Kreis hatte sich somit auf seltsame Weise geschlossen."²⁷ On the other hand, Fletcher asks the question, "Was Bernstein, as Peter Gay has argued, essentially a critical naturalist?", but does not offer any answer.²⁸ Instead, he is content to label Bernstein with an epithet originally intended for another: "What has been said of J.S. Mill--that in an age of eclectics, he has considerable claim to be regarded as the arch-eclectic, . . . --is manifestly at least as applicable to the 'arch-revisionist'."²⁹

This appellation may be adequate descriptively, but it leaves the questions of whether Bernstein had a consistent philosophical intention, and what that intention was, unaddressed.

Peter Gay, in the course of his detailed discussion of Bernstein's philosophy,³⁰ observes that although Bernstein

called his thought "Positivist" and his revision of Marxism, termed by him "organic evolutionism" was "closely akin to the view of the nineteenth-century Positivists", he actually was not a Positivist.³¹ The reason Gay gives for his refusal of Bernstein's own label for himself is instructive:

It is of importance to note that Bernstein himself held a different view. He said: 'My way of thinking would make me a member of the school of Positivist philosophy and sociology. And I would like to have my lecture How is Scientific Socialism Possible? taken as proof of this attitude of mine . . . ' *Entwicklungsgang*, p.40. I cannot accept this. He shared an empiricist outlook with the Positivists, but it is possible to be an empiricist without being a Positivist (note our present-day Pragmatists). Bernstein was far too much interested in ethics ever to be a Positivist. Comte's ethics (and Comte was, after all, the father of nineteenth-century Positivism) is purely manipulative.³²

Now this is much more helpful than vague references to a nonexistent Naturalist "school", in that it suggests that Bernstein's thinking is a specific sort of naturalism. Furthermore, whether this is intentional or not, it directs attention to a philosophical movement that arose in the late nineteenth century, Pragmatism, and thus to a particular essay in the Krikorian volume, Herbert W. Schneider's "The Unnatural", which offers a typology of "naturalisms" and an argument in favour of pragmatic naturalism. A brief consideration of some of the features of this latter, and of its distinctions from other forms of naturalism, pointed out by Schneider, suggests resonances with Bernstein's "organic evolutionism", and the Bernsteinian approach in general:

For natural knowledge is an inquiry into the working interrelations of things, and though there be many specific types of workings, and many individual differences, the search for the nature in things is a search for their dynamic continuity. Mechanisms are things co-operating toward a result. A mechanism is a teleological structure To regard all natural mechanisms as one vast machine implies the discovery of a world product or of some identifiable end to which all things contribute. Failing this discovery or faith, the search for mechanism is really a search for the structure of 'mechanisms' (plural). Particular processes eventuate in particular things or circumstances, but in their working they may exhibit common principles and forces

Nature conceived in these terms seems to me to have the same place in naturalistic philosophy that 'reality' has in idealism. Just as reality is, according to idealism, the reality in and of appearances, not an unconditional absolute, so nature is not an absolute or self-contained process, but a relativity, continuity, or co-operation among processes. Nature is neither in things nor external to them, but of them. It is normative. The real is the genuine

Nature is a norm, but neither a statistical norm nor an ideal. The 'real' is commonly identified either with the ideal or with the actual, and there seems to be no third alternative. It seems to me that the natural lies between the ideal and the actual. The empiricist or actuarial conception of nature as a norm lies, in a sense, between the ideal and the actual. But such a norm, based on expectancy and probability, is what I mean by a statistical norm; it is inadequate for a theory of nature, whether or not it be adequate for a theory of causality. 'Natural' means more than probable. For example, both an ideal love and an unnatural love may be statistically exceptional, but they are not instances on the same scale and may bear no direct relation to each other or to average love. Natural love is not average love but normal, healthy love. There is something artificial about both sexless and homosexual love. The statistical status of these artificial kinds of love may be quite different in Plato's culture and in ours, and the moral evaluation of them may be different too. But it seems to me that it is possible to define their

unnatural character without examining either their statistical or their moral status, just as it is possible to identify a normal or healthy organism without calculating averages . . .

That is natural which works . . . The vagueness and plainness of my use of the term 'working' makes the theory liable to a variety of caricatures. But in spite of this danger I prefer it to the idealist's identification of the real with the ideal, to the orthodox naturalist's belief that all things are equally natural, and to the orthodox empiricist's belief that the probable is natural.

There is only one order of nature, but there are many ways of being out of order . . . If the natural and the unnatural types of being have been correctly distinguished here, it follows that nature is neither a perfectly indifferent order nor a single integrated process, but a selective, directive continuity among processes. The presence of the unnatural is a constant reminder that normally things are neither indifferent nor alien to each other. There are natural affinities and natural enemies, not for nature as a whole, but relative to any given process.

All values and disvalues, both the natural and the unnatural, are relative to the nature of a particular process. Consequently, in the analysis of natural values means are related not only to ends, but also to each other. This is another way of saying that there are few means which are means to only one end. Though ends be ever so diversified, they have a common matrix of means, in so far as they are natural . . . The network of means makes it possible to go in many directions from any given point and thus provides many opportunities at the same time . . . the structure of the chessboard makes the game both possible and difficult; then, too, easier games can be played on the same board, or it can be used in other ways without playing any game whatsoever. Similarly, the dynamic relatedness of natural means is not so determinate as to make only one pursuit of one end practical, nor is it so indeterminate as to enable any means to serve any end. There is enough 'accident' in things to encourage gambling and enough mechanism to make planning possible . . .

There may be little sense in reviving the design argument without the universal designer and without general determination, since the design argument has been used chiefly to buttress these old faiths. Nevertheless, there is homely truth in it. It is important to know what things fit together

and which are incompatible. There are affinities in things, and, though they explain nothing, they are the subject matter of all explanations. To ignore design in things is one of the most serious forms of ignoratio elenchi; not because the natura rerum is the aim of all things, but because knowledge naturally is of designs and patterns. The mind participates in nature in so far as it works on workings. To understand things in operation it operates on them, to be sure, but it must be guided by the norms of operation. To know nature is more than a knowledge of efficient causes and less than a knowledge of final causes; it is to know the relation of the efficient and the final. It is knowledge of relativity. It does not pretend to say why all things fit together or what they should serve. But it can tell what things can do as a matter of fact.³³

The foregoing, I think, represents the lineaments of Schneider's "pragmatic naturalism", and I have quoted him so extensively because I intend to return to many of the details of his argument in the body of this thesis. It is sufficient at this point, however, to notice what sort of metaphysics is "spilled" here--it is clearly the Aristotelian, as Schneider himself recognizes.³⁴ The separation of Becoming and Being of the ancient scheme may have disappeared, but the contemplation of physis by the modern, according to Schneider, still reveals the complex organic realization of potentials of which Aristotelians thought as degrees of the achievement of the perfection of transcendent Being. Such practical wisdom may remain agnostic concerning the nature of final causes, but it clearly retains a sense of final cause and hence, remains "metaphysical" rather than "positive" in Comte's sense. I shall be arguing that the "organic evolutionist" political theory that Bernstein concocted from a number of sources was

of this "pragmatic naturalist" type.

Bernstein's core "myth" or underlying existential stance from the first, however, was indeed the "common sense" that Gay rather grudgingly admires.³⁵ By "common sense" I do not mean commonly accepted ideas, pre-critical thought, or "relatively natural world view", but rather, as Eric Voegelin puts it, "the habit and judgment and conduct of a man formed by ratio . . . the habit of an Aristotelian spoudaios, the mature man who desires what is in truth desirable, minus the luminosity of his knowledge of the ratio as the source of his rational judgment and conduct . . . a civilizational habit that presupposes noetic experience, without the man of this habit having a differentiated knowledge of noesis . . ." ³⁶

This is the "common sense" of the Scottish Enlightenment, particularly of Thomas Reid and his school, with its leverage against both theological and metaphysical dogmatism on the one hand and the empiricist scepticism of Locke and Hume and the subjectivism of the "moral sentimentalists" Hutcheson and Smith on the other. As Voegelin makes clear, it is related to the political rationality of Aristotle's Politics ("in so far as it does not deal with the logos of consciousness itself, [the Politics] is a commonsense study of typical situations that arise in society and history when man attempts to order his collective existence"), and is thus "a genuine residue of noesis." ³⁷

The Aristotelian spoudaios was such because he had developed his power or phronesis, which is the ability to "mediate between the poles of the tension" that exists "in man's concrete experience of justice which is everywhere the same and yet, in its realization, changeable and everywhere different."³⁸ What is "right by nature" (physei dikaion) is thus what the spoudaios discovers is "right by nature in its tension between divine immutable essence and human existentially conditioned mutability."³⁹ According to Voegelin, the "compact type of rationality" known as eighteenth-century "common sense" philosophy retained for the "Anglo-American cultural area" this Aristotelian idea of "natural law" (minus its "metaphysical" background).⁴⁰ Both the concepts of "natural law" of the High Middle Ages (eternal, immutable laws of God) and of the modern period (eternal, immutable laws of Nature), which Voegelin sees as gnostic derailments of noesis, are offered resistance, although not overthrown, by such a common sense view of natural law.⁴¹

It is this type of natural law approach that Bernstein exhibits as a tendency from the outset of his political career, the circumstances of which serve to strengthen what is initially an attitude into a critical enterprise. Bernstein's development moves from an inchoate Romantic revolutionism that collects "intimations of the beyond" from many sources, through a critical examination of the historical roots of modern ideologies in the seventeenth century (his work in the

British Library on "Cromwell and Communism") that leads to his abandonment of the "dialectic", and to his conscious adoption of the critical common sense view that he has seen in practice among British liberals and socialists (expressed in Die Voraussetzungen). His natural law model is never stated and, indeed, is never recognized by him to be such, but this is hardly surprising since it is not known to his mentors by this terminology.

Under these circumstances, it may well be wondered how Bernstein could have recovered something of the Aristotelian natural law view, as I am claiming, without an extensive academic training. The feat, I shall argue, was achieved through a fortunate combination of native inclination and opportunity. Stated rather simplistically, Bernstein's intellectual activity during his "years of exile" from 1878 to 1901 replicated in miniature and in reverse the stages of the "spilling" of the Renaissance world view which was still substantially Aristotelian, or, more generally, Middle Platonic.

As Ernest Lee Tuveson has shown, the process by which the Artistotelian perfect Being became conflated with the Becoming of Nature and then of Man was begun in the fifteenth century with the introduction of the Gnostic Hermetica into Western thought under the auspices of Lorenzo di Medici.⁴² The same author points out that the first phase in the wide acceptance of this essentially emanationist metaphysic involved its permeation of the Christian millennarian tradition and the revival of the cognate mediaeval Joachite speculation to

create a Utopian millennialist politics.⁴³ A second stage in the falling and unfolding process of Hermetism saw the fragmentation of the "levels of being" of the Neo-Platonic world-view (upon which Hermetism had been parasitic) and the emergence of contractarian theories of consciousness and society, as well as moral sentimentalism and the Romantic aesthetic of Nature.⁴⁴ The final stage, which could be characterized, following Tuveson, as the stage of "absorption" saw the Romantic imagination become the means to power.⁴⁵

For Tuveson, a specialist in the study of theological and literary history, Walt Whitman's bombastic autoerotic nationalism is the epitome of the realized gnosis of Hermes Trismegistus. For Voegelin, a political philosopher, it is Hegel's inversion of Aristotle and St. Paul that fulfils this role:

. . . In the Hegelian conception, philosophy begins as the 'love of wisdom' in the classic sense and moves from this imperfect state toward its consummation as 'real knowledge' (wirkliches Wissen) in the System. From the classic participation in the divine nous it advances through the dialectical progress of the Geist in history, to identification with the nous in self-reflexive consciousness. The tension toward the ground of existence, considered by Hegel to be a state of diremption (Zerrissenheit) or alienation (Entfremdung), is meant to be superceded by a state of concilation (Versoehnung), when the ground has become incarnate in existence through the construction of the System. The metaxy [the "in-between"] has been transmuted into immanence. This speculative magic (Zauberworte, Zauberkraft) by which the thinker brings the divine ground into his possession is what Plato has called 'eristics'; Hegel, on the contrary, calls it 'dialectics'. Thus, the meaning of the terms has been inverted.

Moreover, being a first-rate thinker, Hegel plays on the Pauline symbols of the divine pneuma

and the 'depth of God' (1 Corin. 2:6-13) the same tricks as on Aristotle's nous. Again placing his inversion in a strategic position, on the last page of the Phaenomenologie he draws the divine pneuma into the metaxy by presenting his System as the exhaustive revelation of the depth that had been intended, but only partially achieved, by Christ and Paul.

In a clean sweep he transfers the authority of both reason and revelation to his System and to himself as its creator . . .⁴⁶

Voegelin characterizes the foregoing as "a gnostic experience with a strong affinity to Jacob Böhme",⁴⁷ the German theosophist (1575-1624). Hegel certainly read Böhme,⁴⁸ and the Hegelian founder of the "Tubingen School" of literary-historical criticism of the Bible, F.C. Baur, produced a study of ancient Gnosticism (Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religions-Philosophie, 1835), which demonstrated its affinity with the Hegelian philosophy.⁴⁹ Böhme's system, most accessible in English through Clifford Bax's translation of The Signature of All Things,⁵⁰ describes in Paracelsan terms the issuing of all opposites from an Ungrund or Urgrund, known by Böhme through direct divine illumination, and the process of the world as God's emanation through Contraction, Diffusion, and Agony to Love or complete manifestation.

Böhme's scheme, like early Hermetism, retains the co-inherent universe of levels of being of neo-Platonism as a superstructure, but at heart it is a self-contained and self-willed evolutionism. It clearly qualifies as an instance of what Hans Jonas describes as Gnostic "saving knowledge":

. . . Fundamentally it is nothing else but the transcendent history itself, because this either displays or implies all the enlightening truth that the world withholds and salvation requires . . . Gnostic myth is always, and essentially, the argument for the importance of its own communication, and also an account of its supranatural source. By virtue of both, revealed content and revelatory source, it claims saving power for itself qua known: it is, in short, the gnosis.⁵¹ [*Italics in original*]

Early nineteenth-century German thought, still heavily influenced by Christian theology, tended to be drawn to either Kantian "ethical rationalism" or Hegelian "speculative and mystical rationalism".⁵² The latter eventually triumphed, and particularly from 1830 to 1840, as Engels puts it, it "penetrated the most diversified sciences and leavened even popular literature and the daily press . . .".⁵³ After about 1845 until the early sixties, however, philosophy in general and Hegelianism in particular appeared to "end" (as Engels says), or disappear. Philosophy "reawakens" in Germany with the lectures of Friedrich Albert Lange, the founder of neo-Kantianism.

Lange notes of the interregnum that "the whole character of the time began to incline towards Materialism", but as both he and Karl Korsch point out, Hegelianism did not really "end" but fulfilled its immanentist essence as Feuerbachian sentimentalist "realism" (positivism), mystical materialism, and Marxism.⁵⁴

While Marx and Engels greeted the evident materialist result of Hegelian emanationism as truly what Hegel had claimed for it, the fulfilment of philosophy, Lange, in his

monumental History of Materialism, considered it to be a "relapse":

The great relapse of Hegel compared with Kant consists in his entirely losing the idea of a more universal mode of knowing things as opposed to the human mode of them. His whole system moves within the circle of our thoughts and fancies as to things, to which high-sounding names are given, without our ever getting to understand what validity can be attached to phenomena and to the notions collected from them. The antithesis between 'essence' and 'appearance' is in Hegel nothing more than an antithesis of two human modes of conception, which are soon again confounded. The phenomenon is defined as the appearance filled with the essence, and reality is thus where the phenomenon is the entire and adequate manifestation of the essence. The delusion that there can be any such thing as 'entire and adequate manifestation of the essence' in the phenomenon has extended to Feuerbach also, and yet he explains reality as being simply sensibility, and this it is that brings him near to the Materialists . . .⁵⁵

The materialism into which Hegelian subjectivism resolves itself may be a brake upon metaphysical dogmatism - and Lange asserts that materialism has served this healthy purpose throughout history - but it merely poses the "metaphysical riddle" of consciousness anew:⁵⁶

It is precisely the atomistic theory which supports an idealistic theory of things; and, we may add, that precisely the resolution of psychical activity into brain and nerve mechanism is the surest way to the knowledge that here the horizon of our knowledge closes in, without touching the question what mind is in itself. The senses give us, as Helmholtz says, effects of things, not true pictures nor things in themselves. But to the mere effects belong also the senses themselves, together with the brain and the molecular movements which we suppose in it. We must therefore recognize the existence of a transcendental order of things, whether this

rests on 'things-in-themselves', or whether-- since even the 'thing in itself' is but a last application of our representative thought-- it rests on mere relations, which exhibit themselves in various minds as various kinds and stages of the sensible element, without our being able to conceive an adequate appearance of the absolute in a knowing mind . . .⁵⁷ [Emphasis in original].

This argument bears some resemblance to that of Reid against the scepticism that results from the representational theory of knowledge. Reid showed that if our ideas of things must be considered as pictures, then our ideas of "the senses" are nothing more than pictures, too. "Sense", therefore, must be active as well as passive, both providing us with immediate sensations as well as a noninferential belief in the existence of corresponding material objects which cause the sensations, particular instances of which belief may be true or false. Sensations thus "suggest" material objects, but neither provide us with absolute knowledge of their existence nor require that we doubt their existence absolutely.⁵⁸

Lange's philosophical intention, as expressed in the latter quotation above, is a similar "indirect realism" but as Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, the Scottish philosopher, pointed out, Lange's debt to the Kantian concept of "experience" viewed as a semi-independent world, identifiable with neither the facts of subjective consciousness nor a trans-subjective reality, led him to substitute "the physico-psychic organization" for the Kantian noumenal self and thus to leave his philosophy open to the anti-dogmatic "sceptical criticism" of Vaihinger

which, with inexorable logic, reduced neo-Kantianism to a purely subjective Idealism or solipsism in which the world, as Eduard von Hartmann puts it, "is transformed into the dream of the dreamer."⁵⁹

Peter Gay notes that diverse commentators have drawn parallels between Bernsteinian Revisionism and pre-Hegelian Enlightenment thought.⁶⁰ That this affinity has been seen is hardly surprising, as Bernstein grew up and came to maturity during the hey-day of the neo-Kantian philosophical revival, which was in a sense a reversion to the second stage of the immanentization of the Hermetic gnosis (the "meta-physical" in the Comtean scheme) described by Tuveson. Thus, Bernstein's early liberal radicalism, Romanticism, and moral sentimentalism, which attracted him to both the figures and works of Freiligrath, Schiller, Lassalle, Dühring, Marx, and Lange and his activity in the poetic, theatrical, and trade union fields was neither an unusual nor a specifically remarkable combination in the Germany of the 1870's and '80's except perhaps in its intensity. Bernstein's exile from Zurich in May 1888 to London, and his subsequent residence there until 1901, brought him into contact both personally and intellectually with a strand of Enlightenment thought that had entered Germany through the medium of theological speculation that belonged to the first Tuveson stage. Bernstein's historical studies of the Puritan revolution, his critical work on Lange, whose philosophy he apparently took seriously

for the first time,⁶¹ and his practical experience with British Radicals and socialists, with their "common sense" approach, produced a nervous breakdown⁶² which issued in his abandonment of the Hegelian dialectic and adoption of a moral evolutionism similar to that expounded by the eighteenth century Scottish School.

Bernstein, who had encountered Lange's philosophy first during his stay in Switzerland through Höchberg, now went "back to Lange" with the intellectual tools he had learned in Britain, such as the critical common sense philosophy of his friend and mentor Graham Wallas.⁶³ Addressing a German audience (in Die Voraussetzungen), he is thus recommending a return to what he considers to be the best accessible approach to his new natural law perspective when he exhorts his readers to go "back to Lange":

. . . If I did not fear that what I write should be misunderstood (I am, of course, prepared for its being misconstrued), I would translate Back to Kant by Back to Lange . . . What I have in mind is the distinguishing union in Lange of an upright and intrepid championship of the struggles of the working classes for emancipation with a large scientific freedom from prejudice which was always ready to acknowledge mistakes and recognise new truths . . . Today [the working-class movement] needs, in addition to the fighting spirit, the co-ordinating and constructive thinkers who are intellectually enough advanced to be able to separate the chaff from the wheat, who are great enough in their mode of thinking to recognize also the little plant that has grown on another soil than theirs . . .⁶⁴

"Back to Lange" meant, in effect, back to the critical common sense rationality of pragmatic natural law thinking of

the type advocated by the Scottish Enlightenment. In the course of his involvement in the Imperialism Debate, the Nationalist Question in World War I and the Homosexual Controversy in the SPD and the international socialist movement in general, Bernstein demonstrated natural law thinking at work.

NOTES

1. Gay, The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism, 299
2. Ibid., 161 and footnote 66
3. Ibid., (footnote) Aristotle, Spinoza, and Hobbes are all included under the "Naturalist" rubric by contributors
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 144
6. Ibid., 143, 144
7. Fletcher, Revisionism and Empire, 182
8. Gustafsson, Marxismus und Revisionismus, I, 111, 112
 "Bernstein was influenced in this point not only by neo-Kantianism, but also by Croce (who, however, referred to contemporary German philosophy himself). But neo-Kantianism appears to have been the main-spring. That must not be interpreted pretentiously. Bernstein was no philosopher. After he contacted both the prominent neo-Kantians of German Social-democracy, Ludwig Woltmann and Karl Vorländer in the years 1898 and 1899, these became his 'helpers and shield-bearers.' That is to say, Bernstein needed all the philosophical help that he could get . . ."
9. Jonas, Philosophical Essays, 291, 303
10. Corbin, The Concept of Comparative Philosophy
11. Bernstein, My Years of Exile, 5
12. Ibid., 13, 15
13. Ibid., 73
14. Ibid., 12
15. Tuveson, The Imagination as a Means of Grace
16. Lichtheim, Marxism, 295, 296
17. Lewis, The Pilgrim's Regress, 16
18. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, xxxii

19. Fletcher, (41 note 4) is the exception. (See Appendix A of this thesis for a translation)
20. Luxemburg, "Die englische Brille"
21. Grebing, Der Revisionismus in Fletcher, 124 ✓
22. Schröder, "Eduard Bernsteins Stellung zum Imperialismus vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg", in Fletcher, 143
23. Fletcher, 165, 166; 183, 184
24. Ibid., 5
25. Gustafsson, 109-115 (See Appendix B of this thesis for a translation)
26. Ibid., 109
27. Ibid., 115 "So the circle had closed in a strange way."
28. Fletcher, 140
29. Miller, "John Stuart Mill's Theory of International Relations", in Fletcher, 166
30. Chapter 6 of The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism
31. Gay, 146, 171
32. Ibid., 171, footnote 71
33. Schneider, in Krikorian (ed.) Naturalism and the Human Spirit, 123-26; 130-32
34. Ibid., 124, 125
35. Fletcher belittles it, but recognizes its efficacy.
36. Voegelin, Anamnesis, 212
37. Ibid., 212, 213
38. Ibid., 61, 62
39. Ibid., 60
40. Ibid., 211, 213
41. Ibid., 213

42. Tuveson, The Avatars of Thrice Great Hermes
43. Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia; Redeemer Nation
44. Tuveson, The Imagination as a Means of Grace
45. Tuveson, The Avatars of Thrice Great Hermes
46. Voegelin, Anamnesis, 108, 109
47. Ibid., 194
48. Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, "Jacob Boehme"
49. Rudolph, Gnosis; Douglas (ed.) The New Bible Dictionary, "The Tübingen School", 946, 947; Mozley, Ritschlianism, 1-3
50. Bohme, The Signature of all Things
51. Jonas, Philosophical Essays, "The Gnostic Syndrome", 271
52. Mozley, 1
53. Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, 15
54. Korsch, Marxism and Philosophy; F.A. Lange, The History of Materialism and Criticism of its Present Importance, II, 241-267
55. Lange, Ibid., II, 249
56. Ibid., III, 213, 214, 223
57. Ibid., III, 230
58. Seth Pringle-Pattison, Balfour Lectures on Realism; Daniels, Thomas Reid's Inquiry: The Geometry of Visibles and the Case for Realism
59. Seth Pringle-Pattison, Ibid., "The Epistemology of Neo-Kantianism and Subjective Idealism", 232-235
60. Gay, 164
61. Fletcher, 131: "Bernstein's alleged 'discovery of Lange' dated not from the late 1870's, when he had been private secretary to Karl Höchberg (his lasting influence on Bernstein has also been much exaggerated), but from January 1892, when he informed Kautsky that he had been reading books on and by Lange in the British Museum."

- 62. Fletcher, 158
- 63. Wallas, Human Nature in Politics; Bernstein, (ed.),
Politik und menschliche Natur
- 64. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 224

CHAPTER ONE

The Romantic Critique of the Dialectic

As was noted in the Introduction, George Lichtheim is of the opinion that Bernstein "frankly avowed his distaste for . . . the Hegelian philosophy."¹ Gustafsson summarizes Bernstein's remarks concerning the dialectic in Die Voraussetzungen,² and notes parallel views in Sorel and Jaures.³ However, Bernstein's critique of the dialectic makes no part of what Gustafsson considers as "Bernstein's philosophy."⁴ Roger Fletcher offers no discussion of Bernstein's relationship to the Hegelian dialectic at all, although he suggests that the arguments amongst German Social Democrats can be understood best in the context of the underlying "ambivalence" or "dichotomy" in Marx's theory of emancipation, one strand of which he sees as stemming from "philosophy" and the other from Hegelian thought:

. . . Marx himself is, and always has been, notoriously amenable to interpretation. Leaving aside the fact that some of Marx's early and most important writings were quite unknown at the time, we are still confronted with the problem of a profound ambivalence in Marx's own theory of emancipation. In the entire Marxist oeuvre there coexisted two distinct and irreconcilable models of emancipation. One derived from philosophy and postulated the unity of the individual and society, which was to become social reality through practical action. Overlaying this, and more characteristic of the mature Marx although Hegelian in origin, was a view of emancipation based on the logic of the objective historical process. Whereas the former model was inherently activist and

voluntarist, the latter was implicitly quietistic. This dichotomy existed in Marx's thought from the beginning and was never resolved by him. It cannot be explained away by reference to the dialectic or by identifying as the 'real' Marx either the young Marx or the mature Marx.

In their understanding of Marx the epigones in German Social Democracy faithfully duplicated this dichotomy. The problem was less that the SPD leadership read too much or too little into Marx than that they took too literal a view of Marx's objectivism. In fact, the interpretation of socialism among all factions in the Wilhelmine labour movement was closely bound up with the objective position . . .⁵

Aside from Fletcher's tantalizing reference to "philosophy" (as one source of the Marxist theory of emancipation as opposed to the Hegelian source), his general observation here that Marx may be interpreted, and applied, either voluntaristically or deterministically says little more than was embodied in the slogans of the antagonists within German Social-Democracy. To fault all these parties within the Party for "objectivism", however, is either to simply accuse them of taking Marx too seriously as a political theorist or (on Fletcher's own account) to say that they were all too Hegelian.

This analysis does not make much sense when the attitudes of the actual combatants are recalled. How can Luxemburg's "voluntarism" be squared with her defence of the Hegelian dialectic? Kautsky gives an apparently dialectical apology for revolutionary attentisme.⁶ Bernstein eschews Hegel and yet propounds a reformist evolutionism. The revolutionism of Liebknecht (as that of Eisner) stems from

his neo-Kantianism, and has nothing to do with the dialectic at all.

If the writings of Marx and his followers are pressed into this "voluntarist" versus "determinist" (or revolutionary versus evolutionary) analytical mould, real scholarly gaffes occur. In a paper unpublished in English, for example, Marxologist Lawrence Krader avers that Bernstein as an "evolutionary" interpreter of Marx was a materialist and a predestinarian on the analogy of John Calvin, both of which are positions that it is the point of Die Voraussetzungen (along with the 'snares of the dialectic') to attack. Krader writes:

. . . In presenting the revisionist doctrine of Marxism, Eduard Bernstein expounded his doctrine of the materialist interpretation of history and of historical necessity. His doctrine is one among many of the materialist interpretations; in his, the laws of natural history and human history are considered to be one and the same; historical necessity in human affairs arises out of the laws of nature; the revisionist doctrine of Bernstein sets forth the iron laws which will lead to socialism by predestination. As a materialist, Bernstein was conscious of the religious odor of destiny and predestination, and pointed to the doctrine of Calvin as an example of this. He therefore claimed that revisionism is Calvinism without God. He preached not divine but economic inevitability of all historical developments. From any point in time, he wrote, all further events are determined beforehand (Die Voraussetzungen, chapter 1). In support of this notion of historical fatality, he quoted Marx, who had written "Even when society has come to discover the track of the natural law which governs its movement--and it is the ultimate goal of this work to reveal the economic law of motion of modern society--it can neither leap over the stages of its natural development, nor decree them away. But it can shorten and soften the birth pangs." (Kapital,

Vorwort zur 1. Auflage, 1867)). Thus Bernstein considered that it was the task of social democracy to shorten and soften the transition to socialism. Socialism is inevitable for it is predestined. It is a natural predetermination . . .⁷

The contrast between this view of Bernstein and that of Lichtheim, quoted above, ("Paradoxically, Bernstein maintained that the goal was desirable just because it was not inevitable"),⁸ could not be more obvious (Fletcher and Gay agree with Lichtheim on this point).⁹ Krader appears to interpret Bernstein as a dialectical materialist without the dialectic, which, interestingly comes close to the understanding Gay has of Bernstein's critique of the dialectical method ("With the elimination of the dialectical method, the dialectical conception of historical change naturally fell by the wayside. Bernstein substituted a unilinear concept of progress, which was closely akin to the nineteenth century Positivists.")¹⁰

This is to say that Bernstein was what Herbert Schneider calls an "orthodox naturalist"; that is, a monist who takes Nature to be "the whole show", and all actions to be determined. Unfortunately for both Krader and Gay, Bernstein specifically denies this in Die Voraussetzungen.

Chapter 1 of this work, to which Krader refers, presents an argument against the deterministic interpretation of Marx, and specifically against monism.¹¹ The context of the remark about Calvin shows that Bernstein is attacking the materialist as a "Calvinist without God", that is, as a dogmatic determinist,

and is criticizing Marx himself for precisely this fault:

The question of the correctness of the materialist interpretation of history is the question of the determining causes of historic necessity. To be a materialist means first of all to trace back all phenomena to the necessary movements of matter. These movements of matter are accomplished according to the materialist doctrine from beginning to end as a mechanical process, each individual process being the necessary result of preceding mechanical facts. Mechanical facts determine, in the last resort, all occurrences, even those which appear to be caused by ideas. It is, finally, always the movement of matter which determines the form of ideas and the directions of the will; and thus these also (and with them everything that happens in the world of humanity) are inevitable. The materialist is thus a Calvinist without God. If he does not believe in a predestination ordained by a divinity, yet he believes and must believe that starting from any chosen point of time all further events are, through the whole of existing matter and the directions of force in its parts, determined beforehand.

The application of materialism to the interpretation of history means then, first of all, belief in the inevitableness of all historical events and developments. The question is only, in what manner the inevitable is accomplished in human history, what element of force or what factors of force speak the decisive word, what is the relation of the different factors of force to one another, what part in history falls to the share of nature, of political economy, of legal organizations, of ideas.

Marx . . . gives the answer, that he designates as the determining factor, the material productive forces and the conditions of production among men at the time. [There then follows a long quotation from the Preface to Marx's Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.¹²]

If we look at the other [than the two last] sentences [in the quotation] we are struck, above all, by their dogmatic wording . . . On the whole the consciousness and will of men appear to be a very subordinate factor of the material movement . . .¹³

Gay's interpretation of this passage flatly contradicts that of Krader, for he sees it as an attack on materialist determinism¹⁴ rather than as a defence of it (as Krader does). In the ensuing paragraphs, however, Bernstein goes on to show that he still considers himself to be a materialist in some sense, although a non-deterministic and non-monistic one:

The dependence of men on the conditions of production appears much more qualified in the explanation Friedrich Engels gives of historical materialism, during the lifetime of Karl Marx and in agreement with him, in his book against Dühring. There it reads that the 'final causes of all social changes and political revolutions' are to be sought, not in the brains of men but 'in changes of methods of production and exchange.' But 'final causes' includes concurrent causes of another kind--causes of the second or third degree, etc., and it is clear that the greater the series of such causes is, the more limited as to quantity and quality will be the determining power of the final causes . . .

In his later works Engels has limited still further the determining force of the conditions of production--most of all in two letters reprinted in the Sozialistischen Akademiker of October, 1895, the one written in the year 1890, the other in the year 1894. There, 'forms of law', political, legal, philosophical theories, religious intuitions or dogmas are enumerated as forces which influence the course of historical struggles and in many cases 'are factors preponderating in the determination of their form' . . .

. . . [I]t cannot be denied that Marx and Engels originally assigned to the non-economic factors a much less influence on the evolution of society, a much less power of modifying by their action the conditions of production than in their later writings . . .

. . . He who today employs the materialist theory of history is bound to employ it in its most developed, not in its original, form--that is, he is bound in addition to the development and influence of the productive forces and conditions of production to make full allowance for the ideas of law and morals, the historical and religious traditions of every epoch, the influences of geographical and other circumstances of nature--to which also the nature of man himself and his spiritual disposition belong . . .

. . . The purely economic causes create, first of all, only a disposition for the reception of certain ideas, but how these then arise and spread and what form they take, depend on the co-operation of a whole series of influences. More harm than good is done to historical materialism if at the outset one rejects as eclecticism an accentuation of the influences other than those of a purely economic kind, and a consideration of other economic factors than the technics of production and their foreseen development. Eclecticism--the selecting from different explanations and ways of dealing with phenomena--is often only the natural reaction from the doctrinaire desire to deduce everything from one thing and to treat everything according to one and the same method . . . It is the rebellion of sober reason against the tendency inherent in every doctrine to fetter thought . . .

. . . In modern society we have to distinguish . . . two great streams. On the one side appears an increasing insight into the laws of evolution and notably of economic evolution. Within this knowledge goes hand in hand, partly as its cause, partly again as its effect, an increasing capability of directing the economic evolution . . . Individuals and whole nations thus withdraw an ever greater part of their lives from the influence of a necessity compelling them, without or against their will . . .

. . . Sciences, arts, a whole series of social relations are today much less dependent on economics than formerly, or, in order to give no room for misconception, the point of economic development attained today leaves the ideological and especially the ethical, factors greater space for independent activity than was formerly the case. In consequence of this the interdependency of cause and effect between technical, economic evolution, and the evolution of other social tendencies is becoming always more indirect, and from that the necessities of the first are losing much of their power of dictating the form of the latter . . .

Thus we see the materialist conception of history today in another form than it was presented at first by its founders. It has gone through a development already, it has suffered limitations in absolutist interpretation. That is . . . the history of every theory. It would be the greatest retrogression to go back from the ripe form which Engels has given it in the letters to Conrad Schmidt to the first definitions and give it a 'monistic' interpretation based on these . . .¹⁵

This extensive statement of Bernstein's mature revisionist position in the first chapter of Die Voraussetzungen immediately makes a number of things about his philosophical intentions clear. He was not a determinist (pace Krader), but neither was he a "voluntarist", as Fletcher seems to believe. His critique of Marxist materialism (and of modern materialism in general) was immanent rather than given from the point of view of transcendent philosophy (developments within society and Marxist writing are the evidence he adduces to support his pluralism rather than arguments drawn from noetic experience). This evolutionary developmentalism is pointedly non-monistic, however; that is, the various "forces" and "factors" that he sees as part of the process are not reduced to one primary factor (e.g. matter) or force (e.g. thought) as in any kind of emergent evolutionism. The development he describes, in fact, he clearly believes to be relatively self-evident to "sober reason" and thus given in nature. Motion there certainly is in this formulation of the materialist view of history, but it is not the patterned motion of the Hegelian dialectic; law there certainly is, but it is the law of free critical common-sense rationality.

Ultimately "the nature of man himself" is Bernstein's touchstone.

Chapter two of Die Voraussetzungen makes it plain that Bernstein neither simply had "distaste" for the Hegelian dialectic (Lichtheim), nor merely moved it "to the periphery" of Marxism (Gay).¹⁶ Rather, as with the materialist component of Marxism, he revised the dialectic in a non-monist direction. This had the effect of splitting it into various elements, some of which Bernstein adopted and some of which he rejected--an operation analogous to that performed on the dialectic's theosophical progenitor by the German Romantics.

Georg Lukács notes that "it is no accident that the laws of the contradictory movement of evolution, the main principles of the dialectical method became known in Germany precisely during the period from Lessing to Heine [and] that Goethe and Hegel raised this method to the highest level attainable within the limits of bourgeois thinking".¹⁷ It is no accident because, just as the secularizing theology of the Puritan sects became the civil theology of British capitalism, so heterodox Lutheranism served the same function in Germany.

Lessing, a literary critic, dramatist, and lay theologian, lived from 1729 to 1781. At base a follower of Leibniz,¹⁹ he was dissatisfied with both Lutheran orthodoxy and the "neology" or skeptical natural theology derived from Locke, Tindal, Toland and Bayle.²⁰ It may be said that

Lessing invented the dialectic per se (although, as I have pointed out in the Introduction, it had Gnostic precursors) in order to overcome what Leonard P. Wessell calls his "cognitive crisis",²¹ which Wessell describes as the problem of reconciling "the rational and the empirical, the eternal and the temporal, the metaphysical and the historical, the universal and the particular, the necessary and the mutable",²² or, in a word, everything. The Christian doctrine of the Fall, which explains man's problems in terms of a primordial human hubris, is reinterpreted by Lessing as a deviation from the simple religion of nature caused by a "cognitive incapacity to grasp the universal, i.e. divine, in reality."²³ The solution is to "relativize any position, to think in terms of others, to change his own opinions, to affirm contradictory positions" so that "truth is for Lessing . . . a dynamic and continuously differentiating unit of reason and feeling, of the universal and the individual, of this and that position."²⁴ Enlightenment rationalism (of Locke et al) is as transformed by this method as is Christian theology, for its static bedrock of the testimony of the "natural light of reason" is broken up and made fluid.

Lessing's intellectual development has been studied carefully and his "dialectical" mode of thinking (as expressed in his mature works Ernst and Falk, Nathan the Wise and The Education of the Human Race) is recognized as a clever synthesis of the Leibnizian doctrine of a "pre-existent harmony" with Spinoza's monism and determinism, and Adam Ferguson's Scottish

School progressivism. The result is the proclamation of an "inner truth" or esoteric Christianity of the sort propounded by the Freemasons (Lessing was a Freemason and Leibniz a student of Rosicrucian alchemy).²⁵ This "truth" is identified by Lessing with the "eternal gospel" of Joachim of Fiore and the Franciscan Spirituals, as Henry Chadwick and Marjorie Reeves note,²⁶ in section 86-90 of The Education of the Human Race, but Lessing gives this Joachism a naturalistic interpretation:

It will assuredly come! the time of a new eternal gospel, which is promised in the primers of the New Covenant itself! [Revelation 14:6]

Perhaps even some enthusiasts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had caught a glimmer of this new eternal gospel, and only erred in that they predicted its arrival as so near to their own time.

Perhaps their 'Three Ages of the World' were not so empty a speculation after all, and assuredly they had no bad intentions when they taught that the new covenant [Christianity] must become as antiquated as the old [Judaism] has become. There remained with them the same economy of the same God. Ever, to put my own expression into their mouths, ever the self-same plan of the education of the human race.

Only they were premature. They believed that they could make their contemporaries, who had scarcely outgrown their childhood, without enlightenment, without preparation at one stroke men worthy of their third age.

And it was just this which made them enthusiasts. The enthusiast often casts true glances into the future, but for this future he cannot wait. He wants this future to come quickly, and to be made to come quickly, through him. A thing over which nature takes thousands of years is to come to maturity just at the moment of his experience. For what part has he in it, if that which he recognizes as the best does not become the best in his lifetime? Does he come again? Does he expect to come again? It is strange that this enthusiasm is not more the fashion, if it were only among enthusiasts . . .²⁷

Lessing, who was widely read in the Church Fathers (particularly the Alexandrian Christian Platonists Clement and Origen) and ecclesiastical and Biblical history, traced this triadic scheme of history, in which revelation guides reason until reason is able to reflect back upon revelation and illuminate it, to Persian sources that influenced the Jews during their Babylonian captivity.²⁸ The particular "Persian" source that Lessing favours is "Sabeism" or Mandaean Gnosticism,²⁹ the still-existing anti-Christian and anti-Hebraic religion of the lower Tigris-Euphrates valley. The Mandaeans have a good claim to being the original Gnostics for they trace their history back to the first century C.E.,³⁰ and the founder of the first Gnostic world-religion, Mani, was of Mandaean parentage. "Mandaean" is their own name for themselves, and it means "knower" or gnostic. Their emanationist doctrine consists in an intramundane spirituality:

. . . [T]he Gnosis of which they profess themselves adherents is a personification, the aeon and mediator "knowledge of life" (Manda d'hayye). . . the divine element in man, distinct from [rational] knowledge, and corresponding to something between 'reason' and 'revelation' . . .³¹

The existence and doctrine of the Mandaeans became known to French and German scholars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the efforts of Jean de Thévenot (1633-1667), Engelbrecht Kaempfer (1651-1716) and Carsten Niebuhr.³² Both during his period at Breslau (1760-1765) as secretary to General Tauentzien (a position which allowed him much free time in which he read Patristics, theology and

Spinoza), and during the last ten years of his life (1771-81) while he was ducal librarian at Wolfenbützel, Lessing had ample opportunity to familiarize himself with what was known about the Mandaeans, as well as the Joachite tradition.

As Marjorie Reeves has shown in an unpublished paper,³³ the latter was a widespread influence on the thought of the nineteenth century, and Comte, George Sand, George Eliot (the English translator of D.F. Strauss' Leben Jesu and Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity), and August von Cieszkowski, whom Schlomo Avineri considers to be a forerunner of Marx,³⁴ all read or followed Joachim (Reeves thinks that Eliot's novel of the Florentine Renaissance, Romola, is virtually a Joachite tract). Lessing is the first representative of the German branch of this revival of Joachimism, and his influence on later German philosophy, letters, and politics was immense.

German Social-democracy was quick to recognize this, and the earliest systematic scholarship that it produced (after the basic studies of political economy) was of the civil theology that anticipated liberalism and socialism. Franz Mehring's Die Lessing-Legende (1893), which sees Lessing and his eighteenth and nineteenth century epigones as ideological preparers for the bourgeois revolution of 1848,³⁵ is an example of this trend. The great project of the SPD, edited by Kautsky, Vorläufer des neueren Sozialismus (1895), to which Bernstein contributed his Sozialismus und Demokratie in der englischen Revolution

(Cromwell and Communism), was an extension of this enterprise. Kautsky's own studies of Thomas More, Ulrich Zwingli and the Anabaptists were further efforts in this direction.

Bernstein's initiation into this kind of socialist scholarship came in 1891 when he was asked by the executive of the SPD to edit Ferdinand Lassalle's speeches and works.³⁶ He was eminently qualified for this job, as he had been first attracted intellectually to socialism through Lassalle's writings³⁷ in the 1870's. From his current perspective, however, a critique of Lassalle was demanded, and this evaluation formed a long introduction to the edition (it was later published separately in English as Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer). In it, Bernstein is critical of Lassalle's Hegelianism with its debt to Heraclitus, and of Lassalle's styling himself (after Heine) as the promised "third Luther" (to succeed the second, Lessing.)³⁸

The fruit of Bernstein's work was published in three volumes in Berlin in 1892 and 1893 as Ferdinand Lassalles Reden und Schriften. His close friend, the French socialist Jean Jaurès, published a translation of his Latin academic thesis dealing with the intellectual roots of German socialism in 1892 (Les origines du socialisme allemand), and the themes of the two works were complementary. Jaurès outlined the development of the sense of justice and the consciousness of the social collective from Luther through Kant, Fichte, and Hegel to Lassalle and Marx.³⁹ Of course, a continuing development beyond this point was implied.

While Bernstein strongly disapproved of Lassalle's extreme nationalism, autocratic leadership, elevation of the role of the state in the establishment of socialism, deterministic economics and personal egocentrism (all of which he attributed to the Heraclitan-Hegelian legacy in some measure),⁴⁰ he admired his advocacy of universal suffrage and his doctrine that ethical thought is independent of economic conditions. Jaures's thesis argued that while economic developments had made socialism possible in Germany, the evolution of Lutheran theology into the ethical idealism of Kant and Hegel formed the actual content of socialism, and thus that moral thinking not only was independent of economic factors, but should be, and had become progressively more so.⁴¹ Both Bernstein and Jaures, then, were simultaneously effecting a similar differentiation of consciousness within the monistic dialectical tradition in the 1890's-- and this by pressing the logic of its progressivistic component.

That tradition took on its recognizable shape in Lessing's work shortly after he assumed his duties as ducal librarian at Wolfenbuetel in May 1770. Up to this point, his writings show that he was in accord with the deists in their rejection of revealed religion and reliance upon reason,⁴² and in agreement with Leibniz that man and nature were emanations of God. His early The Christianity of Reason (of 1752 or 1753), for example, argues that:

. . . Since every thought is a creation with God, the result of this contemplation is the creation of a series of beings, each of which has something of the divine perfections. The sum total of these created beings constitutes the world, which . . . is necessarily the best possible.

Upon this basis Lessing proceeds . . . to describe the best of all possible worlds in essentially Leibnizian terms . . .⁴³

Scholars agree that a real change in Lessing's thought takes place after his exposure to the work of the Scottish moral philosopher, Adam Ferguson.⁴⁴ In a letter written to Moses Mendelssohn dated January 9, 1777, Lessing states:

I am now going to make an actual study of Ferguson. I can already see from the table of contents that this is the kind of book which I have missed here, where for the most part I only have books which sooner or later dull my understanding and waste my time. When one does not think for a long time, he ends up not being able to think at all. However, is it really good to contemplate and to concern oneself seriously with truths with which one has lived and, for the sake of peace, must continue to live in constant contradiction? I can already see from afar many such truths in the Englishman.⁴⁵

It is not known whether Lessing is here referring to Ferguson's An Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767) or his Institutes of Moral Philosophy (1769). In either case, the effect of Ferguson's comparative pessimism, sociological and historical realism and guarded belief in progress upon Lessing's theosophical affirmation of this "best of all possible worlds" must have been profound. Indeed, only in his later compositions (Ernst and Falk, 1771, Nathan the Wise, 1778 and The Education of the Human Race, 1779) does one detect a strong pessimistic undertone and a hard doctrine of struggle behind the assertions of a coming world brotherhood of man. This change in atmosphere has sometimes been

attributed to the death of Lessing's wife and new-born son in 1776, but this hardly explains the "sharp and sceptical" character of Falk (who is a mouthpiece for Lessing) in the earliest of these works Ernst and Falk, Conversations for Freemasons.⁴⁶

Lessing was evidently somewhat familiar with Ferguson's ideas before 1777, as his letter to Mendelssohn was to thank him for a long-awaited copy of the book in question. Ferguson's books had been circulating widely in Germany, and his doctrine that the object and end of "historical development" was "polity" had found a ready response. In fact, the term "civil society" (bürgerliche gesellschaft), which Ferguson applied to the most developed form of human interrelationship, entered into the vocabulary of German social and political thought at this time.

Ferguson (like Lessing) had studied Rousseau, but he was dissatisfied with the latter's claim that the hypothetical "natural man" had been happier than the modern. The purpose of the Essay, as Duncan Forbes shows (partly citing a contemporary of Ferguson, Lord Kames), was to sketch the moral progress of the race, and to admonish it to retain its gains:

Besides tracing the history of society from its dawn in the savage state to its meridian lustre of civilization, sciences, and arts, the book . . . had a further aim, which was to wean us from selfishness and luxury, the reigning characteristics at present of all commercial nations, and to restore the manly passions of heroism, generosity and love of our species . . . Qua Machiavellian moralist, Ferguson was concerned with the virtù of men and nations, with public spirit and

national vigour, with the lack of this, that is, corruption, and with the forms and degrees of corruption in different types of state and different social conditions . . .

Connected with this political pathology . . . in Ferguson, is a psychology which is very much his own and not at all typical of the Enlightenment. His advocacy of happiness in benevolence has nothing to do with a pleasure-pain psychology: the generally prevailing utilitarianism and hedonistic psychology is rejected in toto. There is a Stoic and neo-Stoic inspiration behind this which Ferguson is proud to acknowledge . . . But further, there is something almost Nietzsche-like at times, something of the Wille zur Macht in Ferguson's account of human nature . . . Ferguson is undermining several systems of political and ethical philosophy when he asserts that Nature's great law is, for man at any rate, merely one drive or propensity among several, and not necessarily the most powerful; even in some of the 'nobler' sort of animals it is often suspended . . . Only men led astray by the demands of a favourite system could imagine that happiness consists in a balance of pleasure over pain . . . Happiness is in the struggle and effort, not in the attainment of the goal . . . Life without danger and risk and hardship is insipid-- the great inventor of the game of human life, knew well how to accommodate the players.⁴⁷

Lessing wrote to Mendelssohn, concerning the "truths" that he had noted "in the Englishman", that there were "some which I have for a long time ceased to regard as truths", and he reflected that he "might have thrown away a little too much."⁴⁸ Henry Allison thinks that these repudiated truths were his original Christian beliefs, lost through the influence of Bayle and Spinoza.⁴⁹ There is no evidence, however, that Lessing returned in any real sense to traditional Christianity. As Henry Chadwick puts it:

He clearly denied the exclusiveness of the traditional idea of special revelation. 'Truth' for him does not consist in dogma, except for the dogma that there is no dogma. 'Truth' is brotherly love, sincerity, and tolerance rather than a metaphysical interpretation of nature, man, and God. His certainties are moral certainties . . .⁵⁰

The chief "truth" he seems to have reclaimed from Ferguson is thus the doctrine of Providence in the neo-Stoic form of moral progress derived from such Classical writers as Epictetus and Seneca, both of whose works were popular during the Renaissance and early Enlightenment.

The alteration in Lessing's thought that has been noted as having occurred during the last ten years of his life therefore seems to have resulted from his blending of this neo-Stoic concept of Providence with his basic Leibnizian/Spinozist determinism. The paradoxical product might be described as predestined freewill. One side of this seemingly contradictory view was expressed to F.H. Jacobi in July 1780 when Lessing averred, "I have no desire for free will."⁵¹ The other side is typified by Lessing's most famous remark (in his bitter Rejoinder of 1778 to J.H. Ress' orthodox Lutheran Defense of the History of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ), which is an adaptation of Clement of Alexandria's description of the "Christian gnostic":

The worth of a man does not consist in the truth he possesses, but in the pains he has taken to attain that truth. For his powers are extended not through possession but through the search for truth. In this alone his ever-growing perfection consists. Possession makes him lazy, indolent, and proud.

If God held all truth in his right hand and in his left the everlasting striving after truth, so that I should always and everlastingly be mistaken, and said to me, 'Choose', with humility I would pick on the left hand and say, 'Father, grant me that. Absolute truth is for thee alone.' 52

Clement, of course, did not imply that his searcher would deliberately choose to be "everlastingly mistaken" in order to be increasingly perfect, but rather that his quest for the knowledge of God (natural to reasoning man) would be chosen over a selfish desire for personal salvation.⁵³

Lessing's reformulation anticipates Hegel's "determinate negation", a logic which, as F.G. Weiss puts it, "demonstrates the Nothingness of being, and the Being of nothingness."⁵⁴

In orthodox Christian terms this is a definition of hell, and in practical terms may be suspected of approaching the Orwellian "boot stamping on a human face forever."⁵⁵

Ferguson's contribution to the development of the dialectic, then, involved both an emphasis upon political progress, and the exposure of the dualism at the heart of the optimistic Hermetic gnosis.⁵⁶ Hermetism's panentheism (the doctrine that the universe as a whole is a manifestation of God) as distinct from pantheism (the view that God is in everything) is clearly taught by Lessing,⁵⁷ and it is this concept that opens the way for the identification of the active intellect (or the "higher Self") with God, with a consequent human self-apotheosis, for, as Berkeley had shown (unintentionally), a recognition of the "necessary perceiver" means, for most men, a recognition of themselves.

Ernest Tuveson has argued that for the men of the eighteenth century, the active imagination functioned "as a means of grace"⁵⁸: that is, it was the organ of "spilled religion", the active intellect as "natural light" or "light of God" fulfilling the role of "spilled metaphysics." First evident among the "cosmic Whigs" the third Earl of Shaftesbury, Addison, Steele, Hutcheson and James Thomson, this proto-Romanticism spread to Germany, particularly through the influence of the philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten who invented the discipline of aesthetics:

When, in 1735, A.G. Baumgarten applied to the 'science of perception' the word aesthetá, he signalized a change that had in fact occurred. The influence of such English writers as Shaftesbury and Addison was felt early and strongly in Germany . . . Baumgarten sharply separates the mental activities into things known by reason (noetá) and those perceived (aesthetá). The latter class constitutes a material of knowledge separate from and parallel to that of reason; the objects of aesthetic are not merely raw material for a higher faculty, but have a 'perfection' of their own. Sensations of the latter kind are vivid but confused--that is, not analyzed and organized (by the reason or understanding); the materials of the noetá, in contrast, are analyzed but not individualized. The qualities of the aesthetá, then, constitute a 'perfection' as they would not for an earlier philosophy, and logical clarity and precision tend to become alienated from the poetic effect . . . One result of the differentiation in a philosophical system of the 'aesthetic' was that a new separate branch of philosophy was established . . .⁵⁹

Baumgarten's articulation of a second power of the mind, different from the intellect in its operation although not inferior to it, initiated the literary and philosophical

movement that was eventually to issue in Romanticism. Many translations and imitations of the Spectator, Tatler and Guardian (the Moralische Wochenschriften) circulated, and under the influence of Rousseau, Shakespeare, Edward Young and especially James Macpherson's Ossian, a "bardic movement" heralded the advent of Johann Georg Hamann, the Magus im Norden and chief impetus for the Sturm und Drang.⁶⁰ Hamann elevated the experiences of faith and the senses above reason, and one of his chief pupils, Johann Gottfried Herder, (1744-1803) elaborated this perspective into a developmental theory of cosmic and human history. As in the case of Lessing, this evolutionism owed a great deal to Leibnizian influence.⁶¹

A contemporary of Herder, the philosopher Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743-1819), whom we have already met as the interviewer of Lessing shortly before his death (p. 50 above), took a tack different from both Hamann and Herder for his Gefühlphilosophie (philosophy of feeling), as well as offering a critique of Lessing's deterministic dialectic. Sir William Hamilton, Thomas Reid's nineteenth century editor pointed out that this minority opinion, as it were, in German philosophy, originated in an appropriation of Reid to undermine the fountain-head of German speculative thought, Leibniz:

. . . [I]t was Jacobi who first in Germany attacked the mediate and demonstrating philosophy of the Leibnitians [sic], and shewed the necessity of immediate knowledge. This he took from Reid. See Francke, p.227 sq. Schulze, another great promoter of this. -Ibid. p. 230 . . .⁶²

Other writers of the period took a similar "common sense" approach, such as the publicist and statesman Justus Möser, whose theory of organic law had a significant impact on the political thought of Classical Weimar (the period following Sturm und Drang).⁶³ Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, the editors of a recent translation of Friedrich Schiller's On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters (1795), note that Reid's "common sense" philosophy undoubtedly affected him as a student, as his favourite professor, J.F. Abel, was a follower of Reid. (Abel "had prefaced the theses philosophicae his pupils were to 'dispute' during the session 1776 with the axiom: 'Vera philosophia est philosophia sensus communis quam e.g. Reid pluresque Angli sequuntur.' . . .)⁶⁴ Schiller evidently also read Ferguson and Ferguson's translator Christian Garve "whose influence on [him] was almost as great as Ferguson himself."⁶⁵

In their Glossary appended to the Letters, Wilkinson and Willoughby discuss two meanings which Schiller gives to the term Gemeinsinn (common sense) in the text. In the first place it is:

. . . the 'faculty of primary truths', which is 'common' in the sense that it is the common bond, originally between the five senses, later between the various faculties. This is the predominant sense in VI.12, where the extreme specialization of the individual faculties-- no single one of which is itself capable of grasping truth-- forces the unifying, the 'common' sense to penetrate deeper into the nature of things than it would otherwise have done. Cf. letter to the Duke of Augustenburg (21.xi.1793) in which Schiller opposes this Gemeinsinn to 'logischer Verstand',

and equates it with a 'kind of tact'-- an operation of the understanding, it is true, but one which remains unaware of the principles which guide it. For this notion Schiller was no doubt as much indebted to Oetinger's 'common human organ for feeling or perceiving Truth, Wisdom, Goodness, &c.' (see C.A. Auberlen, Die Theosophie F.C. Oetingers, Tübingen, 1847, p. 54 f.) as to the 'inward light'-- which is 'a gift of nature' and 'has the light of truth in itself'-- of the Scottish philosopher, Thomas Reid, whom, paradoxically enough, Schiller's teacher, Abel, had introduced to his pupils at the Carlsschule with the avowed aim of counteracting such 'unenlightened' thinking as Pietism . . .⁶⁶

Secondly, Schiller means by Gemeinsinn:

. . . the sense which is 'common' to all mankind, which has accrued from the experience and wisdom of countless generations, general sagacity. This is clearly the predominant meaning in XXVII, where the technical, and therefore in some sense exoteric, knowledge of science and philosophy is to be brought out into the open, made available to the Gemeinsinn, and transformed into a common possession (Gemeingut) of the whole community. This was the express aim of Schiller's journal Die Horen. In this second meaning, 'common sense' derived from England - from Locke via the Moral Weeklies . . . The meaning of the term was still being debated in 1790 in an article in the Deutsche Monatschrift, i.61 . . . Though the notion obviously lent itself to trivialization, it yet epitomized the 'democratic' educational ideals of the Enlightenment; and thinkers such as Schiller and Coleridge, who were uncompromisingly insistent on the need for rigorous analysis and strict distinctions, not only took it as their own proud aim to 'combine and harmonize Philosophy and Common Sense' but were convinced that their severance would be disastrous both for philosophy (here in the widest sense, to include 'science') and for mankind. This is supported by what Schiller says in I.4, about 'gemeine Vernunft.' Equated with 'moralischer Instinkt' and opposed to the technicalities of Ethics, it clearly signifies the organ of

primary moral truths, thus representing the ethical counterpart of Gemeinsinn . . .⁶⁷

The psychically and psychologically unifying role of "common sense" thinking in its German adaptation is here made clear. Deeper than logical understanding (in its first meaning), it co-ordinates the impressions of the other senses (including the rational and aesthetic) like the Wordsworthian "feeling intellect", and identifies the "natural light of reason" of the Scottish Enlightenment with the spiritual "inner light" of Pietism. In its second (and not wholly distinguishable) sense, it extends to include the Hookerian Law of Reason ("what has been taught by most men in most ages as true") and thus encompasses a social doctrine of a "natural" moral law.

Wilkinson and Willoughby point out the intellectual problem that Schiller faced as a student for which his aesthetic approach to understanding provided the solution:

Medical studies at the Duke of Wurttemberg's Military Academy were oriented to those frontiers where physiology and psychology meet; and Schiller's report on one of his first cases faithfully reflects the required psycho-somatic approach. The philosophical theories to which he was exposed did little to solve the problems thus engendered. Here, as elsewhere in the Academy, the principles of enlightened liberalism held sway, and the pupils were confronted with maximum diversity: with the traditional deductive method of Descartes and Leibniz, on the one hand, and with the inductive empiricism of the philosophes, or the common-sense school of Reid and Ferguson on the other . . .⁶⁸

This early background of philosophical confusion was

not resolved in Schiller's mind until the decade of the 1790's, when he took up the study of philosophy in earnest. In 1791 he carefully read Kant's Kritik der Urteilskraft, which had just been published. His Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man expand and apply Kant's theories to personal and social life.

Schiller's application of Baumgarten's "aesthetic" power of the mind to the Kantian "categorical imperative", made it into Gemeinsinn, the common human faculty of primary truths, both intellectual and moral, that presents a pattern of the "ideal man" to empirical men. In Letter IV, for example, he writes:

It may be urged that every individual man carries within himself, at least in his adaptation and destination, a purely ideal man. The great problem of his existence is to bring all the incessant changes of his outer life into conformity with the unchanging unity of this ideal. This pure ideal man, which makes itself known more or less clearly in every subject, is represented by the state, which is the objective and, so to speak, canonical form in which the manifold differences of the subjects strive to unite. Now two ways present themselves to the thought, in which the man of time can agree with the man of idea, and there are also two ways in which the state can maintain itself in individuals. One of these ways is when the pure ideal man subdues the empirical man, and the state suppresses the individual, or again when the individual becomes the state, and the man of time is ennobled to the man of idea.⁶⁹

This analysis of human nature might be called "an imagination of Right Reason", for, by means of the active imagination (the aesthetic sense as common sense), Schiller

has recovered something of the order of being illuminated by the poetic power in Aristotelian thought. The evolution from potential to actual man is there, as is the political life of man as the natural practice that realizes eternal truth or theory. The Aristotelian distinction between the pursuit of permanent truth (theorizing) and temporary practical knowledge or praxis is somewhat blurred in the notion of the state as the objective expression of the struggle of subjective ideals to find unity, but the supercession of the state through the ennobling of men into "men of idea" returns the focus of this anthropology to theoria, or the pursuit of truth. Of course, as a type of gnosis, the "imagination of Right Reason" circulates around itself to some degree, unconscious of the Classical tension toward the ground of being. There is, then, a kind of subjective "dialectic" à la Hegel here.

Hegel, however, moves to a full "unity of theory and practice" by taking another step in the direction of pure subjectivity. If for Aristotle the object of theory is physis or Nature, and for Schiller and the Romantics it is human nature, for Hegel it is the theoretical activity itself. As Schlomo Avineri puts it:

In the strict Aristotelian sense a 'unity of theory and practice' is quite meaningless. Since the two concepts are so defined as to be mutually exclusive, no kind of knowledge can be simultaneously both particular and universal, both applicable and inapplicable. But Hegel twists the traditional meaning of the terms: the eternal, the object of

theory, for Aristotle Nature as a totality of potentials, in Hegel is shaped by human consciousness. Once the cosmos becomes Weltgeschichte, the theoretical becomes a general view of what is practical, or applicable. If the universal or the eternal can be consciously created by thought, then the theoretical can exist only in relation to the practical. Consequently, Hegel's enigmatic final passage in the Preface to the Philosophy of Right ('The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of dusk') may be, despite its obvious quietism, the key to an attempt to shape the world according to theory⁷⁰

Hegel's "idealism" (like German Idealism in general) is at base a theological rationalism which rejects revelation but retains the content of Christian doctrine. As Karl Aner notes,⁷¹ Lessing is the first of these "rationalists", but it is Hegel who, as T.M. Knox shows, works out a tight philosophical pneumatology on this basis:

. . . [Hegel's] early theological writings contain plenty of hard sayings about Christianity and the churches, but the object of his attack is orthodoxy, not theology itself. All that he wrote at this period throbs with a religious conviction which is totally absent from Kant . . . Above all, he is inspired by a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of man, his reason, is the candle of the Lord and therefore cannot be subject to the limitations which Kant had imposed on it in the Critique of Pure Reason. This faith in reason, with its religious basis, animates the whole of Hegel's work henceforward.

His outlook has also become that of a historian, and this again distinguishes him from Kant, who was much more influenced by the conceptions of physical science.

. . . His new-won insight [that Kant's influence had caused him to misrepresent the teachings of Jesus] found expression [in 1798] in his essay The Spirit of Christianity . . .

. . . He begins by sketching the essence of Judaism, which he paints in the darkest colours. The Jews were slaves to the Mosaic law, leading a life unlovely in comparison with that of the ancient Greeks and content with the material satisfaction of a land flowing with milk and honey. Jesus taught something entirely different. Men are not to be slaves of objective commands; the law is made for man. They are even to rise above the tension in moral experience between inclination and reason's law of duty, for the law is to be 'fulfilled' in the love of God wherein all tension ceases and the believer does God's will wholeheartedly and single-mindedly. A community of such believers is the Kingdom of God.

This was the kingdom which Jesus came to teach. It is founded on a belief in the unity of the divine and the human. It is one life which flows in them both, and it is only because man is spirit that he can grasp and comprehend the Spirit of God. Hegel works out this conception in an exegesis of passages in St. John . . .

In this essay the leading ideas of Hegel's system of philosophy are rooted . . .⁷²

As Aner suggests, Hegel's apotheosis of the "candle of the Lord" is anticipated in Lessing's Education of the Human Race, for there it is argued that revelation in general (and that to the Jews in particular) is a schoolmaster leading to reason (which the Jews received from the Persians):

As yet the Jewish people had worshipped in their Jehovah rather the mightiest than the wisest of all gods; as yet they had rather feared him as a jealous God than loved him; this, too, is a proof that the conceptions which they had of their eternal One God were not exactly the right conceptions which we should have of God. However, now the time was come for these conceptions of theirs to be expanded, ennobled, rectified, to accomplish which God availed himself of a perfectly natural means, a better and more correct measure, by which they got the opportunity

of appreciating him.

. . .[They] began, in captivity under the wise Persians, to measure him against the 'Being of all Beings' such as a more disciplined reason recognized and worshipped.

Revelation had guided their reason, and now, all at once, reason gave clearness to their revelation.

This was the first reciprocal influence which these two (reason and revelation) exercised on one another; and so far is such a mutual influence from being unbecoming to the author of them both, that without it either of them would have been useless . . .

Thus enlightened respecting the treasures which they had possessed without knowing it, they returned, and became quite another people, whose first care it was to give permanence to this enlightenment among themselves . . .⁷³

This "history" is (and is intended to be) an objectification of an "inner history" rather than a chronicle of events. That the "reciprocal influence of reason and revelation" is also intended to be, not an objective anthropological description, but a stage of initiation or "enlightenment", is made clear at the outset of the Erziehung:

Education gives man nothing which he could not also get from within himself; it gives him that which he could get from within himself, only quicker and more easily. In the same way too, revelation gives nothing to the human race which human reason could not arrive at on its own; only it has given, and still gives to it, the most important of these things sooner.⁷⁴

As for the "pneumatic" man in the Gnostic schemes, so for Lessing and Hegel, the religion of reason is the self-development of the Self.

In his analysis of the complex origins of the German tradition of "Bildung" (self-cultivation) from the early nineteenth century to the present, W.H. Bruford sees one strand as deriving from the "preromanticgenius cult" of the Sturm und Drang, "the inspiration of Goethe's marvellous ode 'Prometheus.'" ⁷⁵

Goethe was the only contemporary figure recognized by Hegel (other than himself), ⁷⁶ as having any merit philosophically (he even eschewed the work of his friend of student days, Schelling, as being too romantic). ⁷⁷ Goethe's Spinozist naturalism (and perhaps also his early interest in alchemy, astrology and religious mysticism) was more to Hegel's taste than Schiller's "modern" and sentimental" (as opposed to "classical" and "naive") ⁷⁸ compositions. The particular "modernity" that Schiller was tapping, however, as E.L. Stahl shows, was that of Tuveson's second "metaphysical" (in Comtean terms) pre-dialectical stage of the realization of the Hermetic gnosis, which replaced religion with ethics:

The term 'moral' is misleading when applied to the kind of problem [Schiller] had in mind in his tragedies and the kind of solution he propounded. His idealism was rooted in the concept of universal order evolved by the great mathematical thinkers of the seventeenth century and had wider connotations than those implied in the ordinary use of the term 'morality.' An examination of his term moralisch, particularly in Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung, establishes this beyond doubt. ⁷⁹

One of Schiller's students, Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772-1801), who took the pen-name Novalis, developed an

immanent critique of the religion of the active intellect (the dialectic as it later came to be called by Hegel and his followers), by reinterpreting it as an operation of the active imagination (the aesthetic power). In Christenheit oder Europa (written in 1799), Novalis revised Lessing's Education of the Human Race by means of his technique of "magic idealism" or poetic analogy,⁸⁰ recovering the sense of a metaxy (or "in-between") above the events of history into which Verstand (understanding or common-sense) is thereby enabled to penetrate. His novel of poetry, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, left unfinished at his death in 1801, performs the same operation on Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.⁸¹

When Novalis went to Jena to study law in 1790, he chose Schiller as a teacher, and later became a close friend of the "poet of philosophy."⁸² Frederick Hiebel is of the opinion that "there can be no doubt whatever that it was Schiller who was the crucial experience of [Novalis'] years at Jena",⁸³ and that Novalis' work frequently shows him to be a "disciple of Schiller, whose mind was akin to his own."⁸⁴ While he was still in high school, Novalis had written an Apology for Friedrich Schiller, the chief point of which is to show that those who criticized Schiller's supposed atheism were narrow-minded.⁸⁵ Both Schiller and Novalis, in addition, developed their ideas against a background of Pietism, with its criticism and affirmation of elements of both Lutheran and Calvinist theology. Schiller's study of Kant, undertaken while

Novalis was at Jena, coincided with Novalis' own study of the Königsburg philosopher.

Novalis dedicated himself to the ideals of beauty, moral grace and friendship after having read Schiller's Don Carlos, and was similarly moved by Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahr, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, and Jean-Paul Richter's Die Unsichtbare Loge.⁸⁶ These literary influences did not motivate him to write poetry immediately after his graduation, however, but he devoted two and a half years to a careful study of contemporary German philosophy. His first effort was a manuscript of about five hundred pages criticizing J.G. Fichte, the intellectual predecessor of Hegel. Novalis knew Fichte personally, as the latter had succeeded Reinhold, Novalis' Kantian teacher, to the chair of philosophy at Jena in 1793.

Like many of the young "Romantics", Novalis was fascinated by Fichte's "call for autonomous action" and declaration that the ego's "pure act" is to "posit originally its own being," thus bridging the chasm that Kant had dug between physical and metaphysical experience.⁸⁷ However, Novalis was only in thrall to Fichte for a short time, finally extensively revising the concepts he borrowed from this "most dangerous of all thinkers," as he called Fichte.⁸⁸

The element in Fichte's thought that most interested Novalis was the notion of a "productive imagination" (produktive Einbildungskraft) not immediately available to consciousness, that Fichte said was responsible for the second act of the

"intellectual intuition" (or the "reason" of theological rationalism), the positing of a non-self. Novalis took this as his first principle, and discovered something which was later to excite him so much when he saw it in Schleiermacher's Speeches on Religion-- the power of the imagination to differentiate consciousness into "levels" or "orders" of being as the Classical nous had been able to do (Novalis' favourite philosophers were Plato and the Dutch neo-Platonist François Hemsterhuis). As Novalis pointedly expressed the result of his study of Fichte, "Spinoza ascended to Nature, Fichte to the Ego or the Person, I to the thesis God." 89

This immanent critique of what in Hegel will be called "the dialectic" denies the third movement of Fichte's "intellectual intuition"-- the necessary return of the "non-ego" to itself which, as John Neubauer notes, leads to a restatement of the Kantian categorical imperative as "everything should be posited in the ego; the ego should be independent and everything dependent upon it."⁹⁰ However, Novalis' attack on the dialectic was not an endorsement of the so-called "transcendental" philosophy of Kant either. In rejecting a triadic monism, Novalis did not return to Kantian dualism, but rather, as is evident in Christenheit oder Europa, posited a multi-level reality or order in which mankind would participate over time. As Hiebel summarizes the conclusion of the book, the seventh and last ascent:

. . . The conquest of nationalism is possible only when the nations discover their heart, when they choose Christ as their leader. What alone can save Europe is not political internationalism but an idealistic cosmopolitanism derived from the spirit of religion. Only in this way can we understand that last section, where Novalis gives a creative metamorphosis of Lessing's three-fold idea of the Education of Mankind.

. . . In the first part the poet speaks of a threefold apostasy from God, in the second of a threefold heralding of the new Kingdom of God. The first apostasy of the primitive Church was, as it were, a denial of the Holy Ghost. Theological error crept into dogmatic controversy and secularization. The schism of the Reformation was an apostasy from the role of intermediary, the tradition of the Sacrament, the principle of the Son. The abolition of all religion, complete atheism, was a denial of the Father, the true creator of the world.

Man's new ascent retraces these stages in reverse order. The first promise is that of the Father. It uses words taken from the book of Genesis, of the Old Covenant. The second promise speaks of the conception of a new Messiah. The third points to the flame of the Holy Ghost, to the Whitsuntide of a new 'world-inspiration' . . .

A century of brotherhood and tolerance, of cosmopolitanism and reconciliation-- that is what Novalis felt he was proclaiming . . .⁹¹

Novalis' friends and contemporaries misunderstood Christenheit Oder Europa, mistaking it either for a philosophy of history (Tieck), Roman Catholic propaganda (Schelling), unprogressive obscurantism (Schleiermacher) or simply irrelevant (Goethe).⁹² (It was not published until 1824 by Friedrich Schlegel). Of course it was not meant to be any of these things, but was in fact an exercise in "magic idealism" or mythopoeia as it is called today. In this, Novalis used "the magic wand of analogy" to illuminate depths of current (including political) experience, and he described his method

as "romanticizing":

The world must be romanticized. In this way one rediscovers its original meaning. Romanticizing is nothing but a qualitative raising to a higher power. In this operation the lower self becomes identified with a higher self. Just as we ourselves are such a qualitative exponential series. This operation is still wholly unknown.⁹³

While it may have been unknown to the Enlightenment, Novalis' "magic idealism" is fundamentally symmetrical with the Middle Platonic method of philosophizing common to the Renaissance, Middle Ages and Classical world. It is a re-assertion of the co-inherent world-picture of neo-Platonism that forms the superstructure for Renaissance Hermetism. This hierarchical order of being is still present in Böhme (whom Novalis had read), but the Hermetic emanationism at the heart of this writer and other mystics of the Reformation had long since liberated itself from its host philosophy in the minds of their successors (Novalis' contemporaries).

Armed with his newly-acquired confidence in the power of the "productive imagination", Novalis went back to Kant and re-examined the Introduction and Preface to the second edition of the Kritik der reinen Vernunft, the Metaphysische Anfangsgrunde der Naturwissenschaft, and Die Metaphysik der Sitten. While he accepted much of Kant's argument concerning the inscrutability of "things in themselves", he maintained that Kant was wrong to claim that only the sciences of the "forms of external sensibility" (mathematics and pure science) were possible, and that the corresponding science of the "internal sensibility"

(psychology or pneumatology) could only exist by analogy. Like Thomas Reid before him, Novalis undertook to show that the sciences of the "forms of external sensibility" were themselves impossible without an internal ordering of the psyche's content and a grasping of the interconnections between the various faculties.⁹⁴ For Novalis, too, mental contents were not just representations simpliciter, but imaginative constructs that integrated the will and the emotions with the products of the sensory organs. Thus, Kant's theory that firm knowledge about God, the world, and freedom was impossible was declared by Novalis to be too extreme, and he argued that in many of the practical situations of life one obtains what amounts to metaphysical knowledge. In the heightened emotional intensity of erotic love (in the Greek sense), for example, the mental powers of the lover are enabled to grasp more of the nature of reality than is ordinarily the case.⁹⁵

Novalis accepted Kant's view that mathematics was the paradigm of "synthetic a priori" knowledge, but he showed that it was in fact not a science based upon empirical data or repetitive brain functions alone, but that it had a content stemming from the "productive imagination" as well. He revised Kant's thesis to read: 'Mathematical thinking multiplies itself', by which he meant that although mathematics is clearly a product of the mind, the mind cannot "get ahead" of mathematics, as it were, and explain mathematical logic in terms of itself simply; i.e., as a combinatory function, because this would be tautological.

This is, of course, a variation of Reid's claim that empiricism (and, by extension, all "orthodox naturalism") is self-refuting. However, it goes further than Reid in anticipating (and refuting) the Logical Positivist and extreme neo-Kantian interpreters of Kant who were to claim that reality is wholly constructed by the mind. Novalis acknowledged that mathematical logic proves that the mind only knows fully what it fabricates; that is, "we recognize (the unconditioned) only inasmuch as we make it real" in our mind.⁹⁶ However, while our picture of reality is the result of the shaping and re-shaping (machen) action of the "productive imagination" in its function as noetic power, there must be a correspondence between this patterning and external nature for natural science to function at all-- "Reason understands nature only inasmuch as the latter is reasonable-- and henceforth agrees with it."⁹⁷ This is the kind of anthropology that one finds in Aristotle's De Anima or De Partibus Animalium, although, of course, Novalis is approaching his analysis of mind through the active imagination rather than the "understanding." His reworking of Kant by means of Schillerian Gemeinsinn serves to highlight the "metaphysical" natural law presuppositions in the Königsburg philosopher that, as George Grant points out,⁹⁸ are abandoned by his epigones. Novalis also obviously intends to extend Kantian metaphysics without flatly contradicting Kant, as is evident in his reformulation of the latter's statement-- "I had to limit knowledge in order to make room for faith"-- as "Where knowledge

stops, faith begins," with the explanation that "faith" is "faith construction-construction through assumptions."⁹⁹

Novalis' term for his method ("Magic Idealism"), is rather misleading, perhaps, as it had no connection with Black Magic, and represented a critique of the "high magic" of the Renaissance. In fact, it grew out of his studies of medicine and physiology, and his knowledge of mathematics (he was a trained natural scientist). His literary style (mythopoeic) and the centrality in his thought of the relationship between erotic and divine love, as well as his techniques of "romanticizing" and "poetizing", have served to strengthen the erroneous view that he was an impractical and aetherial dreamer. In fact, poetry for Novalis was a heightened form of practical activity.¹⁰⁰

Novalis' "Magic Idealism" was a particularly luxuriant flowering of German critical common-sense philosophy that brought together (without merging) the categories that Kant's philosophy tended to progressively push apart-- faith and knowledge, mathematics and psychology, will and feeling, freedom and necessity, fact and value. As an immanent critique of the incipient dialectic, and an alternative to that monistic mode of thought, it qualifies its author for the title of "original revisionist."

NOTES

1. See above, 8
2. Gustafsson, 117, 118
3. Ibid., 247, 270, 272
4. Ibid., 109-115
5. Fletcher, 15
6. Kautsky, "Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm", Die Neue Zeit, Stuttgart, 1899, 160-166 in Patrick Goode (ed. and trans.), Karl Kautsky: Selected Political Writings, 26-28
7. Krader, "Natural and Human History", Part II, 3
8. See above 8
9. Fletcher, 127; Gay, 164
10. Gay, 146
11. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 16
12. Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Preface. Bernstein quotes the following passage:

The method of production of the material things of life settles generally the social, political, and spiritual process of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their mode of existence, but on the contrary their social existence that determines (the nature of) their consciousness. At a certain stage in their development the material productive forces of society come into opposition with the existing conditions of production or, which is only a legal expression for it, with the relations of property within which they have hitherto moved. From forms of development of the forces of production, these relations change into fetters. Then enters an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the whole gigantic superstructure (the legal and political organisations to which certain social forms of consciousness correspond) is more slowly or more quickly overthrown. One form of society never perishes before all the productive forces are evolved for which it is sufficiently comprehensive, and new or higher conditions of production

never step on to the scene before the material conditions of existence of the same have come to light out of the womb of the old society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production . . . but the productive forces developing in the heart of the bourgeois society create at the same time the material conditions for the solution of this antagonism. The previous history of human society, therefore, terminates with this form of society.

Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 7,8

13. Bernstein, ibid., 6,7,9
14. Gay, 149
15. Bernstein, ibid., 10-16
16. Gay, 143
17. Lukács, Goethe and His Age, 12,13
18. Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History
Morton, The World of the Ranters: Religious Radicalism in the English Revolution
19. Allison, Lessing and the Enlightenment - His Philosophy of Religion and Its Relation to Eighteenth Century Thought, 121-166
20. Ibid.
21. Wessell, G.E. Lessing's Theology: A Reinterpretation - A Study of the Problematic Nature of the Enlightenment, 143-148
22. Ibid., 146
23. Ibid., 137
24. Ibid., (citing Wolfgang Ritzel, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Stuttgart, 1966)
25. Allison, 135, 139, 163
Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment
Tuveson, The Avatars of Thrice Great Hermes, 170-179
"Links in the Hermetic Chain - The Masonic Connection"

26. Chadwick, (trans.) Lessing's Theological Writings, 41
Reeves, Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future
27. Chadwick, ibid., "The Education of the Human Race", 96,97
28. Ibid., 89, 90 (sections 36-39, 42)
29. Ibid., 89 (section 39)
30. Rudolf, Gnosis, "Mandaeans"
31. Encyclopedia Britannica, (1959), vol. 14, 787 "Mandaeans"
32. Encyclopedia Britannica, (eleventh edition) vol. 17, 555
(1910,11), "Mandaeans"
33. Reeves, "Joachim of Fiore's Influence in the Nineteenth
Century"
34. Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx,
124-130
35. Lukács, ibid., 12
36. Bernstein, Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer, Preface
37. Gay, 24
38. Bernstein, Lassalle, ibid., 19, 29-31, 72, 73
39. Hulse, Revisionists in London, 131
40. Bernstein, Lassalle, ibid., 19, 29-31
41. Hulse, 151
42. Allison, 81
43. Allison, 60 (citing The Christianity of Reason, sections
13-21)
44. Ibid., 82
45. Ibid., 81 (citing Lessing's Werke,)IX, 406
46. Allison, ibid., 135
47. Forbes, (ed.); Ferguson, An Essay on the History of Civil
Society 1767; 'Introduction', xxvii-xxix

48. Allison, 82 (citing Lessing's Werke, ibi)
49. Allison, ibid.
50. Chadwick, 44
51. Chadwick, 46 (quoting F.H. Jacobi, Lette
Mendelssohn on the Subject of
Doctrine)
Allison, 74
52. Chadwick, 42,3 (citing Lessing, Eine Dup)
53. Chadwick, 42 (citing Clement, Stromateis)
54. Weiss, "Introduction" to Hegel - The Ess
55. Orwell, George, Nineteen Eighty-Four: a
Secker and Warburg, 1974, 274
56. Tuveson, The Avatars of Thrice Great Her
Jonas, "The Gnostic Syndrome" in Philoso
57. Wessell, 225
58. Tuveson, The Imagination as a Means of G
59. Ibid., 110, 111
60. Encyclopedia Britannica, (1959), Vol. 10
61. Ibid., Vol. 11, 483
62. Hamilton, Preface to The Works of Thomas
vol. I, xvi
63. Spael, Justus Möser und die Philosophie
Kranz, Justus Möser und Goethe
64. Wilkinson and Willoughby, (ed. and trans
On the Aesthetic Education of Man
Letters, "Introduction", xxxi
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., xxxi

69. Schiller, Works, (1884) viii, 40
70. Avineri, 131, 132
71. Allison, 164 (citing Aner, Die Theologie der Lessingsheit, 358)
72. Knox in Encyclopedia Britannica, (1959), Vol. 11, 379, 380 "Hegel"
73. Chadwick, 88, 89 "The Education of the Human Race" sections 34-37, 40
74. Ibid., 83 (section 4)
75. Bruford, The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation - 'Bildung' from Humboldt to Thomas Mann, 18
76. Redeker, Schleiermacher: Life and Thought, 186
77. Knox, ibid., 380
78. These are Schiller's own poetic distinctions. See E.B.. (1959), vol. 20, 69 "Schiller"
79. Stahl, Friedrich Schiller's Drama - Theory and Practice, 158
80. Hiebel, Novalis: German Poet-European Thinker-Christian Mystic, 87-98
81. Ibid., 98-111
82. Ibid., 11
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid., 88, 89, 98
85. Ibid., 11
86. Neubauer, Novalis, 18
87. Ibid., 24, 28 (citing J.G. Fichte, Ausgewahlte Werke, I, 292, 329)
88. Neubauer, 28
89. Ibid., 26
90. Ibid., 24

91. Ibid., 95, 96
92. Ibid., 97, 98
93. Ibid., 49, 50, 93
94. Ibid., 30 (citing Dilthey, Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung
"Novalis", 30)
Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man
95. Neubauer, ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid., 30, 31
98. Grant, English Speaking Justice, 25-32
99. Neubauer, 31
100. Ibid., 30

CHAPTER TWO

From Romantic Radical to Common-Sense Communist

Before Engels' death in 1895, Bernstein had very little contact with British socialists and radicals, as his autobiographical writings make clear.¹ During these first seven years of his exile in London, Bernstein's primary intellectual and practical interest remained the progress of the German Social Democracy, and most of his literary output was directed through the Sozialdemokrat and later Die Neue Zeit.² After the lifting of the anti-Socialist laws in 1890, it was no longer necessary to publish the Sozialdemokrat in England, and Bernstein was able to devote more of his time and energy to his first love - the clarification of the nature of socialism.

As a young man, Bernstein had experienced the conflict between the Lassalleans and the Eisenachers or Marxists in the German social democratic and labour movement. He joined the latter group in 1872, and worked as an organizer for them in Berlin, but, as Peter Gay shows, his original commitment to socialism had come through a reading of Lassalle and the positivist Eugen Dühring.³ Although the rival socialist organizations amalgamated in 1875, Gustafsson points out that it was not until Bernstein read Engels' Herr Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft, during the winter of 1878-1879 in Lugano, that he really began to take a Marxist approach.⁴ The

evidence is thus, on chronological grounds, that Marxism was accepted by Bernstein as a rational correction of his earlier Lassallean and Dühringian notions of socialist theory and practice rather than as an outright "conversion" to a completely new way of thinking.

Bernstein thus came by his "eclecticism" honestly. The intellectual milieu that was formative for him was one in which Romantic, positivist and "Left" or Materialist Hegelian pictures of socialism were in competition or were incongruously fused. His life-long pursuit of a coherent and experientially verifiable theory of socialism, which led him to do extensive historical studies when the ideal opportunity arose in England from 1890-1895, can be seen as an outgrowth of the unresolved philosophical contradictions of the socialist movement of his youth.

Bernstein's first chance to apply his experience and critical skills to a problem in socialist history came in 1891, when the SPD asked him to edit Lassalle's speeches and letters. His introductory essay, entitled "Ferdinand Lassalle and his Significance in the History of Social Democracy" (which, in a slightly altered form appeared as a separate book in English in 1893-- Ferdinand Lassalle As A Social Reformer), gave Bernstein the opportunity to develop his first extended assessment (the book is 200 pages long) of one of the ideological components of his own heritage.

Bernstein's approach to Lassalle consists in the method of "criticism and affirmation" that he was later to use with such startling results when dealing with the historical roots of liberalism and socialism in the Puritan Revolution, and finally with the "civil theology" of Marxism itself. While showing great appreciation for Lassalle's accomplishment of having "trained [the German working class] for the fight" and having "given them swords", Bernstein is roundly critical of Lassalle's related faults of the personal cultivation of "a kind of Lassalle religion" and a "cult of the State."⁵ Both of these he traces to the "philosophical absolutism" which "has at all times had a tendency inclining it to political absolutism."⁶ Bernstein notices this attitude in Lassalle, as expressed in personal terms, for example, in a letter by Lassalle to the Countess Hatzfeld: "I am sick and tired of politics . . . for without supreme power nothing can be done."⁷ In practice, this stance leads to the substitution of doxa for theoria, and ideology or political religion for political progress:

The cult of the State as such means the cult of every State, and even if Lassalle's democratic and socialist views made it impossible for him to support directly the existing State, it did not prevent this cult from being exploited later on by the advocates of the existing State in its interest. Indeed, the Achilles heel of all ideology, of all theory built upon preconceived concepts is that, no matter how revolutionary in intention, they are really always in danger of being transformed into a glorification of existing or of past institutions. Lassalle's concept of the State is the bridge that was one day to bring together the Republican Lassalle and the men fighting for absolute monarchy, the Revolutionist Lassalle and the out-and-out reactionaries . . .⁸

Logically, conflicts arise between different political religions, and Bernstein notes that Lassalle pursues his a priori thinking, and takes the next step of approving war as necessary for progress.⁹ While Bernstein concedes that some wars and conflicts have aided progress, he notes they have "frequently acted in the opposite direction" and have "proved an obstacle to progress," as in the "two phases of the militarism of today."¹⁰ With regard to Lassalle's recognition of the Prussian government's warming to universal suffrage for reasons of state, and his consequent adoption of a rather volkisch German nationalism, Bernstein points out that a similar situation in France had formed the basis for Bonapartism.¹¹ Lassalle's problem, Bernstein thinks, the "fundamental fallacy of the Lassallean method of thought", is a "juridical bent of mind" which "prevents his really getting to the bottom" of "the social side" of "the deeper causes of historical events."¹²

This "social side" is not simply material development, as is made clear in Bernstein's comments on the French Republic of February 1848. This did not become the social republic that it was hailed as by the Parisian proletariat, despite its being preceded by a great deal of socialist propaganda, because "the class upon which it would as such have had to rely, was not yet sufficiently developed . . . in the social sense of the word," although it was very much present materially.¹³ Bernstein is saying, in other words, that the February Republic, which was founded on the basis of universal suffrage, had

spawned Bonapartism-- a movement using the language of democracy-- because the material potential for social democracy had produced its forms rather than, as yet, allowing the development of its spiritual substance.

Lassalle's "juridical bent of mind" distorted his understanding of both the "social side" and the "economic side" of socialism, according to Bernstein.¹⁴ His analysis of the social structure of Prussia, for example, was based upon the statistics of incomes rather than an understanding of the social relationships of various strata and the facts of "spiritual control."¹⁵ The achievement of universal suffrage, under such conditions of spiritual servitude, would, Bernstein says, make very little difference (whatever the income statistics said). The problem, indeed, was not a juridical one involving the appropriation of part of the workers' product by the employers, as Lassalle formulated it in his "Iron Law of Wages", but a spiritual one, the uncertainty of the workers' existence under capitalism. Exploitation had always existed; what was new was the dynamism and instability of capitalism that kept employees in a constant state of worry and turmoil:

The real material question at issue was not raised by Lassalle until later on, and then only incidentally. The position of the working-class in modern society is so unbearable, and compares so unfavourably with every former method of production, not because the worker receives only a fraction of the new value produced by him, but because this fractional payment is combined with the uncertainty of his proletarian existence; because of the dependence of the workers upon the contractions of the world-market following one another in ever shorter periods of time, on constant revolutions of industry, and

altered conditions of distribution; because of the crying contrast between the character of production, ever becoming more socialised, and its anarchical distribution; and with all this the growing impossibility for the individual workers to free themselves from the double dependence upon the employing class, and the vicissitudes of the industrial cycle; because of the constant threat of being thrown from one sphere of industry into another lower one, or into the army of the unemployed. The dependence of the worker has only become greater with his apparent freedom. It is this which, with iron weight, presses upon the working-class, and its pressure grows with the growing development of Capitalism. The rate of wages, on the other hand, varies to-day with the various branches of industry, from literally starvation wages to wages which represent a certain amount of comfort. In the same way the amount of exploitation in the different industries also varies considerably, in certain cases wages being higher, in others lower, than in the earlier epochs of production. Both depend upon very variable factors; both differ, not only from industry to industry, but are in each of these subject to the greatest changes. The only thing constant is the tendency of capital to raise the rate of exploitation to squeeze surplus labour in one way or another out of the worker.¹⁶ [*Italics in original*]

Of course, the anxiety of the worker under capitalism is a major factor in the ability of capitalists to continue to raise the rate of exploitation.

The foregoing represents the heart of Bernstein's Marxist critique of Lasselleanism, and, as may be seen, it is a criticism of the formalism and dogmatism of Lassalle's mode of perception of the actualities of modern life. As Peter Gay shows, Bernstein retained this view of the human experience under capitalism until the end of his life as one of his core beliefs,¹⁷ and he expanded it into a criticism of the formalistic and

dogmatic elements in Marxism, and a doctrine that capitalism could lead to either a development of its socializing principle or an intensification of its alienating character.

It must be remembered, however, that Bernstein also never lost the Romantic sense of the "true myth" that he found in Lassalle (while eschewing the latter's Romantic hubris). Socialism was for him both "utopian" in one sense, and anti-utopian in another, a "bit of the beyond" and a programme that expressed itself as the extension of democratic institutions and economic equity.¹⁸ It was both imaginary and real, although not realizable simply via the will (his later criticism of Marx's "Blanquism" is couched in similar terms to his disapproval of Lassalle's conclusion that dictatorship was historically "necessary."¹⁹).

In chapter three of die Voraussetzungen (chapter two of Evolutionary Socialism), Bernstein worked out in detail his extension of his critique of Lassalle's formalistic concept of exploitation by the "Iron Law of Wages" to the Marxist interpretation of the labour theory of value itself. He sees the latter as an imaginative "key" that, like the Leibnizian monad or the atomic theory of matter, reveals something in a general or mythical sense about the nature of reality, without yielding programmatic directions for action or scientifically accurate descriptions of particular instances:

We have seen that surplus value can only be grasped as a concrete fact by thinking of the whole economy of society. Marx did not succeed in finishing the chapter on the classes that is

so important for his theory. In it would have been shown most clearly that labour value is nothing more than a key, an abstract image, like the philosophical atom endowed with a soul-- a key which, employed by the master hand of Marx, has led to the exposure and presentation of the mechanism of capitalist economy as this had not been hitherto treated, not so forcibly, logically, and clearly. But this key refuses service over and above a certain point, and therefore it has been disastrous to nearly every disciple of Marx.

The theory of labour value is above all misleading in this that it always appears again and again as the measure of the actual exploitation of the worker by the capitalist, and among other things, the characterisation of the rate of surplus value as the rate of exploitation reduces us to this conclusion. It is evident from the foregoing that it is false as such a measure, even when one starts from society as a whole and places the total amount of workers' wages against the total amount of other incomes. The theory of value gives a norm for the justice or injustice of the partition of the product of labour just as little as does the atomic theory for the beauty or ugliness of a piece of sculpture. We meet, indeed, to-day the best placed workers, members of the 'aristocracy of labour', just in those trades with a very high rate of surplus value, the most infamously ground-down workers in others with a very low rate.²⁰

Like Novalis' poetic reinterpretation of the Lessingian "dialectic", Bernstein's treatment of the "labour theory of value" consists in an attempt to recover its potency as theory (its power to differentiate experience) by attacking its function as monistic dogma. In a footnote to this passage, not included in the English translation of die Voraussetzungen, Bernstein, following a similar line of argument to that of Lange, in The History of Materialism,²¹ notes that "der reine Materialismus zuletzt Idealismus sei" because consciousness itself is, and must remain, a mystery. Thus, imaginative constructions such

as the Leibnizian monad and the "labour theory of value", by which the mind understands its contents derived from the senses, cannot be considered as absolute pictures of either the mind or the external world:

Wir wissen, dass wir denken, und wir wissen auch so ziemlich, in welcher Weise wir denken. Aber wir werden nie wissen, wie es zugeht, dass wir denken, wieso aus Eindrucken von aussen, aus Nervenreizen oder aus sonstigen Anderungen in der Lagerung und dem Zusammenwirken der Molekule unseres dehirnes Bewusstsein entsheht. Man hat es damit zu erklaren versucht, dass man dem Atom einen gewissen Grad von Bewusstseinsfahigkeit, von Beseeltheit im Sinne der Monadenlehre, zusprach. Aber das ist ein Gedankenbild, eine Annahme, zu der unsere Folgerungsweise und unser Bedurfnis nach einheitlichem Begreifen der Welt uns zwingt.²²

In the remainder of the note, Bernstein defends this view, which he had earlier expressed in an article, against the attacks of George Plekhanov, who had accused him of "ignorance generally and total uncomprehension concerning the philosophical views of Friedrich Engels."²³ Bernstein's point is that the "materialism" of many modern materialists is "rooted more in political than in scientific principles", and he thinks that Engels and even Plekhanov ("unconsciously himself") verify this. The description, by both men, of Spinoza as a materialist, when the Dutch philosopher's single substance is explicitly named by him as "God" as well as "Nature" and as "non-corporeal", is, says Bernstein, "a perfectly arbitrary interpretation of the word." Engels' further definitions of materialism as "that which nature takes as the original" and "the giving up of each idealistic fad which won't bring itself in agreement with facts conceived in its own context" are additional

examples of the giving of "so wide an interpretation to the word materialism that it loses all firmness and includes very anti-materialistic conceptions." For Bernstein, as for Lange, the value of philosophical materialism, defined as "the doctrine of matter as the final and only ground of things", is as an antidote to dogmatic speculation, and thus as a political weapon against reaction and absolutism.²⁴

It must be remembered that Bernstein's Revisionism per se emerged over a period of time (from approximately the end of 1896 to the summer of 1899) in the press of the SPD, partly as a response to theoretical and philosophical challenges from his opponents. His series of articles 'Probleme des Sozialismus' appeared in Die Neue Zeit in 1896 and 1897, but Die Voraussetzungen was not published until 1899, at the request of Kautsky and Bebel, who wanted a definitive statement from Bernstein, after attacks in the socialist press in 1898 by Parvus-Helphand, Luxemburg, and Plekhanov. Vera Zasulich, who had met Bernstein at Engels' house several times, had alerted Plekhanov in Geneva early on. Plekhanov had published (in Russian) in 1895 The Development of the Monist View of History, a philosophical defence of Marxist materialism, and he was a formidable opponent. The focus of the last chapter of Die Voraussetzungen is, in fact, Plekhanov's criticism of Bernstein's articles, but much of the material relevant to this debate is left out of the English translation of the book, giving the impression that Bernstein's "revisions" of Marxism are simplistic generalizations

based on "common-sense" (in the sense of "commonly held opinions") observations of current conditions, tarted up with philosophical language.²⁵ The following well-known passage, near the end of Evolutionary Socialism, for example, loses its air of intellectual dilettantism, when it is realized that it is specifically directed against Plekhanov, who had accused Bernstein of being a Kantian:

I cannot subscribe to the proposition: 'The working class has no ideas to realize.' I seen in it rather a self-deception, if it is not a mere play upon words on the part of its author.

And in this mind, I, at the time, resorted to the spirit of the great Königsburg philosopher, the critic of pure reason, against the cant which sought to get a hold on the working class movement and to which the Hegelian dialectic offers a comfortable refuge. I did this in the conviction that social democracy requires a Kant who should judge the received opinion and examine it critically with deep acuteness, who should show where its apparent materialism is the highest - and is therefore the most easily misleading - ideology, and warn it that the contempt of the ideal, the magnifying of material factors until they become onmipotent forces of evolution, is a self-deception, which has been and will be exposed as such at every opportunity by the action of those who proclaim it. Such a thinker, who with convincing exactness could show what is worthy and destined to live in the work of our great champions, and what must and can perish, would also make it possible for us to hold a more unbiassed judgment on those works which, although not starting from premises which today appear to us as decisive, yet are devoted to the ends for which social democracy is fighting. No impartial thinker will deny that socialist criticism often fails in this and discloses all the dark sides of epigonism. I have myself done my share in this, and therefore cast a stone at no one.²⁶

The title of the summary chapter of Die Voraussetzungen, "Endziel und Bewegung: Kant wider Cant", is suggestive of the

source of Bernstein's polemical style, for his friend, the British Marxist Ernest Belfort-Bax, had written an essay in the 1880's entitled "On Some Forms of Modern Cant. A Contribution to the Phenomenology of Cant." This, in the words of James Hulse, "defined cant as the ostentatious assumption of a virtue or a vice that one does not actually possess, or boasting of a quality that one happens naturally to have."²⁷ Belfort-Bax also wrote an essay at this time ("That Blessed Word") attacking the tendency to make particular ideas into sacred cows.²⁸ Bernstein had met Belfort-Bax in Zurich before the former moved to London,²⁹ and he was one of the few British socialists with whom Bernstein had extensive contact before Engels' death.³⁰ Belfort-Bax spoke German fluently, and he was of added interest to Bernstein in that he had a wide knowledge of German philosophy.³¹ It is interesting (and perhaps surprising) that recent Bernstein scholarship in both English (e.g., Fletcher) and German (e.g. Helmut Hirsch's Der 'Fabier' Eduard Bernstein) makes no mention of Belfort-Bax in connection with Bernstein's productive British years,³² and particularly with the period from 1890 to 1895 when Bernstein was carrying out his research and seeing Belfort-Bax regularly at Engels' house.

At the time of the Revisionist Controversy, two groups wanted to say that Bernstein was essentially just a Fabian-- his detractors in the SPD and the Fabians themselves, who claimed him as their disciple. Bernstein flatly denied to the end that his Revisionism was derived from the Fabians; in 1924 he wrote,

"The opinion which has gained wide currency that I was converted to my Revisionism by the model of English Fabianism is wholly erroneous",³³ and there is no evidence that he was well disposed to their views during his first years in London.³⁴ This, of course, would not rule out a process of intellectual osmosis (or perhaps "permeation") that Bernstein himself, who admitted to being receptive to new ideas, was not aware of. It was probably something like this that Eleanor Marx-Aveling was afraid of, when she wrote to Kautsky in 1898 warning that Bernstein was in danger of being used by the Fabians for their own purposes.³⁵ Some form of the "Fabian thesis" of the origin of "evolutionary socialism" would seem to be the most likely, were it not for the fact that all the chief theoretical features of Die Voraussetzungen are present in Sozialismus und Demokratie in der Englischen Revolution, a product of the application of the imaginative Marxism, developed by Bernstein in the course of his work on Lassalle, to original historical research. His detailed study of the "social side" and "economic side" of the circumstances of the English proto-socialism of the seventeenth century evidently convinced him that neither of the two "sides" could be reduced to the other, and that the "Puritan revolution" leading to modern industrialism could not be conceived in terms of a monistic process, but rather had to be seen as a pluralistic "Puritan evolution". From November 1896 to the summer of 1899, Bernstein was to argue in the socialist press and in Die Voraussetzungen, in

effect, that the subject of Marx's study in Capital (contemporary capitalism), was a continuation of this historical process, and thus that what Marx and his disciples thought of as the preparation of the elements for the Revolution - class analysis, political work, trade union work, agitation for universal suffrage, etc. was the Revolution.

With the exception of a two-page analysis by Hulse, Bernstein scholarship utterly ignores Sozialismus und Demokratie (Cromwell and Communism) as a theoretical work.³⁶ In Bernstein's own day, the book was praised by British historians C.H. Firth, G.P. Gooch, and S.R. Gardiner, all specialists in the period.³⁷ Max Weber consulted Bernstein when he was writing The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, thus showing, as Gay puts it, that Bernstein "was regarded as an expert on seventeenth-century English" history.³⁸

Both contemporary political friends and enemies, however, failed to recognize that Cromwell and Communism offers a theoretical challenge to Capital, even as it works out of it. This misapprehension continues. A current "friend" of the book, the former chairman of the British Labour Party, Eric Heffer, is enthusiastic about it because it shows that "socialism in Britain is not a foreign import, not an alien influence, grafted on to the British people from outside", but rather that it "is inherently British, in reality as British as the Union Jack or the hymn 'Abide With Me.'"³⁸ Be that as it may, Bernstein, for all his Anglophilia, can hardly have intended that the "Britishness

of socialism" be taken as being the main message of the work (it first appeared in German in 1895 and in English only in 1930). Heffer notes in passing that Cromwell and Communism proves that "the demand for a free, co-operative, democratic socialist commonwealth was already being made" in the seventeenth century, but he makes no attempt to relate this point to the theoretical debate concerning the nature of socialism in which Bernstein was a central figure (if not the central figure).³⁹

How and why did Bernstein's imaginative and rather free interpretation of Marxism become what amounted to a rival theory? Hulse notes that "the years of Bernstein's work on Lassalle and on the English revolutionaries coincided with the period of his closest collaboration with Engels."⁴⁰ During this period, Engels was working on volume III of Capital, which Bernstein hoped would clear up a number of problems in volumes I and II. Most of these centred on the labour theory of value, which had come under attack after 1875 from the "marginal utility" theorists in Austria and Britain. When Engels finally did bring out the third volume in 1894, Bernstein, along with many other socialists, was bitterly disappointed with it. Hulse points out, however, that Engels' Sunday evening gatherings (which Bernstein attended regularly for a number of years) probably had given ample opportunity for the main outlines of the debate to be thoroughly evident long before publication.⁴¹

As Peter Gay shows, Bernstein was thoroughly familiar with the literature on value theory (unlike most of the

Revisionists), and concluded that "value" was a "metaphysical" concept, and that economic value was "androgynous" in that it contained both utilitarian and labour power elements. He disagreed with the marginalist criticism of Marx's theory of value which claimed that Marx's theory ignored considerations of demand, by pointing out that the notion of "socially necessary labour time" was meaningless apart from such considerations, and followed Graham Wallas and Bernard Shaw in refusing to choose between the rival theories.⁴² In an article in Neue Zeit in 1899 he summed up his own position in a mythical way:

Peter and Paul stand before a box filled with mineral. 'These are parallel-planed hemihedral crystals,' says Peter.

'They are pyrites,' says Paul.

Which of the two is right?

'Both are right,' says the mineralogist. 'Peter's statement refers to form, Paul's to substance.' . . . The same is true in the quarrel over the value theory.⁴³

Superficially, this may appear to be an allegory in which one description of the substance stands for the marginal utility theory of value and the other for the labour theory. In that case, Bernstein might be taken to be saying that marginal utility is the form and labour power the substance of economic value. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that the story is in the form of the "true myth", for, of course, labour power could be just as easily seen as the "form" and marginal utility as the "substance" of economic value. What Bernstein means is that economic experience (like human experience in general) is irreducibly plural, having both form and substance, and that

attempts to reduce it to one principle (such as the Hegelian-materialist objectivism of process, or the bourgeois-materialist subjectivism of the individual consumer) are as doomed as the old theological effort to define and dogmatically separate form and substance once and for all.

While Bernstein's view of the question of economic value does not flatly contradict that of Marx in Capital (as the marginal utility theory does), it reinterprets it, denying its claim to be a datum of positive science and treating it as a theory of political science, that is, a critical description of a particular human society (modern capitalism). As Marx's theory of value is, of course, central to his whole enterprise, Bernstein's alteration of perspective on value implies that Marx's political "programme" (immanent revolutionism), based upon the supposed inevitability of a collapse of value, becomes an anatomy of the tendency of capitalist values to fall and of social values to replace them. In adopting this view (involving, as we have seen, the frank acknowledgement that the "form" and "substance" of economic value are the "metaphysical" presuppositions of the concept of economic value in the first place), Bernstein is returning to a position that Marx, in Capital, acknowledges as fundamental, but believes that he has superseded, namely, the "discovery of a relation of equality in the value-expression of commodities" of Aristotle.⁴⁴

Marx, in the first chapter of Capital, notes that the analysis of economic value really begins with the Nicomachean Ethics:

The great investigator who was the first to analyse the value-form, like so many other forms of thought, society and nature . . . [was] Aristotle.

In the first place, he states quite clearly that the money form of the commodity is only a more developed aspect of the simple form of value, i.e. of the expression of the value of a commodity in some other commodity chosen at random, for he says:

5 beds = 1 house
is indistinguishable from
5 beds = a certain amount of money . . .⁴⁵

Marx thinks, however, that Aristotle's understanding of economic value suffers from its stopping at the level of the practical relations between men, and that this deficiency is caused by a lack of a "concept of value" on Aristotle's part:

He further sees that the value-relation which provides the framework for this expression of value itself requires that the house should be qualitatively equated with the bed, and that these things, being distinct to the senses, could not be compared with each other as commensurable magnitudes if they lacked this essential identity. 'There can be no exchange', he says, 'without equality, and no equality without commensurability.' Here, however, he falters, and abandons the further analysis of the form of value. 'It is, however, in reality, impossible that such unlike things can be commensurable,' i.e., qualitatively equal. This form of equation can only be something foreign to the true nature of things, it is therefore only 'a makeshift for practical purposes.'

Aristotle therefore himself tells us what prevented any further analysis: the lack of a concept of value. What is the homogeneous element, i.e., the common substance, which the house represents from the point of view of the bed, in the value expression for the bed? Such a thing, in truth, cannot exist, says Aristotle. But why not? Towards the bed, the house represents something equal, in so far as it represents what is really equal, both in the bed and the house. And that is-- human labour.⁴⁶

It is clear, however, that Aristotle does not have "a concept of value" because the realm of Becoming, in which he

thinks the practical relations of men are conducted, is not the realm of "the true nature of things", and the equality necessary "for practical purposes" of economic relations must, therefore, be a "makeshift," or, like everything else in the political sphere, a matter of "common sense" or practical wisdom. "Value" is thus presupposed, by Aristotle, as inhering in reality as a whole, and economic value (like any other specific application of the principle of value) is viewed as having as many facets as there are points of view that go to make up the temporal "makeshift" or approximation of "the true nature of things" (labour, utility, beauty, etc.)

Marx, on the other hand (following Hegel), thinks that Aristotle has no self-conscious "concept of value" because Greek society was founded upon the material institutionalization of the inequality of men and thus of their labour power, and that such a "concept of value" could not arise until the relations between men became the relation between owners of commodities, thus revealing men as equal as expressions of "human labour in general":

However, Aristotle himself was unable to extract this fact, that, in the form of commodity-values, all labour is expressed as equal human labour and therefore as labour of equal quality, by inspection from the form of value, because Greek society was founded on the labour of slaves, hence had as its natural basis the inequality of men and of their labour-powers. The secret of the expression of value, namely the equality and equivalence of all kinds of labour because and in so far as they are human labour in general, could not be deciphered until the concept of human equality had already acquired the permanence of a fixed popular opinion. This, however, becomes possible only in a society where the commodity-form is the universal form of the product of labour, hence the dominant social relation is the relation between men as possessors

of commodities. Aristotle's genius is displayed precisely by his discovery of a relation of equality in the value-expression of commodities. Only the historical limitation inherent in the society in which he lived prevented him from finding out what 'in reality' this relation of equality consisted of.⁴⁷

This, of course, is to see bourgeois society as a necessary and historically inevitable product of ancient society, or, put another way, to see the past as the present writ small. It is not merely chronological snobbery, but a deliberate appropriation of the Aristotelian metaxy (the "in-between", mediating the Absolute and the realm of Becoming) as an absolute, immanent present, mediating the past and the future-- Self-conscious Value, or Human Activity.

Bernstein either never fully understood this transmutation of the metaxy into immanence by Hegel and Marx, or his skeptical turn of mind led him to take it as a "model" on the analogy of the scientific (as opposed to the philosophical) theory. At any rate, his treatment of "value" as "metaphysical", and economic value as multi-faceted and beyond definitive analysis, shows that his thinking on this central element in Marx's thought was akin to the Classical view, at least in the sense that both Aristotle and Bernstein think of economic value and its political implications in "common-sense" terms.

This "objective" view of the labour theory of value (i.e. seeing the theory itself as external to the thinker), makes possible again the notion of a history as a chronicle of events, rather than a Hegelian "interior history", and thus it is not

surprising that such a project (in the form of a "history of socialism") was contemplated and carried out in the 1890's by the SPD. The prime mover behind this effort was Karl Kautsky, the chief theoretician of the Second International, whose writings make plain the fact that, while he retained the Hegelian "dialectical" form of Marx's work, he was a thorough-going positivist.⁴⁸ His accomplice in this historical effort was Eduard Bernstein.

As Capital is intended as the immanentist replacement for an "abstract" history of both material life and spiritual "ideas", Kautsky's historiographical enterprise (the notion of writing a "history of socialism") represented a "revision" in its very conception. This must have been realized by Kautsky and Bernstein at least subconsciously, for they kept Engels in the dark about the project until it was a fait accompli. Engels was somewhat put out about this, although it appears from a letter which he wrote to Kautsky on May 21, 1895, that he was more offended by being left out of the scheme than by its theoretical shortcomings:

What did pique me was the strange mysteriousness in which you wrapped the matter as far as I was concerned, while the whole world was talking about it. It was only through third persons that I learned of the whole project and only through the printed prospectus of the outlines of the plan. Not a word from either you or Ede [Bernstein]. It was as if you had a bad conscience. At the same time surreptitious inquiries were made by all sorts of people: how I regarded the matter, whether I had declined to collaborate, etc. And then at long last, when silence was no longer possible, good old Ede got to talking about this matter, with a shame-facedness and embarrassment

that would have been worthy of a worse cause--
for nothing improper had really occurred . . .

Well, then, you have confronted me with
an accomplished fact: a history of socialism
without my collaboration . . .⁴⁹

The "history of socialism", for which Kautsky had recently asked Engels for material on the First International (eliciting the above response), had really begun with Kautsky's Thomas More und sein Utopie (1888). The second instalment had been Die Vorläufer des Neueren Sozialismus, which had appeared earlier in 1895 as Volume I of Die Geschichte des Sozialismus in Einzeldarstellung. Kautsky had contributed Von Plato bis zu den Wiedertäufern and Von Thomas More bis zum Vorabend der französischen Revolution to this collective effort, and Bernstein had written his study of Cromwellian England for it.

Engels' "review" of Kautsky's part of Die Geschichte is in the same letter:

As for your book I can say that it gets better the further one reads. Plato and Early Christianity are still inadequately treated, according to the original plan. The mediaeval sects much better, and crescendo, the best are the Taborites, Münzer, and the Anabaptists. Very many important analyses of political events, paralleled, however, by common-places where there were gaps in research. I have learnt a great deal from the book; it is an indispensable preliminary study for my new revision of the Peasant War . . .⁵⁰

Bernstein's task for the "history" was to cover the pivotal period from the theological communism of the mediaeval sectaries to the "positive" or scientific basis for socialism set out in Marx's immanent critique of the political economy

of actual capitalism (Capital). In practical terms, this meant a study of the seventeenth century, in particular seventeenth-century Britain, which was the locus of the "metaphysical" transformation of the Puritan doctrine of a scrutable Providence into the secular religion of Progress, the first stage of which was the identification of human "callings" with the will of God, as in the work of William Perkins.⁵¹

Scholars have noted that Bernstein's treatment of this era in Cromwell and Communism exhibits the characteristic method that he was to use later in the studies of the political economy of the nineteenth century that led to his "heresies" -- what might be called Imaginative Marxism. Peter Gay, for example, points out that the "historical materialism" employed by Bernstein in Cromwell and Communism serves him as an aid to understanding, rather than (as for Marx), so to speak, understanding itself:

Critics have succeeded in showing that Revisionism lacked profundity and originality . . . But it must be said that [Bernstein] had absorbed far more of the Marxist view of history than these criticisms would indicate. To Bernstein, Marx's interpretation was a living thing, not a stereotyped model. It was 'above all a method of understanding history', as he once wrote to Kautsky, and he objected, rightly, to a rigid application of Marxian terminology and categories. This procedure, he felt, put historical truth in a straitjacket in order to fit the infinite variety of life to a single scheme. Bernstein's own use of Marx's historical materialism -- in Cromwell and Communism -- had resulted in a brilliant study which was free from the flaws of a narrow orthodoxy and which did not do violence for the sake of a theory.⁵²

Gay's observations here strongly suggest that the method adopted by Bernstein in his 'Probleme des Sozialismus' articles in 1896 and 1897, and later in Die Voraussetzungen, is anticipated

in Cromwell and Communism in 1895. Hulse goes further, and argues that the actual subject treated by Bernstein in the latter work was instrumental in crystallizing his "evolutionary socialism":

. . . The Marxist interpretation runs through the whole study, but this is not the most interesting feature of the book. It is evident that Bernstein developed an intellectual admiration for some of the people whom he discovered, and he treated them and their ideas with a scholarly affection that went beyond the typical class-struggle analysis.

He took special interest in some of the revolutionaries who had been either harshly treated or completely ignored by previous historians of the revolutions. He has received praise from professional historians for pointing out the importance of Gerrard Winstanley, the spokesman for the lower-class Diggers. Bernstein summarized and analysed the grievances that Winstanley called to the attention of Cromwell during the period of the Commonwealth. He examined the liberal-republican suggestions of Pieter Cornelius Plockboy, the Netherlander who wrote pamphlets for the movement shortly before the Restoration. He praised the Levellers and the Quakers, and he commented on the seventeenth-century contributions to nineteenth-century English Socialism.

He reserved his highest praise for John Bellers, the prolific Quaker whose contribution to the literature of the English Revolutions had come rather late, beginning only in 1695. Marx and Engels had previously mentioned him in Das Kapital and Bernstein followed their lead in examining his work, but he found that there was much more to appreciate. Bellers had advocated 'Colleges of Industry' or 'Civil Fellowship' Communes, an international confederation of nations with peacekeeping responsibilities, a reform of hospital and penal facilities, and plans for discouraging corruption of members of parliament. He also sought the moral elevation of the poorer classes.

Each of these men, as Bernstein represented them, had been seeking reform within the existing political framework and the changes that each proposed could be achieved by peaceful means. It is suggestive of Bernstein's personal tastes --and this foreshadows his Revisionism --that these moderate advocates of reform appear in a better light than the more militant John Lilburne. Bernstein saw that the reformers eventually

sought not to destroy the state but to make it the instrument for advancing the welfare of all. Just as the attitude of the English revolutionaries towards the state had matured, culminating in the refined ideas of Bellers, so Bernstein undoubtedly recognized his own ideas undergoing transition. 'In 1648 and 1649', he wrote, 'it was possible to believe in the feasibility of a democratic revolution, inasmuch as the democratic sections of the nation were then under arms; but in 1688 or 1695 such an expectation was clearly an illusion.' Likewise, the conditions that had made Bernstein an uncompromising radical in his days as editor of the illegal Sozialdemokrat in the 1880's no longer existed in the 1890's. The comparison is not explicit, but it is obvious that Bernstein had thought a good deal about the change in tactics that had occurred among the subjects of his study as the revolutionary movement matured. [ft. 2 Bernstein kept his interest in Bellers for many years, and on 12 October, 1918, when Germany was on the verge of defeat in the First World War and the prospect of a league of nations was being widely discussed, Bernstein delivered a paper in which he referred favourably to Bellers' suggestions on the subject. Eduard Bernstein, Volkerbund oder Staatenbund: Eine Untersuchung, (Berlin, 1919).]

So there is internal evidence that his studies of English revolutionary history contributed to his tendency towards evolutionary socialism. The examination of the comparative utopian schemes of the seventeenth century and of the evolution of those schemes made him less disposed to regard any single formula or dogma as a final gospel. Socialism got a good history from Bernstein's studies of the English revolutions, but it also got a man who had developed a taste for heresy . . .⁵³

While neither Gay nor Hulse is specifically reductive in the above passages, the general view that each takes of Bernstein gives us the choice of seeing the latter's "evolutionary socialism" as being read into the English Revolution (Gay) or read out of it (Hulse). The fact that Bernstein's Imaginative Marxism is already present in his work on Lassalle, as was noted previously, may seem to favour Gay here. However, Eric Heffer's remark⁵⁴ that, as a result of reading the book, "we can see that the demand for

a free, co-operative, democratic socialist commonwealth was already being made" by Lilburne, the Diggers and the Levellers etc., shows that the historical documentary theory of the origin of Bernsteinian Revisionism, presented by Hulse, is not implausible either. Both Gay and Hulse, in company with modern empiricist scholarship as a whole, although disagreeing about the furniture with which Bernstein filled his mind, (economic data, books, "experiences" etc.), concur that the genesis of his revisionism must have been in some sort of process of accumulation, or history, of ideas.

As I suggested in the Introduction,⁵⁵ however, Bernstein's own accounts of his mental development indicate rather that from the first he had a self-conscious experience of, or attitude to, being (what I called his "myth") which, in the course of his life, underwent an elaboration. His approach to the English Revolution is then perhaps best seen as an exercise in comparative philosophy wherein the searcher finds a mode of thought that resonates with his own thought, an external history that corresponds with his own internal one. In such a situation, the external history illuminates the internal, but by a similar token, the latter acts as a "key" upon the former, bringing out all sorts of details and relationships that would not otherwise be evident. It is such an exercise (although not a conscious one) that I believe we have in Cromwell and Communism.

That such a relatively unconscious hermeneutic operation can have profound philosophical significance is evident from the

case of Hans Jonas, the great scholar of Gnosticism and critic of technocracy, who describes the genesis of his own enterprise in just such an exercise in comparative philosophy:

When, many years ago, I turned to the study of Gnosticism, I found that the viewpoints, the optics as it were, which I had acquired in the school of Heidegger, enabled me to see aspects of gnostic thought that had been missed before. And I was increasingly struck by the familiarity of the seemingly utterly strange. In retrospect, I am inclined to believe that it was the thrill of this dimly felt affinity which had lured me into the gnostic labyrinth in the first place. Then, after long sojourn in those distant lands returning to my own, the contemporary philosophic scene, I found that what I had learnt out there made me now better understand the shore from which I had set out. The extended discourse with ancient nihilism proved--to me at least--a help in discerning and placing the meaning of modern nihilism: just as the latter had initially equipped me for spotting its obscure cousin in the past. What had happened was that Existentialism, which had provided the means of an historical analysis, became itself involved in the results of it. The fitness of its categories to the particular matter was something to ponder about. They fitted as if made to measure: were they, perhaps, made to measure? At the outset, I had taken that fitness as simply a case of their presumed general validity, which would assure their utility for the interpretation of any human "existence" whatsoever. But then it dawned on me that the applicability of categories in the given instance might rather be due to the very kind of 'existence' on either side--that which had provided the categories and that which so well responded to them.

It was the case of an adept who believed himself in possession of a key that would unlock every door: I came to this particular door, I tried the key, and lo! it fitted the lock, and the door opened wide. So the key had proved its worth. Only later, after I had outgrown the belief in a universal key, did I begin to wonder why this one had in fact worked so well in this case. Had I happened with just the right kind of key upon the

right kind of lock? If so, what was there between Existentialism and Gnosticism which made the latter open up at the touch of the former? With this turnabout of approach, the solutions in the one became questions to the other, whereat first they had just seemed confirmations of its general power.

Thus the meeting of the two, started as the meeting of a method with a matter, ended with bringing home to me that Existentialism, which claims to be the explication of the fundamentals of human existence as such, is the philosophy of a particular, historically fated situation of human existence: and an analogous (though in other respects very different) situation had given rise to an analogous response in the past. The object turned object-lesson, demonstrating both contingency and necessity in the nihilistic experience. The issue posed by Existentialism does not thereby lose in seriousness; but a proper perspective is gained by realizing the situation which it reflects and to which the validity of some of its insights is confined.

In other words, the hermeneutic functions become reversed and reciprocal--lock turns into key, and key into lock: the "existentialist" reading of Gnosticism, so well vindicated by its hermeneutic success, invites as its natural complement the trial of a 'gnostic' reading of Existentialism56

Bernstein's research for Cromwell and Communism was undertaken in an analogous way; he brought his Imaginative Marxist method (which, as we have seen, itself represents a significant return to the second stage of the realization of the Hermetic gnosis, identified by Tuveson, with its "divine lamp" of reason, "spilt religion" of Romanticism and moral sentimentalism--[see p. 18 above]) to the "matter" of the second stage as it actually occurred historically in Britain in the events of the English Revolution. As a result, the historical materialist "dialectic" had its roots further

uncovered as Bernstein encountered the remnants of the first Tuveson stage-- the utopian-millennarian communism of the "true Levellers" or Diggers, and the beginnings of the third stage of "absorption" in the recidivist reaction of the disappointed revolutionaries who retired into the "inner illumination" of Quakerism, which Bernstein links with the doctrines of Jacob Böhme, the theology of Kaspar Schwenkfeld (1490-1561), [whose most characteristic teaching was the deification of the humanity (including the flesh) of Christ], and the mediaeval German Anabaptists.

The "key turns into a lock" for Bernstein when he makes the suggested applications of an historically-informed "second-stage" understanding of "the dialectic" to the immanent revolutionary presuppositions of Capital, and revises them to conform with the practical moral evolutionism that he finds running through the seventeenth-century revolutionary tradition, a strand which culminates in the work of John Bellers.⁵⁸

Bernstein, of course, does not pursue his analysis of modern Hermetic immanentism into the stage at which Jonas begins his study--nihilism-- although Nietzsche showed that this was possible in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ However, this does not really reflect badly upon Bernstein, as even Tuveson himself, despite the twentieth century experience of organized political nihilism, fails to identify the fourth stage of the realization of the Hermetic gnosis properly (Tuveson prefers to leave things with the "democratic cult" or Walt Whitman, being convinced that Hermetism is wholly optimistic, unlike the other classical

Gnostic schemes; Jonas disagrees, noting that they are all pessimistic at heart, even if Hermetism "tones down" this characteristic.)⁶⁰

The strand in seventeenth century thought which Bernstein clearly favours, and which he sees as coming to a focus in Bellers might be described (anachronistically) as Pragmatism. He detects the beginnings of this in the religious rationalism of the Levellers,⁶¹ the appeal to "Natural Law" for redress by the Derbyshire miners,⁶² the proto-Chartism of Lilburne and his followers,⁶³ the dynamic materialism of James Harrington⁶⁴ and the economic co-operativism of Plockboy.⁶⁵ Each of these, for Bernstein, represents an aspect of a way of looking at the world which is gradually evolving throughout the century, and which reaches its full expression in Bellers' schemes for a "college of industry", a league of nations, a religious parliament, penal reform etc. This stance, while recognizing that economic and moral progress are interrelated phenomena, nevertheless does not reduce them to the same thing, and, in fact, warns that "all economical improvements are useless unless they are combined with moral elevation."⁶⁶ "Progress", in this scenario, is clearly no simple monistic process or secular deity, but rather a complex achievement involving the development of both the material powers of man and his moral nature (Bernstein's "economic side" and "social side"?).

Bellers wrote in the second half of the last decade of the seventeenth century, but Bernstein did not know that the

"common-sense" civil theology of the Scottish Enlightenment, particularly of Ferguson and Reid, is anticipated by the sort of argument found in Bellers. The neo-Stoicism of the Scottish School, derived ultimately from Machiavelli, offered a criticism of bourgeois greed and utilitarianism, while at the same time affirming the desirability of material progress.⁶⁷ Neither did Bernstein realize that the strand of seventeenth-century thought that he identified as most progressive (because it rebelled against emergent capitalism) was, in fact, the most "conservative", in that its governing principles (natural justice, the rational order of the universe, the goodness of Nature, the innate moral sense) reverted to the oldest stratum in the Hermetic world-view: its borrowed Middle Platonic (Neo-Platonist, Aristotelian and Stoic) framework; that is, precisely that element which the Capitalist heir of mainline Puritanism progressively abandons during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In short, without being fully aware of it, Bernstein's belated scholarly efforts (he was in his early 40's when he began his researches in the library of the British Museum) resulted in his "conversion" from "spilled religion" (Romanticism) to the "spilled metaphysics" (Common Sense, with its background in Middle Platonism) that, in terms of the history of philosophy, actually pre-dates it.

The fact that Bernstein noted a gradual growth of this "genuine residue of noesis" (to use Voegelin's phrase) on the Left of the English Revolution (amongst the Independents, Diggers,

Levellers and secularized Quakers) understandably led him to think, however, that it was integral to their general ideology which, as we have noted, derived--like that of the mainstream Puritans-- from a gnosticized millennarian Christianity, and hence was part of "progress" that was "before its time." Nevertheless, the implications, for the triadic monism and historicism (in C.S. Lewis' sense of the term)⁶⁸ shared by Marxism and Comtean Positivism, of the application of Common Sense to them by Bernstein, were profound.

The effect might be summed up by saying that Bernstein treats triadic monism as simply pre-critical thinking. That is, as chapter 2 of Die Voraussetzungen makes clear, Bernstein thinks that the "dialectic" is (following Lange's estimate) "almost an anthropological discovery" in that it gives a rough pattern of the way human history proceeds, but it must not be confused with deduction on the basis of sense-perception, and therefore has no predictive or strategic value, although it may be considered to be a contribution to natural science.⁶⁹ It is a mental "scaffolding" that Marx used to build his political economy, a "real residue of Utopianism" that he employed because "he found [it] existing" already, but it became a "snare" to him when he sacrificed the evidence of his senses to its demands:

. . . It thus appears that this great scientific spirit was, in the end, a slave to a doctrine. To express it figuratively, he has raised a mighty building within the framework of a scaffolding he found existing, and in its erection he kept strictly to the laws of scientific architecture as long as they did not collide with the conditions which the construction of the scaffolding prescribed,

but he neglected or evaded them when the scaffolding did not allow for their observance. Where the scaffolding put limits in the way of the building, instead of destroying the scaffolding, he changed the building itself at the cost of its right proportions and so made it all the more dependent on the scaffolding. Was it the consciousness of this irrational relation which caused him continually to pass from completing his work to amending special parts of it? However that may be, my conviction is that wherever that dualism ['the work aims at being a scientific inquiry and also at proving a theory laid down long before its drafting'] shows itself the scaffolding must fall if the building is to grow in its right proportions. In the latter, and not in the former, is found what is worthy to live in Marx.

Nothing confirms me more in this conception than the anxiety with which some persons seek to maintain certain statements in Capital, which are falsified by facts. It is just some of the more deeply devoted followers of Marx who have not been able to separate themselves from the dialectical form of the work-- that is the scaffolding alluded to--who do this . . .⁷⁰

If the "dialectic" as a "myth" or primary theorization about existence is taken "too seriously" and interpreted as an infallible map of reality, says Bernstein, critical common-sense will be occluded, and political science made impossible. This is particularly true in the case of a "borrowed myth", or an attitude to being that, as in the case of the "dialectic", is intrinsic to the political economy being criticized (capitalism). It is inevitable that Marx, who "had accepted the solution of the Utopians in essentials, but had recognized their means and proofs as inadequate",⁷¹ should have fallen into this trap, for the utopian-millennarian communism of the mediaeval and seventeenth-century communist sectaries is [as Bernstein knew] intellectually symmetrical with aspects of Saint-Simonism,

Fourierism and the teachings of the Owenites.⁷²

Bernstein, as he readily admitted, remained a utopian and a historicist himself, of course, in terms of his moral evolutionism and his faith in the progress of democracy and the working class as agents of enlightenment. He did not "move the dialectic to the periphery of Marxism" (Gay) so much as reduce its stature by identifying it with the earliest (and pre-critical) stage of socialist theorization (in Comtean language the "theological"). He might well have accepted Karl Popper's strictures against historicism, defined as "an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principle aim,"⁷³ without embracing the Popperian conclusions that history has no essential meaning or that all metaphysical speculation, or noetic experience, is equally ideological. On the other hand, he did claim for the unaided reason a potential perfectibility - in the Enlightenment tradition - that, for the Christian, Lewis, following a doctrine that saw reason as efficacious but damaged by the Fall, would have seemed unjustifiably optimistic, and hence both utopian and historicist.

In this regard, it is interesting that, as Roger Fletcher notes, Bernstein's attitude to Christianity and to Christian Socialism in particular changed from one of indifference or hostility in Germany and Switzerland to a much more favourable view after he moved to England:

That [Bernstein] could appreciate Lange's ethical approach to the social question without embracing

neo-Kantianism may be explained by reference to his thirteen years of exile in London (1888-1901, that is, from his thirty-eighth year, when he had yet to publish his first major book to the age of 51). During this period, the labour people with whom he had most contact (apart from fellow-emigres) and whom he most admired were not the Marxist sectarians of H.M. Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation (SDF) or even the Fabians (as the 'best informed' of British socialists, they provided agreeable and stimulating company, much to Engels' annoyance) but ethical socialists like Keir Hardie, Ramsay MacDonald or John Bruce Glasier, whose roots and ambience were the Non-conformist chapel, the trade unions and the Independent Labour Party (S. Pierson, Marxism and the Origins of British Socialism, Ithaca and London: 1973, pp. 140-173, 198-214, 257-271). Bernstein, incidentally, was the one foreign socialist present at the inaugural conference of the ILP held at Bradford in 1893 (H. Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900, 2nd. edition, Oxford: 1965, p. 118). From this source he gained a vastly different perspective on Christianity and religion generally from that acquired in Germany during his youth. In 1890 he informed his German comrades that British Christian Socialists were an altogether different species from Stöcker, Distelkamp Treitschke [sic], many of them having participated actively in the workers' class struggle against capital and distinguished themselves in the organization of the new unions (Bernstein, 'Carlyle und die sozialpolitische Entwicklung Englands', Neue Zeit, Jg. 9, Ed. 1, 730-2). [ft. 4 More than a decade later he still felt obliged to explain for the benefit of his German readers that 'in Protestant England, politically speaking, religion has never been simply a governmental tool of the possessing classes against the propertyless; it was always at the same time also a shield of the political underdog in his struggles against the privileged.' Bernstein, 'Eindrücke aus England', Neue Deutsche Rundschau (Freie Volksbühne), Bd. 1, 1901, p. 569]. In 1897 he maintained that 'if a large section of English democracy draws its ethics from the New Testament rather than from some atheistic treatise, these 'bigots' and 'pharisees', or whatever one wishes to call them, have performed infinitely greater services for liberty in Europe than we enlightened Germans have so far done.' (Bernstein, 'Kreta und die russische Gefahr', Neue Zeit, Jg. 15, Bd. 2, 1896, p. 15). In 1904 he described Keir Hardie's socialism as

exhibiting 'a much more pronounced ethical hue than that of German Social Democracy', (*italics in original*), commenting that 'emphasis of the ethical factor may be a sign either of a backward movement or of the more advanced conditions with which it has to deal. Here both factors coalesce' (Bernstein, 'Nationale Besonderheiten und internationale Sprache'. Die Sozialistischen Monatshefte, Bd. 2, 1904, pp. 893-4). At Chemnitz in 1912 he described Jesus Christ as 'the greatest reformer of all time' (Protokolle über die Verhandlungen des Parteitage der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1912, p. 421) . . .⁷⁴

Fletcher thinks that the specifically "ethical socialist" component of Bernsteinian Revisionism derived from this British Christian Socialist environment to which Bernstein was exposed so extensively (and so early) during his London exile. His "return to Lange" in January 1892 in the British Museum library was provoked, according to Fletcher, not by contact or sympathy with the German "ethical socialists", but by his experience of the British variety:

Clearly, Bernstein was more impressed by Lange's social activism than by his Kantianism, more by British than by German ethical socialism . . .

Not only was Bernstein not a neo-Kantian, but he appears to have had minimal contact and, at best, lukewarm relations with neo-Kantian and ethical socialists in prewar Social Democracy. The 'Marxism and ethics' debate coincided with the revisionist controversy and was fought out very largely in the pages of Bloch's journal [the Sozialistischer Monatshefte, known initially as the Sozialistischer Akademiker in 1895, 1896], though also in the Neue Zeit and its Austrian equivalent, Der Kampf. Closest to Bernstein's position were Eduard David and Paul Kampffmeyer, but none of the 'ethical aesthetes' (Eisner, Otto Bauer, Franz Staudinger, Ludwig Woltmann and Conrad Schmidt) was closely identified with Bernstein. Both intellectually and in their personal relations, these heterogeneous elements manifested very little internal unity . . .⁷⁵

Fletcher makes no attempt to show what intellectual connection Bernstein may have made between British Christian Socialism and the thought of F.A. Lange, nor does he associate Bernstein's interest in the English Revolution with Bernstein's practical experience in Britain, as Hulse does.⁷⁶ However, Fletcher does make an interesting scholarly slip that perhaps indicates the presence of an unpursued "hunch". Following his noting of Bernstein's endorsement of Jesus as a social reformer [see above p. 112], Fletcher writes: "In so saying, he was no doubt as mindful of the fact that Christian ethics had not only produced such admired figures as William Morris (Bernstein, 'William Morris: Eindrücke und Erinnerungen', Der Sozialistischer Akademiker, 1896, pp. 668-73; Aus den Jahren meines Exils, Berlin: 1918, pp. 185, 222-4, 249-56), John Bright and W.E. Gladstone as he was aware that the Nonconformist conscience formed 'the backbone of the Liberal Party' in Britain (Bernstein, 'Die Transvaalwirren und ihr internationalen Rückschlag', Neue Zeit, Jg. 14, Bd. 1, p. 614) . . .⁷⁷

The William Morris referred to is, of course, the famous poet, artist and co-founder of the Socialist League, but Fletcher seems to have conflated him with the Reverend William Morris, the Christian Socialist. Bernstein was acquainted with both of these men, and spoke highly of them (within a few pages of one another in his autobiography, My Years of Exile). The Reverend William Morris was apparently the first Christian Socialist that Bernstein met (during the winter of 1889-90) in

Britain, and the encounter was instrumental in causing him in his own words, "to revise my ideas" on Christian Socialism.⁷⁸ This Morris was a colleague of the Reverend Stewart Headlam, the Church of England clergyman "who was a pupil of the admirable Frederick Denison Maurice",⁷⁹ as Bernstein puts it. Maurice, along with Charles Kingsley and other "Broad Church" Anglicans had founded Christian Socialism in the wake of the failure of Chartism after 1848 in order to establish for "the Kingdom of Christ" its "true authority over the realms of industry and trade" and to clarify for "socialism its true character as the great Christian revolution of the nineteenth century."⁸⁰ The primary principles of this movement were "the Bible principles" of self-sacrifice and co-operation (as against self-interest and competition), and its focus was the establishment of producers' and consumers' co-operatives, profit-sharing and co-partnership in industry, associations for workers' education, legislation to facilitate the co-operative reorganization of society and working men's associations.⁸¹

Bernstein knew Headlam, and remarks in My Years of Exile that G.B. Shaw, who had worked closely with the Christian Socialists, made the character Morell in his play Candida "an active member of the Guild of St. Matthew, an association of clergymen interested in social reform, which was founded by Headlam toward the end of the seventies", because he "had [Headlam] in mind."⁸² Headlam and his Guild were High Church (Anglo-Catholic), and drew their programme from Maurice, the

the Tractarians (Keble, Newman and Pusey), and the Fabians. Bernstein, indeed, thinks that "Morell" was directly modelled on Morris, who was evidently a member of this guild:

'Brother Bob' was the name which the working men--why, no one rightly knew--had bestowed upon Morris, who in reality, like his famous namesake the poet, bore the Christian name of William. He had a better claim to the title of 'Brother' than to the name of 'Bob', since among the members of the Radical 'New Unions' of those days it was used in the same sense as 'comrade' among our German Socialist working men. A thoroughly earnest supporter of the Labour movement, the Reverend William Morris was held in great esteem by the Socialist workers of London. After he had taken his degree at Oxford he was appointed curate in one of the lowest quarters of South London, where he lived in the midst of the poorest inhabitants, to whom he devoted all his energies. He founded a club whose members he won over to Socialism, and a tiny room partitioned off from the billiard-room with just enough space for his bed and his books, was all his lodging. In this club, the May-day demonstrations of the London workers, which had such important results in the early nineties, were first discussed and determined upon. The Club even published a Socialist newspaper, but was unable to carry it on. After ten years' activity there Morris was appointed Vicar of St. Anne's, Vauxhall, but his exhausting work among the poor seemed to have undermined his health. A strong man when I became acquainted with him, he died at a comparatively early age. The alliteration of Morris and Morell and the personal description of Morell in Shaw's Candida, gave me the idea that the dramatist had taken 'Brother Bob' as his model.⁸³

The British Christian Socialism proper, which so impressed Bernstein, was thus of Anglican rather than Non-conformist origin (My Years of Exile clearly distinguishes between the two), and it seems likely that the dual emphasis

upon critical scholarship and practical action in this tradition appealed to Bernstein's temperament. Bernstein himself offers some evidence that the impetus for his studies of the English Revolution partly came from this milieu.⁸⁴

In the Reverend Thomas Hancock I came to know a Christian Socialist of peculiar selflessness. A product of the school of Kingsley and Maurice, Hancock had early resigned his position as an officiating clergyman, and only occasionally preached a sermon, his principal activity being that of research in the great library of the British Museum. In particular he had devoted himself to the history of the great English Revolution, and by the labour of decades had amassed an enormous amount of material, of which he himself made no use as a writer, but was always ready to communicate to others. When I obtained an introduction to him, from Stewart Headlam, and sent him my treatise on "Democracy and Socialism in the English Revolution", which was then in its first and as yet quite unfinished state, he got a common acquaintance to bring me to Harrow, where he was living, and on this occasion placed whole cupboards full of manuscript at my disposal, in order that I might go through it and make free use of it, so that I could work upon my treatise and amplify it, as I had planned. This offer overwhelmed me so by its magnanimity that I could not at once make up my mind to accept it. At first I merely thanked him, but neglected to make any sort of arrangement with him; and when Hancock died a few years later the manuscripts passed into the hands of his heirs . . .⁸⁵

The heyday of the Christian Socialist movement in Britain spanned the years 1848-58, and during that period the Council for Promoting Working Men's Associations, the Workingmen's College, and Queen's College for the education of women were successfully set up, and the Industrial and Provident Partnerships (co-operative) bill was steered through Parliament.

The aim of Maurice and his friends was to offer simultaneously a Christian critique of capitalism and to outflank the atheist elements in the socialist movement. However, this was certainly not conceived of as a "spoiling" operation, as the Christian Socialists abhorred the social consequences of mid-century industrialism, and saw the rise of socialism as an opportunity to re-ground society on principles more in harmony with those of the Gospel. Maurice was theologically orthodox, and his movement should not be confused with later secularizing and modernist tendencies in the churches (such as the "social gospel"), which consciously set out to "de-mythologize" Christian teaching and turn it into political ideology, and which were secular Puritan (rather than Anglican) in origin.

The chief philosophical influence upon Maurice, other than the Bible and the teachings of the Church, was German Romanticism as mediated through Samuel Taylor Coleridge.⁸⁶ Coleridge had come slowly to a profession of Christian orthodoxy through Unitarianism, pantheism, Böhme, Herder, Lessing, and Schelling, to whom he is perhaps most indebted.⁸⁷ The High Church Christian Socialism of Headlam and "Brother Bob" took its rise in the 1870's and 1880's, and added a more direct infusion of Middle Platonism to the Romantic neo-Platonism of the Broad Church socialists. The Tractarians sought to restore the sacramental dimension to Christian practice, and drew much of their inspiration from Patristic and mediaeval theology and

ecclesiastical history of pre-Puritan vintage. The standard modern edition of Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity by Richard Hooker, the late Elizabethan critic of Puritanism and Roman Catholicism, for example, was produced by John Keble, the founder of the Tractarians.⁸⁸

The other William Morris had not at any time been a Christian Socialist, although he had been at Oxford during the decade of the movement's greatest successes.⁸⁹ He was attracted to the High Anglican group, and he and his friends read theology, ecclesiastical history, mediaeval poetry, Tennyson and Ruskin. In his case, the aesthetic dimension of the Oxford Movement (as the Tractarians were also called)--its affirmation of theological points through recourse to the intuition of beauty as well as through the reason-- was what stayed with him, rather than the theology itself.

Bernstein first met this famous Morris on his trip to London with Bebel in November, 1887, and he described the poet and artist as "magnificent."⁹⁰ During his years of residence in London, Bernstein probably met Morris several times at Engels' house (which Morris visited infrequently), and certainly saw him at Kelmscott House, the Morris residence on the Thames, at least twice, on which occasions Bernstein spoke to members of Morris' Socialist League.⁹¹ Bernstein's characterization of Morris is precise, and for the most part positive:

. . . Certainly he could express his ideas in a very arresting manner, but this was

when speaking to a comparatively small circle in an unconstrained gossiping tone. Rhetoric, properly speaking, was not natural to him; his whole nature was, if I may say so, anti-rhetorical. This strongly-built man of middle height, with his fine, impressive head, was an artist through and through; but not an artist of the spoken word. The principal scene of his activity was his workroom or his studio, whether that of the literary or the plastic artist. As a painter and designer he is one of the founders of the style which, variously distorted, is known in Germany as the Jugendstil; as a poet he is, in his longer works, a teller of tales, richly embellished by his imagination. A follower of Ruskin in the first place, he is essentially a romantic; no one but a romantic could have written that interesting picture of the future, which has been translated into every language, 'News from Nowhere': in the German version Kunde von Nirgendwo. But although he regarded Socialism essentially from the standpoint of the artist, William Morris was by no means the type of aesthete who merely writes of Socialism now and again. No; he was in the heart of the movement; he was among the first to assist in its organization, and to do propaganda work; and at that time one might often see the admired poet, the well-to-do manufacturer, the designer of tapestries for the selectest houses of the West End, at some street-corner in a working-class district of London, preaching the message of Socialism to a handful of working men.⁹²

Helmut Hirsch devotes a short chapter of his book Der 'Fabier' Eduard Bernstein to the details of the cordial relationship between Morris and Bernstein,⁹³ and, in passing, mentions the history of Kelmscott House, the previous owner of which had been the widely popular Scottish mythopoeic writer and interpreter of Novalis to English readers, George MacDonald:

In seinem Garten hatte 1816 Sir Francis Ronalds die acht Meilen langen ersten isolierten Kabel des von ihm erfundenen elektrischen Telegrafen gelegt. Nach ihm hatte der Dichter und Romancier George MacDonald rund ein Jahrzehnt dort gewohnt. Ihn wiederum löste der "Dichter, Handwerker, Sozialist" [ft. 7 Karl Baedeker, London and its Environs. (Hamburg, London, New York, 1955), S. 162] Morris auf fast zwanzig Jahre ab bis zu, seinem am 3. Oktober 1896 erfolgenden Tod . . .⁹⁴

MacDonald lived in the house from 1867 until 1875,⁹⁵ and shortly afterwards Morris acquired it.

Although the personal relationship between Morris and MacDonald, who was ten years Morris' senior, is not clear, both men had drunk from similar intellectual wells. MacDonald was a close friend of Ruskin, and the latter's Romantic longing for the lost days of individual artisanship is reflected in the social teachings of the two younger writers.⁹⁶ Ruskin's social utopian writings were published in the early 1860's, but MacDonald's Phantastes, the first prose fantasy in English for adults, preceded them in 1858. The title reverts to the early seventeenth-century Spenserian composition The Purple Island, but its form and content is that of the German Romantic Märchen, or fairy-tale. The narrator and protagonist of the story is named Anodos, a Greek word which MacDonald apparently took to mean "a way back."⁹⁷

MacDonald, who was a trained scientist (chemist and physicist) and Nonconformist minister, is perhaps best described as a religious eclectic.⁹⁸ He early read Böhmé, Swedenborg,

E.T.A. Hoffman, Jean-Paul Richter, and Novalis, whose work he translated. The central issue he tackled was the problem of evil, and his solution involved an adaptation of the eighteenth-century notion of moral progress. As God exists outside time, and man, like everything else, inside it, God's work of redemption must take time, including time after death.⁹⁹ Moral progress is seen in this view as constituting the first stages of spiritual progress in general, rather than as irrelevant (as in strict predestinarian Calvinism) or everything (as in secular Puritanism). The ways of Providence are not scrutable to Reason, but with the aid of the imagination, something of the intentions of God can be vouchsafed to the yearning mind through the senses. The picture of the universe that MacDonald presents, while arrived at through highly heretical neo-Gnostic sources from the point of view of the orthodox, is thus remarkably similar to the one that Keble and the Tractarians (and Maurice and the Christian Socialists) had found in Hooker, the Church Fathers, Bishop Butler and Coleridge. In a word, it was the Middle Platonist perspective, in its Christian Perfectibilist form.¹⁰⁰

MacDonald's novels, in which he expressed his philosophy and theology, proved to be extremely popular, and he became a celebrity. He met F.D. Maurice at the Manchester Working Men's College, and became a lecturer there. In 1865, MacDonald moved to London, and he and his family started attending Maurice's

church, and eventually he joined it.¹⁰¹

While William Morris of Kelmscott was clearly not a Christian of any sort,¹⁰² Fletcher's claim that he was a product of "Christian ethics" makes some sense if one is aware of the nature and pervasiveness of Anglican Christian Socialism in nineteenth-century Britain. Its ethics, as we have seen, were rooted in the Romantic recovery of "natural law", with its emphasis upon imaginative, emotional and aesthetic experience. Morris' literary work shows, if anything, an increasing reliance on this element; his early poetry reworked Classical and Norse mythological themes, his middle period was occupied with his political work, and was productive of his socialist myths, but in his final years he wrote The Well at the World's End and The Wood Beyond the World, mythopoeic romances that expressed an unsentimental account of all the aspects of human experience, "combined . . . with a stirring practical creed."¹⁰³ Neither optimistic nor pessimistic, Morris' honest and clear-sighted "pagan" recovery of the "natural law" tradition was even more anti-Hermetic in effect than Christian Socialism itself, cluttered up as it so often was with the popular piety of Victorian secular Puritanism.

Bernstein, of course, was not a Christian either, but he evidently recognized that there was philosophical common ground between the Christian Socialists and socialists like Morris who were consistent humanists. Of the latter group in England, Bernstein was particularly attracted to Graham Wallas,

the Fabian. Wallas, who had been trained as a classical philologist, had become interested in social psychology through his activity as a school teacher and member of the London School Board.¹⁰⁴ After resigning from the Fabian Society in 1904, he became a lecturer at the London School of Economics, and in 1908 produced his best-known work, Human Nature in Politics.¹⁰⁵ Wallas and Bernstein became good friends and kept up correspondence after Bernstein returned to Germany, and Bernstein edited the German translation of Wallas' book in 1911, contributing a laudatory foreword.¹⁰⁶

Wallas had been one of the founding Fabians, having met Sydney Olivier when both were students at Oxford. Wallas' father was a Puritan Christian, and the son's intellectual career may be seen as an attempt to reassert the efficacy of reason and the goodness of human nature that Puritanism denies:

Wallas, born on 31 May, 1858, was . . . the son of a clergyman, an energetic Evangelical with the orthodox belief in hell-fire and damnation to be expiated by piety and good works. Graham, the eldest son of nine children, was a good but unhappy child, and although he became a talented classical scholar at Shrewsbury School he disliked his life there and kept himself aloof from his associates. By the end of his first year at Oxford, after an acute spiritual crisis, he abandoned his faith, turning instead to the new evolutionary science and to aggressive Secularism. Though Wallas now drew his ideas from Aristotle, Darwin and Bentham rather than from Holy Writ, he retained his father's strong moral sense and dedication to service. Wallas was a kindly man, but something of a prig, willing to make a martyr of himself for principle.

His search for the springs of goodness in human nature understandably affected the impressionable Olivier.

It was Wallas who introduced Olivier to the ideas of Samuel Butler, whose notion of purposive psychic evolution seemed a preferable alternative to the Darwinian lottery of natural selection . . .¹⁰⁷

Human Nature in Politics is the culmination of Wallas' life-long attempt to establish a harmony between Classical ethics and natural science. His proposal is the development of a psychological basis for politics on the biological analogy.

Wallas outlines the change that has taken place in his century in political thought from the "natural right" theories of Locke and Rousseau to the Utilitarian approach, derived from the physical sciences.¹⁰⁸ He argues, however, that modern science itself is a method which is rooted in a Classical Humanistic anthropology: "'Science' has been such an entity ever since Francis Bacon found again, without knowing it, the path of Aristototele's best thought."¹⁰⁹ The narrow model of human society, drawn by the Utilitarians from the physical sciences, must be revised to take into account man's psychological and emotional natures. Such a process of the reconstruction of social and political thought, Wallas thinks, will entail a lengthy critical analysis, however:

The whole question . . . of such deliberate instruction in the emotional and intellectual facts of man's nature as may lead men to conceive of the co-ordination of reason and passion as a moral order, is one on which much steady thinking and observation is still required . . .¹¹⁰ [Emphasis added]

While the desired new political science would thus by no means evolve automatically, it had its precedents. The Japanese combination of reason and feeling, for example, based on a religious and philosophical tradition of Natural Law, had proven to be conducive to the adoption of a scientific anthropology. The same may be hoped for in the West:

. . . They [the Japanese] had wholeheartedly welcomed that conception of Science which in Europe, where it was first elaborated, still struggles with older ideals. Science with them had allied, and indeed identified, itself with that idea of natural law which, since they learnt it through China from Hindustan, had always underlain their various religions. They had acquired, therefore, a mental outlook which was determinist without being fatalist, and which combined the most absolute submission to nature with untiring energy in thought and action.

One would like to hope that in the West a similar fusion might take place between the emotional and philosophical traditions of religion, and the new conception of intellectual duty introduced by Science . . .¹¹¹

The "mental environment" that Wallas sees as the possible seed-bed for the new "co-ordinated" anthropology¹¹² is none other than the tradition of Rta (Hindu), the Tao (Chinese) or the Natural Law legacy of Western Christendom. Wallas' new political science, his "socialism", is thus seen by him as a clearer version of the ancient intuition that there are attitudes and behaviours that are natural to man qua man.

This is "common sense" socialism in the eighteenth-century meaning of the term "common sense". That is to say,

it is essentially the Aristotelian scheme "minus the differentiated knowledge of noesis".¹¹³

The effect upon Eduard Bernstein's "philosophical intention", which we have described as the clarification of the nature of socialism, of his "years of exile" in the British environment of a socialism with a strong philosophically conservative element, was to harden his Imaginative Marxism into its historically anterior "common sense".¹¹⁴ Thus, by 1899 Bernstein could give a succinct definition of socialism which, suggestively, appears at the outset of the prescriptive portion of Die Voraussetzungen ("The Tasks and Possibilities of Social Democracy"):

The most exact characterisation of socialism will in any case be that which starts from the concept of association because by it an economical as well as--in the widest sense of the word--a juridical relation is expressed at the same time. It needs no long-winded deduction to show that the indication of the juridical nature of socialism is just as important as that of its economic nature. Quite apart from the question whether or in what sense law is a primary or secondary factor in the life of a community, the nature of its law undoubtedly in each case gives the most concentrated idea of its character. We characterise forms of communities, not according to their technological or economic foundations, but according to the fundamental principle of their legal institutions. We speak, indeed, of an age of stone, bronze, machinery, electricity, etc., but of a feudal, capitalistic, bourgeois, etc., order of society. To this would correspond the definition of socialism as a movement towards --or the state of-- an order of society based on the principle of association. In this sense, which also

corresponds with the etymology of the word (socius - a partner), the word is used in what follows.¹¹⁵

Bernstein is here reasoning, to all intents and purposes, in the manner of the Aristotelian spoudaios.

NOTES

1. Bernstein, My Years of Exile, 171
"Entwicklungsgang eines Sozialisten", 23
Hulse, 138
2. Fletcher, 191, 192 "Contemporary Published Sources"
3. Gay, 24
4. Gustafsson, 79
5. Bernstein, Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer, 106,
188, 192
6. Ibid., 106
7. Ibid., 186
8. Ibid., 106
9. Ibid., 127, footnote 1
10. Ibid., 128
11. Ibid., 128, 129
12. Ibid., 130
13. Ibid., 129
14. Ibid., 130
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 135, 136
17. Gay, 192, 250, 308
18. Gay, 158, 164
19. Bernstein, Ferdinand Lassalle, ibid., 178
20. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 38, 39
21. See pp.23,24 above

22. Bernstein, Die Voraussetzungen, ft. 6

We know that we think, and we also thus know tolerably well in what manner we think. But we never get to know how it happens that we think, how, out of impressions from outside, from nerve-passages or from other changes in the storage and the co-operation of the molecules the consciousness of our brain originates. I have tried to clarify it here, so that one could speak of the atom as a certain level of the faculty of consciousness, of animatedness in the sense of the doctrine of Monads. But that is a thought-notion, a supposition, which our method of deduction and our need forces us to, according to the general understanding of the world." [Italics in original]

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Hulse, 151, 152

Gay, 154, 155

26. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 222,3. The quotation "The working class has no ideas to realise" is from Marx, The Civil War in France, 73 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970) This is the first of Marx's works that Bernstein read. See Gay, 25

27. Hulse, 151

28. Hulse, 151 (citing Belfort-Bax, The Ethics of Socialism, 129-37)

29. Hulse, 139

30. Bernstein, My Years of Exile, 200

31. Ibid.

32. Hirsch, Der "Fabier" Eduard Bernstein

33. Bernstein, "Entwicklungsgang eines Sozialisten", 23
34. Hulse, 138, 139
35. Hulse, 138
36. Hulse, 141-3
37. Gay, 66, fts. 8, 9
38. Heffer, "Foreword" to Bernstein, Cromwell and Communism, 1980
39. Ibid.
40. Hulse, 143
41. Ibid., 143, 144
42. Gay, 181-3
43. Bernstein, "Arbeitswert oder Nutzwert?" Neue Zeit, XVII, 2 (1899) in Gay, 182
44. Marx, Capital, 152
45. Ibid., 151
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., 152
48. See, for instance, Kautsky's defence of Party "orthodoxy" in Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm excerpted in Goode, Karl Kautsky: Selected Political Writings, 16-31
49. Marx/Engels, Selected Correspondence, 462
50. Ibid., 463
51. Perkins in Morgan, Puritan Political Ideas, 750
52. Gay, 161 (ft. 64, Bernstein to Kautsky, May 11, 1928, Bernstein Archives) (ft. 65 Loc. cit. "He cites Mehring's Lessing-Legende as a bad example")
53. Hulse, 142, 143

54. In his introduction to the 1980 edition of Cromwell and Communism.
55. See pp.4-18 above
56. Jonas, The Gnostic Religion, 320, 321
57. Bernstein, Cromwell and Communism, 230
58. Ibid., 281
59. Nietzsche, "European Nihilism", Book I of The Will to Power, 7, 8 (see especially section 125 re socialism)
60. Tuveson, Avatars, 5, 250
Jonas, Philosophical Essays, 276
61. Bernstein, Cromwell and Communism, 88, 89
62. Ibid., 168
63. Ibid., 171
64. Ibid., 197-199
65. Ibid., 224
66. Ibid., 274
67. See page 48, above
68. Lewis, "Historicism" in Fern-Seed and Elephants, 44-46

I give the name Historicism to the belief that men can, by the use of their natural powers, discover an inner meaning in the historical process

When Carlyle spoke of history as a 'book of revelations' he was a Historicist. When Novalis called history 'an evangel' he was a Historicist. When Hegel saw in history the progressive self-manifestation of absolute spirit he was a Historicist. When a village woman says that her wicked father-in-law's paralytic stroke is 'a judgement on him' she is a Historicist. Evolutionism, when it ceases to be simply a theorem in biology and becomes a principle for interpreting the total historical process, is a form of

historicism. Keats's Hyperion is the epic
of Historicism, and the words of Oceanus,

'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might,

are as fine a specimen of Historicism as
you could wish to find.

69. See Appendix A, 232-234
70. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 209-211
71. Ibid., 210
72. Bernstein, Cromwell and Communism, 251, 268
Lichtheim, A Short History of Socialism, 52-56
Shafarevich, The Socialist Phenomenon, 18-79
73. Popper, 3
74. Fletcher, 132
75. Ibid., 132, 133
76. Hulse, 141, 142 "He apparently turned to the seventeenth century because of his interest in British institutions and because that period seemed to offer inviting topics for Marxian analysis."
77. Fletcher, 132
78. Bernstein, My Years of Exile, 231
79. Ibid., 230
80. Encyclopedia Britannica (1959 edition), Volume 5, 639
"Christian Socialism"
81. Ibid.
82. Bernstein, My Years of Exile, 230
83. Ibid., 232, 233
84. It should be remembered that he had been well acquainted with the Christian Socialists for a couple of years at least when he began his researches for Cromwell and Communism after 1892.

85. Ibid., 236, 237
86. Prickett, Romanticism and Religion- The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church, 120-151
87. Encyclopedia Britannica, ibid., 6, 10, 11
88. The recent Folger edition of The Laws is now in process of replacing Keble as the standard text.
89. Morris attended the University from June 1852 until 1856.
90. Bernstein, My Years of Exile, 170, 171
91. Ibid., 206
92. Ibid., 206, 207
93. Hirsch, 47-57
94. Hirsch, 48 In its garden in 1816, Sir Francis Ronalds had put the eight-mile-long first isolated cable from which electrical telegraphy was invented. After him the poet and Romantic novelist George MacDonald lived there for about a decade. It was again acquired by the "poet, artisan, socialist" Morris for close to twenty years until his ensuing death on October 3, 1896.
95. Wolff, The Golden Key: A Study of the Fiction of George MacDonald, 111

During MacDonald's time there, the house was known as "The Retreat".
96. Reis, George MacDonald, 45, 70
97. Ibid., 87
98. Ibid., 32
99. Ibid., 32-41
100. Bogart, Orthodox and Heretical Perfectionism
101. Prickett, 225

- 102. Lewis, "William Morris" in Selected Literary Essays, 219-231
- 103. Ibid., 231
- 104. Bernstein, My Years of Exile, 238
- 105. N. & J. MacKenzie, The First Fabians, 364
- 106. Fletcher, 176
- 107. N. & J. MacKenzie, ibid., 59
- 108. Wallas, Human Nature in Politics, 136-41
- 109. Ibid., 202
- 110. Ibid., 206, 207
- 111. Ibid., 212
- 112. Ibid.
- 113. See p. 17 above
- 114. See chapter 2 above
- 115. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 96

CHAPTER THREE

"The movement is everything": Bernsteinian Revisionism in Practice

The most famous (or infamous) of Bernstein's utterances, and the one that signalled the opening of the Revisionist Controversy, was occasioned by the accusation made against him by Belfort-Bax, in an article entitled "Our Fabian German Convert" in the November 17, 1896 issue of Justice magazine, that he ignored the final goal of Socialism in his writings. Bernstein's reply to this charge, which was destined to be misunderstood, and misconstrued deliberately, by friend and foe alike, appeared in the Neue Zeit article "Zusammenbruchstheorie und Kolonialpolitik" in early 1897.¹ The fateful declaration was as follows:

I confess openly, I have extraordinarily little interest or taste for what is generally called the 'final goal of Socialism'. This aim, whatever it be, is nothing to me, the movement everything. . . And by movement I understand not only the general movement of society, that is, social progress, but political and economic agitation and organization for effecting this progress.¹

The watershed article was one of a series that Bernstein had started publishing in the Neue Zeit in 1896, "Probleme des Sozialismus". It was only after his "confession" in response to the censure of Belfort-Bax, however, that his Party comrades reexamined his writings and

realized that they were heretical. Immediately a controversy erupted in the SPD press and at Party meetings. The criticisms ranged from the relatively mild reproof of the editors of Vorwärts that Bernstein's way of expressing himself was unfortunate to Parvus-Helphand's charge that he was trying to destroy Socialism.³

Bernstein evidently thought that the tempest would subside when the negative connotations of the original formulation were balanced by a positive statement of his point of view. Accordingly, the following attempt at clarification appeared in the columns of Vorwärts:

Does it follow from my refusal to concern myself with the so-called 'final aim of the Socialist movement' that I deny a definite goal to the movement altogether? I would regret it if my words would be taken in this way. A movement without aim would be a chaotic drifting, for it would also be a movement without direction. No aim, no direction-- if the Socialist movement is not to pitch about without a compass, it must naturally have a goal at which it consciously aims. But this aim is not the realization of a plan for society, it is the carrying through of a principle of society. . . The only thing of value is to be sure of the general course of the movement and to examine the relevant factors carefully. If we do this, we can be untroubled about the final aim.⁴ [*Italics in original*]

If Bernstein thought that this affirmation of what he took to be more or less self-evident would calm the troubled waters - and the irenic tone of the remarks seem at least to express this hope - he was very much mistaken. Despite his confident belief, maintained over the next few months of redoubled attacks upon him and in a letter to the 1898

Stuttgart congress of the SPD which was to debate his views, that he had not departed from the spirit of Marxism, his colleagues persisted in seeing it otherwise. After the publication of the requested definitive statement of his position, Die Voraussetzungen, in 1899, which was hailed by anti-Marxists within the Party and anti-Socialists without, however, Bernstein was "deeply shocked", as Gay puts it, apparently only then realizing fully for the first time how little his perspective was shared.⁵

Indeed, Bebel and Kautsky recognized that Bernstein's whole structure of consciousness vis-a-vis socialism was now quite different from theirs, considerably before he seemed to be prepared to admit it. As a consequence, both SPD leaders tried to ease him out of the Party. Bebel took the uncomplicated line that Bernstein no longer "stood on Social Democratic soil",⁶ while Kautsky made the subtler point to him that "the development which you have undergone. . . heads away from German Social Democracy, although not from Socialism", and he recommended to his erstwhile close friend and associate that he "try to achieve a place in the English movement and to become a representative of English Socialism".⁷

While these comments served to underline the fact that Bernstein's apostasy was not a trivial matter for socialist theory, they undoubtedly also tended to aggravate Bernstein's inclination to interpret criticisms of his theory

as attacks on his person and offended his strong sense of socialist internationalism. In 1900 he decided to return to Germany to engage in the debate directly.

His subsequent career in the SPD (and in the USPD from 1917 to 1919) until his death in 1932 illustrated the truth at the heart of the strictures of Bebel and Kautsky in 1898-- that what Bernstein conceived as socialist theory and practice was virtually unrecognized as such by anyone in Germany. As Carl Schorske points out in his study of the development of the "great schism" that split the Party ideologically in 1917, the chief factions that were to emerge were already largely present in identifiable form at the Chemnitz congress of 1912, where, it will be remembered, Bernstein extolled the virtues of Jesus Christ as a social reformer. Schorske identified the four factions that were evident in the debates at Chemnitz on the question of imperialism (and that were later to be apparent amongst German Social Democrats during World War I) as the "so-called 'social imperialists', right-wing revisionists who. . . felt that the workers' interest lay in full support of the state in the imperialist struggle, . . . Bernstein [who] stressed the ideological, as opposed to the economically determined, character of imperialism" and who found it "impossible. . . to follow his colleagues of the Sozialistische Monatshefte into support of Germany's power politics", a "third group [which] emphasized the need to work against war within the capitalist framework" (the so-called

"Centrists") and "the left radicals, who condemned the encouragement of international agreements as illusionistic and urged the use of mass actions against war".⁸

It is remarkable that Bernstein should be here described by Schorske as a "faction" or "group" within the SPD, but, as Roger Fletcher has shown, he was indeed in effect a minority of one in the Party in connection with this and other issues. Fletcher calls him "a chieftain without a tribe" and the "'father of revisionism'" who "had so many children but so few followers".⁹ Gay ascribes his later isolation to age and lack of communication with the Party leadership,¹⁰ but Fletcher sees Bernstein's status as an object of affection or polite respect combined with practical inattention as a direct result of his eclecticism from the first:

. . . His theoretical work offered something for everyone. Ethical socialists, neo-Kantians, reformers of all shades (Blochian nationalists included), party bureaucrats, trade union and co-operative leaders and even rank-and-file militants could, if they chose, now cite Bernstein against the party Marxists as providing a respectably socialist, even Marxist, theoretical vindication of their own heretical aims and Sisyphus-like activities. Thus many of them applauded and defended what Bernstein had to say without necessarily understanding or accepting much of it, and with little or no intention of acknowledging him as their leader or spokesman-- a position to which he wisely never aspired. ¹¹

Schorske concludes that after the formal division of the Party in 1917 (the secession of those who set up the Independent Social Democratic Party or USPD), the four

factions resolved themselves into two, the reformists (the SPD) who "held to an eighteenth-century progressivist optimism, to the belief that the ruling class could be brought to see the need for the rule of reason and justice in the social order" and the left radicals (the core of the USPD) who "propounded the dialectic, rationalistic optimism of Marx: the belief that with historical conditions as their goal and the party as their teacher the proletarian masses as a whole would shatter the old, irrational social order to build the new one out of their own spontaneously released rational capacity". (italics in original).¹² But where does Bernstein fit into this schematization? He was a reformist and yet a founding member of the USPD. In January 1919, during the quarrel between the SPD and USPD, who were governing the new German Republic jointly, he rejoined the SPD, while continuing to hold USPD membership, in an attempt, as Gay puts it, "to demonstrate the fundamental unity of the German working class".¹³ Unlike the right-wing Revisionists, he distinguished between patriotism, which he took to be a natural and good emotion flowing from the principle of association, and nationalism, which he understood as "a barbaric, irrational, artificial and ephemeral regression to a primitive tribalism".¹⁴ He attacked the drift of the Left, which eventually resulted in the USPD majority entering the Communist Party, towards dogmatic mass revolutionism, and yet supported the principle of the political mass strike in the defence or for the

advancement of particular political goals.¹⁵ From the point of view of the heirs of both the Reformist and Radical camps into which German Social Democracy split after World War I, Bernsteinian Revisionism thus appears to be exceedingly ambiguous.¹⁶

However, if, as I have suggested, the structure of Bernstein's thought about socialism was different from both the "eighteenth-century progressivist optimism" of the Right and the "dialectic rationalistic optimism" of the Left, his behaviour will perhaps seem less erratic, and his eventual complete isolation, in the final analysis, more understandable. The affinity of his approach with that of the eighteenth-century critical common-sense moral progressivists of the Scottish School (as opposed to the mainline secular Puritanism of the Newtonians and their successors),¹⁷ that I have argued for above, might explain both the attraction of his ideas for the Right, and his skepticism of (and indeed opposition to) their embracing of German imperialism and nationalism as supposedly "progressive". His knowledge of the origins of Utopian socialist speculation in late mediaeval millennarian dreaming perhaps put him in a better position than most to be equally skeptical of the faith in the self-development of the proletariat that characterized Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and the other ideologues of the Left, as well as giving him a great deal of sympathy for their democratic and liberal intentions.

Schorske concludes his history of German Social Democracy during the years 1905 to 1917 with a short account of what he calls the "great transformation" of the ideology of the "left radicals" of the USPD into an authoritarian doctrine of engineered revolutionism after 1920, under the tutelage of the Comintern. He sees this new policy as the antithesis of Bernsteinianism:

. . . In the Communist Party the strategy of revolution, conceived in politico-military terms, admitted every tactic, be it reformist or revolutionary, fair or foul. The Communists reversed the famous statement of Eduard Bernstein to read, 'The movement (and, let us add, the human beings who compose it) is nothing; the goal is everything'. . . 18

The "movement" for Bernstein, of course, was in a sense the goal, for he conceived of it as the material and moral progress of society qua society, and practical work toward the realization of this principle.¹⁹ In other words, he wanted society to fulfil its potential, or, crudely put, to "work better". While this emphasis in Bernstein's thought on the results of the day-to-day work of "building socialism" obviously appealed to the Praktiker of the Party and trade union movement, and was easily truncated into the pursuit of expediency, it was not of the essence of right-wing Revisionism. As Roger Fletcher has shown, in effect, the "social imperialists" also managed to reverse the "famous statement" by their practice.

In Fletcher's opinion, the real theoretical eminence

grise of Révisionism as it came to be known as a functioning force in German Social Democracy was not Eduard Bernstein, but Joseph Bloch, the editor of the Sozialistische Monatshefte. He and his stable of writers (which for a time included Bernstein) worked out a world view and political philosophy that, according to Fletcher, was remarkably influential upon the development of "social imperialism" as the dominant ethic of the Right and Centre-right of the pre-World War I SPD. A sample of what Bloch's "reformism" was to become is given in the following extract from his only book (written in the mid-30s, and heavily edited by Felix Stössinger), Revolution der Weltpolitik:

The socialist ideal is no longer a consumer ideal. It does not seek the greatest good of the greatest number but rather the highest attainment of all. . . True socialism is productive socialism. Productive socialism revolutionises world politics. The revolution in world politics occurs not for the sake of humanity but for that which has yet to be created".²⁰

Again, the goal here is everything, and the material interests, happiness and personal freedoms of the participants in the "movement" (which, for Bernstein, were not antithetical to the cultivation of the "principle of association", but which were, indeed, intrinsic to it) are made subservient to "that which has yet to be created". Where Bernstein thought of socialism as an extension of liberal-democracy (albeit one requiring a change of attitude), for Bloch and his friends it was (according to his disciple Stössinger) "organic socialist

democracy in ascendancy over individualistic, head-count democracy".²¹

In practical terms, this translated into what Bloch himself described as "the programme of the Sozialistische Monatshefte" which consisted, as Fletcher points out, in "illiberalism, protectionism, Anglophobia, national consensus politics", a geopolitically-based policy of German imperialism, and Pan-German nationalism,²² and was virtually indistinguishable from "the same style of mass politics as practised by the radical right-- in Austria by Georg von Schönerer and Karl Lueger. . . , in Germany by Alfred Hugenberg and General Keim. . . ."²³ With the exception of a certain area of agreement on the question of class consensus (which, however, was based on entirely different philosophical premises), all of these positions were anathema to Bernstein. His association with the Monatshefte can be explained in terms of economic necessity after his return to Germany (As an aging journalist who had had his connections with Vorwärts and the Neue Zeit terminated by his change of venue and the Revisionist Controversy, Bloch's solicitations-- Bernstein was eventually put on salary at the Monatshefte-- were probably too tempting to refuse),²⁴ Bloch's journalistic strategy of styling the magazine "an independent organ for all viewpoints based on the common ground of socialism"²⁵ when, in fact, it was a mouthpiece for "Blochian Revisionism", which appears to have hoodwinked the rather over-trusting Bernstein,²⁶ and simply

Bernstein's isolation.

Bloch rarely wrote for the Monatshefte himself, but rather promoted his world-view by means of like-minded authors such as Max Schippel, Richard Calwer and above all Karl Leuthner. Other contributors, such as Bernstein, Kurt Eisner, and Eduard David who Bloch thought indulged in harmless notions or (in Bernstein's case) "fantasies", acted, as Fletcher notes, as "a convenient foil to the Leuthner-Schippel viewpoint".²⁷

Bloch used the terms "revisionist", "reformist" and "opportunist" interchangeably, but as Stössinger makes clear, "Blochian Revisionism [was] worlds apart" from Bernsteinian Revisionism.²⁸ For one thing, it was clearly at heart a revolutionary rather than an evolutionary doctrine. Bloch described socialism as "above all a complex of feelings having its ultimate justification in the personality of the respective individual".²⁹ The original theoretical basis for this "productive socialism" was evidently anarchism, for, as Fletcher shows, Bloch had written in the Sozialistische Akademiker (as the Monatshefte was called until 1897) in 1895 that "all the anarchist systems are nothing but communism" or socialism, and in later articles he continued to comment favourably upon German anarchism, taking a particular interest in the ideas of Gustav Landauer, the volkisch-anarchist.³⁰ Like the latter (and others including Clara Zetkin, Ernst

Bloch, and Victor Adler),³¹ Bloch attempted to synthesize socialism with Nietzsche. The result in his case was an aesthetic and vitalist apologetic for young Germany (over against corrupt old England), an assertion of the amorality of international relations and the importance of the heroic superman such as Napoleon, and an argument for the centrality of the national idea, and in particular the German national idea, for the future of mankind.³² On the basis of this formulation, which supposedly established Germany as "the highest moral entity yet produced by humanity", Bloch exhorted the German proletariat and its party to support the highest collectivity (the nation), and its imperial ambitions.³³

Fletcher describes Bloch as having a "holistic turn of mind",³⁴ but this rather mild term does not seem to adequately express the drive to personally systematize and control that characterized his approach. He passed through a number of intellectual stages (Germanophile populist, Germanophobe Zionist etc.), and culled his ideas from various sources (Lassalle, Conrad Schmidt, popular Darwinism amongst others), but his interest in Nietzsche remained constant throughout (when Nietzsche died in 1900, Bloch wrote an article for the Monatshefte, accompanied by a picture of the philosopher, which claimed him for the labour movement).³⁵

Of all Bloch's spokesmen, (a group which, in addition

to those already mentioned, included Max Maurenbrecher, Gerhard Hildebrand and Ludwig Quessel), Karl Leuthner was probably the most in tune with him philosophically (although Schippel was also very close).³⁶ Rather more consistent than Bloch, Leuthner's thought is summarized by Fletcher as "Nietzsche eked out with Lassalle".³⁷ However, unlike Bloch, he had read Marx in some depth, and references to Lessing, Goethe, Herder, Kant, Schopenhauer and Wagner are scattered throughout his writings. His policy recommendations, which Fletcher sees as being rooted in "the ubiquitous and pervasive spirit of anti-Enlightenment, pseudo-Darwinist and neo-idealist Prusso-German patriotism which proclaimed the alleged cultural mission of the Germans, as the historically ordained heirs to the jaded Romance world, to champion the cause of Europe against Slavic barbarism", included the pursuit of a united Europe under the political leadership of "Greater Germany", the incorporation of the German-speaking portion of Austria in the Reich, the reduction of France to a German dependency and the recognition by the working class and its leaders that "the interests of socialism and Deutschtum were identical, in that socialism, both as an ideology and as a movement, was quintessentially German".³⁸

Leuthner's thinking was imbued with the neo-mercantilist doctrine of the "three world empires", and Fletcher notes that his writings contain geopolitical ideas of the sort found

in Karl Haushofer, Friedrich Ratzel, Sir Halford Mackinder and the sociologist Rudolf Kjellen (all considered to be precursors of National Socialist geopolitics), although it is not known whether he derived them from these authors or not.³⁹

Leuthner's central philosophical notion was "the primacy of the idea",⁴⁰ and, like Bloch, he strongly disliked liberal individualism, cosmopolitanism and humanitarianism. In these respects, Fletcher's assessment that he had "a profound animus against Enlightenment progressivism"⁴¹ is clearly justified, but in other regards he was a true child of the era of the secularized "inner light". Fletcher himself notes Leuthner's "Hegelian-Lassalleian" nationalism which required "for its fulfilment a specific political dimension in the form of the nation-state",⁴² his reading of Marx, Goethe and Kant (and his professed debt to the latter two),⁴³ his citation of Lessing,⁴⁴ his attraction to Darwinism,⁴⁵ his interest in Classical history and culture,⁴⁶ his strong opposition to anti-Semitism and his anti-clericalism,⁴⁷ and German scholar Heinz Brantl's description of him as "first and foremost a socialist much indebted to liberal-humanist ideas".⁴⁸ The "three (or four) world empires" theme, as we have seen, is manifestly of the common stock of early modern European civil theology (at base the triadic scheme of Joachite immanentism). Indeed, although the subsequent history of the particular "idea" that Leuthner believed to be "prime" for

his time (Deutschtum) might tempt the commentator to want to see in him something fundamentally alien from the spiritual substance of modernity, or, at least, a serious perversion of it, the truth of the matter seems to be rather more complex. The tradition of German Identitätsphilosophie (which eventually reached the conclusions of the "primacy of the idea" and the "self-overcoming will" that both Bloch and Leuthner adhered to) was a self-conscious "inner development" of the human spirit, and thus progressivist to the core.

Indeed, the "goal" to which Leuthner, Bloch, and the other "social imperialists" directed the attention of the SPD and the trade unions was certainly not conservative in the philosophical sense, or even Romantic, in the sense of nostalgic, in its orientation. It was thoroughly futurist, hard-headed, materialistic and, at base, libertarian. The "social imperialists" borrowed the language and the thought-ways of the Party Left,⁴⁹ (as the National Bolsheviki were to do in the '20s and '30s),⁵⁰ and filled these with new content. The "class struggle" became the broader "national struggle" of the "vanguard of historical evolution"⁵¹ or the German people, who had invented socialism. Marx was criticized by Leuthner for (among other things) being a moralist in the style of the Old Testament prophets, for not recognizing the importance of individual genius in the conduct of world affairs, and for failing to take into account the significance of nationalism.⁵² Even the pro-militarist and avowedly

chauvinist pro-war stance that Leuthner and others adopted after January, 1912, was justified in the language of Marxism, as the following example from an article written by Edmund Fischer, a Bloch fellow-traveller, in 1913 shows:

. . . And even Marx and Engels set their hopes on a world war. . . Old England, they said (in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung), could only be toppled by a world war. . . The next world war will wipe from the face of the earth not only reactionary classes and dynasties but also whole reactionary peoples. 'And that, too, is progress.' . . . ⁵³

When it is realized that the same sort of argument was used in support of Leninist (or perhaps more accurately Stalinist) nationalities policy towards the minorities in the Soviet Union,⁵⁴ it is perhaps less difficult to see such reasoning as a product of Schorske's "eighteenth century progressivist optimism", and to see the link, in terms of structure of consciousness, between this latter and the "dialectic rationalistic optimism" followed by the SPD Left. In historical terms, the second stands revealed as basically a later (and more secularized) version of the first, and the ideology of the "social imperialists" (at least, from their point of view) as simply the next self-development of Man.

Both Bloch and Leuthner could be considered to be part of the "Back to Lassalle" movement that began to manifest itself amongst German Social Democrats in the years leading up to the War.⁵⁵ As Fletcher notes, Lassalle could be appealed to to support Leuthner's volkisch nationalism, Hegelian view

of the state as the vehicle for the realization of human freedom, elitism and authoritarianism, dislike of liberalism and belief in German national integration.⁵⁶ As in the case of the "Back to Kant" (or Bernstein's "Back to Lange") slogan, however, "Back to Lassalle" was really a standard raised for a new current of thought or, perhaps more accurately (as the variations within these "currents" varied quite considerably), a constellation of related attitudes.

It is arguable that the integrative intellectual substratum of "Blochian Revisionism" (and the chief reason for its success) was Darwinism. In a letter to Joseph Bloch dated May 5, 1910, Leuthner admitted his attraction to "the laboriously held-at-bay siren voices of biology",⁵⁷ and Fletcher points out that Leuthner's "ethic" combined Nietzschean and Darwinian elements.⁵⁸ The British scholar R. Hinton Thomas claims that Nietzsche exercised a much greater influence in Germany (at least at first) amongst libertarians of the political Left than upon the Right,⁵⁹ and Alfred Kelly has shown that Darwinism "became a kind of popular philosophy in Germany more than any other country, even England".⁶⁰ Kelly's study of the popular scientific writers and the reading habits of the middle and working classes of Wilhelmine Germany concludes that a sort of Darwinist religion of science which "was a continuation of the old eighteenth-century Enlightenment tradition" became the received civil theology, (substituting for political theory), of German

libertarian liberalism and socialism in the 1860s and 70s.⁶¹

Kelly identifies the "climax of popular Darwinism" with the works of the writer Wilhelm Bölsche, published between 1885 and 1927.⁶² These presented "monistic evolutionism" as what it truly was, "a new scientific folk-religion."⁶³ The following remarks by Kelly give some idea of Bölsche's own role in this development:

. . . In 1890, Bölsche was just another struggling writer in Berlin, the author of two charming but not very successful novels, a rather pedantic tract on naturalist literature, and a few magazine articles. Within a generation he had become probably the greatest science popularizer of all time; and as the author of dozens of best-selling books and hundreds of articles, his name was a household word to millions. When the popular journal Kosmos surveyed its readership after World War I, it found that Bölsche's name was virtually synonymous with popular science. He was more popular than both Haeckel (whose Riddle of the Universe was still going strong) and Alfred Brehm (whose Tierleben was a long-time classic). A newspaper sketch of Bölsche on his sixtieth birthday in 1921 put the matter simply: 'It would be superfluous here to refer to any particular book of his; every German who reads has read at least one of them! . . .

[In terms of popular success], Bölsche is unmatched. The combined sales of Bölsche's books by 1914 may be very conservatively estimated at 1.5 million. This . . . does not include the hundreds of articles Bölsche wrote for magazines and newspapers. . . Most of the paperbacks that Bölsche wrote for the Kosmos Bandchen (small books) series sold over one hundred thousand copies at a time when a non-fiction book that sold a quarter of that number was a tremendous best-seller. Bölsche was probably the single best-selling non-fiction author in the German language prior to 1933. There is no doubt that he was a major cultural phenomenon, and because his main interest was Darwinism, his story is central to understanding Darwin's fate in Germany."⁶⁴

Under the rubric of Darwinism, Bölsche pulled together and focussed elements from German literature, philosophy, political thought and popular culture into an imaginative synthesis that Kelly calls "erotic monism". An aspiring novelist who was trained in neither natural science nor philosophy, the young Bölsche gravitated in the mid-1880s to Berlin, where he joined the literary club Durch, and "mixed with other fiery young prophets of naturalism, absorbing a confusing brew of socialism, anarchism, Darwinism and Bohemianism".⁶⁵ He met and was befriended by Bruno Wille, like Max Schippel and Gustav Landauer one of the socialist Jungen.⁶⁶ Like the two latter, Wille was attempting to marry Marx and Nietzsche, and the Darwinism he professed was pan-psychic, that is, the development of nature (of which, of course, man was a part) was conceived by him as the development of consciousness.⁶⁷

Bölsche began by writing historical novels and science fiction, but in the mid-1890's, he turned his talent for imaginative description to science directly, producing first the Entwicklungsgeschichte der Natur in 1894 to 96, and Das Liebesleben in der Natur: Eine Entwicklungsgeschichte der Liebe (Love-Life in Nature: The Story of the Evolution of Love) in 1898 to 1901. The latter, despite consisting of three thick volumes, was a spectacular success.

Love-Life in Nature (the main theme of which Bölsche

repeated in numerous later books and articles) was a "soft" optimistic interpretation of Darwin that Bölsche drew largely from the panpsychist ideas of pioneer psychologist Gustav Fechner (1801-87).⁶⁸ Bölsche's thesis was that "sexual love was the unifying principle of the universe, the engine of evolution".⁶⁹ The "hard" pessimistic implications of Darwinism for the value of the individual and the meaning of life aside from struggle are transformed into a sort of joyful cosmic, orgasmic oblivion, which Bölsche suggests should be embraced:

. . . In Bölsche's hands, Darwinism was changed from a tale of bitter struggle to an erotic monism or paneroticism, a lyrical celebration of love. Love-Life, his most ambitious and endearing work, tells the story of sexual love from primitive life forms--flies, jellyfish, and tapeworms--to the rapturous human love, which ultimately transcends sexuality to find its final expression in art and religion. . . Each stage on the scale of being has already passed through every simpler stage and now longs to experience the ecstasy that accompanies climbing still higher on the ladder. Man's advancing culture is but an extension of this natural ladder and is thus drenched in sexuality. Every person has deeply buried within himself, in the hoary wisdom of the body, a primeval memory of the whole drama of eons of evolution. . .

The story of love begins with the assumption of the primeval sympathy of all matter. Whereas his mentor, Fechner, had attributed soul only to systems, Bölsche. . . believed that single units or cells might also possess soul [which]. . . was really consciousness. . .

Once we have conceded that individual cells are consciously aware, everything else falls into place. Love is present from the very beginning as the basic motivation for eternal renewal and development. . . At first, simple division suffices, but eventually the primal feeling of Gemeinschaft (community) of all cells begins to assert itself. . .

At first, sex and death are indistinguishable for the destruction of one individual is simultaneous with the creation of a new one. Higher up the scale, sex and death begin to diverge somewhat, though they still maintain their intimate connection. In a memorable passage, Bölsche describes the life of the day fly, which emerges from its larva only long enough to mate and die-- 'killed by the lightning of love'. Even in man, death remains an 'unrecognized act of love' that throws him into the lap of nature, where he achieves immortality through the unbroken chain of life".⁷⁰

Bölsche's "erotic monism" represented, in fact, an emphasis upon the anthropomorphic and teleological elements in Darwinism-- an approach that found much greater favour in Germany than amongst the empirically-minded British. Kelly notes that Darwinism is a constitutionally ambiguous and protean doctrine:⁷¹

... At first glance, it might seem that Bölsche picked out what suited him and ignored a great deal of Darwin's work, but this hardly makes him uniquely culpable, for Darwinism had both the advantage and disadvantage that it could be all things to all men. As a theory, it was anything but airtight and consistent, and its many ambiguities and infinite suggestiveness opened the floodgates for a plethora of often totally contradictory interpretations. Bölsche's reconciliation of Darwinism and erotic monism offers one of the classic examples of the almost infinite malleability of Darwinism. . .

. . . Bölsche took advantage of a central philosophical ambiguity in Darwinism. Superficially, it appeared that Darwin had banished mind from nature. Many writers interpreted natural selection as a kind of mechanistic cosmic roulette game with chance variations pushing life forms aimlessly from one stage to another. Such a reading of Darwin led straight into the dismal pessimism that Bölsche abhorred. . .

The antiteleological interpretation, however, had serious difficulties. . . If there were no overall plan in nature, how could one account

for the development of extremely intricate organs that had every appearance of design and were totally devoid of survival value in their earlier developmental stages? Did not the very idea of adaptation imply that the species tended toward its own collective good? The eye was the classic example of an organ worthless in its early stages; the very thought of the eye, Darwin once admitted, made him 'cold all over'. A similar problem existed for the human brain, which, as Wallace pointed out, was fully developed before it was fully exploited by cultured man. Many passages in Darwin's own works seem to support the argument from design. At the end of The Origin, he remarked: 'Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection'. Elsewhere, as in his correspondence with the American, Asa Gray, Darwin seemed to contradict himself on the design problem; but, as he admitted in 1860, he was in an 'utterly hopeless muddle'. Certainly Darwin was a better biologist than metaphysician.⁷²

Kelly thinks that the "root cause of the teleological confusion was that Darwin's theory addressed itself to the effects rather than the causes of variations",⁷³ but this, of course, is not what Darwin thought his theory did - the very title Origin of Species indicates that he believed that he had discovered the primum mobile in the "struggle for existence". As an intellectual descendant of the eighteenth century, he combined the optimistic Puritan millennialism of the "natural theology" of the Latitudinarian clergy and the moral sentimentalism of the "cosmic Whigs" with the hard-headedness of British Empiricism. The result was a Manichaeian-like world-view that inevitably oscillated between monist and dualist, optimistic and pessimistic or "soft" and

"hard" modes. His mind was certainly not "banished from nature".

In Britain, the "hard" interpretation of Darwinism found favour at first, although Alfred Russel Wallace in his book Darwinism (1889) gave a panpsychistic account of the theory by synthesizing it with his belief in Spiritualism. In Germany, although the materialist Ludwig Büchner took a decidedly pessimistic line, most Darwinists were of the "soft" variety. As Kelly notes, Bölsche's scheme is an elaboration of the implicit Naturphilosophie in Ernst Haeckel's "biogenetic law that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny".⁷⁴ His mentor, Bruno Wille, indicates that, like Wallace, he and Bölsche had strengthened the immanentist content of Darwinism by putting it in a panpsychic setting:

We both, friend Bölsche, are idealists in that we ascribe a physical, spiritual character to all of nature. At the same time we profess Darwinism because in spite of its gaps it is a purely reasonable, clearly intelligible, and in a certain sense irrefutable theory. On our walks in the woods we have often sketched Darwin's theory into our panpsychic picture of nature.⁷⁵

Bölsche's "erotic monism" is thus clearly a species of the "speculative and mystical rationalism" that came to dominate German thought after 1830, in popular scientific form (see p. 22 above). He recognized this himself by seeing Novalis, who he considered to be the spiritual father of Fechner, as the true precursor of his theories.⁷⁶ However, his reading of Novalis was a mid-nineteenth century one, so

that, for example, the Romantic poet's goal of the "blue flower", mythically expressing the interpenetration of nature and supernature in the intramundane consciousness, becomes for Bölsche a mystical naturalism, a merging of the self with nature and vice versa. As Kelly puts it, "the romantic journey into the depths of the soul was for Bölsche proto-realistic. . .,"⁷⁷ so that rather than "ascending to the thesis, God", one descends, in Jungian fashion, to the thesis Bölsche.

Bölsche had been introduced to the socialist sub-culture of Berlin by Wille, and he was asked to participate in the cultural aspects of the movement such as workers' education and the free theatre.⁷⁸ A year after the inception of the Sozialistische Akademiker (later the Monatshefte) in 1895 Bölsche contributed a ten-page article entitled "Sozialismus und Darwinismus" to Bloch's new periodical.⁷⁹ This was in no way out of the way, for, as George Lichtheim puts it, "'from Hegel to Haeckel' might serve as the summary of the evolution of Marxist thinking between the 1840s and the 1880s. . ."⁸⁰ It should be noted that this process began during Marx's life, and although Engels took a greater hand in the "Darwinizing" of Marxism than did the master himself, there is no indication that the latter objected to it.⁸¹ The cause of the gradual subsuming of Marxism by Darwinism was that as soon as one admitted that Darwinism gave a description of the relations within bourgeois society (which Engels certainly

did), one ascribed to them a natural origin, thus reducing "history" to "nature", the "dialectic" to a "natural force", and its moments to "natural laws".⁸²

After Marx's death, the Darwinizing tendency accelerated. Engels was partly responsible for this, but his successors, particularly the chief theoretician of the Second International, Kautsky, had much to do with it. Kautsky had come to Marxism via Darwinism, and his trying to come to terms with both systems was not a happy one. Until the late 1880's, he thought that Marxism could be absorbed into Darwinism. During the 1890's he maintained that Darwin's "nature" and Marx's "history" had nothing in common with one another. In 1902 he took this rather artificial compartmentalization of obviously related modes of thinking one step further by declaring that Darwinism was antisocialist because of its gradualist, non-revolutionary implications. In 1909 he reversed himself, claiming that Darwinism was a doctrine of struggle and catastrophe, and that it thus gave natural-scientific support to the theory of breakdown and revolution. His Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung (The Materialistic Conception of History), published in 1927, still features Darwinism as a major prop for socialism, and in his later years he had a book he had written on the evolutionary history of mankind in the 1870's reprinted.⁸³

As for Kautsky, so for the rank and file of the Social Democratic movement in Wilhelmine Germany-- socialism and

Marxism came to mean Darwinism. Kelly suggests the following scenario for this development:

George Lichtheim has suggested that the scientism or Darwinism that permeated Social Democracy was a necessary adaptation 'to the rather modest intellectual requirements of the labour movement'. (Marxism, p. 243) This would seem to imply that the party knowingly passed on to the masses a distorted Darwinized Marxism, believing it to be the only popularly understandable Marxism. . . . What happened was more like the following. The workers tended to bypass Marx (or popularizations of him) altogether and go to popular Darwinism; and because of their philosophical leanings (or perhaps better, their confusion), the party leaders usually acquiesced. A wealth of evidence on workers' reading habits shows that they were far more interested in science than in economics or politics. And science usually meant Darwinism, the workingman's favored subject. . . .

In any case, the pattern of interest in Darwin rather than Marx was clearly established by the 1890s and persisted throughout the next generation. As Paul Göhre, a young theologian who worked in a machine factory in Chemnitz, reported in 1891, the workers knew little of socialist theory, but they were fascinated by the popular scientific 'materialistic' literature. Göhre's impressions are confirmed by all of the available surveys of workers' libraries. With the exception of Bebel's Woman and Socialism, popular Darwinism dominated worker nonfiction reading. As Die Neue Zeit reported in 1894 (on the basis of statistics from a Social Democratic club in a south German city), political literature was not in demand. After Bebel, the most popular nonfiction authors were Arnold Dodel, Oswald Köhler, and Edward Aveling--all Darwin popularizers. Die Neue Zeit speculated that the workers lacked political interest because they already had political brochures.

The results of the most impressive reading survey at the turn of the century cast doubt on this explanation. In 1899, A.H.T. Pfannkuche placed an ad in Die Neue Zeit asking the librarians of workers' libraries to send him lists of the most

popular books. Pfannkuche published the results the next year in a short book entitled Was liest der deutsche arbeiter? (What does the German worker read?) Although Bebel's Woman and Socialism headed the list for nonfiction, four out of the top ten books in this category were of the genre Darwiniana. . . . Typically, librarians lamented their patrons' lack of political interests. Pfannkuche concluded that the number of political and economic titles was inflated because the librarians pushed the 'right kind' of books. Many were probably returned unread. It was wrong to argue, he said, that the political curiosity of the workers was already met by party newspapers, for these papers also followed science. Clearly the fascination with science was deep and genuine. What concerned the workers most could be summarized by the title of Dodel's popular book, Moses or Darwin? . . . Workingmen's memoirs, of which there are several dozen for the period before World War I, are another source of information on reading habits. Rarely do the memoirs mention reading Marx or even Kautsky. More typically, the road to political awareness (if there is any) went via popular science. Thus, Moritz Bromme, whose recently reissued Lebensgeschichte eines modernen Fabrikarbeiters (Life story of a modern factory worker, 1905) is probably the best-known worker memoir, reports reading among others Darwin, Bebel, [Carl] Vogt, and [Rudolf] Bommeli [The latter two were Darwin popularizers]. Likewise, Nikolaus Osterroth, a brickworker tells eloquently of the great impression Dodel's Moses or Darwin? made on him. Wenzel Holek, a Czech worker who learned German so he could read Darwinian literature, boasted that his personal collection contained volumes by Vogt, Büchner, Ferdinand Lassalle, Haeckel, and Bölsche. Holek recommended Bölsche as a starting point for workers studying science. He once loaned a fellow worker who had been a little puzzled by Haeckel a copy of Bölsche's Vom Bazillus zum Affenmenschen. 'That pleased him; he understood it', Holek recalls. Nor are these reading lists isolated cases; they are typical.⁸⁴

Darwinism thus functioned as a sort of civil theology for the Social Democratic and labour movements of pre-World War I Germany. That this belief-system involved both the

leadership and the general membership of the SPD has already been noted. No wing of the Party was exempt from its influence, although the Centre and Right clearly relied upon it as a direct inspiration for their theoretical programmes--Bebel's reading while in prison in the 1870s had included Darwin's Origin, Haeckel's History of Creation, and Buchner's Force and Matter;⁸⁵ Eduard David had particularly high praise for Bölsche in his Referentenführer, a 1908 list of books recommended for those wishing to develop political consciousness;⁸⁶ to the "left" of Kautsky, even Lenin (the later mentor of the German revolutionary purists) declared Haeckel's Riddle of the Universe to be a "weapon in the class struggle".⁸⁷ In sum, as Kelly puts it, "there was no clear lineup of forces in the Social Democratic party on the meaning and significance of Darwinism."⁸⁸

The revolutionism in theory and reformism in practice of the Party's Erfurt Program of 1891 may have owed as much to this pervasive ideology of popular Darwinism as to the intellectual ingenuity of the Centre's "official Marxist" theoreticians, for the concrete easily-graspable Whig History of the Darwinian dialectic had "scientific" instances aplenty of both the moments of violent action and slow change perceptible to the senses in everyday experience. As Eduard Bernstein recognized, and Ignaz Auer admitted,⁸⁹ in effect, the thought, programme and activity of German Social Democracy showed that it understood Marxism as an evolutionary doctrine,

in which reform and revolution were not strictly alternatives, but aspects of the same thing.

For Party intellectuals of any sort, this smothering blanket of naturalistic monism was a clarion call to try to make something satisfying and coherent out of the movement's ideology. Neo-Kantianism offered hope to many, but in the long run the alternatives that were adopted amounted to what might be described (perhaps over-schematically) as increasing doses of Darwinism on the Right, and increasing doses of Hegel on the Left. In this respect, only Bernstein really managed to stay in the Centre.

The "programme of the Monatshefte", as Bloch called it, was well under way before Bernstein became a regular contributor to the magazine after 1903. In 1909 Rudolf Hilferding singled out Bloch, rather than Bernstein, as the "impresario of German revisionism".⁹⁰ By 1910, the "programme" had been sufficiently successful to draw the fire of Lenin, who continued to attack the Monatshefte over the next few years with increasing concern. Calling it "the model organ of revisionism", he clearly considered it to be a serious threat to the unity of the socialist movement:

Take the German magazine Sozialistische (??) Monatshefte and you will always find in it utterances by men like Legien, which are thoroughly opportunist, and have nothing in common with socialism, utterances touching on all the vital issues of the labour movement. The 'official explanation of the 'official' German party is 'nobody reads the Sozialistische Monatshefte', 'that it has no influence', etc.; but that is not true. The most prominent and responsible people, members of parliament and trade union leaders who write for the Sozialistische

Monatshefte constantly and undeviatingly propagate their views among the masses. . . . We must not try to play down the disease which the German party is undoubtedly suffering from and which reveals itself in phenomena of this kind.⁹¹ [*Italics in original*]

Lenin's fear that the Monatshefte's message was deeply penetrating both the leadership ranks and the membership of the SPD was entirely justified. Fletcher sums up the periodical's success as follows:

Despite occasional claims to the contrary-- these were frequently an expression of wishful thinking on the part of the anti-revisionists-- Bloch's periodical struck root within a few years of its first appearance, soon out-stripping in popularity and notoriety the party's official theoretical organ, the Neue Zeit. In the absence of reliable circulation figures for both publications, this impression cannot be confirmed statistically. Nevertheless, the testimony of contemporaries indicates that the shaky fortunes of the Neue Zeit were a constant source of concern to the party, whereas the Monatshefte regularly sold out quickly, continued to increase its circulation among working-class subscribers even in times of higher subscription rates, and had no difficulty in attracting the collaboration of most of the leading literati within the prewar German and international labour movement, all of which alarmed and exasperated the party left and centre, and the partisans of the Neue Zeit in particular.

Certainly, Bloch and the friends of the Monatshefte had no doubts as to the success of the revisionist organ. This success is further reflected in the attacks to which it was subjected by its opponents within the party, in the judgement of non-partisan observers, and in the use made of the Monatshefte by the enemies of the labour movement.

At the Lubeck and Munich party congresses (1901 and 1902) several delegates complained vehemently that the Neue Zeit was already being undermined by Bloch's publication, pointing out that almost all the party's Reichstag deputies and even a member of the party Verstand (Ignaz

Auer) evidently preferred to write for the Monatshefte rather than for Kautsky's journal. Bebel, too protested that 'a considerable number of respected party comrades' had manifested a serious 'want of solidarity and comradely feeling' in this way. . . . As a rule, organs like Vorwärts and the left-wing Leipziger Volkszeitung strove to ignore the Monatshefte, having learnt from experience that anti-revisionist tirades were futile and more likely to provoke a revisionist counter-offensive than to rally the faithful to a trial of strength with the citadel of right-wing heresies. When the party press could not refrain from delivering broadsides against the Monatshefte, the tenor of its invective served merely to underline the magnitude of the threat perceived in the revisionist journal. Thus, in its issue of 26 June, 1908, Vorwärts felt compelled to admit that the Monatshefte writers were 'persons who not only play a certain role in the party but [were] arrogating to themselves, over and above this, the role of a supreme tutelary authority within the party'.⁹²

Clearly, "Blochian Revisionism" had a pedigree (and a significant measure of influence) that antedated Bernstein's recruitment to the cause of the "programme of the Monatshefte", and the effectiveness of that programme continued to increase in the years leading up to World War I. Fletcher identifies "three factors [that] explain the success of the Monatshefte":

These were Bloch's skill in attracting and retaining the services of notable and respected writers; the greater popular appeal which he was able to impart to the journal by keeping it topical, down to earth, readable, varied and comprehensive in content; and most important of all, the stable financial base enjoyed by the Monatshefte.⁹³

Fletcher explores the third of these in some detail, finding some evidence in confirmation of the charges expressed at the time that the Monatshefte enterprise had been funded

by the German government and/or Establishment interests in order to bring the SPD and the working class into line with national and imperial ambitions.⁹⁴ He also notes that "workers evidently found Bloch's publication more comprehensible and relevant to their concerns than Kautsky's Neue Zeit", and that "Bloch's proficiency in winning an ever-expanding circle of subscribers, especially working-class subscribers, was recognized even by Clara Zetkin and was attributed by Wolfgang Heine to the circumstance that the Monatshefte published a great many concrete articles on important day-to-day issues which would not appear if someone had not appealed to the right authors".⁹⁵ But Fletcher does not investigate the matter of the ideological appeal of the Monatshefte for the working-class when discussing the reasons for its success. If he had, he undoubtedly would have realized that the Darwinist version of socialism promoted by the Blochian pillars of the "programme of the Monatshefte" (Leuthner, Shippel, etc.) was simply a sharpened variety of the popular civil theology of biological scientism. It was also (not inconveniently, if the theory of subversion from the Right is correct) intellectually symmetrical in many respects with the "social Darwinism" being purveyed by such apologists for German capitalism and imperialism in the 1890's as Otto Ammon and Heinrich Ziegler.⁹⁶

The term "social Darwinism" itself illustrates the difficulty in defining the exact character of the "half-way

house" role that the predominant ideology of the Monatshefte writers apparently played, for, as Kelly notes, it "is a creation of later historians, and its restricted application reflects more their interests and limitations than the merit of anyone's special claim to Darwinism" (no-one called himself a "social Darwinist" in the nineteenth century; the term entered the scholarly vocabulary after the publication of Richard Hofstadter's Social Darwinism in American Thought in 1944).⁹⁷ Both the German Right and Left were "social Darwinist" in the sense that they found support for their political goals in Darwin's teaching (the former tending to emphasize its competitive, military and eugenic implications, and the latter its revolutionary and egalitarian aspects), and Kelly points out that the designation, "generally. . . associated with the first of these two positions. . . may with equal justification be applied to the second".⁹⁸

Despite remarking upon the dangers of reading back contemporary notions into history, and noting Darwin's own "social Darwinism", Kelly's own ideological agenda evidently moves him to spill a good deal of ink towards the end of his book trying to perform the (admittedly impossible, or perhaps rather, meaningless) task of showing that German socialism and left liberalism were free of the "social Darwinist" taint.⁹⁹

Kelly offers a better clue as to the ideological

appeal of the "programme of the Monatshefte" for the masses in his survey of the beliefs of the German working-class, which shows an enduring faith in a sort of organicist monism that functioned as a "substitute religion". Variouslly described by its adherents as "Darwinism", "pantheism" or "monism", this belief-system had both political and spiritual significance:

When the workingman spoke of the future, he used the emotional, yet naturalistic language of popular Darwinism. . . But the future did not seem to be within the grasp of these men. It was, in a sense, not a tangible result of progress, but rather a formless cosmic development. It would inevitably, as that almost magic word had it, 'evolve'. 'Everything evolves', said one miner. And therein lay the hope. Not a few had succumbed to the despair of a hard life, but another young miner spoke of the many who still had hope: 'Yes, it will get better because the whole of evolution is pointed toward something great, the realization of a higher stage of culture when we will finally separate from the animal kingdom'. Here speaks the marriage of Marx and Darwin.

Not only did nature give hope for the future, it also was an object of worship in the present. Most workers denied. . . that they believed in God, but it is clear that they meant the Christian God. They referred repeatedly to the God in nature so beloved by Haeckel and especially by Bölsche. 'I believe in Nature', remarked one metal worker. 'I profess the monistic world view', said another. These men saw the purity and promise of nature as an antidote to the misery and ugliness of city life. Their views were romantic and sentimental. . . Somehow evolution would bring that little house in the country for their descendants. That such views persisted in the 1920s is a tribute to the power of popular Darwinism. Gertrud Hermes's study of the workers taking workingmen's courses in the early 1920s

reveals continuing faith in Darwinian science as a substitute religion. 'The core of their world of thought is the theory of evolution. It is the beginning and end of the workers' natural philosophy; it recurs in the most varied forms as a leitmotif in their testimonies' writes Hermes. Their faith in the future, she adds, comes not from Marx, but from Darwin-- as befits a group whose favorite nonfiction author was Bölsche. Similarly, Paul Piechowski, who surveyed Berlin workers in 1927, found that when workers were asked their Weltanschauung, they would often reply 'Darwinism', 'pantheism', or 'monism'. He concluded from his questionnaires that a 'scientific pantheism meets us at every turn: God-Nature'.¹⁰⁰

Kelly rightly underscores the quietistic or dampening effects of such a mind-set upon individual revolutionary initiative, but he fails to see that it also suppresses the individual's critical response to climates of opinion that are already in political motion, particularly when these are themselves organicist in character. He notes that it was perhaps not untypical to have a Darwinian reading of Nietzsche in the Germany of the 1890s ('Nietzsche, too, . . . sometimes sounded Darwinian. Some readers probably interpreted the superman as a higher stage of evolution. . .'),¹⁰² and we have seen that this is precisely what Leuthner did have. Leuthner also combined this with a volkisch nationalism, as Fletcher shows:

Nor could Leuthner accept Nietzsche's moral-existential nihilism. Instead of coming to terms with the full implications of a godless existence, Leuthner, in fact, made a god of the German nation. . . .¹⁰³

Indeed, there is every reason to suppose that a vague

organicist panpsychistic evolutionism, such as the German working-class apparently widely subscribed to, is very easily truncated into a belief in the special evolutionary destiny of a geographically, culturally and historically specific and concrete Volk, and out of this, of course, a political programme almost automatically arises.

Bloch's "programme of the Monatshefte" would clearly flourish in such a climate. It would presumably not be necessary for the "impresario of (Blochian) revisionism" to commission many directly popular-Darwinist pieces, as the whole thrust of his journalistic strategy was predicated upon the widespread pre-existence of attitudes for which his magazine would be a rallying-point. Nevertheless, as we have already noted, Bölsche was an early contributor, Edmund Fischer's 1909 article "Der Entwicklungsgedanke" argued that biological evolution proved that revisionism was correct, and revolution unnatural, and there is every reason to think that the Monatshefte remained hospitable to related opinions throughout its career.¹⁰⁴

Probably one reason why Eduard Bernstein could become a member of the Monatshefte stable at all (considering that he differed with Bloch and his spokesmen on so many things) from 1903 to 1914, was that he had a "related opinion" on the question of Darwinism. Bernstein had contributed an article to the 1890/1 volume of the Neue Zeit (entitled "Ein Schuler

Darwins als Vertheidiger des Sozialismus") in which, as Kelly puts it, "he seemed . . . to imply that socialism was the natural culmination of biological evolution."¹⁰⁵ Kelly notes that "sometimes it appeared that revisionists wanted both natural evolution and ethics as the engine of history leading to socialism", ¹⁰⁶ and this was certainly true in Bernstein's case. As a Darwinist, he undoubtedly had a community of interest with the "programme of the Monatshefte", and something to say to its constituency. However, his treatment of the theory, relating it to ethical progress indirectly, or by implication, contrasted with the naturalistic monism of Bölsche, Leuthner etc., and the popular Darwinism of the masses, that generally obtained in Germany. Bernstein's naturalistic pluralism in this regard was another instance of his relative uniqueness in the SPD, and a further indication that his thought had come to maturity in Britain.

Gay perceives this duality, or, perhaps more accurately, parallelism, right at the centre of Bernstein's thought, which he takes to be his evolutionism, and traces it to Fichte:

Bernstein distinguishes two kinds of Utopianism. The first sort, championed by the great Utopian Socialists, set a goal apart from an investigation of the possibilities of its realization. The second, which Bernstein advocates, sets itself the task of studying present-day society without fear or favor. It then establishes its aims realistically; it goes beyond ascertained fact, making an imaginative leap into the future, but it is careful to curb its imagination. To Bernstein, the goal of Socialism appears as a never-ending task. The world is never finished, never perfect; the reformer's work, like the housewife's is never

done. This is one sense in which his remark, 'The goal is nothing, the movement everything,' may be understood. Bernstein's concept of never-ceasing effort was derived from Fichte, who had posited the Self (Ich) as incomplete, and as constantly striving to transcend its limitations. Fichte, like Bernstein after him, saw the eternal striving of the Self as the response to resistance and the overcoming of obstacles. (Cf. Richard Kroner, Von Kant bis Hegel, Tübingen: Mohr, 1921; I, 513-18)¹⁰⁷

The "Utopianism" favoured by Bernstein is, then, according to Gay, to be derived from or even identified with Bernstein's "organic evolutionism", the organon for which recognizes the necessity for the combined action of two mental perspectives or poles of the mind-- the empirical/rational and the imaginative. We noted earlier that Fichte indeed posited a self-transcending self (Ich) (see p. 64 above), but Bernstein's non-monistic view of mental processes both in relation to one another and to that which is "other" to them, puts his thought much closer to Novalis than to Fichte. The former's affirmation of common-sense rationality and belief in the "productive imagination" (derived from the second moment of the Fichtean triad, the discovery of the "non-self")-- both of which he considered had to be operative for a clear understanding of the immeasurable depths of the present and the mysterious nature of the future-- seems much closer to Bernstein's cast of mind than Fichte's "speculative and mystical rationalism", with its cycle of knowing, and knowing that it is knowing. If Fichte was a precursor of Bernstein,

it is only in the sense that he was a precursor of German Romanticism.

The striving to overcome the limitations of the self and of the self's environment, which Gay notes in Bernstein's approach, and which he ascribes to Fichtean influence, is found (as we have already seen-- p. 49 above) as part of Adam Ferguson's theory of human nature, derived from Stoic sources. It is thus integral to the eighteenth-century "common sense" philosophy of "moral progress", particularly as that philosophy entered Germany (Ferguson was evidently more popular than Reid).

While the foregoing may shed some light on Bernstein's intellectual inheritance, it says little or nothing about the possible history of the development of his ideas (there is no record that Bernstein read either Novalis or Fichte, although he was familiar with Schiller's work, and admired it). The vitalistic organicism of Bölsche may at first glance appear to be similar to Bernstein's "organic evolutionism", but, as we have seen, the former was monistic and panpsychistic, whereas Bernstein's naturalism was pluralistic, and he did not locate any "spirit" in Nature. Bernstein's use of the disciplined imagination as a probe of evolutionary possibilities recalls Novalis' "magic wand of analogy" or the poetizing activity of the "productive imagination" that "discovers the original meaning" of the world (see p. 66 above).

Bölsche's reduction of Novalis to an immanent eroticism, however, seems to be akin to the tradition of Feuerbach's "realism" (or positivism), and the related Anarchist anthropology (in 1913 he published an article entitled "Is Mutual Aid a Basic Principle of Organic Evolution?" in which he argued that it is the primary principle).¹⁰⁸

Bernstein certainly had ample opportunity to acquaint himself with the Anarchist view of man's place in natural evolution. The chapters of Petr Kropotkin's great critique of the "hard" or pessimistic interpretation of Darwinism, Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, appeared in the British magazine Nineteenth Century between September 1890 and June 1896. At Engels' house, Bernstein met and befriended Sergius Kravtshinsky ("Stepniak"), the Russian Anarchist and associate of Kropotkin, who was also in exile in London. Hulse points out that Bernstein's "remarks on the 'principle of association' [in Die Voraussetzungen]", and many of the programmatic statements he made in explanation of them, "contained some elements that carried him towards the position of Kropotkin" and the Anarchists.¹⁰⁹ However, in the final analysis he rejected what he considered to be their desire for freedom "in the metaphysical sense. . . i.e. freedom of all duties towards the community", which he believed to be a "dream".¹¹⁰ Kropotkin's later attempt to ground an Anarchist theory of ethics on orthodox naturalist grounds

alone¹¹¹ was perhaps partly prompted by his perception of the same problem amongst his confrères (i.e. their fissiparous nature).

Evidently, then, it was not Bernstein's contacts with the Anarchists in Britain that stimulated whatever inclination he may have acquired, from his youthful environment in Germany, to think of socialism and Darwinism as linked in a pluralistic way. It was not usual either for main-line socialists in Britain, of whatever stripe, to make the "socialism through Darwinian evolution" argument--that was the prerogative of the Germans. (Darwin himself had snorted: "What a foolish idea seems to prevail in Germany on the connection between Socialism and Evolution through Natural Selection.")¹¹² And yet, all the main features of Bernstein's "organic evolutionism", which is at the heart of his Revisionism, and which he says he learned as a "pupil of Darwin", had been developed by him before he returned to Germany in 1901.

Interestingly, there was one strand of socialist thought in Britain which had roots in German Romanticism and with which, as we have already shown, Bernstein had had early and cordial contact, which dealt with Darwin in an imaginative and pluralistic way--the Christian Socialists.

Frederick Denison Maurice was not disturbed by the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species, as one might expect, but, in company with the former High Anglican (by

then Roman Catholic) John Henry Newman, it might almost be said that he welcomed it. The letters of the two men indicate that they were intrigued by Darwinism as a scientific hypothesis, and that they did not see it as a threat to their faith.¹¹⁵ Stephen Prickett, in his study of Romantic Christianity in Victorian Britain, notes that the confidence and lack of defensiveness in the face of Darwin shown by these men and others of their ilk, was the result of their acceptance of the Romantic aesthetic of the "true myth", and also points out that this sensibility had much in common with the natural theology of the Christian tradition prior to the seventeenth century (i.e., the Renaissance and Mediaeval minds):

. . . We have compared this revival of aesthetic language with the re-introduction of the horse to South America--transforming at once the ecological and social structure of the continent. Something dimly analogous did happen in the Victorian Church, and we can trace its effect by looking at what distinguishes the tradition of Coleridge from the great bulk of Anglican thinking. The nineteenth-century crisis of faith over the historical accuracy of the Bible which had begun in England as early as the 1820s was, in fact, a conflict between two attitudes of mind which were both relatively new. Both depended upon what we may loosely call the 'modern' idea of history. Only with the rise of a concept of 'history' as a verifiable (and therefore 'objective') record of human events do we get the corresponding attempt to treat the Biblical narrative as an 'inspired' record of such events. A sixteenth-century divine would have taken it for granted that the scriptures were 'inspired', but if pressed it would have become clear that what he meant by this was that they were charged with divine meaning--

to be interpreted by means of allegory, correspondences and the most complex of symbolism. Questions of 'historical accuracy' would not have been meaningful except in these terms. That was what 'history' was about. Biblical literalism in its nineteenth - or twentieth-century sense is a relatively new phenomenon born of the scientific revolution and the development of a historical consciousness. Archbishop Ussher's famous attempt at producing an accurate Biblical chronology in the seventeenth century can be seen as an activity in this sense parallel to the foundation of the Royal Society. . . . Similarly, it comes as a shock to discover that the Council of King's College under Principal Jelf should dismiss Maurice for 'heretical' views on eternity when identical ideas can be found in seventeenth-century poetry, or even in Augustine. . . . [T]hrough the new language and corresponding sensibility they had inherited via Keble and through the common tradition of the English Romantic poets, they were able to think of scriptural inspiration in quite other terms from the Evangelicals and literalists. . . . But the shift in theological sensibility betokened by the new aesthetic imagery is far wider and more far-reaching than the question of accepting or rejecting the methods of the German historical critics or of the new scientific discoveries. . . . The literary idea of the 'poetic' gave a framework for thinking about myth that was independent both of philological criticism and science. As their disinterested reaction to Darwin suggests, it enabled Maurice and Newman to take up a position that was not primarily defensive at all Behind the change of sensibility that we call English Romanticism there lies a new kind of confidence. It is a confidence that we see in Newman accepting the process of historical change as evidence for the dynamic power of the unfolding 'idea' of the Church; a confidence that allows Maurice to proclaim that, against all appearances, the Kingdom of Christ is universal--and already here.¹¹⁵

For Christian theology and philosophy up to and including Richard Hooker (1553-1600), "natural law" is the mind's operative analogue (or, in Enlightenment terms, "power of analogy") that permits the ordering of consciousness. In so doing, it bridges sense-perception and the ground of perception (in theological language, Nature and God), and illuminates the "in-between" (metaxy). The "natural" movement of the mind, in this Middle Platonic approach, is thus an opening toward God, and theorizing the observation of this opening (or its opposite). The Patristic and Mediaevalist background of Christian Socialism (see pages 117,8 above) strengthened the Middle Platonic element in its Romanticism, and kept Maurice's immanent "Kingdom of Christ" (and later that of Stewart Headlam et al.) firmly attached to its transcendent prototype. The general scheme of Darwinian evolution becomes, in this tradition, an analogue for the movement of a redeemed creation (or society) towards perfection, but the process is not monistically identified with that perfection itself, as in Gnostic schemes, which immanentize the metaxy as theory and practice.

George MacDonald develops the ideas of Novalis and Jacob Böhm^{..} in the same direction as Maurice took Coleridge's "Germanism", and also performs a similar Platonic operation upon Darwin, as Prickett shows:

The idea of development is central to MacDonald's notion of morality. He saw life as a progressive

enlightenment in which man climbs a kind of ladder, or scale of spiritual being. Not surprisingly, he found Darwin an immediate ally, but, as his son points out, ethical evolution was implied throughout his work long before Darwin published anything. . . In The Princess and Curdie we find a process of reverse evolution whereby the courtiers and people of Gwyntystorm become more and more like the animals they resemble. . . MacDonald, of course, would have differed from such modern exponents of ethical evolution as Teilhard de Chardin in that, for him, the moral is prior to the scientific (in theory as well as fact) rather than vice versa. Evolution, for MacDonald, is primarily a symbolic process. 'All that moves in the mind is symbolized in Nature. Or, to use another more philosophical, and certainly not less poetic figure, the world is a sensuous analysis of humanity, and hence an inexhaustible wardrobe for the clothing of human thought.' (A Dish of Orts, p.9). It is obvious how this kind of vision of life as a symbolic process of development within a God-filled universe of infinite variety, finds better and more natural expression with MacDonald's kind of fantasy or fairy tale than it would within the constraints of realistic fiction. . . 116
[emphasis in original]

Of course, Bernstein was not a Christian, much less a British Neo-Platonic "Romantic" Christian, but when it is realized that back of the latter phenomenon was a much larger inchoate movement of British Romantic "Germanism" centred upon the figure of the later Coleridge,¹¹⁷ the possibility of an affinity of attitudes to being between the German Marxist exile and Anglican clergymen seems less far-fetched, perhaps.

Coleridge's Theory of Life borrows heavily from the

Naturphilosophie of Schelling, and his follower Henrik Steffens.¹¹⁸ Unlike Fechner, however, who interpreted Schelling vitalistically (Fechner, Bölsche's mentor, was a disciple of Schelling, not Novalis, as Bölsche seemed to think), Coleridge made of German Naturphilosophie a sort of Aristotelian entelechy, or "natural law" of the realization of inherent potential:

. . . [I]t is clear that Coleridge did not believe that 'life' was something over and above mere complexity of organization in the sense of being an 'occult power' or an added 'force'--like the steam in a steam-engine. Dorothy Emmet, indeed, believes that he should not properly be called a 'vitalist' at all ('Coleridge on Powers in Mind and Nature' in Coleridge's Variety, 1974, p. 176). As she puts it, Coleridge was primarily interested in 'what it is to be a living creature.' (Ibid.) The teleological biology of Schelling and Steffens seemed to provide in natural science a direct equivalent of Coleridge's aesthetic distinction between 'Imagination' and 'Fancy'. The former was a living and vital principle of organization where the whole transformed and modified the constituent parts; the latter was simple juxtaposition in which the parts themselves remained unchanged. In philosophical terms, similarly, [Coleridge's 'vitalism'] seemed to correspond to the Kantian Reason, whereas Understanding could be held to refer to the material and mechanical. . . New discoveries in electricity and galvanism seemed to show that both organic and inorganic material was subject to the same laws of polarity; parallel developments in physiology seemed to indicate a general law of 'irritability' in living tissue. . . [T]he very existence of such apparently impressive correspondences between science, aesthetics, and philosophy seemed to imply the possibility of a grand theological synthesis whereby the discerning Christian might point to a slow 'evolution' of consciousness

from its primeval roots latent in the inanimate world and ascending in an unbroken Chain of Being through plants and animals to Man himself. Such a Chain of Being could be either static and immutable hierarchy or 'evolutionary'-- and it seems to have been towards this latter developmental and progressive position that Coleridge increasingly inclined. 'Nature', he says in Aids to Reflection, 'is a line in constant and continuous evolution.' . . . This kind of reasoning, in its various forms, can be traced right back to Aristotle.¹¹⁹

This, in fact, is the Aristotelian doctrine of entelechy seen through modern spectacles. As C. S. Lewis notes in The Discarded Image-- An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature, Coleridge inverts the order of Imagination and Fancy (or Fantasy), and Reason and Understanding on the Classical and Medieval Chain of Being (putting Fantasy and Understanding lower, rather than higher than Imagination and Reason),¹²⁰ but this is hardly surprising, as Coleridge is working out of the tradition of the Romantic recovery of the Neo-Platonic world-view, which begins, as we noted in the case of Novalis (see pp. 62-70 above), with the an analysis of self-consciousness. Again, in Coleridge, we meet the "productive imagination" of Fichte via Novalis as an organizing or ordering principle by which potentials are realized, and the "metaphysicalized" Kantian Reason of Novalis, which amounts to a developmental psychology or pneumatology. These two elements are not conflated or made moments of a single process, however, but remain parallel

aspects of a single universe which is in process of realizing its diversity.

Such an approach to evolution might just as easily appeal to the "discerning agnostic" as to the "discerning Christian", however, because the potential perfection towards which the process is moving cannot, by its very nature as potential, be known. What is required is merely the pre-supposed mental distinction between the potential and the actual, without which the notion of evolution is incoherent anyway. In theological terms, there is room here for both faith and skepticism, but not, of course, for gnosis. Other evolutionary schemes seem to require either divine fiat, or just plain fiat, because beginning with finalities ("the fittest", "the noösphere" etc.), they unfailingly discover only evidence of the development of these ends, and are thus circular, closed, and hence anti-evolutionary at heart.

Gay thinks that "Bernstein believed he had found the center of Marxist thought in evolutionism".¹²¹ What possible resonances of Marxism can Bernstein have detected in the essentially Aristotelian evolutionism of the British Christian Socialists and Romantic evolutionism in general? The answer in a word is, I think, ethics.

For those who see Marx as never really doing more than explicating Hegel, the combination of Marx's opposition,

on "scientific" grounds, to all moralizing, and his frequent and fiery issuance of moral judgements himself, does not constitute a contradiction or really even a problem of any sort. Steven Lukes, in an unpublished paper,¹²² resolves this "paradox" in terms of the "emancipatory ethic" of Marx over against the morality of Recht, or title, claim, privilege. However, there is evidence that the dichotomy is not simply a "dialectical" (i.e. tactical) one.

Paul Phillips, a lecturer in jurisprudence at The Queen's University, Belfast, argues that there is a significant "natural law" content in Marx's thought, (particularly evident in writing done in his student years, and during his period as a journalist). In Marx and Engels on Law and Laws, Phillips points out that this may be a result of Aristotelian influence:

In the articles [Marx] wrote for this journal [the Rheinische Zeitung] and particularly in his articles on the censorship of the press, Marx's thought on law has a distinctly Natural Law cast. There seems to be implicit reference to a criterion of the validity of law other than either the purely formal criteria laid down by the constitution, e.g., as to what formal requirements must be satisfied for a rule to count as 'law', or the empirical criterion of whether the constituted authorities do in fact adjust their behaviour in accordance with the requirements of the rule. It is tempting to conjecture that the source of this strand of Marx's thought may derive from Aristotle since even in 1837 in his letter to his father Marx mentions a translation in part of Aristotle's Rhetoric as one of the endeavours with which he had occupied himself and even more so since

the doctoral dissertation [On the Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature] makes extensive reference to a range of Aristotle's works. Even in such late works as Capital Aristotle appears in the list of authorities. . . 123

We have already noted Marx's respect for Aristotle as the pioneer of value theory in the Nicomachean Ethics (see pp. 93 above). Phillips gives what he considers to be a particularly clear instance of "natural law" thinking in Marx that appeared in an article in 1842 that was part of a series in the Rheinische Zeitung called "Debates on the Freedom of the Press". It is interesting that this passage also displays an "emancipatory ethic", and evolutionary political implications. The passage reads as follows:

. . . The press law punishes the abuse of freedom. The censorship law punishes freedom as an abuse. It treats freedom as criminal, or is it not regarded in every sphere as a degrading punishment to be under police supervision? The censorship law has only the form of a law. The press law is a real law.

The press law is a real law because it is the positive existence of freedom. It regards freedom as the normal state of the press, the press as a mode of existence of freedom, and hence only comes into conflict with a press offence as an exception that contravenes its own rules and therefore annuls itself. . .

Laws are in no way repressive measures against freedom, any more than the law of gravity is a repressive measure against motion. . . Laws are rather the positive, clear, universal norms in which freedom has acquired an impersonal, theoretical existence independent of the arbitrariness of the individual. A statute book is a people's bible of freedom.

Therefore the press law is the legal recognition of the freedom of the press. It constitutes right,

because it is the positive existence of freedom. It must therefore exist, even if it is never put into application, as in North America, whereas censorship, like slavery, can never become lawful, even if it exists a thousand times over as a law.

There are no actual preventive laws. Law prevents only as a command. It only becomes effective law when it is infringed, for it is true law only when in it the unconscious natural law of freedom has become conscious state law. Where the law is real law, i.e., a form of the existence of freedom, it is the real existence of freedom for man. Laws, therefore, cannot prevent a man's actions for they are indeed the inner laws of life of this action itself, the conscious reflections of his life. Hence law withdraws into the background in the face of man's life as a life of freedom, and only when his actual behaviour has shown that he has ceased to obey the natural law of freedom does law in the form of state law compel him to be free, just as the laws of physics confront me as something alien only when my life has ceased to be the life of these laws, when it has been struck by illness. Hence a preventive law is a meaningless contradiction.

A preventive law, therefore, has within it no measure, no rational rule, for a rational rule can only result from the nature of a thing, in this instance freedom. It is without measure, for if prevention of freedom is to be effective, it must be as all-embracing as its object, i.e. unlimited. A preventive law is therefore the contradiction of an unlimited limitation, and the boundary where it ceases is fixed not by necessity, but by the fortuitousness of arbitrariness, as the censorship daily demonstrates ad oculos.¹²⁴ [emphasis in original]

It could be said with justification, of course, that there is much in this treatment of law by Marx that belongs to "second wave" liberalism (as Leo Strauss calls it). The view that law is "the positive existence of freedom", for example, clearly belongs (as a mode of expression) to the

Rousseau-Fichte-Hegel line of political anthropology, as does the concept of legitimate punishment as a matter of "compelling to be free". That this should be so is hardly surprising, as Marx had imbibed, very deeply, the Hegelian system at university, and Saint-Simonianism at home.¹²⁵ Since completing his doctoral dissertation too, he had been a close collaborator with Bruno Bauer and the other atheistic "Young Hegelians". There is a "first wave" liberalism here also, a Naturrechts consciousness of the sovereignty, worth and dignity of the individual in the general tone of Marx's remarks (slightly "hurt"). However, the overall philosophical intention of the passage, its underlying source of appeal, is to "natural law" presuppositions, as Phillips shows:

. . . From a jurisprudential point of view, of far more importance than the concept of law as 'the positive existence of freedom' is the distinction between 'real laws' and those that have 'only the form of law'. . . The significance of this distinction is that it posits the existence of an order superior to that of mere man-made law and, to that extent, it is a Natural Law theory. The resemblance is strengthened by Marx's use of the expression 'the natural law of freedom', but even more so by the analogy he draws with the law of gravity. The context of the phrase 'the natural law of freedom' shows even more clearly the influence of Natural Law thinking on Marx at this time, since it regards it as a source of 'conscious state law'. The resemblance may be illustrated by comparing Marx's statement with some of the classic expositions of Natural Law, e.g., Cicero's--'True Law is right reason in agreement with nature', or Justinian's statement (in a passage subsequently quoted by Aquinas) -- 'The law of nature is the law which nature has taught all the animals'. . .

The argument against preventive laws equally calls for closer examination. . .

The second paragraph of this argument has a decidedly Aristotelian ring to it. The concepts of law as a 'measure' and of a 'rational rule' resulting from the 'nature of the thing' would not sound out of place in any of the classical Natural Law theories. . . "126

Phillips thinks that a later series of articles that Marx wrote for the Rheinische Zeitung in 1842 on the matter of the law relating to thefts of wood is also predicated on a "natural law" perspective, although he shows that Marx had largely abandoned arguments that were explicitly of this type after 1848.¹²⁷ It might be thought that this was because of his concentration on practical and programmatic questions after that year, but this can hardly be the reason, for, as I have already noted, there is an emancipatory political intention intrinsic to the critique of the censorship law in the 1842 piece quoted above. That the thrust of this political implication is already socialist (as opposed to libertarian liberal) is indicated by Marx's definition there of "real laws": "Laws are rather the positive, clear, universal norms in which freedom has acquired an impersonal, theoretical existence independent of the arbitrariness of the individual". (emphasis added). This formulation of the essence of law sees it as given in nature, given in society, definitive of individual freedom and (implicitly) evolutionary in the Aristotelian sense (i.e., developmental). So

conceived, law clearly is prescriptive as well as descriptive (without the two being conflated).

The reason for Marx's abandonment of this sort of argument is probably that he well understood that unless it is made against the background of a Middle Platonic picture of the universe (or one which has a significant residue of Middle Platonic elements) it reduces to the one dimension of orthodox Naturalism (which, as C. S. Lewis has shown, is self-refuting or, at least, utterly incoherent).¹²⁸ The refuge of the orthodox Naturalist (Empiricist, crude Pragmatist, etc.) is usually to embrace the incoherence and thus write off philosophy altogether, but Marx, with his interest and education in philosophical inquiry evidently could not do this. On the other hand, he also apparently could not accept the Middle Platonic perspective on man as a "predicate" of an order of being (preferring to see man as the "subject"), so, at least after 1844 (when he performed his "transformative criticism" of Hegel's Philosophy of Right), he decisively adopted immanentism as the basis for his political theory.

Hegelian immanentism has nothing to say to the individual about "what to do" ethically, however, and yet, those addressing practical political questions cannot avoid telling people "what to do". As a philosopher, therefore,

Marx was a thorough Hegelian, but as a commentator on practical political questions, he continued to appeal to "natural justice" on many occasions. This "paradox", as Lukes calls it, was faithfully replicated by his epigones (except Bernstein) of the Second International. With Lenin (via Clausewitz) we get a consistent immanentist politics, although, of course, it is hard to relate this to anything that had been recognized as ethical previously.

The subject of censorship versus "press offences" (i.e. journalistic standards) is one which lends itself to the elaboration of a "critical common-sense" philosophy, but it is hard to imagine any political journalism that does not prescribe. Bernstein's entire career was tied up with party organization, political journalism and parliamentary politics. His whole orientation was necessarily towards interpreting what socialism meant or could mean in terms of the inevitable series of decisions that make up day-to-day existence. As a publicist, he was forced both to explicate and to moralize, and he simply discovered that this could not be done within an immanentist metaphysics. Having noticed that Marx's immanentism did not stop either him or his followers from behaving as if morally-motivated actions were possible, and indeed desirable (i.e., in this respect like everyone else), he naturally concluded that Marx's Hegelianism was a piece

of intellectual baggage from the past that he had failed to discard after it had served its purpose. Bernstein also clearly thought that what Marx really "wanted to say" was something ethical, something about "natural law".

Bernstein's own pluralistic Pragmatic Naturalism is evident in his journalism. Two particularly good examples are his contributions to the "homosexuality debate" that took place within the SPD, and in the socialist movement generally, at the turn of the century.

This controversy was part of a broader societal discussion which produced a large amount of scientific literature on the subject of homosexuality and other sexual abnormalities, as well as a literature and culture that celebrated them. In Germany, the issue came to a head in 1895 with the petitioning campaign to repeal paragraph 175 of the legal code, led by Magnus Hirschfeld and the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. August Bebel was one of the first signatories to the petition, and he raised the matter in the Reichstag in January of that year, and later introduced the first petition of the campaign to the parliamentary body.

Paragraph 175 prohibited "unnatural coupling undertaken between persons of the male sex" and made such activity "punishable by imprisonment". It also stated that in such

cases "civil rights can also be withdrawn".¹²⁹ The argument of the petitioners was that the evidence collected by medical science since the 1850's conspired to show that male homosexuality was biologically based, and was either simply a third variety of sexuality or a pathology (both possibilities rendering prohibitive legislation absurd).

Not all socialists subscribed to this rather simplistic positivist view. Some argued that homosexuality was a corruption typical of capitalist relations of production, and others that it was culturally induced or purely a matter of taste, while still others took a simply moralistic line.¹³⁰

Bernstein's two articles appeared in Die Neue Zeit in 1895. The first, entitled "On the Occasion of a Sensational Trial", date-lined April, reported on the circumstances surrounding the trial of Oscar Wilde on a charge of sodomy. The second, written on May 6, was a thorough discussion of the whole question of the nature of homosexuality and the jurisprudential issues involved.

In these two pieces Bernstein tried to give a rounded picture of the "homosexual debate", touching on all the approaches noted above that were being taken to the topic, and considering their strengths and weaknesses, as well as dealing with the shortcomings of bourgeois and public opinion.

The articles were apparently well received, but, as was usual with Bernstein's work, their admirers took what

they wanted from them. Writing in Die Neue Zeit in 1878, W. Herzen, who supported the view that homosexuality was a biological anomaly, cited the argument that Bernstein had made against the criminal code's use of the term "unnatural" for homosexuality, but ignored the reasons that Bernstein gives for nevertheless thinking the condition to be "abnormal".¹³¹

The tradition of using the articles as a quarry continues. The "British and Irish Communist Organization", that published an English translation of the articles in 1977, apparently likes the same thing that attracted Herzen: "We would agree with Bernstein's view that the term 'unnatural' is absurd in the very much man-made world in which we are living". (As we shall see, this was not Bernstein's view).¹³² However, they believe that this citation supports their position that homosexuality is culturally determined. Strangest of all, perhaps, the British Marxist scholar, and "Gay Liberation" activist, David Fernbach claims that the first of the two articles is "a particularly vigorous defense of Oscar Wilde".¹³³ This is an odd assessment, to say the least, as even a cursory reading of the text in question suggests something approaching a character assassination of Wilde by Bernstein. We will return to this earlier-written piece, which presents an application of Bernstein's approach to homosexuality to a particular instance of it, after having

considered his general theory as set out in "The Judgement of Abnormal Sexual Intercourse".

Bernstein starts by reviewing the public perceptions of homosexuality, and the wide variety of opinions held amongst German Social Democrats, most of which he considers to be "pre-judgements" (rather than judgements) that range from "extreme libertarianism borrowed from philosophical radicalism" to "an almost pharisaical, ultra-puritan morality".¹³⁴ Regretting that "there is little sign of the endeavour to gain and maintain a firm, modern, scientifically grounded point of view" on the question amongst his comrades, and recognizing that the issue is not one that is central to the Party's aims, he nevertheless sees the necessity of "search[ing] for an objective means of assessing this side of social life" because the Party's growing influence on the State already gives it "a certain responsibility for what happens today." Bernstein thus sets himself the task, in the article, of "smooth[ing] the way towards such a scientific approach to the problem".¹³⁵

Bernstein first focusses upon the penal code's description of male homosexuality as "unnatural", and argues that "abnormal" would be a better adjective to describe the phenomenon. He is here clearing the ground and choosing adequate terms of reference for a full discussion of the topic rather than dogmatizing or using sophistical

"analytical" word-games to "prove" homosexuality's "natural" or "culturally-determined" character as Herzen and the British and Irish Communist Organization, respectively, seem to think. In fact, Bernstein's justification for the use of the term "abnormal" actually attacks both these views, while acknowledging that there is some truth in each of them. An examination of the structure of his argument shows this, and indicates that he is using "dialectical" reasoning (in the Platonic, not the Hegelian, sense).

The opening point in the argument is that "unnatural" is an inappropriate term for homosexuality because it is too general and vague:

For what is not unnatural? Our entire cultural existence, our mode of life from morning to night is a constant offence against nature, against the original preconditions of our existence. If it was only a question of what was natural, then the worse sexual excess would be no more objectionable than, say, writing a letter-- for conducting social intercourse through the medium of the written word is far further removed from nature than any way as yet known for satisfying the sexual urge. Have there not been observed among animals (usually amongst domestic and captive animals, of course, but these are still significantly closer to nature than man himself) and amongst so-called natural peoples practices relieving the sexual urge which would colloquially be termed 'unnatural'? . . . 136

Reference back to Herbert W. Schneider's typology of "naturalisms" and argument for Pragmatic Naturalism (pp. 14 - 16 above) suggests that Bernstein is here

criticizing the orthodox naturalist's belief "that all things are equally natural" (Schneider, p. 15 above) as well as the idealist's claimed knowledge of final ends to which "the natural" corresponds. Bernstein sees, in Schneider's words, "not an absolute or self-contained process" of natural and human evolution "but a relativity, continuity, or co-operation among processes".¹³⁷ Such pluralistic naturalism can neither give the name "natural" to everything (as in orthodox monistic naturalism), nor "unnatural" to some human activities which do not correspond to the final ends believed in (as in idealism), without viewing all human activity as either anomalous or "unnatural" respectively. Thus, Bernstein prefers to use the term "abnormal"¹³⁸ rather than "unnatural" for homosexuality as he thinks that in this case it is the operative word. This after all, brings out the essence of the Pragmatic Naturalist "myth" or attitude to being: "Nature is a norm. . . between the ideal and the actual":¹³⁹

'Abnormal' seems a far more appropriate expression than 'unnatural'. As far as the present subject is concerned, the concept of normality contains as much of the concept of what is natural or correct as is required for its pertinent examination, whilst being more flexible. Also, its usage corresponds better with the fact that moral views are historical manifestations which are not directed by what was supposed to have existed in a state of nature but according to what is considered normal for itself at a given stage of development of society.¹⁴⁰ [*Italics in original*]

It is important to notice that Bernstein is not

saying here that homosexuality is natural, nor is he saying that it is "not 'unnatural'", but that "abnormal" expresses better what it is than does "unnatural". Schneider, it will be remembered, says that "natural love is not average love, but normal, healthy love" or love "which works".¹⁴¹ "Unnatural" love for the Pragmatic Naturalist is thus abnormal love.

Bernstein's formulation may appear at first to give comfort to the "culturally determined" school of thought about homosexuality, but on closer inspection it can be seen that his argument has subsumed this sort of monism, too. As we have observed, he acknowledges that there is both a cultural and historical relativity evident in terms of what "is" or has been "considered normal". This rules out, he thinks, appeals to a primordial human "state of nature" (as in Locke and Hobbes) for a standard of "the natural", or even the detailed content of "the normal". At this point in his argument, however, he parts company with the apostles of the demiourgos Culture, recognizing that his underlying postulate of a "development of society" and his concept of "stages" in that development (i.e. his organic evolutionism) constitute normative or "natural law" thinking:

However, this is not to deny that humans have at all times regarded that form of sexual activity which corresponds with the task of propagating the species as the normal kind. To this extent even people

are tied to the law of nature....¹⁴²

Bernstein concludes his argument, which, of course, has a jurisprudential intention, by recommending legal tolerance of homosexuality on the basis that it is one form of the general "abnormality" of sexual practice that has occurred at various times and places in the past, and that occurs widely in modern society:

There have been times and cultures in which large classes of the population have regarded that task [propagating the species] as an unreal idea; in which the law of nature ceased to be the norm. And this much can be said about most of the civilized nations: that in an increasing number of cases, the so-called mating act not only is not concerned with the reproduction of the human race, but this result bound up with it is rather regarded as a most unwelcome outcome and is prevented as opportunity allows. Formally, the original mating act is solidly affirmed as the norm, but in practice, sexual intercourse is carried on for pure pleasure and because it has been emancipated from procreation, it is highly unnatural, even counter-natural. However, law and custom do not enquire into this, but proscribe and punish only certain kinds of sexual intercourse, in which even the appearance of a connection with procreation falls away--which in fact are not merely counter to nature, but also counter to normality, which run counter to the firmly maintained fictional norm. . . ¹⁴³ (Italics in the original)

Bernstein thinks that such a situation is hypocritical, and cannot be sustained in law. If the norm against which homosexuality is judged as "unnatural" bears little relationship to the reproductive "law of nature"

(the fundamental norm) itself, positive laws framed on the basis of such a social norm are vitiated from the first.

Bernstein admits that the further analysis of the question is hampered by the fact that "on the whole our knowledge of the connection between the state of society in general and the organization of sexual life in particular is rather undeveloped".¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, he reviews the available historical, biological, anthropological, medical and juridical evidence, and ends the article with a general theorization intended to provide rough criteria for the judgement of "individual cases":¹⁴⁵

In the last analysis, everything can be represented as a psychological compulsion, and it is precisely sexual matters that provide the best occasion for this. For in the animal kingdom, do we not see that the reproduction periods are in fact times of an abnormal, pathological, or psychotic state in the animal? But even if the sexual life of humans presents analogies to this, human activity is influenced by other facts than sexual excitement and other such momentary sensations: public opinion, customary institutions and what the individual thinks is right all have an effect on the will and actions, and at least the people involved thus have the possibility of being able to counteract such practices of sexual pleasure which lead to the enervation of those concerned. That is about all that can be done today. As long as social conditions which, so to speak, threaten natural sexual pleasure with punishment, as long as our entire way of life does constant injury to the requirements of health of body

and spirit then so long will abnormal sexual intercourse not cease. On the contrary, it will reveal a tendency to become the normal.¹⁴⁶

On first reading, this analysis might be taken to be a Freudian-like "biology of the mind", a Nietzschean or Schopenhauerian doctrine of "determinate will", or a species of Vitalism. The movement of thought is actually in the opposite direction from all of these, however. Biological compulsions are conceived of in terms of "psychological compulsions" (i.e. human motives) and are associated with a lower animal "kingdom", whereas for Freud the opposite is the case. Human intellectual and social life are said to provide more compelling motivations than either the "momentary sensations of sexual excitement" or "the will" itself, which, indeed, is acted upon by them. Certain modes of "sexual pleasure", it is suggested, in fact lead to the "ennervation" of the proper "psychological compulsions" in man, and, even in animals, sexual activity, far from being the vitalistic paradigm for emergent evolution, is a matter of "abnormal, pathological or psychotic states."

This anthropology displays a kinship, rather, with the hierarchy of the powers of the human mind proposed by Thomas Reid and more especially with the neo-Stoicism of Adam Ferguson (see pp. 48, 49 above). Bernstein thinks that "people. . . have the possibility of being able to counteract

such practices of sexual pleasure which lead to the enervation of those concerned" because there are other "psychological compulsions" that may work upon them (public opinion, customary institutions, person conscience), much as Ferguson believed that humans had a number of "drives or propensities" working in them, (including "Nature's great law" that permitted moral and civilizational progress, which could be aided or thwarted by the others), a fact that he thought could even be observed amongst the higher animals.¹⁴⁷ The two final sentences of Bernstein's theorization, while perhaps seeming to have a libertarian thrust, actually amount to a Ferguson-like political pathology of his contemporary civil society:

As long as social conditions which, so to speak, threaten natural sexual pleasure with punishment, as long as our entire way of life does constant injury to the requirements of health of body and spirit then so long will abnormal sexual intercourse not cease. On the contrary, it will reveal a tendency to become the normal.¹⁴⁸

What is to be "liberated", according to Bernstein, here is the evolutionary process itself, which has been hindered by the "social conditions" of capitalism that "threaten natural sexual pleasure with punishment" and do "constant injury to the . . . health of body and spirit". The net result is that homosexuality, which from the point of view of the "law of nature" is "abnormal", tends to be

not simply tolerated (as it should be) but made into the primary norm, taking the place of the "law of nature" itself in the minds of the bourgeoisie.

Bernstein's criteria for the judgement of instances of homosexuality are thus the ethical ones of pluralistic Pragmatic Naturalism, a mode of thought that has clear affinities with the "Common Sense" philosophy of the Scottish School.

That Bernstein's analysis of homosexuality is essentially an ethical one is demonstrated by his own judgement of the Oscar Wilde affair. That the particular ethical stance is the one I have suggested (that of Pragmatic Naturalism, with its residue of the Middle Platonic cast of mind), is indicated by the fact that Bernstein's article "On the Occasion of a Sensational Trial" might be characterized as a pneumapathology of Wilde and of the "pederastic intellectual direction" which, Bernstein thought, certain elements in British imperial culture were increasingly taking.

Bernstein's essay opens with a lengthy quotation from a book published in 1894, The Green Carnation by Robert Hichens. This "extraordinarily successful piece of persiflage", as Bernstein calls it, was a thinly-disguised lampoon of Wilde's public posturing and self-conscious "decadence". The quotation is a dialogue between "Esme Amarinth" (Wilde) and "Lord Reginald Hastings" (Lord Alfred

Douglas, the young man he was accused of corrupting), and Bernstein thinks that the author, or authors, "have delineated the character of [Wilde's] 'musé' both clearly and discreetly."¹⁴⁹ That muse, Bernstein believes, is anti-naturalism.

Bernstein begins his analysis of the Wilde affair by situating Wilde's sensibility firmly within the European "decadent" tradition:

It is relevant to seek an inner link between Wilde's literary and sexual inclinations, and to a certain extent such a link can be easily proven. Wilde, as a literary person, is utterly 'decadent', a pupil and imitator--if not a mimic-- of the French decadent litterateurs, whose first conscious and most famous exponent was Baudelaire, author of Fleurs du mal. . .

Baudelaire has been dead for nearly thirty years, and thus one can view the Wilde of today not so much as his pupil as his epigone. Perhaps the word 'importer' will fit Wilde, for it took a lot to make Protestant England accept this particular fruit from the tree of modern experience. Even now there is the consolation that it was a born Irishman who was the medium. However, Wilde, with all the daring of his race, only took the lead in opening up the English market for this imported commodity; he did not remain the only importer. . . 150

For his description of the attitude to being and structure of mind of the "decadent" movement, Bernstein relies upon Wilhelm Weigand's essay "Zur Psychologie der Decadence", one of a collection of short treatises by Weigand. Bernstein thought this "convincing and controversial book" to be a "product of great learning and fine analysis".¹⁵¹

The dissertation on the psychology of decadence is specifically about Baudelaire, but Bernstein excerpts a number of sentences from it which he thinks "apply literally to Wilde":¹⁵²

Naive freshness of spirit is united in him with the whims of worn-out fancy. . . The inclination for the artificial and the histrionic emerged very early in this child of the city, whose entire youth lacked the wholesome background of free, pure, healthy nature. . . The word 'dandy' takes on a quite singular meaning for Baudelaire: for him the dandy is a kind of gentleman who. . . is very intelligent and above all fears being duped. . . Instead of plucking the usual rose, he prefers the lily or violet, the burning, luminous, poisonous plants with the bewitching scent. . . He is at odds with nature, and dreams of a landscape composed of marble created by the hand of man. . . a task for unwholesome epicures, revellers in fancies, and romantics who gladly seek the most forbidden pleasures of modern life. . . He believes in sin, but always as fanfaron de son vice [boaster of his vice]. . . Apart from (theoretical) cruelty we also find self-deification, auto-idolatry. . . His poetry is artistic, his words: l'art pour l'art, are of romantic origin. . . An over-cultivated product of civilisation, he approaches the barbarian. Clever and discriminating people saw that Baudelaire's forced pose made him a charlatan, whilst the outer appearance of his feelings ensnared young, immature, impressionable minds into seeing originality in corruption.¹⁵³

For those used to thinking of Bernstein, following Luxemburg and many others of his SPD colleagues, as a sufferer from unreflective Anglophilia, it may come as rather a surprise to learn that his critique of the "decadence" of

Wilde and his circle is part of a broader attack on what he considers to be the deleterious spiritual effects, particularly evident in England, of advanced capitalist imperialism.

This socialist aspect of Bernstein's analysis of the Wilde case starts with a clear formulation of an economic and ideological context in which the phenomenon of "decadence" can be placed:

The circumstances which created decadent literature in France also exist in England, perhaps even to a greater extent, for England became urbanised--if we may express ourselves in this way-- in quite different conditions from France. Living in a city makes everyone blasé, its stimulants outbid the simple pleasures and thus constantly blunt the susceptibilities in this epoch of exaggerated competition. In the last century, dissatisfied townsfolk sought out the open country under the delusion that they would find there that innocent and pure paradise which they lacked in the town. . . . Then came the epoch of travel: that which could not be found at home was sought abroad--outside one's own or any civilisation. But travel has lost its charm as well, or at least only keeps it for a brief duration. . . . It is only those who emigrate 'to make money', who can hold out without the benefits of civilisation for any length of time, but there is an ever-growing corresponding increase in the number of rentiers and capitalists for whom money is made 'somewhere abroad', and nowhere is this number greater than in England, the biggest colonial country in the world.

It is for this reason that it suffers from the effects of surfeit more than anywhere else. In France--or rather, Paris--the signs began to show earlier, but that is because life

there lacked certain safety valves. To the Parisian, Paris is the world, whilst the English gentlemen were by far the first to seek out opportunities abroad to relieve their feelings. They have arranged everything so thoroughly that the travelling Englishman is certain to find England, Englishmen and English institutions in any place worth visiting. Travel has become banal, escape from civilization has lost its charm for those who have found that they hate the vulgar--for people with fine feeling, sensitive natures, and those who wish to pass as such. The substitute is to become over-civilised, to develop the cult of the unusual, the abnormal, of the cultural foundation of civilisation. They know that this is a symbol of decay and for this reason they provocatively call themselves 'Decadents.'¹⁵⁴ (*Italics in original*)

Of course, Bernstein was very well acquainted, at first hand, with the salon subculture of "heterodox London", with its congeries of occult, theosophical, feminist, utopian political, Eastern religious and vegetarian circles (whose memberships frequently overlapped)¹⁵⁵ that flourished in the British capital between 1870 and 1914. While, like most of the other European political exiles in London, he enjoyed the stimulation afforded by the rich and varied cultural life of the city, he nevertheless evidently thought that the primitivism and cynicism of the "decadents" represented a sign of the internal corruption of the British bourgeoisie. He thus offers the following "class analysis" of the relations between the middle class and the subclass that had grown up within it and hated it:

The decadent is, after all, a not very untypical descendent of the romantic. Unlike the latter,

he does not look to the past, but neither does he look to the future, regarding which he remains sceptical. He does not seek the bloom of romanticism upon the mountains, in the battlements of ruined castles, or in pictures of the future, but in the fashionable dens of the metropolis. The refinement of a metropolitan existence appeals to him. In fact, taking the "green carnation" as the symbol of decadence was very much to the point. This flower does not owe its colour to nature, but to the hand of man, to the craftsman; it is not even cultivated, but simply dyed--a gilded bloom. Nature is not able to bring forth such a sublime product: it is 'beyond nature's power of intervention', says Amaranth-Wilde. For him, nature is 'middle class'. Like the romantic, the decadent hates and despises the bourgeoisie, and this opposition is even more anachronistic in his case, and mostly only affected; for the decadent is chained to the bourgeois world by all his fibres. Artistically, he is the modern court jester. His paradoxes and cynicisms amuse the bourgeoisie, just as the corrupt jokes of the court-jesters once amused princes, even when made at their expense. But the court-jester is no revolutionary. He speaks the truth only if and when his 'art' requires it.¹⁵⁶(italics in original)

Bernstein clearly thinks that Wilde's homosexuality, or perhaps rather homosexualism, is a function of the "decadent" consciousness that is typical of certain emerging elements in bourgeois life--elements that were ultimately self-destructive:

Occasionally every author feels the urge to shake the self-satisfied establishment or to puzzle the mean bourgeois understanding. But anyone who makes a profession out of speaking paradoxes, makes cynicism a cult, glorifies the abnormal simply because it is unusual, must finally become his own victim, even if the cult was originally only a pose. Manners maketh man. The false prophet comes to

believe his own lies. It may be that Oscar Wilde and the boys who shared his suppers and who were allowed to address him by his Christian name, did nothing to offend the law, but his art, his writing--the intellectual direction which marks all his utterances, his pose is pederastic. . . ¹⁵⁷ (*italics in original*)

The foregoing pinpoints Bernstein's objection to Wilde's homosexuality as representative of what is, in effect, a new type of homosexuality--the glorification of "the abnormal simply because it is unusual". That Bernstein thinks that such a "pederastic intellectual direction" has a tendency to establish itself as the primary norm, the "law of nature" (converting homosexuality from something that should be tolerated to something that is being advocated) in bourgeois society, is clear from his article's concluding prescriptive remarks.

Bernstein issues a warning that the frequently remarked-upon hypocrisy of society in its dealings with Wilde - praising his cynicism and great "wit" before he had his troubles with the law, and then ostracizing him after he was caught practising what he preached - should not cause one to minimize the extent of the pernicious influence of the sort of view he stands for:

[O]ne must not be fooled on this account into thinking that the 'decadents', as an articulate party, only form a small minority in art and literature. It is not a matter of how many people openly espouse a thing, but of the influence they exercise, and their relationship

to the public. There is, however, no doubt that the influence of decadence or of decadent consciousness on the rest of the literature on the matter is unmistakably extraordinary.¹⁵⁸

The "decadent consciousness" that both inspires and emanates from Wilde, his "muse", Bernstein thinks, is expressed as a cult of the anti-natural. Returning to The Green Carnation, Bernstein quotes a passage from the book in which "Amarinth" (Wilde) sets forth precisely the attitude that Bernstein finds so dangerous:

'How I hate that word natural. To me it means all that is middle-class, all that is the essence of jingoism, all that is colourless, and without form, and void. It might be a beautiful word, but it is the most debased coin in the currency of language. . . A boy is unnatural if he prefers looking at pictures to playing cricket, or dreaming over the white naked beauty of a Greek statue to a game of football under rugby rules. If our virtues are not cut on a pattern, they are unnatural. If our vices are not according to rule, they are unnatural. . . Nature is generally purely vulgar, just as many women are vulgarly pure. There are only a few people in the world who dare to defy the grotesque code of rules that has been drawn up by that fashionable mother, Nature, and they defy--as many women drink, and many men are vicious--in secret, with the door locked and the key in their pockets. And what is life to them? They can always hear the footsteps of the detective in the street outside. . . 159

Acknowledging that the foregoing contains "much truth", Bernstein admits that "the misuse of the word 'natural' is often infuriating", but he adds, with more than a touch of irony, "but fine words can cover a mean view."¹⁶⁰

"Amarinth" slyly moves from justifiable criticisms of the ways in which "the natural" is often invoked to an attempt to overthrow the idea of "the natural" altogether.

In response, Bernstein points out that Wilde's invocation of "art" is as much a misuse of this word as the arbitrary and prejudiced abuse of the term "nature" that "Amarinth" has complained of, and that this "double-mindedness" is a greater threat to society than any acts of buggery he may have engaged in:

Wilde has countered the testimony of the boys appearing as crown witnesses by calling attention to his aesthetic sensibilities, his artistic feelings, his good taste. It was the same with the cynicisms held up to him from his writings. He asks not what their effect could be upon ill-read people, but only whether they are art, whether they work as literature. But here the word 'art' is misused in the same way as 'nature'. The doctrine of art for art's sake, the release of art from everything which lives and should live in the popular consciousness, the proclamation of art as the preserve of an initiated aristocratic freemasonry--this double-mindedness is corrupt: it is far more dangerous to society ¹⁶¹ than the actions of which Wilde was accused. . . [Italics in original]

Bernstein's general assessment of the significance of the Wilde affair as an indicator of the health of British society is cautiously framed. On the one hand, he notes that "no conclusions about the viability of a society as a whole can be drawn from isolated occurrences of this kind" (i.e., of "male love" or homosexuality).¹⁶² On the other hand, he is obviously quite unfavourably impressed by the evident

extent and cultic character of British homosexual circles, because he follows this statement with a definite qualifier:

Not that Wilde's case was an isolated one; the police in recent years have repeatedly closed down the temples of this cult and it emerged from the statements of witnesses at Wilde's trial, that the police knew a lot more than they were saying and that they simply take no action unless the proofs are almost forced on them. . . 163

In the final analysis, however, the heart of the matter for Bernstein lies not in jurisprudential considerations, but in the understanding of the social conditions productive of pneumapathology or sickness of spirit: "It is the mental outlook which [Wilde] represented and to which he gave expression which is important and this cannot be conjured out of existence by a legal code so long as it continues to be fed by social conditions".¹⁶⁴ As a final philosophical statement, Bernstein again offers a quotation from social psychologist Weigand's essay on decadence: "Every civilization founders in the figurative sense on some epidemic of pleasure; the will to power or the will to pleasure can be taken as the essence of life", to which Bernstein appends: "That is a very true observation".¹⁶⁵

"The movement is everything". Ferguson had said it: "Happiness is in the struggle and effort, not in the attainment of the goal".¹⁶⁶ As Duncan Forbes notes, "there

is something almost Nietzsche-like at times, something of the Wille zur Macht in Ferguson's account of human nature".¹⁶⁷ Almost, but not quite, for the "will to power" for the Scottish thinker was the will to virtu, whereas for Nietzsche it was the will to transcend it.

NOTES

1. Gay, The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism, 74
2. Ibid., quoting Bernstein, Zur Geschichte und Theorie des Sozialismus, 234
3. Gay, 75
4. Ibid., quoting Bernstein, op. cit., 237-8
5. Gay, 78
6. Gay, 79 quoting Bebel to Bernstein, October 22, 1898 (Bernstein Archives)
7. Gay, Ibid., quoting Kautsky to Bernstein, end of October, 1898 (Bernstein Archives)
8. Schorske, German Social Democracy, 263,4
9. Fletcher, Revisionism and Empire, 140, 128
10. Gay, 296
11. Fletcher, 128
12. Schorske, 323
13. Gay, 292
14. Fletcher, 147
15. Schorske, 34,5
16. Pachter, "The Ambiguous Legacy of Eduard Bernstein", Dissent, Spring, 1981
17. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers
 Jacob, The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689-1720
 Olson, Millennialism, Utopianism and Progress
18. Schorske, 328
19. See pages 135, 136 above

20. Fletcher, 47 (quoting Bloch, Revolution der Weltpolitik)
21. Fletcher, 57
22. Fletcher, 54-64
23. Ibid., 85
24. Fletcher, 78; Gay, 80
25. Fletcher, 68
26. Fletcher, 46 (quoting D. Frick "Zur Rückkehr Eduard Bernsteins in das Deutsche Reich 1901" Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft, vol. 22, no. 12, 1974) "For a long time the journal used Bernstein as a decoy."
27. Fletcher 71
28. Fletcher, 70 (quoting Stössinger, "Bolschewismus oder revolutionärer Revisionismus", Frankfurter Heft, Jg. 3, 1953)
29. Fletcher, 51 Bloch to Leo Arons, October 24, 1908, SM Papers, Bundesarchiv, Coblenz, Vol.1
30. Fletcher, 65
31. Ibid., 54
32. Ibid., 50-54
33. Ibid., 53, 54, 58
34. Ibid., 50
35. Ibid., 52
36. Ibid., 61 "On numerous occasions [Bloch] told Leuthner that he entrusted the cause of the Monatshefte in essence to him. . . and to Schippel".
37. Ibid., 97
38. Ibid., 91, 93, 97
39. Ibid., 88, 97, 98

40. Ibid, 83
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., 82, 95
44. Fletcher, 96
45. Ibid., 95
46. Ibid., 95
47. Ibid., 82, 97
48. Ibid., 96
49. Ibid., 63
50. Laqueur, Weimar--A Cultural History, 105-9
51. Fletcher, 93
52. Ibid., 84
53. Fletcher, 82 (quoting E. Fischer, "Krieg und Sozialdemokratie", Sozialistische Monatshefte, Bd. 2, 1913, 606)
54. Smal-Stocki, The Nationality Problem of the Soviet Union and Russian Communist Imperialism
55. Fletcher, 97
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., 101
58. Ibid., 95
59. Ibid., 122 (citing R. H. Thomas, Nietzsche in German Politics and Society 1890-1918, 1983) footnote 3
60. Kelly, The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914, 5
61. Ibid., 7

62. Ibid., 36-56
63. Ibid., 56
64. Ibid., 36, 7
65. Ibid., 38
66. Ibid., 37; Fletcher, 54
67. Kelly, 37
68. Ibid., 40, 1
69. Ibid., 42
70. Ibid., 42, 3
71. Darwinism shares this protean character with Marxism.
See pages 32, 33 above.
72. Ibid., 43-45
73. Ibid., 45
74. Ibid., 42
75. Ibid., 40 (quoting Wille [ed.], Darwins Weltanschauung,
1906, xii)
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., 39
79. Ibid., 166 (Der Sozialistische Akademiker, 2, 1896,
267-77)
80. Lichtheim, Marxism, 244
81. Kelly, 124
82. Ibid.
83. Kelly, 124, 5 (following Hans-Josef Steinberg,
Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie: Zur
Ideologie der Partei vor dem I. Weltkrieg, 48-53)

84. Kelly, 127-9
85. Ibid., 127
86. Ibid., 134
87. Ibid., 137 (citation in Gunnar Schmidt, Die literarische Rezeption des Darwinismus, 28)
88. Kelly, 126
89. Fletcher, 125 (Auer to Bernstein, 1899)
90. Fletcher, 47 (quoting R. Hilferding, "Der Revisionismus und die Internationale", Neue Zeit, JG. 27, Bd. 2, 165)
91. Fletcher, 47, 66, 67, 72 (citing Lenin, Against Revisionism, 1966, 169, 70)
92. Fletcher, 71, 2
93. Ibid. 74
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Kelly, 106, 7, 125
97. Ibid., 101, 157, footnote 1
98. Ibid., 101
99. Ibid., 100-122
100. Ibid., 138, 9
101. Ibid., 139
102. Ibid., 109
103. Fletcher, 97
104. Kelly, 127
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.

107. Gay, 164
108. Kelly, 44 (citing Bölsche, "Is Mutual Aid a Basic Principle of Organic Evolution?" in Stirb und Werde: Naturwissenschaftliche Plaudereien, 1913, 135-53)
109. Hulse, Revisionists in London, 148, 9
110. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 153
111. Kropotkin, Peter Ethics: Origin and Development, New York: Dial Press, 1936
112. Kelly, 127 (quoting C. Darwin in Francis Darwin ed. The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin, 1989, vol. 2, 413)
113. Prickett, Romanticism and Religion, 263
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid., 262, 3
116. Ibid., 243
117. Ibid., 34-69
118. Ibid., 58 (citing S.T. Coleridge, "The Theory of Life", Misc. Aesthetic and Literary Papers, 1892)
119. Prickett, Ibid., 58, 9
120. Lewis, The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature, 88, 157, 162
121. Gay, 146
122. Series of papers given by S. Lukes, Balliol College, Oxford January 20-March 3, 1983 (Hilary Term) on "Marxism and Ethics"
123. Phillips, Marx and Engels on Law and Laws, 6, 7
124. Phillips, 78 (quoting Marx in Marx and Engels: Collected Works, 1975-9, Vol. 1, 161-3)

125. McLellan, Marx Before Marxism
126. Phillips, 9, 10, 11
127. Phillips, 12-21 (quoting Marx in MECW, op. cit., I, 224-63)
128. Lewis, Miracles: A Preliminary Study, 16-42
129. Herzen, "Antithetical Sexual Sentiment and Section 175 of the Imperial Penal Code" from Neue Zeit, 1898 in Bernstein on Homosexuality (trans. Angela Clifford), 1977, 29
130. "The British and Irish Communist Organization", Bernstein on Homosexuality, March 1977, 1-5
131. Herzen, op. cit., 34 - Herzen thinks homosexuality natural, though undesirable
132. "The British and Irish Communist Organization", op. cit., 2
133. Fernbach, The Spiral Path: A Gay Contribution to Human Survival, 62
134. Bernstein, "The Judgement of Abnormal Sexual Intercourse" in Bernstein on Homosexuality, 20, 21 (from Neue Zeit, 1895)
235. Ibid., 20
136. Ibid.
137. See Schneider Page 14 above
138. Bernstein, op. cit., 20
139. See Schneider Page 14 above
140. Bernstein, op. cit., 20, 21
141. See Schneider Pages 14, 15
142. Bernstein, op. cit., 21
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.

145. Ibid., 26
146. Ibid., 27
147. See Ferguson Page 49 above
148. Bernstein, op. cit., 27 (See page 199 above)
149. Bernstein, "On the Occasion of a Sensational Trial"
in Bernstein on Homosexuality from Neue Zeit,
1895), 16
150. Ibid., 12, 13
151. Ibid., 13
152. Ibid., 12
153. Ibid., 13 (quoting W. Weigand, "Zur psychologie der
Decadence" in Essays)
154. Bernstein, Ibid., 14, 15
155. Burfield, "Theosophy and Feminism: Some Explorations
in Nineteenth-Century Biography" in Women's
Religious Experience (ed. Pat Holden), 27-56
156. Bernstein, "On the Occasion of a Sensational Trial",
op. cit., 15
157. Ibid., 16
158. Ibid., 18, 19
159. Ibid., 16, 7 (quoting Robert Hichens, The Green
Carnation, 1961 edition, 82)
160. Bernstein, Ibid., 17
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid., 18
163. Ibid.
164. Ibid., 17
165. Ibid.
166. See Ferguson, page 49 above
167. Ibid. (emphasis added)

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing pages, I have attempted to sketch some of the features of the intellectual landscape within which Eduard Bernstein's mind apparently moved and which have perhaps not been much noticed before. Peter Gay, in his groundbreaking work, deals extensively with Bernstein's "partial acceptance" of Kant, but concludes that "in spite of some superficial resemblances to the Critical Philosophy, Bernstein was never a Kantian."¹ The same author disagrees with Bernstein's own label of "Positivist" for his way of thinking, and notes that his obvious Empiricist tendencies were qualified by a "strong concern with ethical problems."² James Hulse thinks that in some respects Bernstein "was a long way from the position of the Communist Anarchists", while, seemingly paradoxically, "he reached other conclusions that are strikingly similar to those that had been expressed by Kropotkin."³ Roger Fletcher, who examines in detail Bernstein's relations with neo-Kantianism and neo-Kantians, believes (in agreement with the assessment of Bernstein's friend, the neo-Kantian philosopher Karl Vorländer) that his "ethical inspiration did not derive from Kant, Lange, or the neo-Kantians of his own era."⁴ Perhaps German Romanticism and British Christian Socialism may also prove to have been rather peripheral to the development of his

philosophical intention.

To try to find out what that intention was, I have used the method of "comparative philosophy" to attempt to locate "scenes" that are similar to the one that Bernstein's structure of consciousness presents. His pluralistic Naturalism finds its analogues in Pragmatism and the common sense philosophy of the Scottish School. Gay's suggestion that Bernstein substitutes "unilinear progress for dialectical evolution"⁵ thus seems wrong, for both these traditions are anti-monistic and anti-deterministic in tendency.

The closing sentence of Bernstein's preface to Die Voraussetzungen states his philosophical intention plainly:

That which concerns me, that which forms the chief aim of this work, is, by opposing what is left of the utopian mode of thought in the socialist theory, to strengthen equally the realistic and the idealistic element in the socialist movement.⁶

To do this within a naturalist context is to oppose immanentism with "natural law." It is therefore hardly surprising to find that behind both Pragmatic Naturalism and the philosophy of Common Sense is the Middle Platonic world-view - Aristotle and the Stoics respectively.

Why, then, "Back to Lange"? If Bernstein had been the trained metaphysician that Gay conjures up, his slogan might conceivably have been "Back to Aristotle." But he was not a trained metaphysician, and presumably as a practical man with immediate political concerns (he continued to refer even to Lange

as a Kathedersozialist, or "socialist of the lectern")⁷, such a rallying cry would have seemed somewhat obscurantist, even if he had thought it an appropriate description of what he was counselling philosophically.

The answer seems to be that "Back to Lange" was, as much as anything, an autobiographical code for his "moulting" (as he described the "very lengthy development" of the transformation of his Marxism in a letter to Bebel in October 1898),⁸ the last phase of which process was indeed a return to his German intellectual roots, to be followed, eventually, of course, by his physical return to his home country.

Bernstein had first encountered Lange's ideas during his years in Switzerland. Höchberg was familiar with them, but it was probably not until Bernstein and Höchberg moved to Zürich from Lugano in 1879 that Bernstein came across a mind that was imbued sufficiently with the sort of spirit that animated Lange, for the latter's views to make much of a consistent impression. In Zürich, Bernstein met and befriended Reinhold Ruegg, a Swiss journalist who had been a contributor for a long time to the Winterthur Landbote, one of the editors of which had been Lange. The Landbote, as Bernstein puts it in his memoirs, "was then the chief organ of the Zürich, indeed one might say, of the Swiss Democratic Party."⁹ Bernstein's close life-long friendship with Ruegg, and his association with a wide circle of Zürich democrats, probably left him with a lasting affection

for Lange's type of liberalism, which in its concerns and attitudes hovered between the traditional liberal and the "hard" socialist perspectives.

It is clear, however, from a letter which Bernstein wrote to Kautsky in January 1892, that he had not read any books by or about Lange until shortly before that time, when he had started to do so in the library of the British Museum.¹⁰ Later, in a letter to Vorländer, he indicated that his interest in neo-Kantianism had begun after he had read Otto Adolf Ellissen's biography of Lange, published about the same time.¹¹ Hermann Cohen's "Introduction" to Lange's Geschichte des Materialismus was one of the things he read, as the letter to Vorländer reveals,¹² but it is not known whether he ever completely perused the magnum opus itself.

In any event, it was none of these works, but Lange's Die Arbeiterfrage: Ihre Bedeutung für Gegenwart und Zukunft, that, as Gustafsson shows, Bernstein apparently had "very close to hand" when "he sat down in November 1898 to write his defence at the invitation of Bebel."¹³ It was this book that he quoted in chapter two of Die Voraussetzungen to bolster his critique of the Hegelian dialectic,¹⁴ and, in Gustafsson's opinion, it was basically "Friedrich Albert Lange's social-liberal picture of society", rather than his philosophy, that even in 1898 moved Bernstein to call upon Social-democracy "to revise its perception of Lange."¹⁵

The immediate result of the "return to Lange" by Bernstein, represented by the spate of reading induced by the impact of Ellissen's book, was a series of three articles for Die Neue Zeit in 1892 entitled "Zur Wurdigung F.A. Langes" ("On the Appreciation of F.A. Lange").¹⁶ Characterized by Fletcher as "essentially an extended review" of Ellissen's popular biography, these articles show, in H.-J. Steinberg's opinion, how much "Bernstein was still very reserved towards neo-Kantianism."¹⁷ Gustafsson thinks that in these articles Bernstein "rejected neo-Kantianism on the same grounds and with the same arguments" as Engels had used.¹⁸

Bernstein's "return to Lange" took place during the years of his "socialist scholarship" in connection with Lassalle's speeches and letters and Cromwell and Communism, which was also the period during which the debates concerning Marx's theory of value and its treatment in the third volume of Capital occurred, and Bernstein was in close contact with the British Christian Socialists. His "imaginative Marxism" evidently was hardening and thickening into a full-blown heresy between 1890 and 1895, and he was naturally fishing for a new intellectual anchor to replace the Marx that had been lost.

Lange, no doubt, looked attractive as a candidate for mentor for a number of reasons. He had been active as a trade union and socialist sympathizer during the 1860's, and, as Thomas Willey notes, "he earned the respect not only of August

Bebel, but also of Marx and Engels."¹⁹ Fletcher indicates that Kautsky also regarded him highly.²⁰ He was an opponent of Hegelianism, a respecer of natural science, a democrat, and a believer in co-operativism and working-class self-help. Additionally, he simultaneously argued for a practical realism in philosophy, the untenability of Materialism, and the irreducibility of "the standpoint of the ideal."²¹ Above all, he was someone Bernstein had come to admire (albeit vaguely) as a young man. Here was the perfect nexus, psychologically speaking, between all that Bernstein wished to retain from his past, and the "new life."

As we have seen, however, Bernstein did not really find what he was looking for in Lange. This was for the simple reason that it was not there. Lange could serve as a symbolic figure for Bernstein's philosophical intention, to the degree that it was he who had been responsible for the revival of philosophy in Germany after its "death" between 1845 and 1860, but his own thinking led, in his epigones, as we have seen, to the world being understood as "the dream of the dreamer." As John H. Hallowell has shown, the neo-Kantian jurisprudence of Rudolf Stammler, Hans Kelsen, and others sought to isolate the form of law from its content, separating norms from wills.²² The neo-Hegelian jurists in Germany did something similar, except that in their case wills were given pre-eminence.²³ The attempt at a solution to the problem of the "pure" theory of power that

this created, proposed by Cohen's pupil Ernst Cassirer, the synthesis of neo-Kantianism and neo-Hegelianism, proved to be unsuccessful, at least in practical terms.²⁴

"Nature" as an operative analogy was certainly no more integral to the high-minded Utilitarianism that the Fabians had inherited from J.S. Mill than it was to the thought of Lange. Again, as in the case of Kantianism, the resemblance between Bernstein's pronouncements and those of the Fabians exists at a superficial level only.

Bernstein's range of contacts during his British sojourn was "staggering", as Fletcher puts it,²⁵ but he cannot be pigeonholed philosophically with any of them. After his return to Germany in 1901, the same syndrome is observable. He started two periodicals of his own--the Neues Montagsblatt (which was published only from May to November 1904) and the monthly Dokumente des Sozialismus (1901-1905) - but he built up a wide network of connections in the Party. Despite these efforts, "Bernsteinian Revisionism", as far as actual disciples were concerned, was remarkably unsuccessful. A possible significant exception to this general ignoring of Bernstein, as Fletcher notes, was Joseph Schumpeter.²⁶

For Eduard Bernstein, "Back to Lange" was a groping after a way of expressing his "natural law" structure of consciousness. For those who think that history is the history of the evolution of consciousness, this makes Bernstein a throwback. For those

who believe that there is such a thing as a "history of ideas", this perhaps makes him an obscurantist. The analytical philosopher might treat his efforts at philosophizing with disdain because they do not "parse properly". For the Empiricist scholar, Bernstein is perhaps the archetypical "bundle of ideas." But for Bernstein himself, "evolutionary socialism" was a movement at the heart of which was critical common-sense. His real slogan is the last sentence in Die Voraussetzungen:

To-day [the working class movement] needs, in addition to the fighting spirit, the co-ordinating and constructive thinkers who are intellectually enough advanced to be able to separate the chaff from the wheat, who are great enough in their mode of thinking to recognize also the little plant that has grown on another soil than theirs, and who, perhaps, though not kings, are warm-hearted republicans in the domain of socialist thought.²⁷

NOTES

1. Gay, The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism, 154-63; 160
2. Ibid., 163
3. Hulse, Revisionists in London, 147
4. Fletcher, Revisionism and Empire, 110-13; 128-33; 129
5. Gay, 148
6. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, xxxii
7. Fletcher, 131
8. Gay, 73
9. Bernstein, My Years of Exile, 85
10. Fletcher, 131
11. Willey, Back to Kant: The Revival of Kantianism in German Social and Historical Thought 1860-1914, 175
12. Gay, 153
13. Gustafsson, Marxismus und Revisionismus, 115
14. Ibid.
Bernstein, Die Voraussetzungen, 48
(see Appendix A, 234 below for translation
see Appendix B for translation of context)
15. Gustafsson, 115
16. Willey, 175
Fletcher, 131 (Neue Zeit, Jg. 10, Bd. 2 1891/2, 68-70,
101-9, 132-41)
17. Fletcher, 131 (quoting Steinberg, Sozialismus und Deutsche Sozialdemokratie: Zur Ideologie der Partei vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg, 1972, 90)

18. Gustafsson, 112
19. Willey, 92
20. Fletcher, 130
21. Lange, The History of Materialism
22. Hallowell, The Decline of Liberalism as an Ideology:
With Particular Reference to German
Politico-Legal Thought, 92-100
23. Ibid., 100-105
24. Ibid., 105
Lipton, Ernst Cassirer: The Dilemma of a Liberal
Intellectual in Germany 1914-33
25. Fletcher, 165
26. Fletcher, 155, 166 note 10
27. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 224

APPENDIX A

Chapter 2 of Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie by Eduard Bernstein, Second edition, Stuttgart and Berlin, 1921.

Translated by Terry Barker, McMaster University, and Benito Müller (Diploma Math. ETH, Zürich), Magdalen College, Oxford.

Text checked against Eighth edition (Introduction by Horst Heimann, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf., Bonn and Berlin, 1984).

This chapter does not appear in the English editions:
Evolutionary Socialism: A Criticism and Affirmation,
Trans. Edith C. Harvey, London: Independent Labour Party, 1909
(*'The Socialist Library' VII*) (by Edward-sic-Bernstein).

Evolutionary Socialism: A Criticism and Affirmation,
Introduction by Sidney Hook, New York: Schocken, 1961 (Text
is that of the Harvey translation).

Notes on the Text:

[] words added by the translators.

() brackets or asides in the text.

___ italics in original.

Proper names are left untranslated, or established English names for the persons, places or publications are used.

Untranslated German or other non-English words are underlined;
e.g. Freien(p. 1).

Second Chapter

Marxism and [the] Hegelian Dialectic

a) The snares of the Hegelian dialectical method

"During long, frequently night-exhausting debates, I infected him, to his great injury, with Hegelianism."

-- Karl Marx concerning
Proudhon

The Marxist comprehension of history and that [part] of socialist doctrine touching on it was worked out in its first form in the years from 1844 to 1847, in a time when West- and Central- Europe found itself in a great revolutionary fermentation. It could be described as the most radical product [of] this epoch.

In Germany, that time was [the] epoch of a strengthening bourgeois liberalism. As in other countries, also here, the ideological representative of the class which fought against the existing [things] was much too strong for the practical needs of the class itself. The middle class, among which is to be understood the broad layer of non-feudal classes and [those] not standing in the wage relationship, struggled against the still half-feudal state absolutism, the philosophical representation of which began with the negation of the absolutes, just to cease with the negation of the state.

The philosophical current, which found in Max Stirner its most radical representative on this side, is known as the radical Left of the Hegelian philosophy. As one may glean from

Frederick Engels, who, just as Marx, lived a certain time in its magic circle-- they associated at various times in Berlin with the Freien of the Hippelschen wine-tavern--, the representatives of this way rejected the Hegelian system, but took pleasure all the more in his dialectic, partly until the practical struggle against positive religion (at that time an important form of political struggle) [and] the influence of Ludwig Feuerbach, forced them to the frank acknowledgement of materialism. Marx and Engels didn't stay with natural-scientific materialism, however, which was still important for Feuerbach, but now developed their theory of historical materialism by application [of] the dialectic divested of its mystical nature and under the influence of class-struggles playing between bourgeoisie and working-class, which were still very strong in France and even stronger in England.

Engels had stressed with great energy the contribution of the dialectical method in the origin of this theory. Following Hegel's example, he distinguished between [the] metaphysical and dialectical view of things and declared of the former, that it dealt with the things or their mental images, the concepts, in their isolation as fixed objects given once and for all. The latter [the dialectical view of things] however, regarded them [the things] in their context, their changes, their transitions, whereby we are told that both poles of a contradiction, however positive or negative they might be,

mutually interpenetrate. But whereas Hegel interpreted the dialectic as the self-development of the concept, the dialectic of concepts became for Marx and Engels the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the actual world, by which the Hegelian dialectic again "has been turned from [its] head onto [its] feet."

Thus [wrote] Engels in his essay "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical [German] Philosophy."

It is not so simple, meanwhile, with the "setting upright" of the dialectic. However the things behave in reality, as soon as we abandon the ground of the empirically detectable facts and think beyond them, we get into the world [of] inferred concepts, and if we then follow the laws of the dialectic, as Hegel has drawn them up, we thus find ourselves, before we become aware of it, yet anew in the coils of the "self-development of the concept." Here lies the great scientific danger of the Hegelian logic of contradiction. Its theorems might potentially be very useful to illustrate the relations and developments of real objects.* They [its theorems] might also have been of great

*Even though there too the correct situation is more darkened than enlightened by it; the fact that an alteration in the proportions of the components of any object will change its properties is expressed, at least very curtly and superficially, through the principle of "the turning of quantity into quality."

Incidentally let me note that I adopt the Engelsian definitions of the metaphysical concepts and dialectical point of view with the reservation that the qualifying adjectives "metaphysical" and "dialectical" should count in the senses ascribed to them herewith only for this contrast. Otherwise [the] metaphysical view of things and [the] view of things in their isolation and solidification are, in my opinion, two wholly dissimilar matters.

Finally let me here declare that I evidently do not want to criticize Hegel nor to challenge the great services which this important thinker has rendered to science. I have to do only with his dialectic as it has been of influence on the socialist theory.

utility in the formulation of scientific problems and might have given impulse to important discoveries. But as soon as developments are anticipated deductively on the basis of these propositions, already the risk of arbitrary construction also begins. This risk becomes so much [the] greater, the more the object involved in the development is composite. With a tolerably plain object, most of the time our experience and logical judgement protect us by analogy propositions like "the negation of the negation" from being seduced to conclusions concerning possible changes which lie outside of the scope of likelihood. But the more composite an object is, the greater the number of its elements, the more varied their nature and more diverse their power-connections, so much less can such propositions tell us about its developments, for so much more is every measure of estimate lost, where we base our conclusions on them [the propositions].

Therewith the Hegelian dialectic should not be denied every merit. Rather, we could say, as respects its influence on historiography, that Friedrich A. Lange has judged it most appropriately when he wrote of it in his Arbeiterfrage that one could "call" the Hegelian philosophy of history with its fundamental thoughts, the development in antitheses and their resolution, "almost an anthropological discovery." But Lange has "almost" at the same time put his finger on it when he adds that "as in the life of particulars, so also in history,

the development through the antithesis makes itself neither so easy and radical, nor so precise and symmetrical as in the speculative construction." (Third edition, pages 248/9). Every Marxist today admits this concerning the past, only for the future--and indeed already a very near future--this should be otherwise according to the Marxist teaching. The "Communist Manifesto" declared in 1847 that the bourgeois revolution, on the eve of which Germany is supposed to be standing at this point of development reached by the proletariat, and at the advanced conditions of European civilization "can only be the immediate prelude of a proletarian revolution."

This historical self-deception, which could hardly be surpassed by the best primary political enthusiast, would be inconceivable in a Marx who had already at the time done some serious economics, if one wouldn't have seen in it the product of a residue of Hegelian contradiction-dialectic, which Marx--just as Engels-- seems never to have been able to dispose of completely in his whole life, but which at that time, in a period of general ferment, would become to him so much more disastrous. We have there not merely over-estimation of the prospects of a political action, as can occur [to] high-spirited leaders and [as] has helped them to surprising successes under certain circumstances, but a purely speculative preconception of the maturity of an economic and social development, which had not yet shown the first buds. What was to take generations for its fulfillment-- this was in the light

of the philosophy of the development of, and in, contradictions, already considered as the direct result of a political revolution, which first had to produce free space for the development of the bourgeois class. And when Marx and Engels, already two years after the composition of the Manifesto were compelled at the splitting of the Communist League to reproach their opponents in the League for "the undeveloped structure of the German proletariat" and to protest against [the fact] that "the word 'proletariat' is made into a holy entity" (The Cologne Communist Trial, p. 21), this was only the result of a momentary disillusionment at the time. In other forms, this same contradiction between genuine and constructed maturity of development was to repeat itself again various times.

Because we have here a point which, in my opinion, has become one of the most fatal ones to the Marx-Engels teaching, let the presentation of an example that lies in the recent past be permitted.

In a polemic with a South-German social-democratic paper, Franz Mehring has recently (1898) reprinted in the Leipziger Volkszeitung a point from the foreword of the second edition of Friedrich Engels' work On the Housing Question, where he spoke of the "existence of a certain petit-bourgeois socialism" in the German Social-democracy which finds its expression "even in the parliamentary fraction." Engels there characterized

the petit-bourgeois nature of this tendency, which, although it appreciates the fundamental ideas of modern socialism as legitimate, it postpones their realization to a remote time, whereby one is "dependent for the present upon a mere social patchwork." Engels explained the existence of this tendency in Germany sufficiently comprehensibly, but he declared it not to be dangerous because of the "miraculous common sense" of the German workers. Mehring connects these explanations with the conflicts concerning the question of the subsidies for steamers, which briefly had played its part in German Social-democracy, and which he set down as "the first great analysis concerning 'practical politics' and proletarian-revolutionary tactics in the Party." What Engels implied in the point referred to, was that what the representatives of the proletarian-revolutionary tendency (among which he counted himself) "mean and want" is: Dispute with the thus denominated "petit-bourgeois socialists."

There is no denying the fact that Mehring interpreted the point by Engels, referred to, rightly. So Engels considered the situation at that time--January 1887. And fifteen months previously he added to the new edition of the Disclosures Concerning the Communist Trial the two circular letters written by himself and Marx in March and June 1850, which proclaimed "the revolution in permanence" as the policy of the revolutionary proletariat, and in the foreword he mentioned that much of

the there-noted also fits for the shortly-due "European Convulsion." The last convulsion previously of that kind was proclaimed there as the war of 1870/1; the lifetime of European revolutions is reckoned to be fifteen to eighteen years in our century.

That was written in 1885/87. A few years later the conflict with the so-called Jungen occurred in German Social-democracy. Already creeping up for a long time, it became acute in 1890 on the occasion of the question of the celebration of May Day as a holiday. That the majority of the Jungen believed honestly in taking action in the spirit of Engels, when they opposed the "opportunism" of the parliamentary fraction at that time, is challenged today by no-one. When they attacked the majority of the parliamentary fraction as "petit-bourgeois" -- who else was their authority for it other than Engels? Did it not consist of those same people who had formed the opportunistic majority in the question of the subsidy for steamboats? But when the editorship of that time of the Sächsischen Arbeiterzeitung finally referred to Engels for its view, the answer proved, as Mehring knows, to be completely different from that memorandum quoted from him. Engels declared the movement of the Jungen to be a mere "literati and student revolt", reproached it for its "forced, distorted Marxism" and declared that what this side reproaches the fraction for is at best to be seen as trifles; may the Sächsischen Arbeiterzeitung

hope in a victory of the common sense of the German workers over the success-mad parliamentary tendency in the Social-democracy as long as it wants; he, Engels, hopes not with it, --to him nothing is known of such a majority in the Party.

That Engels followed only his conviction when wording this declaration, no-one knows better than the writer of these lines. To him the movement of the Jungen (which was at least also one of workers, who, under the anti-Socialist laws, had been amongst the most active propagandists of the Party) presented itself as an instigated revolt of radicalized literati, and the politics they favoured as so damaging at that moment, that the "petit-bourgeois" aspect of the fraction really shrank to trifles.

But as politically deserving as was the "Answer" published in the Sozialdemokrat of September 13, 1890, so it is as doubtful whether Engels was totally justified when he shook off the Jungen from his coattails in that way. If the European revolution stood so near to the door as he has advanced in the foreword to the Disclosures -- after what has been said therein the "lifetime" has meanwhile expired-- and if the tactic outlined in the circular letter is in principle still effective, then the Jungen were in effect flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood. But if not, then the error lay less with the Jungen than in the writings added to the propaganda in 1885 and 1887 with the appendices mentioned and the additions capable of double explanation.

But this ambiguity, which so little reflected the character of Engels, was rooted ultimately in the dialectic taken over from Hegel. Its "yes, no and no, yes", instead of the "yes, yes and no, no", its merging of the antitheses and changes of quantity into quality, and whatever other dialectical beauties there are, time and time again worked against the full rendering of accounts for the effective range of recognized alterations. Should the Hegelian development-scheme as originally constructed remain standing, then either reality had to be re-interpreted, or all real proportion in the measurement of the road to the goal striven for had to be ignored. For that reason we have the inconsistency that the painful exactitude in researching the economic structure of society (reflecting the industriousness of the genius), goes hand in hand with the almost incredible neglecting of the most obvious facts. [These negligences are] that the self-same teaching, which proceeds from the decisive influence of the economy over power, terminates in a truly miraculous belief in the creative force of power, and that the theoretical elevation of socialism to science so often "converts" into a subordination of the requirements of any scientific character under the "tendency".*

*As I already did earlier after the appearing of the first edition of this work, I will also mention here that I admit, in the preceding piece against Hegel and Marx-Engels, to having expressed myself a little too sharply. What was important to me was to clarify psychologically [what] was an apparent contradiction, incomprehensible to me, in the writings of the author of the Communist Manifesto. As for the rest, may the reader decide with what right I wrote at the time: "If I, in my work, have dealt with Hegel somewhat harshly, it was certainly not done to belittle Marx and Engels." (Cf. the essay "Dialectic and Development", Neue Zeit 1898/99, volume II, included in my anthology On the Theory and History of Socialism, (Berlin: 1904), fourth edition.

If nothing else, it is in any case thoroughly unscientific for a politician or theoretician to decide his standpoint simply according to the perception which he has of the rapidity of the course of social development. The identification of the notion "proletarian" with the conception of abrupt, direct abolition of contradictions amounts to a very base interpretation of this idea. The crass, the coarse, the Philistine were accordingly the "proletarian". If the belief in the revolutionary catastrophe as immediately expected makes a proletarian-revolutionary socialist, then it is the putsch-revolutionaries who can claim this name before everyone else. Shouldn't there be in a scientific theory at least some rational measure for the demarcation line, on one side of which is to be found the dreamer, on the other the petit bourgeois. But of this there was not a trace; the assessment remained [a] matter of pure arbitrariness. Because the proportions always appear smaller, if one contemplates things from an ever further distance, so the strange fact commonly emerges in practice, that one finds the most 'petit-bourgeois' opinion (in the above sense), with people who (themselves belonging to the working class) stand in the most intimate contact with the genuine proletarian movement, while people belonging to the bourgeois class or living in bourgeois circumstances overflow from the beginning with proletarian-revolutionary sentiments, although they have either no feeling whatsoever for the world of workers, or know it only from political assemblies which are dominated by a

certain tone.

Engels had admitted unconditionally at the close of his life, in the foreword to the "Class-struggles", that Marx and he had made the error in their estimation of the length of time of social and political development. The merit which he had earned around the socialist movement through this writing, which one can rightfully call his political testament, cannot be over-estimated. There is more in it than it promises. However, the foreword was neither the place to draw [all] the inferences which resulted from such a frankly-made confession, nor could one expect from Engels that he would himself undertake the necessary revision of the theory demanded. Had he done it, he would have unconditionally had to settle accounts with the Hegelian dialectic, if not explicitly then at least implicitly. It is the traitorous element in the Marxian doctrine, the snare, which lies in the way of all logical reflection on things. Engels neither could nor would go beyond it. He drew the inferences from his improved perception only with regard to certain methods and forms of the political struggle. As significant as were his remarks in this regard, however, they only cover a part of the area of the questions raised now.

So, it is for instance clear that the political fights, about which Marx and Engels have left us monographs, have to be regarded from a somewhat different point of view than they had. Their judgement concerning parties and persons, in spite of the very realistic way of looking at things, could not be

completely correct, considering the self-deceptions about the course of events which they permitted themselves, and just as little could their politics always be right. The subsequent correction would not be of practical significance, if it wasn't precisely in the socialist historiography, so far as the recent past is taken into consideration; [i.e.,] the tradition played such a major role, and, on the other hand if not, time and again these earlier struggles would still be fallen back upon as examples. But more important than the correction which socialist historiography of modern times must make according to Engels' foreword, is the correction which results from it [Engels' foreword] to the whole conception of the struggles and the tasks of social-democracy. And, first, this leads us to a hitherto little discussed point; namely, the original inner connection between Marxism and Blanquism and the dissolution of this link.

APPENDIX B

Pages 109-115 of Marxismus und Revisionismus--Eduard Bernsteins Kritik des Marxismus und ihre ideengeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen by Bo Gustafsson, Volume I, Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1972.

Translated by Terry Barker, McMaster University, and Andreas Stockhecke, University of Toronto.

e) Bernstein's Philosophy

With the study of the revolution of 1848 and the economic and political articles in the series "Problems of Socialism", Bernstein had created an economic and political rationale for a reformistic socialism. But that was not sufficient. Marxism was also a philosophy, consequently one also had to deal with it on this level. Instinctively he knew in which direction to look for the philosophy of reformism. But it must also be rationalized. That was done in the article "The Realistic and the Ideological Moment in Socialism." [Neue Zeit, Bd. 16:2, 1897/98, S. 225 ff. and 388 ff.].

In this Bernstein tied to the idealistic philosophy: Kant and neo-Kantianism, Croce, Sorel among others. Already before Bernstein Conrad Schmidt had proclaimed a cautious connection with Kant. Now Bernstein declared point-blank that the battle-cry of the neo-Kantians "Back to Kant", up to a certain degree . . . also applies to the theory of socialism. This expressed itself in the article, in that, that in accordance with the physical idealism, which very much dominated in philosophy and natural sciences at this time, he interpreted the new natural scientific discoveries idealistically. The law of causality was, according to Bernstein, only "a law of logic, the objective validity of which, as well as the objective validity of space and time, is unproveable, but just as little can be challenged, and for the scientific view of

things is the indispensable precondition, as it were, a command of practical reason." Bernstein maintained that "newer materialists" place themselves resolutely "on the ground of Kant." But since Kant was an agnostic, that is, the possibility of perception ("the thing in itself") is not agreed upon, hence it follows that "every scientific investigator . . . [is] as such an agnostic, that is . . . [he accepts] the final grounds of things as unrecognized."

To what consequences for the theory of socialism did this way of viewing things lead? If the real nature of things was not researchable, socialism also, naturally, cannot be fully accessible to scientific perception. From the first, socialism was for Bernstein "pure ideology"; he grounded himself on "Christianity, justice, equality" etc. Also, Marxism was based on an idealistic foundation. His interpretation of the state, of society and of history was "reflections of thought, built up from ideal summaries of ascertained facts and deductions, imperatively coloured ideologically." Of these ideal driving forces, which delineated socialism, the most important was, according to Bernstein, "moral consciousness or grasp of the right."

Bernstein was very well aware that Marx and Engels had sharply rejected views that one can build socialism on ethical demands. They were of the opinion that that was utopian. They strove to ground the socialist theory on practical reality; their names were indissolubly allied with the notion of

scientific socialism. But Bernstein was engaged skeptically particularly against the "misunderstanding provoked by the application of the word science in association with modern socialism."

This skepticism should pass over within a few years into the entire certainty that socialism "is not and cannot be pure science." But until further notice he put the chief weight on the other side of the problem, namely, that socialism is essentially a moral question.

"Nobody can deny that capital is over-rich in changes in which a moral judgement lies at the bottom. Already the designation of the wage relation as a relation of exploitation assumesuch, since the notion of exploitation, where it is a matter of characterization of the relation of human to human, always includes the power of illegitimate seizure, the usurpation . . .

The economic objectivity of the surplus-value doctrine stands, then, also only for the abstract analysis. As soon as it comes to its application, it shows itself immediately rather as an ethical problem. The masses also interpret it morally time and time again . . .

The worker learns that he obtains in wages, on no account, the [full] value of his power, so his natural sense of justice is directly challenged, for in the notion of value lies included a moral element, an equality-and-justice conception."

With this Bernstein had broken with Marxism more clearly than ever previously. But why did Bernstein see himself forced to supplement political and economic Revisionism by means of an idealistic philosophical doctrine? The explanation is simple. Marx and Engels grounded their communist demands on "the necessary collapse of the capitalist means of production, taking place daily more and more before our eyes." This was written in the darkest years of the great depression. But Bernstein lived now in the middle of a mighty boom, and he did not believe in a collapse. Capitalism would consequently not perish on the practical basis of the internal contradictions of the system. There must be sought another impelling power for socialism. Partially he had found tendencies in the capitalist economy which would accelerate the development of socialism (cartels etc.). But he was barely convinced that these would be sufficient. They must be complemented through the subjective striving of the working class for social justice. For capitalism would not sink because of its irreconcilable contradictions, but on the basis of the fact that it was unjust. On the other hand, therefore, it was not worth struggling for socialism because it was an objective necessity, but because it represented something morally good. Hence Bernstein gave to socialism a moral motivation.

Bernstein was influenced in this point not only by neo-Kantianism, but also by Croce (who, however, referred to

contemporary German philosophy himself). But neo-Kantianism appears to have been the mainspring. That must not be interpreted pretentiously. Bernstein was no philosopher. After he contacted both the prominent neo-Kantians of German Social-democracy, Ludwig Woltmann and Karl Vorländer in the years 1898 and 1899, these became his "helpers and shield-bearers." That is to say, Bernstein needed all the philosophical help that he could get. Woltmann and Vorländer only received importance for Bernstein, nevertheless, after they had declared for Kantianism.

More important than these were both Hermann Cohen and Friedrich Albert Lange. That just Cohen and Lange influenced Bernstein is typical, for both approached the problems of socialism from a practical philosophical or downright political starting-point. Just because of that, Bernstein utilized their message. Nothing indicates that Bernstein had had at any time before or after a special interest in the neo-Kantian philosophy as a theoretical discipline. In 1892 he still rejected neo-Kantianism on the same grounds and with the same arguments as Engels in his essay on Ludwig Feuerbach. Wilhelm Windelband's programmatic presidential address in Strassburg in 1894 appeared to be passed by unnoticed by Bernstein, although it could have furnished him with useable arguments against Marxism. In Bernstein, also, no trace of Rudolf Stammler's large scale criticism of Marxism of 1896 is found.

Therefore Bernstein was interested in neo-Kantianism as philosophy only as he required it.

But with the political content of neo-Kantianism he had already made acquaintance. For sixty years the Hegelian philosophy almost completely vanished in Germany from the philosophical consciousness. It was incriminated politically as a consequence of the development which it had taken in Young Hegelianism and in Marxism. Its place was taken by neo-Kantianism in its different variations. Hermann Cohen was the foremost representative of the so-called Marburg School. His socialism was "a philosophy of political reconciliation." Private property was not allowed to be given up, but might be restricted, and the working-class should be integrated into the existing state. Hence he turned against the theory of class struggle and Marxism. His conception of socialism clearly wholly comes from the introduction to the 1866 edition of F.A. Lange's Geschichte des Materialismus. This introduction was one of Bernstein's most important neo-Kantian sources of inspiration.

Cohen wrote there that "all genuine science from time immemorial and for ever is nothing but Idealism", that "the way of research . . . leads to Idealism surely and steadily" and that "socialism . . . is in the right, provided that it is grounded in the idealism of ethics. And the idealism of ethics founded it." Kant was, Cohen affirmed, "the genuine and

actual author of German socialism."

Cohen rejected Marxist materialism, however, and his argumentation is interesting. He made it on the basis of the revolutionary implications of Marxist materialism. That is to say, if state and right rest on a socio-economic foundation, and not on a moral one, state and right will only be able to be changed drastically when the whole society changes fundamentally. But that would assume a social revolution. Cohen wrote about this danger of "revolution as eruption": "From this view of the proper concreteness of society, the risk originates of Right and State becoming shadows and silhouettes: that the efforts to reform Right and State slide over on to the inclined plane of the revolution. Materialism believes it finds a scientific support in these realistic notions of society, and for that reason Right and State are allowed to be taken for bare fictive realities.

Steering around this danger, obviating the revolution as eruption, and observing the historical path of development for these serious questions-- these ambiguities must be thought over rigorously in the terminus of society and become discerned clearly."

If one would take away the material basis from socialism and would give it a principally ideal motivation, one would consequently be able to prevent the struggle for socialism from

sliding off on "the inclined plane of the revolution."

It is probable that Cohen was of importance for Bernstein, as he himself maintained this. But a more important source of inspiration was Friedrich Albert Lange. While Cohen lived a quiet academic life, Lange was also active as a journalist and social-politician. He stood politically between the Liberals and Social-democrats in the Germany of the sixties and seventies. He was strongly critical of the prevailing social system in Germany. He accepted the practical consequences of socialism, and he sympathized with the efforts of the Social-democratic workers' movement. But he never undertook the step to socialism. He wanted to reconcile and balance the contradictions between the socialist workers' movement and the liberal civility. That is why he strove for a gradual reformist way to socialism. He wanted his world-the world of liberal civility and Christianity- rescued [and carried] over into socialism.

In the first place it was Lange's work Die Arbeiterfrage (1865) that was significant for Bernstein. Lange was convinced that the social revolution could happen "as a result of very many smaller steps", and he stressed the necessity that the working class must be mature [in order] "to seize power." It is an absolute necessity "to facilitate the transition into the new state" for the people "to mitigate the struggles, and to rescue as many of the eternal values of mankind as is possible." If the worker-question was solved, "as a thunder-

storm . . . as a blind natural force [that] pushed its course through débris and consternation", the result could turn out negative. "An attempt undertaken in the revolutionary spirit might result in a strengthening of the power of the state, while an experiment undertaken from above pours oil on the fire." From there it was important to create conditions for a long transitional period between the old and the new society.

Lange had a certain reverence for Marx as a national economist, even though he, rather, was a Malthusian himself. But he wanted to remove the dialectic from Marxism:

"It proved to be good in his work (at any rate, it proved again), how much the strong aspect of the Hegelian speculation lies in his philosophy of history, the fundamental ideas of which- the development in contradictions and their balancing- one can term almost an anthropological discovery.

Now admittedly in history as in life one sets out the details of development through contradictions neither so lightly and radically nor so precisely and symmetrically as in the speculative construction . . . This Marx also acknowledges in view of the past . . . But for the future Marx thinks differently of the matter. Here a less protracted struggle appeared to him to be approaching, because the 'expropriation of a few expropriators by the mass of the people' was easier than the 'expropriation of the mass of the people by fewer

expropriators.'

We confess that we are not able to adopt this view . . . From this it is very well conceivable that, in similar ways, as the Reformation as a social revolution contributed to smashing the old forms of property and business and giving rise to the terms of the capitalist modes of production, a new social revolution would serve the purpose of creating bases of law and state arrangements, by which public property would go into free competition with private property, without principal and general abolition of private property, and that presumably a struggle lasting centuries could begin, which would finally end with the administering of public property in association with social labour."

It is no accident that Bernstein quoted this passage from Lange fully as he sat down in November 1898 to write his defence at the invitation of Bebel. He appears to have had Lange's Arbeiterfrage very close at hand. On the last page of his essay he declared that he wanted to render the slogan "Back to Kant" as "Back to Lange." He wanted Social-democracy to revise its perception of Lange. It is also incontestable that a keynote of Friedrich Albert Lange's social-liberal picture of society can be found again in Bernstein. Bebel had really not been wrong, as he maintained that Bernstein had returned to the conceptions which he had had before he had become the editor of the Sozialdemokrat in Zurich. At that

time Bernstein was a "Hö^{••}chbergist" according to Bebel. In his answering letter to Bebel, Bernstein denied the correctness of this characterization. In his memoirs he intimated, however, that Hö^{••}chberg's judgement was becoming not without meaning for him. Hö^{••}chberg was a student of Lange. Just through Hö^{••}chberg Bernstein had come to know Lange's work. So the circle had closed in a strange way.

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