

THE IDEALIST PROBLEMATIC
OF MARX'S EARLY WORKS

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ABSTRACT

The question of Marx's Early Works over the past ten years has been invested with a renewed significance by a debate over the theoretical -- and ultimately political -- conclusions to be drawn from them. At the centre of this debate is the problem of determining the point at which Marx formed his distinctive position vis-a-vis the major philosophies which he had to traverse, namely those of Feuerbach and Hegel. A great number of works dedicated to the interpretation of Marx's theoretical formation, by recourse to a residual concept of 'transition', do not, it is true, raise this question, nor pose it as a problem. Over the past ten years, however, the problem has taken on a new urgency in the light of serious attempts to accommodate Marx to various avant garde philosophies such as Phenomenology and various forms of 'critical' sociology. Supported by a re-reading of Marx's Early Works, these attempts to 'resuscitate' Marx and Marxism via a return to its philosophical roots, have sharply raised the very question of Marx's 'philosophy'. The way that this question has been raised has posed in clear terms the problem of establishing the 'specific difference' between Marx's thought and that of his predecessors and contemporaries in theory, a problem that takes the form of locating the point at which a distinctive Marxist position emerged. The answer to the question that underlies this problem has taken various forms, each associated with a distinctive type of interpretation (historicism, humanism, structuralism). The 'break' between Marx and his predecessors in theory has been located variously in 1843, at the level of the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right; in 1844, at the level of either the Jahrbücher articles or the Paris Manuscripts; and in 1845, at the level of The German Ideology.

Addressing myself to the problem which underlies

these diverse and mutually conflicting interpretations, and to settle the questions of principle associated with it, I argue for the thesis that Marx's Early Works are all governed by a philosophy shaped by Feuerbach's revision of Hegel, and thus not distinctly his own, but that he forms the basis of his own theoretical position in 1845, at the level of The German Ideology.

To argue for this thesis it is incumbent on me to demonstrate, first of all, that Marx's Early Works are all unified by the same philosophy, governed by its theoretical problematic and schemata. To set up a centre of reference for this philosophic problematic I reconstruct the opposed solutions of Kant and Hegel to the 'problem of knowledge', and firmly establish Marx's essential dependence on Feuerbach, whose philosophy is inversely-related to and bound by the principles of Hegel's dialectic. In order to trace out this dependence I reconstruct the path of Marx's intellectual development, re-assessing the theoretical and political meaning of his texts. In the process it becomes the central burden of my study to show that there is no fundamental 'break' in Marx's thought either in 1843 or in 1844, and that, in effect, the texts in question are not theoretically distinct vis-à-vis the 'philosophy of praxis' shared by the Left-Hegelian Movement in general. I also subject the renowned Jahrbücher essays to a re-reading which radically revises the meaning assigned to them. The Paris Manuscripts are similarly read in the light of a previously unsettled problem of Feuerbach's relation to Hegel, and of their encounter within Marx's thought. A short, not too well known text is invested with a special significance in terms of my central thesis viz Marx's dependence on Feuerbach's humanist problematic. Several points of original interpretation are thus introduced. Finally, I show how in The German Ideology Marx breaks with the 'philosophy' that had to date governed the mode of his theoretical reflection, the structure of his

critique. Although in The German Ideology Marx does no more than indicate the minimal conditions of his distinctive approach, we trace out the epistemological and methodological dimensions of his 'break' with Feuerbach and Hegel.

From a phenomenological reduction of phenomena to their inner essence based on the principles of Hegel's dialectic, Marx shifts towards a class analysis based on the principles of Historical Materialism.

The dissertation on our thesis not only settles the central problem of interpretation with which it is concerned, but it gives a coherent reading of Marx's Early Works within the framework of their underlying premises, and it establishes as a point of principle that the search for Marx's philosophy should be directed at his later and not his early works.

PREFACE

As with all events in this world, our study has had its history. Beginning with an attempt to assess the theoretical significance and political implications of various twentieth century forms of Marxism, and led back towards an examination both of Marx's works and of their extensive interpretative literature, I have concluded with a study more limited in scope: an investigation into Marx's Early Works. The point of departure for this investigation is a problem raised by the conflicting interpretations of Marx's thought produced by the broad theoretical tradition of Historicist-Humanism on the one hand, and the more recent Structuralist tradition on the other. At issue: the question of Marx's relationship to Hegel. With Georg Lukács and Louis Althusser as my chief centres of reference, I originally conceived of my project as a critique of the structuralist interpretation of Marx's thought, and thus of structuralism itself. But as I worked my way through the texts of Hegel and Marx my understanding of the question at issue underwent considerable change and development, as did my appreciation of the magnitude of the problem. In helping me manage this problem and sense out my thesis, the works of three people were of particular importance (for me). My study is especially indebted to Auguste Cornu for his thorough study of the Left-Hegelian movement, which builds masterfully on the earlier studies of Franz Mehring. Although neither my thesis nor the line of interpretation on which it is based, is grounded in Cornu's work, his intellectual biographies of Marx and the other Left-Hegelians forms my basic source of reference, and this is especially so in chapter three. The person to whom I am perhaps most indebted for the suggestion of the line of inquiry on which my thesis is based is Lucio Colletti, whose Marxism and Hegel I deem to be of the greatest theoretical importance. The inspiration that I have drawn

from Colletti's work relates to his investigation of Hegel's critique of Kant, which has led me not only to re-assess Marx's indirect relation to Kant, but to establish as a precondition for the study of Marx's Early Works an understanding of what I have termed the 'idealist problematic' of Kant and Hegel's opposed solutions to the problem of knowledge. My exposition of Hegel's critique of Kant in chapter two is largely indebted to Colletti's work. As a 'centre of reference' for my thesis on Marx, my reconstruction of the idealist problematic is based on a close reading of Hegel and Kant's works (in translation) and a secondary analysis of a number of original studies to which I am generally indebted for any discussion of other writers referred to. Finally, the greatest source of inspiration for my study probably is Althusser, who not only has directed me towards an appreciation of the importance of Feuerbach for the development of Marx's thought, but more than anyone else has helped me formulate the problem with which my thesis deals. This is clearly established in the introductory chapter.

As a point of fact, in relation to the works of Cornu, Colletti and Althusser, the contribution of my thesis to an understanding of Marx's thought is quite modest. Although my study raises as many questions as it settles, and has theoretical and political implications easily recognised by students of Marx's thought, I purport to do no more than establish the basis for a coherent reading of Marx's Early Works in terms of an underlying problematic which allegedly unifies them. In particular, by raising in the concluding argument for my thesis the question of an 'epistemological break' I open up a whole series of problems relating to the epistemology and methodology of Marx's 'scientific' approach to the study of history. I should make it quite clear that within its framework of reference I am unable and do not attempt to deal with these problems. My study merely records at this level Marx's attempt to consciously break with He-

✓ Hegel's philosophy of history, and in so doing to set up the study of history on a scientific basis. Within the self-imposed limits of my study I cannot treat the concept of 'science' as problematical, and therefore I do not seriously address the question of Marx's 'philosophy' vis-à-vis this science. In this regard, beyond the limited objective of my study I merely establish as a point of principle that the search for Marx's philosophy should be directed at Marx's post-1845 theoretical and political practice. With my thesis formulated in terms of a problem raised by the interpretative literature on Marx's thought, and with the scope of my study restricted to the Early Works, I believe that I have established the necessary groundwork for a serious consideration of the problems raised by Marx's attempts to construct a new science. Indeed I have done no more than this.

Although a leading note in the Bibliography establishes my sources of reference, I should point out an obvious limitation of my study. Given my **very** limited grasp of the German language I have had to rely on the most authoritative translations available in English, or where convenient as is the case with Cornu's three volume study, in Spanish. In the case of any reference or quote given in Spanish the English translation is invariably my own. On occasion I have been led back to the original text in German, for which I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of my good friend, Inge Orf, whose familiarity with the German language and willingness to put out so much of her time in helping me work through some otherwise inaccessible works or ambiguous passages is very much appreciated.

Obliged to accept full responsibility for both the limitations and weaknesses of my study, I would like to thank the members of my supervisory committee, Marshall Goldstein, Robert Agger, and Howard Aster, for their critical support, and to acknowledge their contributions to my work.

Though each member posed useful questions that forced me to clarify my thesis, I am especially grateful for being allowed to think through the thesis in my own way and on my own terms. I would also like to acknowledge the support of those who throughout it all, despite everything, have remained my friends. Above all, however, I would like to acknowledge the contributions to my work by my companion-in-life and love, Carla Calhoun, who has kept me sane and made this study possible.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SEARCH FOR MARX'S PHILOSOPHY: A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

In his exposition on the 'Origins and Component Parts of Marxism' Lenin has referred us to three great theoretical traditions in the most advanced countries of nineteenth century Europe: classical German philosophy, English Political Economy, and French Socialism. Only with the assimilation, and theoretical transformation, of the central construct of German Idealism, the 'dialectic of reason' -- supported by a serious and profound study of the socialism of the French materialists, and of the doctrines of the English economists -- do Marx and Engels elaborate their conception of Historical Materialism, the basis no longer of a utopian, but of a scientific socialism. On the basis of this conception, the principles of which were detailed in The German Ideology and summarised in the 1859 Preface, Marx laid down the cornerstones of an immense theoretical domain -- the science of history, or, as Althusser has put it, the 'History-Continent' -- in which Marx will make significant discoveries, and in which his successors have continued and continue to explore, but whose vast extent and new problems demand unceasing efforts.¹

¹Our chief centres of reference: F.Engels, 'Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of Classical German Philosophy', Selected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970); Anti-Dühring (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969); Lenin, 'The three sources and three component parts of Marxism', Selected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971); the biographies of Frank Mehring, Carlos Marx (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1967), and Auguste Cornu, Carlos Marx y Federico Engels, vols. 1-III (Havana: Instituto del libro, 1967); and the theoretical precisions of Louis

In the historic circumstance of an implacable class struggle, this theoretical event, the foundation of a new science, has had a pronounced 'political' effect. By demonstrating that human history is the history of class societies, and hence of class exploitation and class rule, ie., ultimately of the class struggle, by demonstrating the mechanisms of capitalist exploitation and capitalist rule, Marx directly countered the interests of the ruling classes who thereupon have unleashed their ideologues against him. On the other side, the exploited, and above all the proletariat, have recognized in Marx's theory (and later, Marxism-Leninism) 'their' truth: they have adopted it and made it a weapon in their revolutionary class struggle. This recognition has a name in history: it is the 'union' of the workers' movement and Marxist theory, which has taken place neither spontaneously nor easily. In the first place, the working-class movement, which existed well before the formation and spread of Marxist theory, was originally under the influence of petty-bourgeois ideological conceptions, such as utopian socialism, anarchism, etc. In the second place, very lengthy theoretical work, and a protracted ideological and political struggle were necessary for this 'unity' in question to form and acquire historic existence -- and, furthermore, the very conditions of its existence mean that this union cannot be a result achieved once and for all. Subject to a class struggle, it requires constant defence against the 'crises' and 'deviations' that threaten it.

As testimony of these difficulties -- theoretical and political -- we need but take yesterday's betrayals by the Second International, and then by Stalinism, the particular circumstances of which have brought about two lines of inter-

Althusser, Reading Capital, part one (London: NLB, 1970); 'On the new definition of philosophy: the conditions of Marx's scientific discovery', Theoretical Practice 7/8 (Jan 1973).

pretation -- historicism, and humanism -- which have had such considerable success in defining for Marxism its 'philosophy', the systematic presentation of its fundamental principles.

This humanist and historicist interpretation of Marx's thought was born as a vital reaction against the 'mechanism', 'fatalism', and 'economism' of the Second International, in the period just preceding and, above all, in the years just following the 1917 Revolution. The themes of a revolutionary humanism and historicism emerged from the German Left, initially from Rosa Luxembourgh and Mehring, and then, after the 1917 Revolution, from a whole series of theoreticians (Lukacs, Korsch, Gramsci, etc...) whose theoretical fables and political tactics were roundly criticized by Lenin as an 'infantile disorder'. In the particular circumstances of the time, the reaction against the opportunistic fatalism and economism of the Second International necessarily took the form of an appeal to the consciousness and will of man to reject the war, overthrow capitalism, and make the revolution. In the urgency of this appeal to the historical responsibility of real men hurled into the revolution, these 'Left-wing' theorists absolutely rejected Kautsky's and Lenin's thesis that Marxist theory is produced by a specific theoretical practice, outside the proletariat, and that Marxist theory must be 'imported' into the proletariat. Proclaiming a radical return to Hegel (the young Lukacs and Korsch), and laying claim to those of Marx's early texts then available, these theorists worked out a theory which put Marx's doctrine into a directly expressive relationship with the working-class. With reference to a revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and philosophy announced in Marx's early texts, these theorists formulated an idealist and voluntarist interpretation of Marxism as the exclusive product and expression of proletarian practice, which designated the proletariat as the subject of an inverted Hegelian dialectic, the missionary of the human essence. Its destiny: the historical role of freeing man from his 'alienation' through the

negation of the human essence whose absolute victim it was. The alliance between the proletariat and philosophy announced in Marx's early texts was no longer seen as the unity of two mutually exclusive components: the proletariat in its political practice is philosophy itself. As for Marx's role it is reduced to having conferred on this philosophy of praxis the mere form of self-consciousness, and thus it is that Marxism is proclaimed 'proletarian science' (philosophy), the direct expression of the human essence in revolt against its radical negation, the product of its sole historical author: the proletariat.²

²Our chief centres of reference for this summary exposition are: Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness (London: Merlin Press, 1971); Karl Korsh, Marxism and Philosophy (New York: Monthly Review, 1971) and various writings of Gramsci's, the following passage of which we take as a symptomatic point of this interpretation: "The philosophy of praxis derives certainly from the immanentist conception of reality...insofar as it is purified of any speculative aroma and reduced to pure history or historicity or to pure humanism....Not only is the philosophy of praxis (ie., Marxism) connected to immanentism. It is also connected to the subjective conception of reality, to the extent precisely that it turns it on its head, explaining it as a historical fact, as the 'historical subjectivity of a social group (class)', as a real fact, which presents itself as a phenomenon of philosophical 'speculation' and is simply a practical act, the form of a concrete social content, and the means of leading the ensemble of society to shape for itself a moral unity" El Materialismo Historico y la Filosofia de Benedetto Croce (Buenos Aires: Ed Lautero, 1958), p. 191. Since the various themes touched upon in this summary constitute the leitmotif of our own study, the negative object of our thesis, we will have occasion to reconstruct in detail the bases of this historicist-humanist interpretation, which is very much the prisoner of its ideological context: the romantic idealist critique of science formulated by the Lebensphilosophie of the early twentieth century, developed by the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger, and taken up by the various forms of 'Critical Theory' which have to a large degree shaped the perspective of 'Western Marxism'. For a perspective on this ideological-theoretical context, see Althusser, Reading Capital, Part one, and Part two (5); Gareth Stedman Jones, 'The Marxism of the Early Lukacs: an evaluation', NLR 70 (November-

As to its political effect: this revolutionary 'humanism' and 'historicism' opened up within Marxism a breach -- the humanist universalism of the proletariat -- through which all the themes of spontaneism rushed in, and which has supported, and authorized, the various forms of theoretical and political 'subjectivism' which have threatened, and continue to compromise Marxism.³

December 1971); D.Howard and K.Klare, The Unknown Dimension: European Marxism since Lenin (New York: Basic Books, 1972); F.Halliday, introduction to Karl Korsh's Marxism and Philosophy.

³We refer to the various forms of 'Western Marxism' which have exalted the 'subjectivity' of voluntary and conscious action, with a particular emphasis on the tradition of 'Critical Theory' developed by the Frankfurt School of Social Research (Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, Marcuse, ...Habermas), and taken up by the Yugoslav social philosophers in Belgrade (Markovic, Stojanovic, etc.) and in Zagreb (Petrovic, Pejovic, etc.); and taken up in North America by contributors to Telos (Arato, Piccone, Breiner, etc.). Aside from the attempts to construct a bridge between Marxism and either existentialism or phenomenology, so as to 'resurrect' or 'revitalize' Marxism, the most characteristic feature of these various 'projects' to search for the 'authentic' Marx -- is the attempt to push Marx back into Hegel: Marx's philosophy points to the telos of history, but only praxis can realize it, a concept worked in tandem with Hegel's dialectic, and with the proletariat's universal totalizing function. Characteristic of this 'hegelian Marxism' are two components identified by Markovic: humanism -- perception of alienation, in the form of class society, as the 'symptomatic, universal condition of our time'; the dialectic as a means to critical social philosophy and socialist praxis -- 'Dialectic is...not only a general theory and method of acquiring positive knowledge, but also a theory and method of revolutionary negation and supersession of existing reality' (Markovic, p.22). The ontological fixation of this Critical Theory, trapped by a Hegelian notion of Reason, is particularly evident in the group of writers who write for Telos who by and large are greatly concerned to defend the 'materialist stringency of Hegel': 'surely, if anyone stood Hegel on his feet (as Marx is alleged to have done) it was Hegel himself, rooted firmly in the ground of revolutionary history, where Marx could meet him' (Telos 22, p.164). The Hegelian-Marxist project of these thinkers is the 'critical application of dialectical reasoning' for which no less

Over the past forty years or so, the various inflated themes of historicism-humanism have dictated the ideological form of the class struggle -- at the level of 'philosophy' in which Marxism thinks the necessary conditions of its own practice, and establishes a relation of knowledge between the political position of the proletariat and the theoretical position that represents it. Little by little, and then massively -- after the twentieth Congress' denunciation of the dogmatist errors and crimes of Stalinism -- this historicist-humanist interpretation (revision) of Marx's thought, has launched an effective attack on the 'orthodoxy' of Marxism-Leninism, and indeed, has gained the upper hand. That this is so, and that we can speak of a renaissance of historicism-humanism, is a result of various circumstances which have been brought into a clear theoretical focus by Louis Althusser.⁴ On the one hand, although the critique of Stalinist 'dogma-

an authority than Lenin is appealed to as 'the only revolutionary who felt a compulsion to return to the Hegelian dialectic as a preparation for proletarian revolution, as a method for merging with the self-activity, self-movement, self-development of the masses that became the 1917 Revolution' (Dunayevskaya, Philosophy and Revolution; reviewed in Telos 22, p.165 ff.). Dunayevskaya's highly speculative reconstruction of history, and Marxism, leads John O'Neill to speak not only of 'Hegelian Marxism' ('The Hegelian Marxist totality is...the basis for the integral humanism of Marxist social science') but of 'Hegelian Leninism', and that, indeed, 'living Marxism is inseparable from its idealist and Hegelian legacy' (Telos 22, p.165). These few references give some indication of the stakes involved! These exponents of 'Hegelian Marxism' would go into the world, and either appeal to workers to cultivate their 'subjectivity' (develop a consciousness of their historic vocation, etc.) or, armed with Hegel's dialectic (purged of its mysticism, by Marx), apply its insights into particular situations: a social force is identified as the 'subject' of this dialectic, and then one turns to 'history' to check on the progress of this dialectic; to see how the dialectic is doing.

⁴Cf. Louis Althusser, 'Introduction; Today' and 'On the young Marx', in For Marx (New York: Random House, 1970); 'Marxism is not a Historicism' in Reading Capital.

tism' has been generally 'lived' by Marxist intellectuals as a 'liberation', it has led at the same time to a profound ideological reaction, 'liberal' and 'ethical' in tendency, which re-discovered the old philosophical themes of 'freedom', 'man', 'human person', 'alienation', etc.⁵ On the other hand, the form which this bourgeois-ideological struggle against Marxism has taken has caught Marxists both off-guard and unprepared. Off-guard, because Marxism is attacked in its home-ground: Marx's philosophy is read directly from his early texts which do indeed contain all the arguments of a philosophy of man, his alienation and liberation. Unprepared, because Marxists have been neglectful of Marx's early texts, and, unmindful of the detailed study of the Young Marx by Auguste Cornu, have failed to establish the specificity of Marxist 'philosophy' with respect to Marx's own intellectual development, and thus, to his predecessors in theory.

Since the 1930's, Marx's Early Works have been a war-horse for the bourgeois-ideological struggle against Marxism, and thus, the focal point for a powerful counter-attack mounted against the historicist-humanist interpretation of Marx's thought by a number of Marxist scholars inspired by the investigations of Louis Althusser.⁶ Indeed, Marx's Early

⁵A good index of this tendency can be found in the anthology of writings edited by Erich Fromm: Socialist Humanism (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966).

⁶The Althusserian 'structuralist' interrogation of Marx's thought has created the basis of an intense debate, inspired a whole series of theoretical investigations (its most notable exponent. Nicos Poulantzas; see also a series of contributions to the New Left Review, [Economics and Society], and the now defunct, Theoretical Practice), and has clearly focused the major problems and questions at issue. For a tentative assessment of the structuralist interpretation of Marx's thought, see this writer's article on Althusser and Levi-Strauss, Science & Society, Vol.38, no.4 (Fall 1974-75).

Works take us into the heart of a debate, the protocols of which are submitted by Althusser himself:

This is the location of the discussion: the Young Marx. Really at stake in it: Marxism. The terms of the discussion: whether the Young Marx was already and wholly Marx.⁷

The problem in question, the focal point of debate, is unavoidable. According to historicism and humanism, the principles of Marx's economic analysis, the theoretical construction of Capital, are ultimately derived from an ethical theory ('the true reality of man'), the silent philosophy of which is openly spoken in Marx's Early Works.⁸ The thesis proclaimed by these two propositions, which has met such extraordinary success, has left Marxists but a single choice: to admit that Capital (and 'mature Marxism' in general) is either an expression of the Young Marx's philosophy, or its betrayal. In effect, Marx is set up against his own youth, or reconciled with it. In either case, the established interpretation must be totally revised and we must return to the Young Marx, 'the Marx through whom spoke the truth', namely, that the essence of man has become alienated in private property, and that human freedom can only be resolved in a class-less society.⁹

⁷For Marx, p. 153.

⁸As reviewed by Althusser, the ancestors of this interpretation were Landshut and Mayer, whose preface to the Philosophical Works of Marx (1831) inaugurated a Social-Democratic tradition of Marx's biography (Riazanov, Rubel, Cole, Laski, Blumenberg,...). The touchstone of this line of interpretation is the following, apparently innocent, but quite tendentious revision of Marx by Landshut and Mayer: 'A slight alteration in the first sentence of the Communist Manifesto would give us: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the self-alienation of man"; in Oeuvres philosophiques de Marx, (Paris: Ed. Costes), p. XL11; quoted by Althusser, For Marx, p.52n.

⁹Cf. Althusser's formulation of the problem, which we

Underlying this entire discussion is an essential question: 'What is Marxist philosophy? Has it any theoretical right to existence? And if it does exist in principle, how can its specificity be defined?'.¹⁰

It is this question to which we address ourselves in our present study.

Within the sharply-defined context of an ideological struggle, this 'essential question' -- the search for Marx's philosophy -- is raised by 'an apparently historical but really theoretical question': 'the question of reading and interpreting Marx's Early Works'.¹¹ The problem in dispute, as posed by Althusser, is clear. In order to interrogate of Marxism its philosophy, which at bottom involves a 'political' discussion, 'it is indispensable to submit these famous texts to a serious critical examination'.¹²

It is directive to which we align ourselves.

The Problem Posed

With Marx's thought subject to two divergent forms of interpretation -- historicist and humanist, on the one hand, and structuralist, on the other -- the lines of debate are clearly drawn: Marx's Early Works either admit of a fundamental continuity at the level of principle (underlying philosophy) or, on the contrary, they express (or betray) the existence of a radical rupture. In terms of this debate, the question of Marx's philosophy assumes the form of a question as to whether or no there was an 'epistemological break' in

take as the basis for our investigation of Marx's thought, in 'On the Young Marx', For Marx.

¹⁰Althusser, For Marx, p.31.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

Marx's intellectual development, and the related question of the precise location of this break.¹³ With reference to these two questions (both raised by Althusser) the study of Marx's Early Works acquires a decisive theoretical importance (does this break exist?) as well as a historical importance (where is it located?).

To situate ourselves within this debate we take as the conscious centre of our investigations the specificity of Marx's philosophy, the essential question of which we address with respect to Marx's Early Works.¹⁴ This question of Marx's philosophy, and of its specificity with respect to Marx's Early Works, necessarily implies the question of Marx's relation to the philosophies which he had espoused or traversed, those of Hegel and Feuerbach, and therefore, the question of where he differed with them. Addressed in this form, the question of Marx's Early Works has given rise to the most conflicting interpretations, and indeed, poses for us the major problem in dispute. On the one hand, the majority of Marx's expositors and commentators tend to give Marx's writings either a Feuerbachian (humanist) reading or a Hegelian (historicist) reading, but are manifestly troubled by the nature of Marx's relation to Hegel and Feuerbach. This embarrassment is not merely due to a lack of familiarity with the writings of Hegel and Feuerbach (they can be read), but partly arises as a failure to conceive what it is that constitutes the basic unity

¹³ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁴ Indeed, says Althusser, 'only a critical reading of Marx's Early Works and a thorough study of Capital can enlighten us as to the significance and risks involved in a theoretical humanism and historicism for they are foreign to Marx's problematic' (Reading Capital, p. 143). Althusser, although he poses the problem in general terms, himself addresses the essential question to Marx's Capital, rather than to his Early Works, as we do in this present study.

of Marx's various texts (their specificity vis-a-vis Hegel and Feuerbach.¹⁵ On the other hand, we have at least two forms of serious, systematic interpretations, based on real philosophical, epistemological and historical knowledge, and on rigorous reading methods -- not on mere opinion (many a book has been written on this basis) -- that recognize, and presuppose, the existence of a fundamental rupture between Marx and Hegel, and between Marx and Feuerbach. These two systematic interpretations, one provided by the school of Della Volpe in Italy (Della Volpe, Colletti, Pietranera, Rossi, etc.), the other by the Althusserian 'structuralists' in France, have from different angles developed Marx's rupture with Hegel through the constitution of a new science of society, which has since been compromised by the re-introduction of Hegelian motifs into Historical Materialism after Marx. In this they converge. They disagree, however, as to the location of this break. The former locates it in 1843, at the level of Marx's Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right; the latter locates it in 1845, at the level of Marx's Theses on Feuerbach and The German Ideology.

This difference in interpretation points towards a problem of the utmost importance, a theoretical -- and ultimately, political -- problem which we highlight by the question of Marx's theoretical formation in 1844, at the level of the Jahrbucher essays, the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, and The Holy Family. At stake in the interpretation of these

¹⁵In these readings, Marx is either read as (or confused with) an avant-garde Feuerbach, or as a Hegelian, on the basis of a comparison of terms, and association of ideas; or, on the other hand, ideas and concepts which Marx borrows wholesale from Hegel, or as is more likely, from Feuerbach, and which are widely shared by Marx's contemporaries, are wrongly taken to be specifically Marxist. That this is so would be easy, but too tedious to document, for it applies to many a commentary. We will have occasion, however, to raise this problem in specific terms at various points of our investigation where relevant.

works is Marxism itself as a theoretical formation distinct from that of Hegel and that of Feuerbach. The position of the Della Volpean school, best represented by Lucio Colletti, takes as its central starting-point the 1843 Critique, in relation to which the 1844 writings become 'Marxist' works and as such, the theoretical basis of all of Marx's later studies.¹⁶ The position adopted by Althusser suggests an altogether different interpretation of these same writings. In this interpretation, which takes as its central starting-point The German Ideology, Marx's theoretical formation in 1844 was still 'pre-Marxist' -- his writings still impregnated with philosophical principles derived from Hegel and Feuerbach, themes and concepts of which have authorized historicist and humanist readings of Marx's philosophy, but with which Marx makes a thorough-going break in 1845.

This problem of interpretation, posed by the study of Marx's Early Works, and reflected in the divergent positions of Althusser and Colletti, will form the theoretical framework for our investigation, which has as its centre the specificity of Marx's philosophy, and as its object Marx's relation to Feuerbach and Hegel as expressed in Marx's Early Works. Although the centre of debate is between the positions of Colletti and Althusser on the one hand, and the 'Hegelian-

¹⁶In this connection, the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 are often taken as the embodiment of Marx's fundamental philosophy, the theoretical 'underpinnings' of Marx's later economic and historical analyses. This position, expressed in the thesis of a fundamental 'continuity' between Marx's Early Works and his Mature Works, is very widely held, and is reflected in the following judgements of the 1844 Manuscripts as: 'the birth of scientific socialism' (Jahn); 'the crucial pivot around which Marx re-oriented the social sciences. The theoretical premises of Marxism had been laid down' (Pajitnov); 'Historical Materialism en nuce' (Colletti); 'Marx's system (Capital) in statu nascendi (Mészáros); 'the conscious passage to materialism' (Lapine). And we deal here of the more 'serious' interpretations of Marx's thought!

Marxists' on the other, the problem in question is best posed with respect to the divergence of interpretation between Althusser and Colletti. This problem of interpretation takes various forms, but ultimately turns on the question of Marx's relation to Hegel and Feuerbach, and their relation to each other within Marx's thought. Does Marx adapt and thus ultimately derive his epistemology and methodology -- his 'philosophy' -- from the philosophies of Hegel and Feuerbach, which thus indirectly forms the theoretical basis of Marx's economic and historical studies? Or, on the contrary, does Marx effectively break with this 'philosophy' to constitute these later studies on an entirely new basis, with a new method? If so, what are the epistemological and methodological conditions of such a break? Keeping in mind that we can hardly speak of an instantaneous event, an immaculate conception as it were, where does it occur? In 1843? 1844? 1845? The answer is of both theoretical and political importance as it authorizes quite different conceptions of Marxism. Indeed, it takes us right into the centre of an open debate, an ideological struggle, whose outcome is by no means clear.

A Question of Method: how we read Marx

In order to submit Marx's early texts to a critical examination so as to settle the questions of principle raised by the problem in dispute, we are brought face to face with a prior question: how to read Marx? As to this question we take as our point of reference the standpoint of a rigorous reading method used and defended by the school of Della Volpe¹⁷ on the one hand, and by the Althusserians on the other; and we

¹⁷ Anyone familiar with the writings of Della Volpe and Colletti will need no further reference. However, Colletti's own words in a recent interview, are apropós: 'The essential lesson I learnt from contact with the writings of Della Volpe was the need for an absolutely serious relationship to the work of Marx -- based on direct knowledge and real study of his original texts' (New Left Review 86: 8). Col-

relate consciously to the problem as formulated by Althusser's methodological demand for a 'symptomatic reading' of Marx's texts.¹⁸

This call for a close reading of Marx's texts itself if, of course, a most elementary demand: the demand for a simple definition of the pre-conditions of the search for Marx's philosophy. However, the form in which Marx's writings have been frequently read, and the diverse interpretations to which it has been subject, gives this methodological demand the force of an imperative. As indicated by Althusser, only too often the form of the reading of Marx's early writings has depended not so much on a historical critique as on a free association of ideas or a simple comparison of terms, which may well be superficial or profound, and either give rise to misunderstandings or open up interesting perspectives, but in any event falls prey to the eclecticism of a theory of sources -- or, what comes to the same thing, a theory of anticipation.¹⁹ Whether the history of Marx's theoretical formation is deter-

letti refers his statement to the 'intellectually and theoretically very superficial and exiguous' character of Marxism in Italy, in relation to which 'Della Volpe came to symbolize a commitment to study Marxism rigorously, where it is actually to be found, namely in Marx's writings themselves' (*ibid*).

¹⁸Cf. the question of a 'symptomatic reading': Reading Capital, pp.28, 32-3, 86, 143, 317. Cf. the broader question of 'reading', For Marx, pp.15, 29-30, 37-9, 45, 55-6, 58, 69, 254; Reading Capital, pp.13-14, 16-21, 16n, 24, 30, 32-5, 34n, 74-8, 101, 121, 123, 126, 150, 295.

¹⁹Cf. 'presuppositions' of an 'analytico-teleological' method and the potential pitfalls of an eclectic criticism as opposed to a historical critique see Althusser's discussion and examples in For Marx, pp.55ff. Taking to task Togliatti for attributing to Marx certain ideas which were clearly plagiarized by Marx from Feuerbach, Althusser notes: 'The moral of these mistakes is that one should read closely one's authors' (*ibid.*, p.56n.12). Cf. the presuppositions of a theory of sources or anticipation, in which either the origin or later

mined with reference to either its original sources or its eventual development, the method in question entails the reduction of Marx's thought into its 'elements' (grouped in general under two rubrics: the materialist elements and the idealist elements) as if a comparison of these elements, a confrontation of the weight of each, determines the meaning of the text under examination. Thus, for example, despite its defence of idealism, Marx's doctoral dissertation contains within it the 'germ' of Historical Materialism;²⁰ in Marx's articles for the Rheinische Zeitung the external form of a thought which is still Hegelian can be shown to conceal the presence of materialist elements such as the political nature of censorship, the social (class) nature of laws on the theft of wood, etc.; in the 1843 Critique, the exposition and formulation, though still inspired by Feuerbach (or still Hegelian), conceal the presence of materialist elements such as the reality of social classes, of private property and its relation to the state, and even of dialectical materialism itself;²¹ in the 1844 Manuscripts, Marx's thought is essentially 'materialist' in content, although partially expressed in an idealist form, ie., Marx has not fully weaned himself from certain vestiges of his Hegelian education, residues of idealism which affect Marx's terminology despite the contrary intent of Marx's basic thought.

development of a thought decides its meaning, see Ibid., pp.56-57, incl.nn.12-13.

²⁰Cf. A.Cornu, Marx and Engels, 1:144; Schaff, 'Le vrai visage du jeune Marx', Recherches Internationales (1960), p.202: 'We know (from later statements of Engels) that Marx became a materialist in 1841' (quoted in For Marx, p.59).

²¹Cf. Della Volpe, Rousseau y Marx (Buenos Aires: Ed. Platina, 1963); Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968); J. O'Malley, Introduction to Marx's Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

This discrimination between 'elements' detached from the internal context of the thought expressed and conceived in isolation, this decomposition of a text into what is already materialist and what is still idealist, clearly breaks up its basic unity, and just as clearly hinges on a slanted interpretation that reads backwards from Marx's mature texts. Furthermore, a sort of 'delegation of reference' often occurs, which fully developed Marxism confers on an intermediate author, for example, on Feuerbach. As Feuerbach is taken as a 'materialist' he serves as a second centre of reference, and in his turn makes possible the acceptance of certain elements in Marx's early writings as 'materialist' by-products (the subject-predicate inversion, a transformative critique of speculative idealism, the critique of religion, the human essence objectified in its productions, etc.). This 'by-production' of elements via Feuerbach, combined with the production of elements via the mature Marx, gives rise to the problem of determining just what does distinguish the materialist elements authorized by Feuerbach from those authorized by Marx himself.²² Ultimately, this procedure allows one to find materialist elements in all of Marx's early texts, including even the letter to his father in which like a true Hegelian Marx refuses to separate the ideal from the real. Indeed, it becomes very difficult to decide when Marx becomes a mater-

²² Thus we have the inevitable position of interpreters such as James Gregor ('Marx, Feuerbach and the reform of the Hegelian Dialectic', Science & Society, vol.29, no.i, Winter 1965) which regard Marx as an outright Feuerbachian; that confuse Feuerbach's 'materialism' for Marx's Historical Materialism (Feuerbach's materialist principle applied to history). There is a whole genre of such an interpretation, which is indeed fully justified as regards to the 1843 Critique, that sees in Marx an ethical (Feuerbachian) philosophy, cf. Kamenka, The Ethical Foundations of Marxism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972).

ialist. For Cornu and Schaff, despite its obvious idealist vestiges, the 'germ' of Historical Materialism is already planted in 1841, at the level of Marx's first text, the doctoral dissertation. For others, it is Marx's discussion of the 'materialist question' in the Rheinische Zeitung which introduces certain elements of materialism -- spontaneously, according to Lapine -- into Marx's thought. Again, for perhaps the majority of Marx's expositors, Marx's conscious passage to materialism occurs in his 1843 Critique wherein (with a delegated reference to Feuerbach's revision of Hegel) Marx penetrates Hegel's mystificatory (idealist) presentation of a real process to establish the 'materialist' premise of historical explanation. Before this interpretation came into vogue (and it did so only recently) the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 were (and often still are) accorded this honour.

This problem of interpretation raises the question of a valid criterion whereby it can pronounce upon a thought decomposed into its elements: what meaning is constituted by the combination of materialist and idealist elements into the effective unity of a text? Take for example, texts such as On the Jewish Question or the 1844 Manuscripts. Taken as Marxist writings they give rise to conclusions for theory and ideological action with serious theoretical consequences, and real political stakes, involved. Nevertheless, the problem in question has no solution within the framework of an eclectic (analytico-teleological) method which (1) presupposes that any theoretical system and any constituted thought is reducible to its elements; (2) that institutes these elements in order to proceed to their measurement according to its own norms as if to their truth; (3) that regards the history of ideas as its own element, the world of ideology as its own principle of intelligibility.²³ On the basis of these pre-

²³Althusser, For Marx, pp.56-7.

suppositions, the method in question deprives itself of a valid criterion for a possible solution: if an idealist element is an idealist element, and a materialist element is a materialist element, who can really decide as to what meaning is constituted by their effective combination within a text?

This question points to an impasse, a problem without solution at the surface level of Marx's thought -- in an 'immediate' reading of the text. This in turn suggests the need for another method of investigation, one that breaks with the presuppositions of eclectic criticism as a precondition for legitimately posing the problem of Marx's Early Works. It is in this regard that Althusser's methodological considerations acquire for us their importance. Indeed, these considerations constitute for us both our principles of investigation, and the reading method to which they apply.

As to these principles, Althusser derives them from a Marxist theory of ideological development:

Every ideology must be regarded as a real whole, internally unified by its own problematic, so that it is impossible to extract one element without altering its meaning;

The meaning of this whole, of a particular ideology (in this case, Marx's early thought) depends not on its relation to a truth other than itself but on its ideological field, and on the social problems and social structure which sustains the ideology and are reflected in it; the sense of the development of a particular ideology depends not on the relation of this development to its origins or its end, considered as its truth, but to the relation found within this development between the mutations of the particular ideology and the mutations in the ideological field and the social problems and relations that sustain it;

Therefore, the developmental motor principle of a particular ideology cannot be found within ideology itself but outside it, in what underlies the particular ideology: its author as a concrete individual and the actual history reflected in this individual development according to the complex ties between the individual and this history.²⁴

²⁴Ibid., pp.62-3. Cf. a theoretical discussion of these

On the basis of these Marxist principles of investigation, which respectively correspond to and break with the three presuppositions of eclectic criticism, Althusser formulates the methodological concept of a 'symptomatic reading' (lecture symptomale) that moves from the level of elements to that of an underlying structure so as to expose the 'basic unity of a text, the internal essence of an ideological thought, ie., its problematic'.²⁵

A 'symptomatic reading' of a text, based on Marxist principles of investigation, clearly differs from the reading method of eclectic criticism, namely a reading that is 'merely literal', an 'immediate reading' that assigns meaning to a text on the basis of an association of ideas, a comparison of elements derived from various sources, and a slanted reference to either the origins or the end of a thought. Unlike a literal reading, which characterizes and qualifies a thought by the immediate content of the objects discussed, the material reflected on, a 'symptomatic reading' moves from these 'elements' towards their 'internal reference system', the 'typical, systematic structure unifying all the elements of a thought', an active but unavowed problematic which fixes for a thought the meaning of its problems and thereby of their solutions.²⁶

principles, see ibid., pp.66n, 67-72, 74-7, 76n, 78n, 79n, 81, 81n. For a brief exposition of the Marxist theory of ideology that underlies these principles see this writer's essay on Althusser in Science & Society, vol.38, No.4 (Winter 1974-75).

²⁵For Marx, pp.66. Cf. further, ibid., p.67, 67n. On 'symptomatic reading' see Reading Capital, pp.28, 32-3, 86, 143, 317. Althusser himself does not establish this relation between these three 'Marxist principles of investigation' formulated in For Marx, and the theory of a 'symptomatic reading' formulated in Reading Capital. The connection is established by us, and, we believe, is consistent with both texts.

²⁶For Marx, pp.67, 69. Cf. the problematic exposed by a 'symptomatic reading': '[it] constitutes its absolute and definite conditions of possibility, and hence the absolute

As in Freudian psycho-analysis of a patient's utterances, to which a 'symptomatic reading' bears comparison, the effective problematic of a text cannot generally be read like an open book, but 'must be dragged up from the depths of the ideology in which it is buried but active'.²⁷ The object: to make visible the effectivity of an unconscious structure, which in the case of a text, is to expose the internal unity of a thought, its problematic -- the 'objective internal reference system' of its particular themes, the 'system of questions commanding the answers given by the ideology'.²⁸

It is clear that this method of a 'symptomatic reading', which we will adopt in our study, directly breaks with the first theoretical presupposition of eclectic criticism, and, in effect, applies the first principle of investigation established by Althusser's Marx. What of the second and third presuppositions of eclectic criticism and their corresponding Marxist principles? To take up this question, we can make the observation that to expose of the internal unity of Marx's thought, to dis-inter its problematic, implies of necessity a knowledge of the ideological field in which this thought emerges and grows, and indeed, of the problematics compounded or opposed in it. It is, in fact, this inter-relation of the particular problematic of Marx's thought with the particular problematics of its existing ideological field, that allows us to determine the specific difference of Marx's theoretical formation, ie., whether a new meaning has emerged -- or, with reference to Althusser's thesis, whether or not there exists

determination of the forms in which all the problems must be posed' (Reading Capital, p.25).

²⁷Ibid., p.69.

²⁸Ibid., p.67n.

an 'epistemological break' in Marx's intellectual development.

As a pre-condition for posing the problem of the relation between the (internal) unity of Marx's thought (at each moment of its development) and the existing ideological field (at each moment of its development) it is necessary to admit that -- as Althusser puts it -- 'even philosophers are young men for a time. They must be born somewhere, some time, and begin to think and write'.²⁹ The fact is, of course, that Marx's intellectual development necessarily had a 'beginning', and to work out the history of Marx's particular thoughts -- the problem of 'Marx's path' -- their formation must be grasped at the juncture at which the Young Marx emerged into the thought-world of his own time, to think in it in his turn, and to enter into an active debate with (and within) it. This thought-world, the existing ideological field into which Marx was born and took up thought, was the world of German Ideology in the 1830s and the 1840s, a world dominated by the problems of German Idealism and by what Marx himself later referred to as the 'decomposition of Hegel', the Hegel of the neo-Hegelian movement. As to the actual history of the concrete individuals who make up this thought-world, the substance of its study has been carried out, first by Mehring, and then, more substantially by Auguste Cornu, the most authoritative biographer of the Young Marx and his world.³⁰ As to this thought-world itself, the most relevant studies establish for us the following observation, which will

²⁹Ibid., p.64.

³⁰Cf. Althusser's judgement, with which we concur: 'The details (of the actual experience of history which united in the Young Marx a particular psychology and the general conditions of his time) should be sought in 'Pere' Cornu's works, for, with the exception of Mehring who did not have the same erudition or source material, he is the only man to have made this indispensable effort. I confidently predict that he will be read for a long time, for there is no access to the

serve as our point of departure: the principal ideologue of the neo-Hegelian movement, the philosopher par excellence to which all the Young Hegelians deferred -- and this includes Marx -- was Feuerbach.³¹ At the centre of this general deference was a philosophy of humanism based on a radical revision of the Hegelian 'system', the 'dialectic' of which is both 'de-mystified' (given a human subject) and 'inverted' (placed on a real basis) but yet -- and this is highly significant -- retained. This observation clearly suggests that the 'ideological field' of Marx's early thoughts is dominated by the opposed-but-related theoretical positions of Hegel and Feuerbach, a fact that both dictates the character of the debate within Marxism, and governs the thematic focus of our study.

The Thesis of our study

By reference to this 'ideological field', the central question of Marx's relation to Hegel and Feuerbach turns on the prior question of Feuerbach's relation to (critique of) Hegel, which dictates a close reading of Hegel's works and those of Feuerbach. The question seems innocent enough, and

Young Marx except by way of his real history' (For Marx, p.83). Aside from Mehring's time-honoured biography, and those within the Social-Democrat tradition (Rjazanov, Nicolaievsky-Maenchen, Rubel, Blumenberg, etc.), Cornu's three volume study constitutes our basic reference-source for Marx's intellectual history. The best account in English of Marx's relationship to the neo-Hegelian movement, we find in the works of David McLellan, although we substantially disagree with his theoretical precisions and judgements.

³¹Although a systematic study of the neo-Hegelian movement readily supports this observation, and the later Engels (cf. L. Feuerbach and the end of classical German Philosophy) clearly records the moment at which 'all became at once Feuerbachians', our authority is no less than Marx himself in The German Ideology wherein he explicitly refers to Feuerbach as the 'philosopher par excellence to which (all true socialists) defer'.

the requirement of a close reading superfluous. After all, both are necessary propaedeutics to the study of Marx's early thought, towards a precise formulation of Marx's thought-world. Nevertheless, our attention to these problems seem warranted by the state of exposition and commentary on this question, which generally speaking often betrays an embarrassing lack of familiarity with the writings of Feuerbach and Hegel -- and this when their relation to (and indeed, within) Marx's thought is at issue.

To touch upon this issue allows us to bring into focus a problem of interpretation which underlies the question of Feuerbach's critique of Hegel, and, we will argue, lies at the very root of the failure of 'Western Marxism' to grasp the specific difference between Hegel and Marx. The problem in question: Hegel's critique of 'Understanding', ie., of Kant's solution to the problem of knowledge.³² Now, as a point of fact, the relation between Kant and Hegel has always haunted the interpretation of Marx's thought. However, despite frequent reference to Hegel, and more obliquely, to Kant, the majority of these interpretations do not pose it as a serious problem;³³ at best they shadow-box with the ghosts to which it has given rise and which yet plague Marxism; at worst, reference to Kant and Hegel, especially with respect to that much abused 'dialectic', tends to be carelessly formulated or arbitrarily constructed -- based more on received opinion than a thorough study. The reason that we do pose Hegel's relation

³²Our perception of this problem derives from the penetrating analysis of Lucio Colletti, cf. Marxism and Hegel (London:NLB, 1973). In fact, our entire line of enquiry is inspired by and indebted to Colletti's suggestive re-interpretation of Marx's relation to Kant. And this despite the fact that our interpretation differs substantially from that forwarded by Colletti.

³³An interesting, but misguided (in our opinion) exception to this case is Lukács' The Young Hegel.

to Kant as a problem is that -- and this will form the first cornerstone of our thesis -- in Feuerbach's revision of Hegel he silently returns to Kant's critique of traditional metaphysics, and that, in effect, Feuerbach's philosophy of man (whose problematic dominates the ideological field of Marx's early thought) is conceived within the theoretic space of Kant and Hegel's opposed solutions to the problem of knowledge. It is, in fact, our thesis that: (a) Marx's early thought, his theoretical formation, is governed by the problematic of Feuerbach's humanism; (b) this philosophy, inversely-related to the problematic of Hegel's philosophy, has its theoretical basis in the epistemology of Kant's subjective idealism; (c) on the basis of Feuerbach's revision of Hegel, Marx indirectly returns to Kant's critique of traditional metaphysics -- to Kant's solution to the problem of knowledge.

The leitmotif, and compressed argument, of this theme of Marx's indirect dependence on Kant via Feuerbach's critique of Hegel points to a problem on which the interpretative literature of Marx's thought has maintained a remarkable silence, but which nonetheless has never been far from the centre of discussion. The problem in question is to produce the effective problematic underlying Marx's first thoughts, the idealist problematic formed by the opposed solutions of Kant and Hegel to the problem of knowledge.

It is true, of course, that the problem in question has to be addressed to Marx's texts themselves, a 'symptomatic reading' of which should confirm the effectivity of this idealist problematic within Marx's early thought. However, in order to establish a centre of reference for our argument we will attempt, first of all, a summary exposition of the idealist problematic in its basic form -- as constructed by Kant and Hegel (chapter two). On the basis of this summary exposition, we will undertake our investigation of Marx's thought with reference, first of all, to the question of its basic unity, its underlying problematic; and secondly, to the question of a

possible 'epistemological break'.

With reference to these two questions, the thesis of our study can be formulated in its most general terms as follows: Marx's early thought and theoretical formation as of 1841 -- all questions raised and problems posed, as well as the range of preferred answers and solutions -- are unified and governed by one and the same problematic; but as of 1845 Marx makes a thorough-going break with this 'philosophy', and establishes the epistemological and methodological principles of an entirely new problematic, the science of history.

In more specific terms, our thesis can be broken down and expanded to encompass the following arguments:

(a) a close study of the phases of and shifts within Marx's early thought yields a systematic unity, an effective problematic which determines the character of Marx's particular thoughts by governing the way all its problems are posed, and thus, its range of possible solutions;

(b) this systematic unity of Marx's thought relates to the idealist problematic of a philosophic dialectic, formed by the opposed positions of Kant and Hegel, and reconstituted for Marx through Feuerbach's revision of Hegel's philosophy;

(c) the ideological field of Marx's thought, in which the problematics of subjective idealism (Kant) and objective idealism (Hegel) are compounded and opposed, is dominated by Feuerbach's philosophy of man, itself inversely-related to the problematic of Hegel's philosophy of history;

(d) Marx adopts as his theoretical basis the philosophical problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, which he applies first of all to the political life, and then to the economic basis of bourgeois 'civil' society;

(e) on the theoretical basis of Feuerbach's humanism, the central problem of 'philosophy' -- the relation of thought to reality, of freedom to necessity, or (within Marx's frame of reference) of philosophy to the proletariat -- is conceived

through the ideological schema of the Left-Hegelian philosophy of (theoretical) praxis;

(f) Marx breaks with the ideological schema of this philosophy in 1844, and with its underlying problematic in 1845, whereupon Marx establishes for the study of history new theoretical principles, a new method -- in short, the basis for a new philosophy.

The argument for the thesis

On the basis of a summary exposition of the idealist problematic of a philosophic dialectic (chapter two) our investigation of Marx's thought, the argument for our thesis, is structured by and around two questions, the question of Marx's problematic (does Marx's thought yield a systematic unity?), and the question of an 'epistemological break' (does it exist? and if so, where does it occur?).

Chapter three

As to the question of Marx's problematic it can be addressed, first of all, to Marx's first text, his doctoral dissertation on the Philosophies of Nature of Democritus and Epicurus (1841), and we do so in chapter three, within the ideological and political context of the general project adopted by the neo-Hegelian movement: to realize the principle of idealism -- the concept of freedom. To begin with, our reading of Marx's text makes it clear that its central problem, its essential questions, are all defined by the philosophic problematic of German Idealism. What is not so clear is how Marx's thought relates to this problematic. On the one hand, Marx consciously situates himself within this problematic by distancing himself away from Kant and towards Hegel. On the other hand, our reading suggests that the Hegel which Marx invokes is a Hegel already made to speak against himself, the Hegel of the neo-Hegelian movement. Indeed, we will argue that despite Marx's avowals to the contrary, Marx adopts a position

closer to Kant and Fichte than to Hegel. To resolve this apparant contradiction -- to reconcile our imputation of Marx's theoretical position with his own self-conscious formulation -- it is necessary to grasp the Hegel of the neo-Hegelian movement, a Hegel fundamentally revised on the basis of a shift from the speculative standpoint of 'the Absolute' to the human standpoint of 'praxis' -- from a historic rationality of which God is the subject and man the object to its radical revision: philosophy brought to its 'subjective point'.

The emergence of this Left-Hegelian philosophy of a 'self-conscious (theoretical) praxis' has been well enough described by Mehring and Cornu, although we find reason to dispute essential points of their interpretation. On the one hand, we fully concur with the thesis formulated by Mehring and thoroughly documented by Cornu to the effect that Marx's dissertation is cast within a Left-Hegelian 'philosophy of praxis'. On the other hand, we reject Cornu's thesis that Marx's dual critique of Democritus and Epicurus produces a new concept of Man superior to both Hegel and the other Left-Hegelians. In our interpretation, Marx's concept of 'Man' relates to, and is indirectly governed by (via Feuerbach's unannounced presence) the philosophic problematic of Kant's subjective idealism, in which man appears simultaneously as a noumenal being (essentially free) and a phenomenal being (subject to the external necessity of material needs). The philosophic problematic of this concept, reflected in Kant's solution to the problem of knowledge, is clearly visible in its effects on Marx's thought, although its meaning cannot be fully established at the level of Marx's dissertation. Resisting the temptation to extract more meaning from Marx's dissertation than its text will bear, and in anticipation of our study to follow, we do not attempt to fully reconstruct the systematic unity of its underlying problematic. At this point we merely delineate in most general terms its effects on the structure of Marx's critique -- a structure formed by the

theoretical relation of the dialectical method to its object (reason). Supported by our earlier exposition on the problem of knowledge, and in anticipation of our analysis of Feuerbach's critique of speculative idealism, we argue that the structure of Marx's philosophic critique -- the dialectic of reason -- has at its centre a philosophy of praxis, the idealist problematic of which places Marx closer to Kant and Fichte than to Hegel.

Chapter four

In chapter four we explore more fully the structure of Marx's philosophic critique, expose its underlying problematic and trace the formation of Marx's thought within it. The leitmotif of this chapter, the basis for our argument, is that the central construct of Marx's philosophic critique -- the concept of Reason -- derives not so much from Hegel as it does from the Enlightenment philosophes. Although this alleged return to the eighteenth century Enlightenment (with respect to the concept of reason, in function of which philosophy adopts a negative-critical standpoint to the existing world) applies to the Left-Hegelian movement in general, and involves complex historical questions which we must entirely by-pass, we take as a centre of reference for Marx's thought Rousseau's solution to the problem of 'civil society'. This is not so much to allege a direct or indirect contact with Rousseau's work (although the case could easily be made) as to define the problematic of Marx's thought. The essential point of our argument, which reference to Rousseau allows us to illustrate, is that the concept of 'reason' with which Marx criticizes the existing state of affairs is neither embodied in existing institutions (as Hegel would have it) nor a subjective faculty generic to the individual (as the eighteenth century liberals would have it). 'Reason', grasped by philosophy as the (ideal) measure of the real, is 'objective' in Kant's sense of 'universality and necessity', but

not in the form as conceived by Kant -- as the effectivity of an inward moral law interrogated in each individual -- nor as conceived by Hegel -- as the effectivity of an impersonal, cosmic force which uses the subjectivity of man as a means to its own end. 'Reason' is embodied in the ideal totality (Weltanschauung) of a human society, a meaningful whole expressive of -- and reducible to -- the 'people's spirit', which is grasped by 'philosophy' as the measure of the rationality of the real, ie., the freedom of man.

On the basis of this concept of 'reason' -- of the 'rational state', its embodied form -- our argument proceeds as follows: we refer the concept of a 'rational state' (which Marx shares with the other Left-Hegelian ideologues) to its political context -- the bourgeois-liberal struggle for freedom as a general right. This struggle, realized when the state fully corresponds to its essence, ie., when the people's spirit is embodied in free institutions and laws, provides a historical context for the emergence of 'philosophy', the form in which the 'reason' of society becomes conscious. This leads us, secondly, to Marx's concept of philosophy as critique, of enlightened thought that measures the actual conditions of life against the Idea -- the concept of a rational state. In regards to this concept of philosophy we clearly establish its continuity with the idealist project of Marx's dissertation: to realize the principle of idealism, the concept of freedom. As in the dissertation, the idealist metaphysic of this principle, the identity of opposites, is satisfied in the concept of 'freedom', the 'essence of man'. With the concept of 'Man' as its ultimate point of reference, the problematic of Marx's philosophic critique -- at the level both of the dissertation (1841) and of the Rheinische Zeitung (1842) -- supports the principle of an inherent truth: a unity in essence. The idealist principle of this inherent truth, the reason of society, is grasped by 'philosophy' through the application of the critical method, the dialectic, which resolves all contradic-

tions of material life into their universal form so as to disclose their human meaning: the alienation of man from his essence. Again, we relate the structure of Marx's method of philosophic criticism to principles established in the dissertation, and we allude to its underlying problematic -- Feuerbach's philosophy of man -- which we systematically reconstruct below (chapter five) at a point where Marx's dependence on Feuerbach becomes explicit and conscious. At this point we expose the effectivity of this problematic as the theoretical basis of Marx's democratic-liberal critique of political life, which leads us, thirdly, to explore (a) Marx's dependence on Hegel's philosophy of law; and (b) his first critical encounter with theories of communism and socialism. As to this double-encounter, it is our thesis, and we so argue, that Marx's critique of the Prussian state -- and thus, of its rationalization, Hegel's 'system' -- and of socialism-communism, proceed from theoretical principles derived from Feuerbach's philosophy of man; that Marx's un-referenced dependence on Feuerbach relates not to his principle of materialism, but to his principle of humanism which is the basis of an idealist metaphysic satisfied in the concept of 'Man'. Indeed, although the support for this argument follows later (chapters five and six), we show that Marx's concept of a 'rational state' derives its meaning from a philosophy of man (the essence of man is freedom), and that the idealist principle of this philosophy forms the basis of the standpoint (universality) from which Marx both attacks the chief supports of the Prussian-Hegelian state and criticizes theories of communism.

We end this chapter, and begin the next, by documenting the general condition of an insupportable theoretical crisis into which Marx, and the Left-Hegelian movement in general, were thrown by the failure of the Prussian state to assume its essence, which is to say, to heed the appeals by 'philosophy' for reason and freedom. As a precondition for grasping the theoretical implications of Marx's response to

this crisis, we point towards Feuerbach whose philosophic texts liberated the Young Hegelians from their theoretical impasse and, we will argue, established Marx's mode of reflection, the problematic of real-humanism which Marx first applies to politics (a critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law) and then to economics (a critique of English Political Economy).

Chapter five

Marx's strategic dependence on Feuerbach as of 1843, at the level of the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, is widely acknowledged, and is well-documented historically and theoretically. What is not so well-understood is the effect of Feuerbach's philosophic humanism on Marx's thought before 1843 -- from the 1841 dissertation throughout the Rheinische Zeitung writings -- and indeed, after 1843 -- from the Jahrbücher essays to The Holy Family. As to the question of 'before 1843' it has to be admitted that Marx makes no explicit reference to Feuerbach, nor does he endorse his principle of materialism or accept his philosophical communism. Indeed, it is Althusser's contention that until 1843 Marx's thought was characterized by a Kant-Fichtean type of rationalist humanism rather than a Feuerbachian type, a judgement which is supported by the fact that the question of Marx's relation to Feuerbach is never addressed to Marx's pre-1843 writings, or when it is, it is denied. As to the question of 'after 1843' there is the problem of specifying the differences between Marx and Feuerbach, a problem raised by a series of recent investigations which trace the epistemological and methodological basis of Marxism to the 1843 Critique, the precise work in which Marx himself openly avows his dependence on Feuerbach.

To clarify these issues, and to clearly pose the problem of Marx's relation to Feuerbach, we outline first of all, the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's philosophy of man and in so doing, introduce points of interpretation that es-

establish the following thesis: in his revision of Hegel's speculative philosophy, the inversion of its dialectic, Feuerbach returns to the Enlightenment, and supports himself on Kant's critique of traditional metaphysics. Incredible as it may seem we have found no support for this thesis in the literature, although Colletti's line of interpretation certainly suggests such a position.³⁴ The implication of this thesis is clear: to argue, as we do, that Marx adopts the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's humanism is to assert Marx's indirect dependence on Kant. This is precisely what we proceed to do. Indeed, we will argue that the problematic of Feuerbach's two principles -- humanism, materialism -- which Marx adopts in its entirety, ultimately goes back to Kant's solution to the problem of knowledge. The problematic of these two principles turns on a revision of Hegel's dialectic, which Feuerbach de-mystifies (gives a human subject) and inverts (places on a real basis), but yet retains. On the one hand, Feuerbach translates Kant's attempt to reconcile rationalism and empiricism, idealism and materialism, into a theory of the 'head' and 'heart' of philosophy, whose idealist metaphysic supports the principles of a 'real-humanism' adopted by Marx. On the other hand, Feuerbach reverts to the principle of materialism -- the heterogeneity of thought and being, and the essential dependence of the former on the latter -- defined by Kant, and accepted by Marx as the basis for an epistemology of science.

³⁴Witness, for example, Manfred Vogel's 73pp. review of the literature on Feuerbach, and assessment of his intellectual sources (cf. Feuerbach: Principles of the Philosophy of the Future, Library of Liberal Arts Press, 1966), without a mention of Kant.

Colletti never discusses Kant in tandem with Feuerbach, but to assert Marx's dependence on Kant implies, in our opinion, this relation.

As a result, there is no reason for following Althusser in dividing Marx's early thought into two types of humanism, a Kant-Fichtean type until early 1843, and a Feuerbachian type from then up to 1845. Although Marx only realizes or accepts the 'materialist' implications of Feuerbach's theoretic revolution in 1843, at the level of his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Marx's indirect dependence on Kant via Feuerbach can be traced all the way back to his doctoral dissertation in 1841. Indeed, the essential type-structure, and de-mystified form, of Feuerbach's critical method, the dialectic, is already found in Marx's dissertation, and we have already disclosed the presence of Feuerbach's theory of philosophy's 'head and heart' in the Rheinische Zeitung writings, and implicitly, in the dissertation itself. It is the idealist metaphysic of this theory -- of its principle of humanism -- that supports Marx's quest for the 'unifying truth' of idealism and materialism, a quest that animates and sustains Marx's theoretical endeavours throughout his early writing -- from his doctoral dissertation in 1841 to his Theses on Feuerbach in 1845.

To establish (at the level of problematic) a basic continuity between all of Marx's Early Works is not to deny the theoretical significance of the 1843 Critique as a watershed in Marx's thought. Feuerbach's 'theoretical revolution' involves a twofold revision of Hegel's idealist dialectic: on the one hand, it is 'de-mystified' (given a human subject) to produce the principle of humanism; on the other hand, it is 'inverted' (placed on a real basis to produce the principle of materialism). With respect to the first principle, which Marx adopts at the outset, Marx has necessarily distanced himself from Hegel -- towards Kant vis-a-vis the problem of knowledge (cf. chapter three), and towards Rousseau vis-a-vis the problem of civil society (cf. chapter four). However, it is with respect to the second principle, which Marx adopts in 1843, that Marx is able to settle account with Hegel, formulate

a thorough-going critique of his speculative philosophy, and break with -- or rather, invert -- the idealist problematic of his dialectic.

Marx's Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right clearly testifies to this intellectual process, and in so doing, raises the question of an 'epistemological break' within Marx's thought, a break with Hegel's philosophy of speculative idealism. To raise this question (as Marxists of the Della Volpean school have done) nevertheless begs the question, or poses the problem, of Marx's relation to Feuerbach. As is made clear by our exposition Marx's critique of Hegel's philosophy of the state, his very mode of reflection, the structure of his critique, is thoroughly Feuerbachian. As a point of fact, the principle of materialism from which Marx levels his attack on Hegel's speculative idealism is defined by the very problematic which has governed Marx's thought from the beginning, and that continues to do so in a more explicit form. As the epistemological basis of science, this principle of materialism was well-established in the eighteenth century, especially in 'French theory' (Condillac, Helvetius, Dezamy, Gay, etc.) which, together with Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, is the apparant source of Feuerbach's self-proclaimed 'materialism'. Marx himself, at this level, adds nothing to Feuerbach's theoretical reflections which in the last instance simply go back to a principle defended by Kant and attacked by Hegel. Although the 1843 Critique marks Marx's transition to materialism, and gives rise to serious epistemological and methodological considerations, it is fully caught up in the idealist problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, and -- theoretically speaking -- does not warrant attention as a source for principles which are specifically Marxist.

Chapter six

To support this position, and to develop the thesis connected with it, we trace the dependence of Marx's thought

in the Jahrbücher essays on the problematic of Feuerbach's philosophy of man (chapter six). As we reconstruct it, this problematic forms the basis of a new politics, whose object is the re-appropriation of the human essence, whose method is the reform of public consciousness, and whose medium is a new journal that combines Feuerbach's 'French heart' and 'German head'. In formulating the conditions of this politics we show, first of all, that Marx's critique of communism-socialism parallels that levelled against Democritus in his doctoral dissertation years earlier, namely that it is 'one-sided', neglectful of the 'spiritual' (ideal) side of human life. We then relate the general structure of Marx's political project to a Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis, which -- and this is the leitmotif of our study -- dominates Marx's thought in the form of Feuerbach's theory viz. its ideological schema of a passive heart/active head. In our analysis we demonstrate conclusively that neither On the Jewish Question nor the 1843-44 Introduction are, strictly speaking, Marxist texts; that the prevailing, well-established tendency to see the Introduction as Marx's first formulation of what will become his mature theory of proletarian revolution is (despite Marx's own contrary indications) mistaken; that Marx's thought at this level remains trapped within the schema of an idealist metaphysic (which relates to Feuerbach, and not to Hegel, as frequently asserted); that Marx's theoretical position is formed in tandem with a strong tendency with the neo-Hegelian movement, and is quite consistent with a Left-Hegelian philosophy of (theoretical) praxis.

Chapter seven

In our analysis of Marx's Jahrbücher writings of 1843-44 we point out that Marx's critique of political life inevitably leads him, by extension, to apply Feuerbach's anthropological problematic to the 'economic basis' of (bourgeois) civil society, or, to be exact, to a critique of (bourgeois)

Political Economy. In chapter seven we submit the resulting text -- the Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 -- to a close reading, the symptomatic point of which falls on the fateful encounter within Marx's thought of 'philosophy' (Hegel-F Feuerbach) and 'science' (Political Economy). This encounter, of course, has been the object of much commentary and divergent interpretation. To date, however, we have not found any studies that rigorously pose the essential problem involved: how are the problematics of Hegel and Feuerbach's philosophies related in the specific form of their conjuncture within Marx's thought?

In posing this problem as the focal point of our reading we find that Marx's text gives evidence of an unresolved tension, a theoretical ambiguity, which we trace back to the presence within Marx's thought of two problematics, that of Feuerbach's philosophy of man, and that of Hegel's philosophy of history. In order to clarify Marx's 'philosophical' encounter with Political Economy we bring into a systematic focus the inverse-relation of these two problematics, and expose the philophic problematic of Feuerbach's philosophy and its structure of a positive-critical discourse as Marx's theoretical basis, the point of departure for his critique of Hegel's dialectic. We than analyse the structure of Marx's critique of Political Economy, and of his conception of communism, by reference to principles derived from both Hegel and Feuerbach.

Our investigation of Marx's thought in the 1844 Manuscripts leads us to the following conclusions. The reality of a class struggle, which had haunted Marx's thought as of his journalistic experience in 1842, erupts into his philosophic consciousness early 1844 through his contact in Paris with the working-class and their theorists and ideologues, French socialists and communists. This decisive experience -- the philosophic discovery of the proletariat -- determines a shift in Marx's ideological orientation towards a political position based on the interests and needs of the working-class.

To represent this shift in theory Marx formulates a theory of communism, on the basis of an analysis that combines an ethical discourse on alienated labour with a scientific analysis of the capitalist system. Marx's theoretical position, formed through a simultaneous critique of Hegel and Feuerbach, yields an important discovery reflected in the formation of a new concept, but is beset by the ambiguity of an unresolved problem: how to reconcile the principles of a philosophic critique with those of a scientific analysis. In regards to this problem there is no question of an 'epistemological break' with the philosophic problematic underlying the inversely related philosophies of Hegel and Feuerbach. Despite the fact that Marx moves beyond the horizons of both Hegel and Feuerbach, and that he begins to perceive the reality eluded and distorted by German ideology, Marx's text escapes neither the idealist metaphysic of a philosophic problematic, nor its ideological schema. As a result -- and we address ourselves here to the central polemic underlying our study -- we take issue with the prevailing tendency to view the 1844 Manuscripts as the basis of Marx's philosophy: its principles ultimately derive from Hegel and Feuerbach, and are not specific to Marx; they do not form the theoretical basis of Marx's later economic and historical studies.

Chapter eight

To settle this problem in dispute, the strategic centre of our re-assessment of Marx's early thought falls not on the 1844 Manuscripts but on two polemics (also written in 1844) and a series of cryptic theses hurriedly written by Marx in 1845 for later elaboration.

Of the two polemics at issue we attach a special significance to the first, in which Marx comments on an article written by Arnold Ruge for the Paris Vorwärts. This short, generally disregarded and little appreciated essay, commands this attention in that it records a fundamental break in

Marx's thought with the Hegel of the neo-Hegelian movement, a break not with its underlying problematic but with its ideological schema of theoretical praxis. This break, precipitated by the outbreak of the working-class movement in Germany, forms the basis of a new conception of social revolution -- proletarian self-emancipation -- and, in our interpretation, constitutes the pivotal point of Marx's theoretical formation: the end of a journey that began in 1842, and the beginning of a new direction in theory and politics.

The first tentative steps towards a new conception of history and politics are taken by Marx in an extended polemic against a group of Left-Hegelians with whom Marx once associated, but from which he has increasingly distanced himself: the 'Holy Family' of 'Bauer and Co.'. At the centre of this polemic is a critique of speculative philosophy which, directed against his erstwhile companions in theory, is in truth motivated by the need for Marx to 'settle accounts' with his own 'philosophic conscience', ie., to break away from the pre-suppositions of 'German ideology'. The touchstone of this critique of ideology, whose critical formulation in The Holy Family anticipates its more systematic presentation a year or so later, is the unannounced break which we have located in the Vorwärts article. On the basis of this break, Marx formulates a new concept of 'revolutionary praxis' and reconstructs his theoretical position -- communism -- on the 'logical basis' of eighteenth century French Materialism. In so doing, however, Marx does not yet escape the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's humanism. Indeed, we show how the logical connection between the materialist theorem and the concept of revolutionary praxis, the basis for a new conception of politics, is governed by Feuerbach's problematic. We argue in this connection that Feuerbach's theory of an 'active head-passive heart' which had hitherto governed Marx's epistemology (cf. the relation of conceptual thought, philosophy, to reality) is now (at the level of The Holy Family) simply

applied to the proletariat itself. Having rejected the ideology of Feuerbach's schema, Marx nevertheless retains its problematic of a human essence, and as a result, authorizes the historicist interpretation of Lukács.³⁵ At the same time, however, Marx again raises the question of an unresolved problem: is the necessity of a proletarian revolution commissioned by a philosophic critique of an irrational condition -- a philosophy of praxis -- or by the scientific analysis of a rational process -- a science of history?

To pose this problem takes us right into the heart of another short, ambiguous but illuminating text, the Theses on Feuerbach, which we subject to a double interpretation: on the other hand, the Theses appear to suggest the epistemology of a philosophy of praxis; on the other hand, they point towards the need for an 'epistemological break' -- the 'end of philosophy'. With Marx's concept of revolution ranged against two possible frameworks of reference, a philosophy of praxis and a science of history, the Theses can be seen alternatively as the first 'Marxist' text in which Marx announces the death of philosophy in the scientific study of reality and in political action; or, as the last text of a philosophic past, the final attempt to solve a problem defined by 'philosophy', namely: to constitute the 'unifying truth' of idealism and materialism.

These Theses do indeed raise rather than settle the question in dispute, although our antithetical presentation of their ambiguity has its risks. To settle this question, the question of an 'epistemological break', and to conclude thereby our dissertation, we turn to another text, The German Ideology, where Marx himself clears up any ambiguity.

³⁵Cf. above pp.3-4. In effect, our position is that the historicist -humanist interpretation of Marx's thought has as its centre of reference The Holy Family.

Chapter nine

Our investigation of Marx's thought clearly supports the thesis suggested by Althusser to the effect that in The German Ideology Marx makes a thorough-going break with the philosophic problematic of his Early Works and establishes the theoretical principles of a new problematic, the science of history. To focus the essential conditions of this 'break', which has both an epistemological and a methodological dimension, first of all we pose the problem confronted by Marx in the presuppositions of 'German ideology', presuppositions that bind both Hegel's Philosophy of History and its inverted form, Feuerbach's Philosophy of Man, to the metaphysic of an idealist dialectic. Secondly, we examine Marx's critique of ideology -- of 'philosophy' as ideology -- to record Marx's attempt to set up the study of history on a new basis: the empirical premises of a positive science, Historical Materialism. Thirdly, we show that on this new basis Marx breaks with the epistemology of a human essence, and, in consequence, with all analytical methods that have as their point of departure, their ultimate point of reference, the concept of 'Man'. In effect, we argue that Marx finally breaks with the philosophic problematic of his early thought to establish the principles of a new science. Fourthly, we examine the theory of ideology which Marx formulates with reference to these principles, and applies to the study of history, to conclude that there is no longer any question of a Hegelian dialectic -- nor of its inverted form, a Feuerbachian dialectic; that Marx's new conception of history and politics breaks with the principles of a philosophic dialectic, and establishes the basis for new principles, a new method. Fifthly, we establish the theoretical implications of this break, and settle the question of Marxian dialectic vis-à-vis Hegel and Feuerbach, with respect to Marx's theory of the state and his theory of a communist revolution. Lastly, with reference to the structure of our general argument, we address the essential problem under-

lying our study, namely that of the relationship between Marxism and the working-class. Although we cannot settle this problem, and indeed at the level of The German Ideology the problem cannot even be properly posed, we firmly establish as a point of principle that the search for Marx's philosophy should not be directed at Marx's Early Works, but at his Mature Works. Although Marx himself, unlike Hegel and Feuerbach, did not systematize the theoretical principles of his philosophy a critical reading of The German Ideology, supported by our investigation of Marx's theoretical formation at least shows us where to look, or, rather, where not to look.

History has not yet absolved us from this task.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PHILOSOPHIC PROBLEMATIC OF THE IDEALIST DIALECTIC

The problem of Marx's relation to Hegel and Kant, the question of his dependence on the idealist problematic of their philosophies, is a very complex one, and indeed we cannot hope to do it justice within the scope of our present study. Nevertheless, it is impossible to dispel the theoretical confusion that results from attempts to push Marx back into Hegel without a clear understanding of what is at stake. To address this problem, and at the same time to set up a centre of reference for our investigation of Marx's thought, we will attempt a summary exposition of the philosophic problematic of German Idealism, a theoretical system unified by the concept of freedom, and constituted by Kant and Hegel's opposed solutions to the problem of knowledge -- the dialectic of reason.¹ Without addressing ourselves to the many problems of the philosophical interpretation of Kant and Hegel's works, we will reconstruct the idealist problematic of the concept of freedom as the framework for Marx's early theoretical reflections, the basis of a critical theory within whose space Marx thinks all of his problems and their solutions, but with which he will eventually break as the condition of a scientific study of history.

¹This summary exposition is a highly compressed form of an extended three-part study completed by this writer as the basis for my dissertation: 'Kant and Hegel on the Problem of Knowledge: The Dialectic of Reason'; 'Hegel on the Problem of Modern Civil Society'; 'The Hegelian Problematic: Reason in History' (unpublished, McMaster University, 1973-74).

THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

The central problem underlying modern philosophy, the pivotal point from which Kant and Hegel's thought develop, is the problem of knowledge: to secure a valid relation of unity between thought and being -- or, as otherwise formulated, between reason and reality, mind and matter, spirit and nature, freedom and necessity. As seen with great lucidity by Hegel, this problem of knowledge has its basic formulation in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and centres on a clash of two principles -- idealism, materialism -- that rises out of a dispute between Rationalism and Empiricism, both of which assume that the natural processes of the real world are governed by an 'objective reason' of universal and necessary relations, and that generally speaking man admits of a 'subjective reason', a natural faculty by which potentially he can grasp the nature of the world, understand its essential structure, and ascertain its laws. At the basis of this dispute is a different conception of the origins of knowledge. For the Rationalists, the 'Understanding' can grasp the true nature of reality when it is purged of 'sensuousness', ie., with 'pure reflection' which is to regress from sense-experience upon the innate concepts of the mind. For the Empiricists, on the contrary, knowledge proceeds not from innate concepts but from sense-perception, ie., from an 'outer experience' of a pre-given world.²

²Our discussion of this problem of knowledge centres on Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965) and G.W.H. Hegel, The Logic, translated from The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences by W. Wallace (London: Oxford University Press, 1972). Hereinafter, the two works respectively referred to as CPR and Enc.L. Although the dispute between Rationalism and Empiricism has many points of reference (notably in Hegel's History of Philosophy, 111, and Enc.L., chapters three and four)

Within the framework of this analysis both conceptions of knowledge are inversely-related and governed by a shared principle of 'truth'; that of an immediate, abstract identity. Either the particulars of sense are subsumed under a presupposed universal, and 'being' is collapsed into 'thought', or vice versa, the universal is abstracted from objects of sense and 'thought' is collapsed into 'being'.³ In the first case, we have a rationalist metaphysic which grounds the idealist proposition that the sense-world seems to be, but is not; and that God and God alone is the truth.⁴ It does so by suggesting the power of thought to know 'all' reality, ie., to grasp the 'Absolute' -- the inner unity of the finite and the infinite, and as such, the 'totality' of the subject-object relation. In the second case, we have an empiricist anti-metaphysic which denies the speculative power of thought to extend itself beyond experience, and as a consequence, forms a scepticism of metaphysical speculation.

The problem of knowledge here posed is as follows. On the one hand, since epistemology has to explain the origin of knowledge, the formation of concepts, it cannot take knowledge as pre-given, but must go back to the conditions from which it is produced: sense-perception and reflective thought. In this sense, epistemology is necessarily a 'theory of elements' where thought is 'one of the two', and is conditioned by the

our study takes its inspiration from the investigations of Lucio Colletti in Marxism and Hegel (London: NLB, 1973).

³Cf. Hegel's reconstruction of the first two 'attitudes of thought to objectivity' (Enc.L., ch.3-4) wherein he assimilates Rationalism to Empiricism with respect to their method of demonstration, whose canons of procedure are represented in the modus operandi of the scientific method.

⁴Ibid., pp.139, 178.

'other' external to it: there can be no thought unless an object to be thought is pre-given. On the other hand, inasmuch as the stipulation of conditions in which knowledge is produced is itself an act of thought, that which at first appears to place limits on thought reveals itself to be a condition imposed by thought for itself: there can be no thought, or consciousness of an object, except by means of the self-consciousness of the Subject. Far from being just 'one of two', thought appears as the 'totality' of the relationship, and as such, a 'self-actualizing universal'. In the first case, when epistemology purports to be an enquiry into the genesis of knowledge, it has to view concepts as a resultant, a point of arrival dependent on extra-logical conditions. Unless it is to be a form of immediate knowledge, a faith, knowledge must be able to manifest itself at the end of a process -- from 'being' to 'thought'. This is to say, the concept must be mediated and conditioned by experience. To think the world philosophy must presuppose its 'other', which is to say, philosophy owes its origin to experience. In the second case, just the reverse: since the very attempt to explain the thought-process implies an act of thought, concepts are seen in terms of an 'original organic unity' that is essential to them. As a result, the concept is a prius, and epistemology, despite itself, presents us with the priority not of real conditions, but of the thought that articulates them. To think the world, philosophy thus presupposes not its 'other' but itself, the apriori concept, the Idea. Knowledge is already given (prior to experience), and mediation and development serves only to acquire consciousness of what already exists.⁵

⁵Cf. Hegel's subheading 12, Enc.L., p.19, in which he traces out this problematic.

This 'problem' is the symptomatic point around which Kant and Hegel's thought develops. The problem: is thought one of two elements, and as such, derived from and conditioned by experience? Or is it the totality of the relationship, and as such, pre-given? Underlying this problem is the clash of two principles. The first holds that since all explanation is a scire per causas any theory that proposes to explain knowledge cannot do other than stipulate limiting conditions placed on thought, i.e., apply to thought the principle of causality. Its presupposition: the heterogeneity of thought and being, and the dependence of the former on the latter. The second principle holds that since thought is 'subjectivity', and therefore a spontaneous activity, it is irreducible to causal explanation. Its presupposition: the identity of thought and being, with an essential dependence of the latter on the former. The first principle, which defends the priority of real conditions, establishes the epistemological basis of materialism: the truth of the finite is its materiality (the 'necessity of being').⁶ The second principle, which defends the priority of an original thought, establishes the epistemological basis of idealism: 'the truth of the finite is ... its ideality' (the 'freedom of thought').⁷

Kant's Solution to the Problem of Knowledge

Both of these principles, the freedom of thought and the necessity of being, have their corresponding dogmas, the one given by Rationalism, the other by Empiricism.⁸ It is in

⁶Enc.L., p.81.

⁷Enc.L., p.178.

⁸According to Hegel (who here follows Fichte and will later be followed by Feuerbach) the relationship between Rationalism and Idealism on the one hand, and Empiricism and Materialism on the other, is a matter of 'consistent development'

his attempt to reconcile these opposed principles, to rescue them from their corresponding dogmas, that Kant confronts the problem of knowledge in the form of a Critical Question: How can the mind be both receptive in relation to the 'matter' of sense (the reality of a pre-given world) and active in relation to the power of thought to determine apriori the 'appearance' of this reality?⁹ This problem, which guides Kant's enquiry into the limits of Understanding, is found at the very centre of Kant's Critical Theory, the essential supports of which can be found in section two of the Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding. Its basic doctrine: the object of knowledge is not reality as it is in itself, but rather, its phenomenal appearance, a synthetic representation (thought construct) subject to apriori forms of intuition and categories of Understanding. In opposition to Empiricism in general, and Hume in particular, Kant argues that the source of 'unity', the 'objective' element in experience, cannot arise from experience, but is constituted by the formative activity of the Understanding whose 'categories prescribe laws apriori to appearances, and therefore to nature, the sum of all appearances'.¹⁰

Kant's argument is clear enough. On the one hand, the Transcendental Aesthetic points to the existence of a self-subsistent world, the objective reality of which affects our senses with something which is transformed into a synthetic (unified) representation by the apriori forms of empirical intuition. The implication is that to have knowledge one must refer thought back to its 'other', an other -- NB -- whose heterogeneity is qualitative and not formal, transcendental and not merely logical. On the other hand, the Transcendental

(cf. Enc.L., p.118).

⁹CPR, p.93.

¹⁰CPR, p.172.

Deduction confirms the power of thought to determine the 'objective' form of experience, reality not as it is in itself, but as it appears to us. The Understanding is both constructive of reality, and conditioned, limited by a reality external to it. In agreement with the rationalists Kant insists that the mind is active, not merely a tabula rasa. At the same time, however, the empiricists are correct in holding that forms without content, ie. , mere thoughts, determine neither reality nor knowledge.¹¹ The reason that both Rationalism and Empiricism failed to recognize that knowledge requires both an active faculty of concept-formation (Understanding) and a receptive faculty of perception (sensibility) is that they viewed knowledge in an immediate relation to 'things-in-themselves', and as a consequence, either 'sensualized' thought or 'intellectualized' sense-data (which is to treat them as phenomena of an inner essence).¹² Operative in either case is an a-critical confusion of thought and being: to treat being as a predicate of thought, or conversely, thought as a predicate of being. Against this a-critical confusion Kant insists that 'being' is always something 'more' in relation to thought. Applying only to the appearance of phenomena, knowledge is conditioned by a world beyond experience and therefore indeterminate and unknowable. The world formed and understood by the mind is but the 'representation of things which are unknown...in themselves'.¹³ As 'appearances, ie., mere

¹¹CPR, pp.93, 265.

¹²CPR, pp.276-96, Appendix: 'On Concepts of Reflection' Kant's-centres of reference are Locke and Leibniz. As to the latter Kant speaks of the 'strange presumption' by which the concept is formed via an abstraction from its 'many necessary conditions of intuition', which are then 'treated as not being there at all...[allowing nothing] to the thing beyond what is contained in the concept' (CPR, p.289).

¹³CPR, p.173.

representations' these phenomena 'have no independent existence outside our thought'.¹⁴

Kant's argument can be summed up simply: the formative activity of Understanding determines the world as it appears to us, but not its real substratum which is beyond experience and thus beyond knowledge. On the one hand, thought has an essential function in constituting the 'objective' element of experience, viz. a consciousness of universal and necessary relations in reality. On the other hand, as Hegel observes (or rather, laments): 'the Kantian objectivity of thought... are still only thoughts and separated from the thing-in-itself'.¹⁵ Hegel's point is clear enough. As an a priori constituent of experience, a Kantian 'objectivity' refers to the universality and necessity of the 'form' of thought, which is the form of the world as it appears to us. Thought may have (under conditions of knowledge) an 'objective reference' to reality, but it cannot overcome its 'otherness'. In spite of its 'objectivity' thought is a 'purely subjective act'. As one element within the ensemble of experience its unity does not encompass 'all' of reality, which is to say, it is never more than one side of the 'totality'.¹⁶

In this refusal to extend thought beyond the field of possible experience Kant adopts what Hegel will call the 'subjective' point of view, which stipulates limits beyond which thought cannot go. In doing so -- and this is the key to our

¹⁴CPR, p.439.

¹⁵Enc.L, par.41, Z.2.

¹⁶The force of Kant's position is clear, despite its frequent misinterpretation. Kant's entire discussion refers to the nature of the thought-process, the process of scientific abstraction, a process obviously restricted to thought, viz. the elaboration of percepts and intuitive representations into concepts by the application of the rules of logical judgement, which are indeed a priori to experience.

interpretation of Kant's position -- he effectively upholds the principle of materialism (the minimum basis for an epistemology of science). At the same time he thereby poses for German Idealism its fundamental problem: to remove the limiting conditions placed on thought, a precondition for realizing 'the true objectivity of thought' which 'lies in the fact that thoughts are not merely our thoughts, but...the essence of things, and of what is objective in general.'¹⁷

Kant's Theory of Reason

In stipulating extreme limits for knowledge Kant rejects the metaphysical principle of an identity of opposites; based on the a-critical reduction of the 'thought-being' relation into a simple relationship of concepts within thought.¹⁸ The real world given in empirical intuition constitutes the substratum of a logical judgement, and is irreducible to it. As put by Feuerbach, and taken up by Marx, the concept does not generate itself, which is to exist as thinking outside the necessary conditions of intuition. It is, rather, the outcome of a process in which percepts and their representations are synthesised into the unity of their concept, which, according to Kant, is to represent the object-world as a system of sense-data unified by laws common to all human experience. The 'unity' of this 'appearance' is secured by means of the logical rules of judgement (categories of Understanding) which constitute the a priori principles of all science.

¹⁷Loc.cit.

¹⁸Cf. Kant's critique of the Ontological Argument, founded on the irresolvability of existence into a mere concept, which is rescued by Marx from Schelling's criticism of it in a note to his Doctoral Dissertation in a manner highly suggestive of Feuerbach. This theme forms a central leitmotif of our study, and can be traced from chapter three below, through our reconstruction of Feuerbach's philosophy in chapter five, to our various reformulations of Marx's critique of

Since the categories of Understanding determine merely the way the world appears to us, and since their application is clearly restricted to the empirical, the element of 'unity' within experience, ie., the logical universal, is clearly not without limits. Nevertheless, to restrict knowledge to the empirical suggests the possibility of thinking beyond its limits. Indeed, says Kant, 'to think and to know an object are ...by no means the same thing'.¹⁹ This form of thought, which does not apply itself to experience, but rather directs the Understanding beyond it, Kant calls 'Reason'.²⁰ The function of this reasoning capacity is to direct the Understanding towards a focus imaginarius, a point marked out by the convergence of all its rules so as to give its concepts the greatest (possible) unity combined with the greatest (possible) extension.²¹ In this, Reason has its legitimate function as a canon of knowledge. However, in its speculative demand for knowledge of 'all' reality, Reason seeks to free the concepts of Understanding from its extreme limits by extending them beyond the empirical via a process of 'dialectical inference'. The result, Kant immediately adds, is an 'illusion', a metaphysical abstraction: the ideal of an unconditioned unity, the Absolute. This metaphysical illusion of pure reason, resting on dialectical inference, is produced by an illegitimate (transcendental) use of the categories as an organon of knowledge -- 'to take the subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts...for an objective necessity in the determination of things in themselves',²² -- rather than as a canon. In

Hegel's dialectic in chapters three to nine.

¹⁹CPR, p.161.

²⁰CPR, pp.300ff.

²¹CPR, p.533.

²²CPR, p.299.

this transcendental application (the dialectic of reason) the categories of Understanding are extended towards the 'absolute totality of conditions' to which 'no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience'.²³ By trying to provide knowledge of what lies beyond experience, Reason 'oversteps its extreme limits, producing only antinomies, and an ideal without reality'.²⁴ The 'absolute whole of appearance' thus remains 'only an Idea', a 'dialectical illusion', which 'consists in treating the subjective condition of thinking as being knowledge of the object'.²⁵

With Kant's discovery of this 'logic of illusion', a dialectic of reason (pairs of opposed, mutually conflicting synthetic a priori propositions), his enquiry into the extreme limits of (theoretical) Understanding comes to a head. The symptomatic point of this enquiry falls on the third antinomy of pure reason, which rises in the simultaneous recognition of the 'necessity of nature' and the 'freedom of will' that appears to contradict it.²⁶ From the point of view of science there is no freedom: the determinism of natural law is a prius with respect to the Understanding, and is an essential principle of scientific explanation. From the point of view of the Subject, however, the problem is not to understand but to act, which requires the possibility of self-determination, an ideal causality that presupposes 'freedom of will'.²⁷

²³ CPR, p.318.

²⁴ CPR, p.319.

²⁵ CPR, p.361.

²⁶ CPR, pp.464-79.

²⁷ CPR, pp.464-5.

How does Kant confront this problem? Since philosophy 'cannot give up the concept of nature any more than that of freedom' it must 'assume that no real contradiction will be found!'²⁸ Rationalists and Empiricists confronted this apparent contradiction by recognizing 'acts of freedom' as a subjective appearance but not as a principle of explanation: the mind is free, but nature is subject to necessity.²⁹ This rejection of teleological explanation, the principle of classical metaphysics, in favour of an efficient causality threatens the principle of subjectivity (the 'dialectic of human activity'), a problem Kant eludes by seeing it as falsely posed: the contradiction only arises as a 'dialectical illusion' (to which one should not ascribe reality). To escape this alleged contradiction of a Subject which seems to be free but is yet subject to law Kant conceives of the Subject as free in a different sense than when it submits to the laws of nature. Here we have the heart of Kant's solution, which is to conceive of the problem as a relation between two objects of knowledge -- two worlds -- one of which is (phenomena) and the other of which is not but ought to be (noumena). In relation to these two worlds, man appears in two senses: as homo noumenon, an active Subject, and as such, an absolute end in himself; and as homo phenomena, subject to the causality of natural law.

This raises the question: How can man be looked at in these two senses? Kant answers:

²⁸Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, trans. by H.J. Paton (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp.123-31.

²⁹Cf. Enc.L. par 35.

[by recognizing that] knowledge may be related to its object ...either as merely determining it and its concept (which must be supplied from elsewhere) or as also making it actual. The former is theoretical, the latter, practical knowledge of reason. 30

The theoretical and practical functions of reason establish man in two different relations to the world, which in turn allows man to be looked at in two different senses. The theoretical function of reason, as pointed out, is to direct the understanding towards an ideal unity beyond experience -- to conceive of the 'logical possibility' of freedom ('I can not know [but] I can yet think freedom').³¹ In this function, however, reason 'cannot procure reality for its ideas; it would thereby overstep its extreme limits, producing only antinomies and an ideal without reality'.³² Nevertheless, although freedom 'is only an idea', and 'its objective reality is itself doubtful' it is established as a 'logical possibility' in that it is not contradicted by the laws of nature.³³ To move towards the 'real possibility' of freedom Kant turns from reason in its theoretical function to reason in its practical function. For the Practical Reason the problem is no longer to produce the concept of freedom, but to 'bring about its existence', to actualize it as objectively real. No longer a question of theoretical understanding, in relation to which reason produces only illusions, reason finds its true and legitimate function in practical activity.³⁴

³⁰CPR, p.18. Here and always emphasis is specifically added by writer unless otherwise stated.

³¹CPR, p.28.

³²CPR, p.319.

³³CPR, pp.478-9.

³⁴Cf. Groundwork, p.358: 'a rational being who is con-

Kant grounds the Practical Reason on the postulate of a free will, presupposed as the property of all individuals conceived ideally as rational beings.³⁵ The basic premise of Kant's 'practical concept' is man as homo noumenon: the rational will which determines itself according to universal law, as prescribed a priori by reason for freedom. This a priori law, prescribed as a subjective maxim for action, is that of the unconditional (categorical) necessity of the moral imperative: to act 'as if according to a universal law'.³⁶

Thus does Kant formulate the problematic of 'rational action', as set by the antinomy of freedom and necessity, respectively presupposed by morality and science. On the one

scious of a causality through reason...must of necessity make it practically, ie., in Idea, the condition of all his voluntary actions'. Here we have the thesis of the primacy of the Practical Reason over the Theoretical, a thesis which Hegel recapitulates as the second form of the Idea in its march towards the Absolute, but which Lenin and many other Marxists (and non-Marxists) mistakenly attribute to Hegel himself.

³⁵Groundwork, pp.114ff. Kant's 'practical' (non-deuced) concept of freedom is justified, though not proven empirically, by the Critique of Pure Reason. Although free will, and the necessity of the moral imperative, are taken by Kant as necessary postulates, they are beyond the power of human reason to theoretically grasp. Their intelligibility, says Kant, 'is precisely the problem we cannot solve' (ibid., p.130). In short, Kant's Practical Reason is based on the postulate of freedom and not on his Critique of Pure Reason. As a result, it is quite possible, as we do, to treat the two Critiques in isolation, and to refer (in our reference for Marx's thought) only to a cornerstone argument of the Critique of Pure Reason.

³⁶Kant, Philosophy of Law, Introduction, par.3, as quoted by Hegel in The Philosophy of Right (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), par.33. Cf. Groundwork, pp.87-8.

hand, if there is to be rational knowledge (scientific understanding) the object must be already determinate in itself. Only that which is pre-given can be determined reflectively by thought. Our actions, as events in the world we know, must be as completely determined as everything else ('sensible in its effects'). On the other hand, action presupposes free will, the corollary of which is that the world that we determine in action must be indeterminate, capable of being given a form. We can only know a determinate world; we can only act in an indeterminate world. Therefore, if action is real, if freedom is not a mere illusion, the world in which we act must be unknowable in itself. The merely possible, the non-existent, ie., the future (a field of possibility) cannot be known. Only the past (a field of actuality) is fully determined, and thus knowable.

Thus Kant resolves the antinomy of freedom. With the problem conceived of as a relation between a world which is and a world which is not but ought to be, we have a theoretical determination of the past (discovery of the necessary conditions of its appearance) and the practical determination of the future (action in the real world). With man conceived in both a theoretical and a practical relation to the world one can with Kant think without contradiction of man in two different senses: as an active subject intelligible in the freedom of his action (conceived in relation to a universal law experienced as inner necessity); and as homo phenomenon, sensible in the effects of his action (understood in relation to the laws of nature experienced as external necessity).

To appreciate Kant's position it should be emphasised that science and morality have a different jurisdiction over the same territory of experience, which is to say, even though man can understand the past and reason about the future he is bound to an inescapable present as the point of his action,

which is to actualize what apart from action is merely possible. It is in the attempt to think the conditions of this action that Kant formulates as the basis of his position a theory of morality: the individual, in the subjectivity of his will, and in a practical relation to the world, confronts his material existence with an inner universal (moral law). Within the problematic of this theory the problem posed is to resolve a tension between two possible modes of action: in relation to 'necessity' (in dependence on Desire) and in relation to 'freedom' (out of conformity to moral law). The moral struggle here adduced is resolved when the individual will is in harmony with the universal, ie., when it becomes what it ought to be (rational).³⁷

It is in this theory of morality that one can find the essential condition of Kant's solution to the problem of freedom, and (with Hegel) confront the limits of his thought. The position that emerges from Hegel's various and trenchant critiques of Kant's theory of morality is somewhat as follows.³⁸ That man ought to be moral (in identity with his concept) is postulated as a subjective unity which necessarily confronts the objectivity of the real as external to it. The unity of the Idea of the Good (what ought to be) and the Idea of the True (what is) is an 'absolute postulate, but it is no more than a postulate, ie., the absolute afflicted with subjectivity'.³⁹ Presupposing the duality it would solve, Kant's solution displaces the unity of reason into an indeterminate beyond. The solution (unity) remains ever an inexistent thought, an Ought based on the formal universality of a subjective ideal. It escapes the present, Hegel concludes, as an impotent Ought, surrendering to an anticipated but never con-

³⁷Groundwork, p.69. Cf. Kant's note.

³⁸Cf. Hegel's The Science of Logic (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), p.820; The Phenomenology of Mind (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), ch.VI.C.a ; Philosophy of Right (New York:

summed future.

Kant's Idea of Organic Unity

Kant himself was aware of the problem left unresolved in his first two critiques, viz. 'the possibility of a causality through freedom in harmony with the universal law of natural necessity'.⁴⁰ It is in his third critique, that of Judgement, that Kant attempts to reconcile the positions of science and morality, and, in effect, to conceive of reality as a unity of opposites, which is to meet Hegel's 'demand that the Idea of unity...be established not as a beyond but as a present'.⁴¹ It is in Kant's remarks on this 'postulated harmony of nature and free purpose' that Hegel sees Kant's most significant contribution to philosophy (ie., idealism): 'It is in these aperçus alone that the Kantian philosophy rises to the speculative height'.⁴² In these remarks, Hegel continues, Kant 'has put before us the Idea' which 'experience presents...in the products of organic nature', and intuition apprehends in the 'present reality of living organisms and of the beautiful in art'.⁴³ Reality, in this aesthetic intuition, is given as an organic whole in which an immanent end becomes manifest in the ideal totality of its conditions. And the unity of the Idea emerges not in a theoretical understanding of a determinate past, nor in a reasoning about an indeterminate future, but as an immediate intuition of the present as an organic whole, the manifestation of a realized ideal.

Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.75ff. These works respectively referred to hereinafter as Logic, PM, PR.

³⁹Logic, p.820.

⁴⁰CPR, p.467.

⁴¹History of Philosophy, 111, p.464.

⁴²Enc.L., p.112.

⁴³Enc.L., pp.112-3.

The significance of Kant's aesthetic concept of teleological judgement is that it 'radically transforms the relation which the Understanding institutes between means and ends, between subjectivity and objectivity'.⁴⁴ In the concept of a 'concrete unity' Kant establishes a different relation between the universal and the particular than that on which the theories of the Pure and Practical Reason are founded.⁴⁵ Recalling the two preconditions of unity there are two polar positions possible: either thought conditions (idealism) or it is conditioned (materialism). In his Critique of Pure Reason Kant adopts the first position, defending it with the concept of an 'original unity of apperception'. But, says Hegel, this recognition is only formal in that it is restricted to the subjectivity of thought, limited by the independent reality of the 'thing-in-itself'. In effect, says Hegel (and we agree with him), Kant assumes the first position, but proves the second: that thought is a conditioned, and thus 'abstract' (one side of the 'totality'). Nonetheless, Hegel continues, Kant's teleological judgement at least 'gave the Idea an intellectual expression', and 'led the mind to grasp and think the concrete Idea'.⁴⁶ Kant's problem was that though he intuited the Idea, and gave it an intellectual expression, he was unwilling to think it. In treating the Idea as 'only a principle of criticism, purely personal to our understanding', Kant allows the possibility of nature's conformity to freedom while maintaining an irreducible distinction between ideality as thought and reality as known. By describing 'harmony...as merely subjective, something which merely ought to be, and which ...is not real' Kant's grasp of Reason is 'abstract', ie., within one aspect

⁴⁴Enc.L., p.114.

⁴⁵Enc.L., p.113.

⁴⁶Enc.L., p.113.

of the totality.⁴⁷ As a consequence, the unity which Hegel would have an 'absolute, self-conscious actuality' escapes reality as a mere thought, an ought to be.

The Limits Removed: Fichte's Philosophy of Praxis

The basic problem confronted by Kant was that of the problem of knowledge. On the one hand, the possibility of thought requires a pre-given object, and knowledge stipulates limiting conditions for thought. This establishes the scientific standpoint in which knowledge proceeds 'according to necessity' (from being to thought), and the concept emerges as a conditioned, derived by applying to thought the principle of causality. On the other hand, consciousness of a pre-given object requires an objective unity of self-consciousness, which establishes the priority not of real conditions but of the thought that articulates them. This establishes the standpoint of Reason in which knowledge proceeds 'according to freedom' (from thought to being), and the concept emerges as an unconditioned universal whose ideality constitutes the 'ground of being'. This problem, posed by Kant within the framework of the subject-object relation, together with the conditions of Kant's solution, becomes the pivotal point for the restoration of an idealist metaphysic by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. It also represents the point of their departure away from Kant.

Kant's solution, as we have constructed it, was to recognize limiting conditions for thought, but yet conceive it as the 'totality' of the subject-object relation; and to stress the active side of this relation: to ground knowledge in the formative activity of the Understanding, and freedom in man's practical reason (ie., moral will). The 'truth' of Kant's solution -- as conceived by both Fichte and Hegel -- is the principle of the Subject's essential freedom, ie., of

⁴⁷ Enc.L., pp.114-5.

the power of thought to determine its own reality. Kant's reflection on this truth, however, is inconsistent. In relation to thought proper, man's theoretical reason, Kant confirms the scientific standpoint in which knowledge is conditioned by and limited to experience. In relation to the thinking will, man's practical reason, Kant confirms the standpoint of philosophy in which knowledge proceeds from an unconditioned, self-actualizing universal. As Hegel puts it: 'the free self-determination which Kant denied to the speculative, he has expressly vindicated for the practical reason'.⁴⁸

The problem with Kant's solution (from the perspective of speculative, ie., metaphysical, idealism) is that both the 'formal unity of theoretical understanding and the 'inward' unity of practical reason are 'afflicted with subjectivity'. This is to say, both modalities of Reason (thought, will) confront the objectivity of the real world as external to it. This returns us to Hegel's complaint that the duality of the subjective and the objective, supported by Kant's recognition of a reality beyond knowledge, does not realize the 'true objectivity of thought': 'If we are to believe the Critical Philosophy, thought is subjective, and its ultimate...mode is abstract universality or formal identity'.⁴⁹ This 'subjectivity of knowledge' -- Kant's 'chief thought' -- is responsible for 'the sickness of our time which is to despair of ever knowing more than something subjective'.⁵⁰ By admitting the existence of a 'thing-in-itself' Kant places limits on the power of thought, which is

⁴⁸Enc.L., p.111.

⁴⁹Enc.L., p.121.

⁵⁰Enc.L., p.44.

to deny the reality of reason, and thereby, to create for German Idealism its basic problem: to restore the power of speculative thought and revive among the German people a consciousness of Reason. Its precondition: to remove the limiting conditions placed by Kant on thought; to see these limits as self-imposed by thought as a condition for its own development.

The first to confront this problem as his philosophical project was J.G.Fichte.⁵¹ In Fichte's conception of philosophy as science, philosophy must be a logically unified system of propositions derived from one 'first and absolutely unconditioned fundamental principle'. Accordingly, Fichte confronts Kant's problem of knowledge as a theoretical enquiry into the ultimate ground of experience which, as Kant has shown, is characterized by a twofold system of representations accompanied by corresponding 'feelings' of freedom and necessity. With reference to these representations and their corresponding feelings Fichte recognizes two fundamental, antithetical forms of philosophy: that of 'necessity' ('dogmatism' or materialism) and that of 'freedom' (idealism), neither of which is able to theoretically refute the other. With this antithetic, produced in strict theoretical deduction, Fichte faces the question: how to establish the ultimate ground of experience, the condition of its unity? Fichte's response: to turn from a theoretical deduction from a priori principles to a practical deduction based on an 'intellectual intuition' grounded in the consciousness of moral law, of 'ego' as self-activity and freedom.

⁵¹The following account, supported by a close reading of Fichte's Science of Knowledge, ed. & trans. by Peter Heath and John Lachs (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1970), draws upon Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, vol.7 (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965).

Kant had admitted an intuition produced by the creative power of the productive imagination but had allowed it only a heuristic function as a regulative principle. According to Fichte, however, Kant relied on, and should have admitted, the use of an 'intellectual intuition' when he established the categorical imperative of a practical reason grounded in the consciousness of moral law. This intuition, grounded in moral experience, underlies Fichte's enquiry into the ultimate condition of unity, and becomes the basis of his philosophy. Consistent with Kant's unity of apperception, Fichte's 'transcendental reflection' does not derive a conclusion from premises (in theoretical deduction) but proceeds from the objective unity of self-consciousness which yields as a condition of its unity, an intuitive grasp of 'pure ego', an infinite, unlimited activity, an endless striving towards consciousness of its own freedom.

This intuition, given in transcendental reflection, of an Absolute Ego as the ultimate ground of the unity in experience, provides Fichte with the basic proposition of his philosophy: ego posits itself (as self-identical, and therefore, as all reality). Although Fichte's 'practical deduction' from this first principle is notoriously difficult to trace out, it is clear enough that the ground of the subject-object relation is the universal reason of an Absolute Ego; and that in consequence, he formulates not only a phenomenology of consciousness but also an idealist metaphysic. In doing so, in eliminating Kant's 'thing-in-itself', Fichte transforms Kant's Critical Philosophy into pure idealism, a metaphysic of moral action. In the process, Fichte rescues speculative thought from the Enlightenment's concentration on the critical, analytical and scientific understanding, and draws philosophy towards the romantic exaltation of the power of the productive imagination, the role of feeling and intuition, and its longing for the infinite. With Kant's theory of knowledge inflated into an idealist metaphy-

sic of reality, the creative power of thought becomes absolute, and philosophy is restored to itself.

The Principle of German Idealism

In rescuing the principle of idealism from Kant's agnosticism, Fichte sets up for Hegel an antithetic for Spinoza's conception of the Absolute: from a metaphysic of 'substance' (in a relation of necessity) to one of 'subject' (in a relation of freedom).⁵² Indeed, for Hegel, the problem of the realization of idealism directly coincides with such a reformulation of Spinoza's thought.⁵³ The antithetic in question: whereas Spinoza reduced the ideality of thought to a subjective appearance in the exhaltation of the necessity of the whole, Fichte so reduced the reality of objective conditions in the exhaltation of the freedom of the Subject. The antithetic of these two conceptions forms the framework of Hegel's concept of freedom. While Spinoza conceives of freedom, a universal relation of an immanent force, as the rational self-determination of the whole, and Fichte maintains that freedom can only be predicated of a self-conscious Subject, the freedom of the thinking will, Hegel combines the two: freedom as self-conscious, rational self-determination of a spiritual whole, an ideal totality.

This principle underlies the diverse forms of idealism developed by Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel -- in a word, by the school of German Idealism. Formulated as a philosophy of theoretical praxis, and understood as the activity of consciousness or Spirit as it manifests its essential freedom,

⁵²Cf. PM, Preface, pp, 80, 802, and in general. Like the PM, Logic reconstructs this process in great detail.

⁵³Cf. History of Philosophy, 111, p.283: '...The fact is that Spinoza is made a testing-point in modern philosophy,

the diverse forms of idealism re-affirm the principle grounded in Kant's presentation of the Subject as the axis both of knowledge and of moral action. To realize this principle Idealism had only to reject Kant's doctrine of the 'thing-in-itself' whose 'otherness' limited the essential activity of the Subject. The task was essentially accomplished by Fichte in a conception of Ego that recognizes only self-imposed limits as a condition for its self-realization. In Hegel's view, however, neither Fichte nor Schelling after him derived from Kant's principle its adequate conclusion, which is to grasp the Absolute as a concrete 'unity-in-difference'; to see the terms in opposition (thought, being) in relation to a unity that encompasses them. In this unity, the truth of Absolute Reason, which has been successively postulated as an immediate identity (Descartes, Leibniz), theoretically denied (Kant), and intuited (Fichte, Schelling), is now finally thought, i.e., established both at its own level and in its own element.⁵⁴ In this element, Absolute Reason finds its truth not in the one-sided standpoints of science and morality, but in the aesthetic-historical standpoint of a realized ideal, which is that 'reason is in the world -- in other words, with actuality'.⁵⁵

Hegel's Critique of Understanding

In this standpoint of a realized ideal, Hegel trans-

so that it may really be said: you are either a Spinozist or not a philosopher at all'. Also ibid., pp.257-8.

⁵⁴ Cf. Hegel's reconstruction of the dialectic of the Idea, as a history and as a system, in PM and Logic. The entire process is compressed in the following: 'Philosophy takes experience...as its point of departure... [and] proceeds in such a way so as to rise...to its own pure and adulated element [thought]...' (Enc.L., p.19).

⁵⁵ Enc.L., p.10.

forms the logical inclusion of opposites that is Reason into the very principle of idealism, the point of view that denies that things and the finite world have true reality, and that regards Reason as 'all reality'.⁵⁶ The principle of this idealism is clearly based on a metaphysic, the identity of thought and being, with which Hegel restores the philosophic standpoint of seventeenth century Rationalism beaten off the field by the French Enlightenment (to be precise, by French materialism) and theoretically destroyed by Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.⁵⁷ Indeed, from Hegel's perspective, to return to the idealist metaphysic of speculative thought is to restore 'philosophy' as such, given that 'every philosophy is essentially an idealism or at least has idealism for its principle, and,' Hegel immediately adds, 'the question...is only how far this principle is actually carried out'.⁵⁸ From the standpoint of this thesis, the problem for philosophy is clear: to actualize the principle of idealism, which is to say, to translate the Idea into reality.

⁵⁶Enc.L. p.178; Logic, pp.154-5.

⁵⁷The identity of thought and being is the principle shared by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz on the one hand, and post-Kantian idealism on the other. In this principle, says Hegel, lies the 'genuinely philosophical and speculative' character of seventeenth-century metaphysics. As to the relationship between traditional metaphysics and French materialism see for example Marx, The Holy Family (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publication House, 1950), p.168. Like Feuerbach, who he follows closely in this respect (see below, chapter five), Marx thinks this discontinuity between pre-Kantian and post-Kantian metaphysics with reference to French Materialism rather than to Kant as we do. The decisive role of Kant in breaking this continuity of metaphysics, clearly appreciated by Hegel, is inescapable, though unacknowledged by Feuerbach who in fact goes back to Kant's critique, and in so doing sets up the basis for Marx's critique of Hegel's dialectic. On this below.

⁵⁸Logic, pp.154-5. Cf. ibid., pp.160-1; Enc.L., p.178.

This is indeed the problem which Hegel reads into the inadequacy of both the old philosophy of traditional metaphysics and Kant's Critical Theory. Hegel's thesis, in this regard, is that no philosophy has succeeded until now in solving this problem. Hitherto, the principle of idealism has been contradicted or negated in its practical execution: philosophy has always been inconsistent with itself. Responsibility for this is traced back by Hegel essentially to a question of method. Philosophy has adopted, Hegel states, the point of view of the 'Understanding', the principle of non-contradiction, which is the source of philosophy's most deep-rooted inconsistency: to confront the object of reason, the infinite and unconditioned, with a finite logic, the method of Understanding. As a result, the old philosophy is half-idealism, half-materialism. It is idealism in its substance or content -- the infinite, the Spirit, God. It is materialism in its form or method.

What problem is here involved? The method of Understanding, which safe-guards the principle of (logical) non-contradiction, sets up an exclusive opposition between the infinite or universal on the one side, and the finite or particular on the other. On the basis of this analytic distinction the old philosophy is forced to confront the universal as an abstraction, an ideal projected beyond the world, or -- despite itself -- to postulate its immediate identity with the world.⁵⁹ In either case, philosophy is 'embarrassed by the difficulty of passing from the finite to the infinite'.⁶⁰

Kant's solution to this problem was to stipulate extreme limits for knowledge beyond which philosophy loses its way in a 'nest of contradictions'. Adopting the standpoint

⁵⁹Cf. Enc.L., pp.72-5; Logic, pp.130, 161; PM, pp. 113ff, 190; HP, 111, pp.228-9, 264, 358.

⁶⁰Enc.L., p.72.

of science against the principle of philosophical speculation Kant rejects the identity of thought and being as a metaphysical abstraction, an unreal object produced by an illegitimate reduction of two orders of reality and the treatment of a transcendental concept, an Idea, as an object of knowledge. Such speculations produce only illusions, taken by metaphysics as real conditions, ie., hypostatized into self-subsistent ideas. The attempt by metaphysics to resolve the contradiction between the Is of Nature and the Ought of Reason by postulating their transcendent or immediate identity has no objective validity. 'Reason cannot procure reality for its ideas'. The Idea of 'totality' remains 'a problem to which there is no solution' (in theory).

This scepticism of reason clearly poses for Hegel his fundamental problem, which is to actualize the principle of idealism as objectively real. The problem is that of an ir-rationalist dualism (the real is irrational in that it is external to, and heterogeneous from, thought) which -- and here Hegel agrees with Kant -- is inescapable from the point of view of Understanding. Indeed, Hegel argues, Kant was correct in his criticism of metaphysics for overstepping the extreme limits of its method -- for mis-applying its method to an impossible object. One cannot grasp the substance of Reason, the infinite and unconditioned, by means of finite concepts, ie., in accordance with the categories of Understanding. Scientific understanding is indeed bound by limits beyond which it loses its way in -- as Kant puts it -- a nest of contradictions.⁶¹ Kant's mistake, however, is that in making explicit this 'inconsistency' of the old philosophy he rejects its metaphysics rather than its method. Pre-critical metaphysics, Hegel asserts, is a 'true' philosophy, ie., a form of idealism. However, it is 'genuinely philosophical and speculative' only in principle, and not in method, which is

⁶¹Enc.L., pp.60-1.

to say, it is inconsistent in the way it develops and elucidates its principle. Its method of demonstration has forced it to contradict itself despite itself. In its 'exposition of the Absolute' pre-critical metaphysics has remained captive of the finite understanding, and thus of 'dogmatism' -- materialism and science.⁶²

While Kant thus criticizes metaphysics for its speculative extension of the scientific method, Hegel attacks the method itself as the basis the 'exoteric teaching' drawn from Kant's philosophy, namely that the Understanding cannot go beyond experience without producing anything more than illusions. Used as a 'justification for a general renunciation of speculative thought' this 'exoteric teaching' provides the impulse for Hegel's own philosophical project: to think the truth of reason at its own level, viz. a metaphysical logic, the dialectic of speculative thought which 'grasp[s]...opposites of thought in their unity'.⁶³

The Dialectic of Reason

To establish this 'truth' of Reason, Hegel not only rejects the scientific method, viz. its principle of explanation, but also the static conception of the world as a mechanical system reflected in it, a conception that prevailed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In tandem with an emergent Romantic movement, Hegel develops a conception of the world as an organic whole undergoing a teleological process of dynamic change and transformation. The logic of this dynamic and organic conception is the dialectic, which, as the theoretical activity of Reason, is identical

⁶²Enc.L., pp.61-75.

⁶³Logic, p.25. (1812 Preface to the first edition).

with the power of speculative thought to transcend all that presents itself to the ordinary understanding as fixed and limited by its particularity. This it does by grasping the principle of its inherent truth, the essence of its phenomena, which 'when viewed in the whole of its universality... is the Idea or the Absolute'.⁶⁴ By grasping contradiction not as an absolute limit but as a basis for movement, dialectical thought mediates the opposition set up by the understanding between subjectivity and objectivity by resolving its contradiction-in-appearance into a unity-in-essence, ie., in Idea.⁶⁵ Breaking down the fixity of scientific concepts, the dialectic of speculative thought grasps all of its terms in opposition as one-sided abstractions from an organic whole, an ideal totality in which the real and the ideal are in identity, ie., in which unity, broken at the level of understanding, is restored (at the level of the Idea).

This speculative drive towards knowledge of the Absolute has both a history (the Phenomenology of Mind) and forms a system (the Science of Logic). As to its history, its significance is that it grounds Hegel's System in the 'philosophical point of view', namely that 'the truth of the finite is...its ideality'. In the idealist metaphysic of this principle Hegel solves the problem of philosophy's 'beginning': is it to proceed from sense-experience, and thus take a given objective world as a limiting condition for thought? Or does it proceed from a self-identical thought grasped as an unconditioned, self-actualizing universal? Does philosophy presuppose its 'other' or itself?⁶⁶

⁶⁴Enc.L., p.24.

⁶⁵This is the central operation of Hegel's dialectic: to resolve what appears as a contradiction into a unity of essence. We will have much occasion to examine the structure and conditions of this dialectic of reason which reflects

The problematic of Kant's solution is based on the first position. On the basis of sense-experience the objective world appears as a given, as -- thinking of Hegel -- an external, self-subsistent reality indifferent to subjectivity. From this perspective the problem is to discover the nature of the world as it is. As an object of sense, nature appears as a world of phenomena, the objective necessity of which is grasped with reference to law. From the standpoint of this conditioned thought philosophy views the relation between thought and its 'other' as an objective contradiction, the antithesis of the subjective and the objective.

From this standpoint the speculative extension of thought beyond the limits of experience, the dialectic of reason, points towards the illusory reality of an ideal without existence. The universal essence of reason, the Ought, is external to the phenomena of the objective world, the Is. As an object of dialectic, an 'ideal of pure reason', the unity of the Idea serves as a maxim for action, but has no objective validity for knowledge, ie., as a principle of explanation. To take the Idea, a regulative function of thought, as a real condition, ie., to use the dialectic as an organon of truth, is to confuse the logical process with the way reality itself develops. The result: a 'logic of illusion' in which dialectic functions as a hypostasis of concepts, with reality attributed to the Idea. To translate this Idea into reality, ie., to transform the Ought into the Is, and thus bring existence into line with its concept, it is necessary to move from man's theoretical reason to his practical reason.

its metaphysical principle of an inherent truth, the identity of opposites.

⁶⁶This is, of course, the problem of knowledge formulated by Kant, reposed by Fichte, and now addressed by Hegel. Cf. Enc.L., pp.17ff. for Hegel's formulation of this problem.

The problematic of Hegel's solution turns on the direct inversion of Kant's position on the problem of knowledge: in order for philosophy to elevate itself to the Absolute, ie., to realize the principle of Idealism, it must abandon the human standpoint of knowledge, both in its theoretical and practical forms, and restore the speculative standpoint of a self-identical thought.⁶⁷

From the speculative standpoint of this Idea, in which philosophy presupposes not its 'other' but itself, the objectivity of the real necessarily appears to thought as its 'self-contradiction', ie., as the 'negation' of its essential freedom. However, in proceeding from its own proper element -- thought -- philosophy assumes a negative attitude to the material, objective world, and finds satisfaction in itself, which is to recognize 'that the very self of things to become what they truly are require to be thought'.⁶⁸ From the standpoint of this 'subjective self-certainty' thought is able to transcend sense-experience, mediate its self-contradiction, and elevate itself to the Absolute.⁶⁹ In effect, philosophy's

⁶⁷Cf. Hegel's movement from the second form of the Idea, Knowledge (in which Hegel compresses Kant's Pure and Practical Reason, thought proper and the thinking will) to the Absolute Idea, in which Hegel sublates the inadequacy of Kant's position to come to his own. This movement, traced out both in PM and Logic, is replicated as a history of philosophy in the various 'attitudes of thought to objectivity' in Enc.L.

⁶⁸Enc.L., p.62.

⁶⁹Note that whereas for Kant knowledge requires thought to be mediated by its 'other', for Hegel thought mediates itself, ie., it 'negates' its own negation which is the existence of a finite world indifferent to its subjectivity. Thought elevates itself to universality by recognizing itself as the very 'essence' of things, ie., by grasping 'reason [as] all reality'.

grasp of the Absolute is commensurate with its capacity to dialectically negate the phenomenal world as the outward, alienated expression of an infinite, self-identical thought -- the Idea. The 'system' of this Idea emerges as the mediated result' of a rational process whose syllogistic form expresses the 'mediative function of the concept'.⁷⁰ As to the 'form' of this rational process Hegel closely follows Kant. However, whereas for Kant the syllogism merely constitutes the logical form of judgement, the Science of Logic (which yields the Idea as the 'formal' unity of a subjective thought-process) for Hegel 'logic coincides with metaphysics', and as a result, the Idea emerges as the inner unity of an objective 'life-process'.⁷¹ The 'system' of this Idea, as a mediated result of a rational process, is the Absolute, in which philosophy achieves its 'highest and final aim', which is to bring about, through the ascertainment of...harmony, a reconciliation of the self-conscious reason with the reason... in the world -- in other words, with actuality. 72

And thus, with the consecration of this principle in Hegel's System, the impulse of philosophy to transform the Ought into the Is gives way to a sober acceptance of the Is as the Ought.

2

THE PROBLEM OF CIVIL SOCIETY

With Hegel's presentation of the life-process as the

⁷⁰Cf. CPR, pp.301ff; Enc.L., paras. 181ff; Logic, 11, 1 (3). As the logical figure of a determinative or reflective judgement the syllogism (Schluss) is as formulated by Aristotle and expounded by Kant.

⁷¹Enc.L., p.45, 287ff, 347ff; Logic, pp.818ff.

⁷²Enc.L., p.10.

medium for the dialectic of the Idea, the problem of knowledge irrupts into history, and, by extension of Hegel's critique of Understanding, translates into another problem -- the problem of 'civil society'.⁷³ As Hegel reconstructs it, the tendency of the Understanding towards dualism is the immediate reflection of a historical process in which the organic unity and harmony of the classic world, the Greek Polis, breaks down and gives way to a new world characterized by division and conflict. At the centre of this new world, as the root cause of its historic development, is the 'working of the principle of personality' which, produced by Christianity, has since formed the basis of a new civilization based on private property.⁷⁴ Based on the ideal equality and subjective freedom of the individual, the working of this principle has had the effect of splitting up the organic unity of the social achieved in the classic world into a multiplicity of atomized, class-divided individuals in pursuit of their own particular ends, who, thus locked in competition and hostile struggle, form a separate organization to mediate their property conflicts and represent their general interest. As a result, we

⁷³The following discussion draws on and summarizes points of interpretation established in the writer's second introductory study, the focus of which falls on Hegel's PM and PR, and at certain points on Rousseau's The Social Contract. Chief supportive references are: Lucio Colletti, From Rousseau to Lenin (London: NLB, 1973); Karl Lowith, From Hegel to Nietzsche (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964); Georg Lukacs, El Joven Hegel (Mexico, D.F.: Grijalbo, 1963).

⁷⁴The close connection drawn between the Christian concept of 'personality' and the bourgeois concept of 'private property' is evident in the following: 'the right of the subject's particularity ... of subjective freedom, is the pivot and centre of the difference between antiquity and modern times. This right...given in Christianity...has become the universal principle of a new form of civilization' (PR, par. 124 R); 'the general principle that underlies Plato's ideal state violates the right of personality by forbidding the holding of private property' (PR, par.46); 'it is about a millennium and a half since the freedom of personality began through

have the formation of 'civil society', a sphere of 'particularity' separate from the state, a sphere of 'universality'.⁷⁵ The problem, first diagnosed by Rousseau, is that of man in bourgeois society split between the particularity of his subjective need and the universality of the body-politic. The problem as posed by Hegel: to reconcile the subjective freedom of each individual with the objective necessity of the whole.⁷⁶

Hegel's mature philosophy is best seen in terms of a response to this problem which Hegel diagnosed in his early works and struggled to solve most of his life. Together with his own and preceding generations of German intellectuals, Hegel confronted this problem with a youthful ideal, which, as his thought developed, was transformed into a system.⁷⁷ This transformation of a youthful ideal into a mature philosophical system involves a complex intellectual process in which Hegel, like Rousseau before him, attempts to reconcile the opposed principles of the Greek Polis (organicism) and Christianity (individualism) within an idealist standpoint, i.e., with the individual conceived as a cohesive member of an integrated political community governed by reason. In confron-

the spread of Christianity to...gain recognition as a universal principle from a...small part of the human race. But it was only yesterday, we might say, that the principle of the freedom of property became recognized in some places' (PR, par. 62).

⁷⁵Cf. Hegel's exposition of the transition from civil society to the state (PR, pp.122-34, 155ff.).

⁷⁶Cf. PR, p.33 and par.258, where Hegel takes up and closely follows Rousseau with an important difference. For Rousseau the subject of the 'General Will' is a community of individuals who consciously formulate their will as law. For Hegel this rational will likewise expresses the spirit of the whole, but man is not its subject; he is its unwitting instrument.

⁷⁷Cf. Hegel's letter to Schelling, November 11, 1800:

ting the problem of civil society with an ideal antithesis derived from a Greek concept of 'ethos' Hegel condemns modern life as 'irrational', ie., as failing to correspond to its concept.⁷⁸ In our interpretation, this early position brings Hegel's thought into line with Fichte's subjective idealism and with the negative-critical standpoint of Rousseau and the Enlightenment philosophes. In the subjective idealism of this negative-critical standpoint, Hegel escapes the liberal problematic which is to construct the rationality of the whole, the law of the state, as a negative restriction on individual freedom.⁷⁹ Rejecting the antithesis on which this problematic is based, Rousseau, Fichte, and the early Hegel, resolve that man secures his freedom in submission prescribed by his own reason, and that in truth the rationality of the whole is the realization and not the restriction of individual freedom.⁸⁰ This solution has two centres of reference:. For Rousseau the necessary condition of unity is conceived with reference to the concept of law which prescribes conditions equal for all. For the young Hegel, unity is conceived with reference to the Greek concept of an organic whole in which individuality is subordinated to the functional integration of unequal conditions. In either case, however, one argues specuatively from what is to what ought to be, and the unity in question, ie., the Idea of Reason, is a subjective ideal to be realized, which is to say, opposed by the objectivity of the real.

'in my scientific development...I was compelled towards philosophy, and the ideal of my youth had been transformed into a system' (in Briefe von und an Hegel, ed. by J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg, 1952), quoted in Platt, op.cit., p.15).

⁷⁸Cf. the transcription from Hegel's Real Philosophie (1805-6), vol.11, pp.249-51, in Lukacs, op.cit., pp.313-7.

⁷⁹Cf. Hegel's remarks in PR, par. 24.

⁸⁰Cf. Rousseau's concept of a 'General Will', the mo-

In his early period, Hegel's thought was very much caught up in this subjective idealism. However, as his thought developed, becoming increasingly aware of the rationality of the modern world, Hegel broke with his youthful dream of restoring the Greek Polis and came to definitively oppose the standpoint of subjective idealism, which is to range against the objectivity of the real its ideal antithesis, the concept of Reason.⁸¹ With reference to a dialectical critique of Understanding, Hegel adopts instead the standpoint of an 'objective idealism': to discover the ideal within the real, which, despite its appearance of contradiction, turns out to be a rational process. In his systematic exposition of this position Hegel comes into relation with two opposed conceptions of reason: the negative-critical conception of the French Enlightenment and the positive conception of English Political Economy.⁸² In the first case, rationality is a function of the equality of all individuals, and is interrogated within each individual as a subjective faculty to order experience, criticize existing reality and shape it anew. In the second case, rationality is inherent in reality itself, and is interrogated within its objective process of development. The former concept of reason, reflected in the principle of equality, emerges as an ideal unity to measure reality against and direct action towards. Despite the unity of

ral and political equality of all individuals integrated into a body-politic. As both Della Volpe and Althusser have shown, this condition, imposed by the clause of total alienation, resolves the antithesis of freedom and law by conceiving of freedom as a function of equality, viz. the freedom of the individual forced into the generality of its concept ("Man").

⁸¹Cf. the process of Hegel's 'intellectual crisis' traced out by Lukacs from the 1801-6 fragments (op.cit., pp.303ff.).

⁸²Cf. PR, par. 189 Remark.

its concept, Reason confronts the real as external to it, a limit to be overcome. The latter concept of reason, reflected in the principle of dialectic, emerges not as a subjective ideal ranged against the conditions of an objective historical movement, but as the inner essence of its phenomenal appearance.

In adopting the standpoint of this latter concept as the basis for his system, Hegel brings into a relation of unity two opposed forces which, despite the unity of their concept, remain for Kant irreducible. In either case, the ground of unity is the 'teleological relation' of the Subject, and its form is 'the concept'. However, whereas for Kant the concept has a mere subjective validity, for Hegel it implicates reality in its very essence. This is to say, the production of life not only has a logical form, but it is the objectification of an inner logic -- the dialectic of the Idea.⁸³ The appearance of this Idea in history, however, is hidden, giving rise to the following paradox: the conscious activity of man, directed the realization of his own ends, brings about an unintended result; which discloses for Hegel a rationality of which 'man' is not the subject, but rather its unconscious instrument:

Reason is just as cunning as she is powerful. Her cunning consists principally in her mediating activity, which by causing object to react on each other in accordance with their own nature, in this way, without any direct interference in the process, carries out reason's intentions. 84

In this metaphysic of Reason, man appears to himself to be an active Subject but is shown to be the mere support of a self-developing process, the means through which the immanent end of a universal (supra-human) reason is realized. Men, progressively and ultimately, become conscious of this end, and of themselves as the 'middle term' within a ration-

⁸³ Logic, pp.739, 818-21; Enc.L., p.347.

⁸⁴ Enc.L., p.382.

al process -- the concept in its concrete existence.

With this speculative conception of history as a process with a subject (ie., as oriented towards the realization of an immanent end) Hegel's thought comes full circle: the elaboration of a presupposed metaphysic into a system which reconciles the ideal of philosophy, the universal of reason, with the real world -- the Prussian state and the Christian religion.⁸⁵ The circle of this thought, reflected in the principle of an inner essence, turns on Hegel's solution to the problem of civil society, which is to grasp its unity-within-contradiction -- its hidden rationality. In appearance, civil society is a riot of self-seeking individuals, whose relations are governed by the particularity of subjective need, and whose individuality is based on the identity of personality and its embodiment, property. However, at another level, or from a different angle, this appearance gives way to a decidedly rational development: the particularity of bourgeois man is mediated by the universality brought about by his association within a system of needs. The rationality of this process, however, is not apparent, characterized as it is by the formation of a 'complex of particular system of needs, modes of satisfaction... [into] which individuals are assigned -- in other words, into class-divisions'.⁸⁶ Reflecting the inequality of conditions under which individuals participate in the social process of the division of labour, this division leads to a struggle for recognition among property-owners which compels the formation of the State which, from one point of view, appears as the external necessity of civil society, but which proves to be its immanent end.

⁸⁵Logic, 11, p.156; Enc.L., p.6.

⁸⁶PR, par.201.

In reconstructing the conditions of this proof, Hegel closely follows Rousseau yet profoundly differs from him. Rousseau secures an automatic harmony between the particular wills of each individual and the general will of the community through the function of the principle of equality, which, in establishing (ideal) conditions equal for all, confronts the existing inequality of real conditions with its ought-to-be. By applying to the conditions of inequality, class-division, and alienation, not the principle of equality but rather, that of the dialectic, Hegel grasps them as the outward form of a hidden rationality. Whereas Rousseau resolves the opposition between freedom and law by calling for the immediate suppression of inequality, Hegel reconstructs the mediative function of class-division. Together with the Bureaucracy, which has no property-basis, and thus no particular interest to represent against the State, the two 'official' classes of civil society (the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie) constitute reciprocal conditions of an organic whole, preconditions for the formation of a rational state. By reconciling in their organic institutions (Primogeniture and the Corporation) the particularity of subjective need and the universality of the whole, civil society is reconciled to the State not as to an external necessity but as to its immanent end, the essence of its phenomena. And thus the rational state, a structured, organic whole permeated by universality, emerges as the reality of the Idea -- of Reason in history.

In the light of this truth, the appearance of contradiction in the modern world yields to a rational insight which reconciles us to the present as the embodiment of freedom: 'to recognize reason as the rose in the present and thereby to enjoy the present, this is the rational insight which reconciles us to the actual'.⁸⁷ In the dusk of this recognition the 'owl

⁸⁷PR, p.12.

of Minerva', in the shape of Hegel's philosophic system, 'spreads its wings' and awaits with a troubled conscience the coming of a new dawn.

CONCLUSION

The object of this chapter has been to provide a conceptual framework for our thesis on Marx, a centre of reference for its supportive arguments. Within the framework of this reference our purpose has been to reconstruct the original form of the idealist problematic formed in Kant and Hegel's opposed solutions to the problem of knowledge. It is this problematic, we will argue, that underlies the essential unity of Marx's early thoughts. The point is that Marx's relation to Hegel -- the problem at issue in our thesis -- can only be clarified through a clear understanding of Hegel's relation to Kant. This question is a precondition for posing the problem of Marx's Early Works, and indeed every serious interpretation of Marx's early thought has shadow-boxed with this question, for the most part without bringing it into its proper focus.

It is our thesis that it is the idealist problematic of this Kant-Hegel relation which underlies Feuerbach's humanism, and thereby governs Marx's thought from the very beginning up to the very threshold of a fundamental break with his philosophical past in 1845-6; that despite its various shifts and significant breakthroughs in 1843 and 1844, until The German Ideology Marx's various thoughts have the same ultimate centre of reference; that, in effect, throughout his early period Marx provides different solutions to the same basic problem; that Marx's perspective on this problem is shaped by the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, and thus governed by the principles of Hegel's dialectic; and that in 1845-6. at the level of The German Ideology, Marx

makes a definitive break with the idealist problematic of this dialectic.

To argue for this thesis, to demonstrate the effectivity of this problematic throughout the Early Works, we need to trace out the formation of Marx's thought -- the path of his intellectual development. To this we proceed.

CHAPTER THREE

MARX AND THE LEFT-HEGELIAN PROBLEMATIC

1

THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM

The problem of freedom, posed within the framework of a subject-object relation, is thought alternatively as the problem of knowledge or as the problem of civil society. The problem posed: to overcome the dualism of reality and conceptual thought and the alienation of the individual from the universal -- to do so by securing their unity.

The first attempt to solve this problem was given on the one hand by Rousseau (in relation to civil society), and on the other hand, by Kant (in relation to knowledge). Both modalities of solution (State, Reason) were thought of in terms of the principle of freedom as a function of the formal universality of law, and establish unity as an ought-to-be, a subjective ideal. This ideal unity, secured through the concepts 'social contract' and 'morality' as an Idea of practical reason, has as its centre of reference a concept of 'Man' -- of the individual forced into general equality.

The next attempt at solution is taken up by German Idealism, ie., Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, whose mutual relationships are, we believe, best summed up by Feuerbach:

'Schelling...restored Spinoza in opposition to Fichte...

Hegel is a Fichte as mediated through a Schelling'.¹

¹Ludwig Feuerbach, Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy, in The Fiery Brook, trans. and ed. by Zawar Hanfi (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972), p. 73.

The various solutions proffered by German Idealism are all based on the principle of freedom formulated by Kant, and depart from his scepticism of Reason or critique of metaphysics. In this critique Kant confronts the dualism of Understanding with the unity of Reason, but rejects the latter as a hypostatized illusion produced by the illegitimate reduction of two orders of reality. In this position Kant rejects the metaphysical postulate of identity (the ideal is real) established by Spinoza and Leibniz, but recognizes in thought and being a categorical homology or formal unity. The twofold condition of this unity, established both in practical Reason (morality) and theoretical Understanding (science), is that the subject imposes the form of its concept on objective reality, but takes the content of its object as given -- as a limiting condition. In this position Kant upholds the principle of materialism: the heterogeneity of thought and being. Within the type-structure of this relation, freedom, the correlative term for thought, emerges as a subjective ideal which ought to be, and by implication, can be realized.

German Idealism rejects the formalism of Kant's solution. It did so by formulating an organic conception of the world which subsume science and morality under the aesthetic standpoint of a realized ideal. According to this standpoint, Kant had only attributed to unity a subjective validity (as an Idea of Reason) because he conceived it from the standpoint of human understanding in which the totality of the subject-object relation (Reason) could not be grasped. From the standpoint of the Absolute Subject, (the historic process in its totality of conditions) Reason emerges not as the outer form, but as the inner essence of things, the spirit of the whole. Spinoza had rightly established the truth of the whole -- thought and being as different forms of a universal essence -- but conceived it wrongly as substance; ie., as a metaphysic of matter. On the basis of Kant's principle of freedom, Fichte countered Spinoza's metaphysic of substance by conceiv-

ing unity not as substance but as subject (absolute ego). From this standpoint, the substance of Nature appears as the alienated form of an absolute, self-identical subject, Infinite Spirit, which posits material, limiting conditions as the basis of its self-development. In the pure negativity or infinite striving of this subject the object-world as such disappears as a 'vanishing factor'.

Schelling responds to this subjective idealism by restoring Spinoza's substance within the absolute identity of a universal Reason. Hegel, as a 'Fichtean...mediated through a Schelling', completes this process by establishing the dialectical unity of thought and being as an ideal totality, ie., at the level of the Idea. 'Reason' here emerges as the immanent truth of the whole process, the inner unity of infinite life. In the metaphysic of this objective idealism, Reason is all reality, and as such the expressive totality of an inner essence or Spirit. When Spirit is alienated from its essence, ie., when nature is estranged from reason, development is subject to chance and blind necessity -- mechanical, in the case of minerals; unconscious, in the case of plants; or instinctive, in the case of animals -- and does not proceed according to the ideal causality of freedom.

Against Kant's position in support of the principle of materialism, Hegel formulates a metaphysic of totality, secured in the principle of a dialectical unity (= Reason). In this metaphysic Hegel shifts from Kant's standpoint of man (human reason) to the standpoint of the absolute (universal Reason). In this latter standpoint man emerges not as an end to himself, but as an indivisible part of an organic whole, animated by an inner universality, a pars totalis of a universal reason or infinite spirit.

Against Kant's exclusion of reason from reality, and against his conception of science and morality as distinct practices, Hegel returns to Spinoza's metaphysic of immanence, the basis of a philosophy of organic development whose logic,

or law of life, is the dialectic: the self-mediated unity (Aufhebung) or ideal totality of reason and reality. Its philosophic proposition: reason is in reality, which is to say, it governs the process of its development.

German Idealism is this dialectical unity of Reason brought to consciousness and given philosophical form. Whereas in Schelling this unity is realized in the past -- in the passive contemplation of the 'beauty' of the whole; and in Fichte, this unity is realized in the future -- in the infinite striving to realize a subjective ideal, an indeterminate ought-to-be; in Hegel this unity is realized 'not as a beyond...but as a present'. This position vis-a-vis Fichte and Schelling is reflected, as we have seen, in Hegel's own philosophic development, as well as in his differentiation of a 'young' and 'old' attitude within his system of morality.² In this respect, the 'old' are adjusted to the reason of reality, and are oriented to the universal and to the past to which they give thanks for knowledge of the universal. The 'young' on the other hand, live in a relationship of unsatisfied tension to a world judged to be inadequate. With an 'antipathy towards reality', and out of harmony with the world as it is, these 'young' think 'individually', ie., are oriented to the 'particular'. With a bent for the ideal, and attuned to the future, they confront the world with demands for change.

In these two attitudes Hegel indirectly condemns both Schelling's reactionary tendencies, and Fichte's revolutionary aspirations. Fichte, for example, had followed Kant in seeing the French bourgeois revolution of 1789 as the practical affirmation of the principle of 'free will':

²Cf. Karl Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche, (New York: Holt, Rhinehart & Winston, Inc., 1964), pp. 63-64.

My system is the first system of freedom. Just as (France) has freed humanity from material chains, my system has freed it from the yoke of the thing-in-itself, from external limits, and its first principle makes of man an autonomous being.³

In interpreting the revolutionary aspirations of his epoch, and with reference to an organic conception of history, Fichte seeks the ideal not in the image of a determinate past, nor in the actuality of the present, but in an image of the future -- the *raison d'être* of both past and present. With Germany as the theoretical but not the historical contemporary of the French Revolution Fichte reduces revolutionary action to the activity of reason conceived as a moral will. Likewise, in opposing to the actuality of the present an ideal to be realized, Fichte suppresses the world as such, reducing it to a 'non-ego' a field and instrument with which the 'ego' is elevated towards moral autonomy. The dialectic of this Idea determines the rational transformation of the real, and the sublation of the individual will, which is progressively integrated into the general will of the state.⁴

Schelling, as we have seen rejects this dialectic which Fichte establishes between the 'ego' and 'non-ego', one that conceives the latter as a 'nullity in itself'. But he only concedes 'objectivity' to the natural world to the degree that it is permeated by spirit. Like Spinoza Schelling considers thought and matter as expressions, different in form but the same in essence, of the absolute. In positing the primacy of spirit, Schelling leans on Kant's Critique of Judgement to demonstrate that nature elevates itself towards spirit, which, for its part, realizes itself in nature; and to conceive of the world as a work of art, a state of 'undif-

³Letter to Baggeson, April 1796; cited by Roger Garaudy, Dieu est Mort: étude sur Hegel (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962).

⁴Cf. Auguste Cornu, Carlos Marx y Federico Engels (Havana: Instituto del libro, 1967), p. 38.

ferentiated identity', in which spirit is nature, and nature spirit. This aesthetic and contemplative tendency that characterizes Schelling's system reduces the dialectic of the Idea to a realized ideal, whose essential moment is given in the past.⁵ And thus does Schelling, in opposition to Fichte, translate the reactionary tendencies of the landed aristocracy. By reference to the essential moment of origin and source in all development, Schelling condemns the idea of revolutionary change.

As in the case of Schelling and Fichte, Hegel's doctrine represents a mode of interpretation of the French Revolution, which is to say, it reflects certain social and political tendencies. Our interpretation supports the opinion of Cornu to the effect that Hegel translates the aspirations of the German bourgeoisie, which desires to free itself from the dominant feudal system, but unable to do so, is obliged to reconcile itself to it. In this recognition, Hegel condemns both the reactionary tendencies of Schelling and the revolutionary ones of Fichte, to interpret the organic development of the world in a conservative sense. Rather than justifying the past or the future, Hegel strives to justify the present. Stalling the dialectic of the Idea in the present, like all conservatives, Hegel attributes to it an absolute value, the necessary result of rational development, the philosophic expression of Absolute Spirit. In the comprehension of Reason in reality, of a realized ideal, philosophy (ie., Hegel) becomes reconciled with reality: political philosophy with the Prussian state, and religious philosophy with Christianity.⁶ In this 'system' Hegel establishes the inner unity of

⁵Cf. Ibid, pp. 39ff.

⁶Cf. Hegel, The Philosophy of Right (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969) at the same time (1821) as the first lecture on the philosophy of religion. Religion and the state

self-conscious Reason (philosophy of the state) and the Reason in reality (the Prussian state). This unity, in which philosophy is reconciled with reality, is expressed in Hegel's dictum: 'What is actual is rational, what is rational is actual'.⁷

2

THE LEFT-HEGELIAN REVISION OF HEGEL

Intellectually, Hegel's philosophy became the dominant force in Germany, even though in the years following Hegel's death, despite its dominance, the Hegelian system came under attack. The closure of the Hegelian philosophy with the Prussian state confronted aspirations for change, forces related mostly to the incipient industrial and commercial bourgeoisie who demanded a 'democratic' state and economic liberalism.⁸ In relation to these aspirations for change the Hegelian philosophy broke into a right-wing, of those who remained faithful to its doctrine, and a left-wing, who in a desire to adapt Hegelianism to liberal aspirations, rejected the conservative system (Prussian state, christian religion) but conserved the concept of dialectical development. Hegel had expressed his reconciliation with the existing world in the metaphysical unity of two principles: the reason of reality, and the reality of the rational. With the decomposition of the Hegelian philosophy into two schools this unity is broken

appear as the subjective and objective determinations of the Absolute Idea in Hegel's Phenomenology and Logic. Also, Löwith, op.cit., pp. 43.

⁷Philosophy of Right, Preface, p. 10. Cf. Hegel, Enc. L., p. 10: 'It may be held the highest and final aim of philosophic science to bring about...a reconciliation of the self-conscious reason with the reason which is in the world -- in other words, with actuality'.

⁸Cf. Cornu, op.cit. for an analysis of the conjuncture in which bourgeois liberalism and Left Hegelianism found common ground. The following discussion is largely derived from a secondary analysis of Cornu's detailed research on the Left-Hegelian movement supported by the studies of Mehring and McLellan.

first with the question of religion, and secondly, with the question of politics.⁹ The right-wing emphasized the first principle: the real is rational; the left-wing, that only the rational is real. In this left-wing interpretation, the Hegelian identity does not mean that what exists is adequate to reason, but quite the opposite: that the rational must be realized, that all which is, but which does not correspond to reason appears to be, but actually is not, and that, therefore, it must be subverted, so as to bring reality into line with its concept.¹⁰ With a lack of political movements and parliamentary institutions, the essential problem posed for the left-hegelians consisted in finding a mode of action which would permit it to represent the liberal movement. With the separation of the revolutionary dialectic from the conservative system it appears that Hegelianism could be used as the philosophic measure of the world's rationality, and thus as a means with which to attack the established order.

Ideologues of growth and movement, in tandem with Romantic Movement, the left-Hegelians established themselves upon Hegel's principle of dialectical negativity, and thus upon the conflict that moves the world. The problem posed for the left-Hegelians, in adapting the Hegelian philosophy to liberalism, was to separate the method from the system; to

⁹Cf. Cornu, op.cit., ch. 3; Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche, pp. 50ff, and David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx (London: The MacMillan Press, 1969).

¹⁰Cf. Plekhanov in his Preface to the Russian translation of Engels' work on Feuerbach, in which he comments on Engels' words to the effect that for a certain period only the poet Heinrich Heine had been able to understand the 'revolutionary essence' of the Hegelian dialectic. Plekhanov quotes Heine's imaginary discussion with Hegel: "Once I was dis-satisfied with the phrase 'the real is rational'", writes Heine. 'He (Hegel) smiled in a strange way and observed that it could also mean that "the rational must of necessity be"' (also quoted in Lukács' Der Junge Hegel). This

extend to the future the dialectical movement of the Idea which Hegel had stalled in the present.¹¹

By opposing the Hegelian dialectic to Hegel's conservative system, the left-Hegelians broke the identity of the rational with the actual present, and transformed the dialectic from the comprehension of what is into an instrument of action -- deriving from it a philosophy of praxis adapted to the needs of the German bourgeoisie.

The first condition of this solution was provided by A. von Cieszkowski in his Prolegomena zur Historiosophie (1838).¹² Cieszkowski expounded the need to transform Hegel's purely speculative philosophy into a philosophy of praxis, and proposed, against Hegel, that philosophy should not merely grasp the rationality of the objective process (extracted from the past or present) but should consciously determine the future according to rational principles:

interpretation was generally adopted by the left Hegelians of Berlin's Doktorsclub around 1840.

¹¹Cf. Arnold Ruge's essay 'Old and New Rationalism' in the Left-Hegelian periodical, the Halische Jahrbücher (March 20, 1841), p. 271, in Cornu, op.cit., p. 174: "...here surges the new rationalism, which, converted into an instrument of dialectic to denounce the irrational character of Reason fixed in a determinate reality [viz. the Prussian state], becomes at the same time an instrument of Criticism, and, overcoming both past and present, points the way to the future. In effect, the present is no more than the Idea fixed in a determinate reality; the Idea, however, grasped in its dialectical movement, in the development of Spirit, has no right to stick to a specific reality and be stalled therein". This passage is highly symptomatic of a dominant leitmotif which, after Cieszkowski, characterizes the Left-Hegelian movement as a whole. On this see Cornu, op.cit., pp. 109ff; D. McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx; and Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, in Selected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970).

¹²August von Cieszkowski, a Polish count who had studied philosophy in Berlin under the orthodox Hegelian Michelet, is widely recognized as having originated the left-Hegelian

The history of the world expresses the development of the Idea, of Spirit. Till now it has done so in an inadequate form inasmuch as it has not been the work of the conscious activity of men, of their rational will. We have arrived, however, at a threshold of a new period that opens with Hegel, in which men will determine the rational march of history.¹³

Hegel had the merit of recognizing in the laws of historic development certain rational principles, but against their application to the present -- Cieszkowski argued the need to apply them to the future, which is to say, to the shaping of society in conformity with the concept of Man (freedom and reason). Hegel, Cieszkowski argued, inadequately considered human activity in the form of thought instead of will, and falsely restricted the application of its historical laws to an understanding of the past.¹⁴ Underlying this argument is a shift of great theoretical import: from an 'objective' standpoint based on a speculative grasp of the Absolute, the movement of the whole, Cieszkowski adopts a 'subjective' standpoint based on a philosophy of human praxis. This is to say, Reason, which for Hegel was the realized necessity of the objective process, becomes the realization of a subjective human ideal. Rather than being the telos of the historic process of which man is an unconscious support or unwitting instrument, Reason is an Idea of which man is the subject.

conception of a philosophy of praxis. Cf. in particular, Cornu, op.cit., pp. 110ff; McLellan, Marx before Marxism and The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx; B. Hepner, 'History and the Future: the Vision of A. von Cieszkowski, Review of Politics, vol. XV, No. 3 (July 1953).

¹³August von Cieszkowski Prolegomena (Berlin: Veit, 1838), p. 30, quoted by Cornu, op.cit., p.110. Translation from the Spanish translation mine, as in all such cases.

¹⁴Cf. ibid., p. 120: 'According to Hegel the Will is only a particular mode of thought's existence, which is false: on the contrary, it is thought that constitutes a moment of Will, in that thought in its drive towards realization acquires the form of Will and action'.

The task of philosophy, therefore, is to oppose 'being' (reality) with 'non-being' (thought) -- to confront the world with an ideal to be realized. The essential task of philosophy is to determine the future. In effect we go back to 'subjective idealism a la Fichte'.¹⁵

The second condition of the Left-Hegelian solution was provided by Bruno Bauer, who extracted from the Greek philosophy of 'self-consciousness' (Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Scepticism) a philosophy of theoretical praxis.¹⁶ Supported by a revised conception of the Greek philosophy of self-consciousness, Bauer transformed Hegel's Absolute Spirit into a universal consciousness which develops in incessant opposi-

¹⁵The change in conception that Cieszkowski introduces entails a profound and far-reaching revision of Hegel's position back to the Enlightenment concept of Reason, and to a position approximate to that of Fichte. The difference in conception of philosophy is signalled by the association of 'speculation' with the 'whole' (God) and the past, and 'praxis' with the individual, and the future. In shifting the axis of human activity from thought to will not only does Cieszkowski go back to Kant's concept of practical reason in its Fichtean form, but he returns to the rationalist humanism of the bourgeois Enlightenment. We touch upon a point of considerable confusion, a source of ambiguity found in the tendency of the Left-Hegelians and Marx to shift between Hegel on the one hand, and Kant-Fichte on the other. The problem is rooted in a double-line of interpretation formed by sliding back and forth between two concepts of 'Reason', one related to the necessity of the whole, the telos of the historic process and the other related to the freedom of individual forced into the formal generality of 'man'. We return to this below.

¹⁶Cf. Mehring, Franz, Carlos Marx. (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1967): ch. 2; Cornu, op.cit., pp. 118ff; McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, pp. 69ff; Sidney Hook, From Hegel to Marx (New York: Humanities Press, 1950).

tion to the world of 'substance'. Within this conception Bauer demonstrates that the philosophy of praxis has to be realized by self-conscious criticism, the critique of the ir-rational elements of reality which impede the development of universal consciousness. With this absolute opposition of consciousness and substance, Bauer, like Cieszkowski, separates the Idea from reality, and revives Fichte's antagonism of what is and what ought to be.¹⁷

Whereas Hegel had conceived of the ultimate end and interest of philosophy as the reconciliation of thought, the concept, with reality, the Left-Hegelians, in their Fichtean demand for philosophy to be 'practical', conceived of philosophy as the critical measure of the real, and as such, as an active force that compels reality to conform to its concept.

With these two conditions the 'philosophy of praxis', or 'critical philosophy', was adopted as the general project of the Left-Hegelians. The demand for philosophy to be 'practical' that united these ideologues of liberalism was understood as the capacity of theoretical criticism to transform the world through the omnipotent power of ideas (human reason).

Throughout the period of 1838-1840 the majority of the Young Hegelians, led, after Strauss, by Bauer and Feuerbach, directed philosophy towards an attack on the Christian religion (the incarnation of Absolute Spirit), and agitated (in Marx's later words), in the heaven of theological criticism. Another tendency, represented by Arnold Ruge, the

¹⁷ Bauer constituted the most notable figure of Berlin's Doktorsclub, and together with Friedrich Koppen, and Marx, formed what Ruge called the 'Montagne', whose philosophic efforts were directed to a revision of Hegel by bringing philosophy 'to a subjective point' in support the liberal bourgeoisie in their struggle for freedom.

editor of the Hallische Jahrbücher, the leading periodical of the Hegelian Left, directed philosophy against the Prussian state -- to convince the government to give the state a 'rational' character, to orient it towards liberalism. The group centred around Ruge defined themselves as the ideologues of the Prussian national state in its struggle against ultracatholicism. In 1840, the elevation of Frederick William IV to the throne was generally regarded by the Young Hegelians as the first step towards the transformation of Prussia into a rational state: 'The spring has brought everyone's heart to life again', 'a ray of hope lights all faces' Bruno Bauer wrote upon the event.¹⁸ However the new king soon dispelled these illusions, and moved to silence and suppress the Left-Hegelian movement by denying them their chief modes of expression: their periodicals (the Hallische Jahrbücher suppressed in June 1841, and the Athenaum in December) and university posts (culminating in Bauer's destitution in March, 1842).¹⁹

The Left-Hegelian movement, in the face of this brutal suppression both of its traditional means of expression, and, for some, its means of existence, suffered a veritable crisis which allowed it but three choices:

(1) capitulate, abandon the political struggle, submit to the government or disappear;

¹⁸Bruno Bauer, Der Aufstand und Fall des deutschen Radikalismus vom Jahre 1842 (Berlin: Hempel, 1850), p. 5, quoted by Cornu, op.cit., p.165.

¹⁹Cf. Cornu, op.cit., vol 1, ch. 3; A. McGovern, 'The Young Marx on the State', Science and Society, 34(1970), pp. 430-5.

(2) emigrate to France or Switzerland, and continue the struggle from exile -- as Heine and Borne had done in 1830, and as most of them will do in 1843;

(3) ally with a social force capable of mounting a resistance to Prussian absolutism, and of opening for it a means of action (ie., expression); this movement was the Liberalism of the Rhenish bourgeoisie.

Thus, as a result of the reactionary intervention of the Prussian state, the Left-Hegelians were drawn away from their literary, religious and philosophical criticism and thrust into political opposition, into the arms of the Rhineland bourgeoisie, whose constitutional aspirations, and illusions about the new king had suffered similar deception. Within the conjuncture of this fortuitous alliance we have on the one side, a core of left-Hegelian intellectuals, ideologically available, and in need of a social and political force to represent; and on the other side, a class of Rhineland burghers, an incipient commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, in need of ideological weapons (legal, economic, philosophical) for its 'constructive' opposition to the Prussian state. Despite the far remove between the left-Hegelian philosophical speculation, and the concrete pre-occupations of the Rhineland burghers, the conjunctural hope of liberal aspirations (in a 'critical' and 'constructive' opposition) established a common ground for a temporary alliance.²⁰

It is in this conjuncture of liberalism and left-Hegelianism that Marx took up thought. The contingency of Marx's entry into politics and philosophy was defined by the world

²⁰The conjunction of the bourgeois liberal and the Left-Hegelian movements is the leitmotif of Cornu's extensive studies on the formation of the conditions in which Marx took up thought. These studies document and analyse a connection previously suggested by Mehring, and which is now conclusively established. Cf. Cornu, op.cit., Vol. 1, ch. 2.

of German ideology dominated by the problems of German Idealism, and by the 'decomposition' of Hegel. The Hegel that Marx confronted was the Hegel of the Left-Hegelian movement, a Hegel that, as Althusser puts it, was

summoned to provide German intellectuals of the 1840's with the means to think their own history and their own hopes; a Hegel already made to contradict himself, invoked against himself in despite of himself.²¹

In this point of departure (in which Hegel is made to speak against himself) philosophy is opposed to the world, rather than reconciled with it. Within this Left-Hegelian problematic Marx is caught between two opposed positions, respectively associated with Kant-Fichte and Hegel: either Reason is opposed to reality as a subjective ideal of unity to be realized, or Reason is in reality as a realized ideal.

It is our thesis that as Marx adopted new political positions (liberalism, democracy, communism) and attempted to represent these shifts in thought, he thought both his problems and his solutions within this philosophic problematic before coming into his own with the formulation of a new problematic.²² We will attempt to construct this problematic and trace the formation of Marx's thought within it.²³

²¹For Marx, p. 65.

²²Cf. General Introduction above. We situate ourselves within the current debate within theoretical Marxism on the side of Althusser in his differentiation between an ideological (philosophical) and a scientific problematic (For Marx, pp. 68ff). Cf. For Marx (1969); Lenin and Philosophy (1971); Politics and History (1972); 'Teoria, Practica Teorica y Formacion Teorica,' Casa de las Americas (?) ref. Paris, 20 April, 1965; 'The conditions of Marx's scientific discovery', Theoretical Practice 7/8, Jan 1973.

²³Throughout the span of his early thought (1837-46) Marx has been, and still is, subject to divergent and conflicting interpretations. Not only is the point at which Marx

MARX'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH HEGEL

Marx first confronted the dilemma represented by the opposed positions of Kant-Fichte and Hegel in a project to write a philosophy of law, pursued as of the beginning of 1837. Under the influence of both Gans and Savigny, Marx attempted to reconcile in this project (prefixed with several 'metaphysical propositions') the philosophic concept of law (Reason) with actual existing legal relations (reality). As admitted in a letter to his father (November 1837) Marx got to about 300 pages, and then gave the project up because of his failure to resolve the problem that 'greatly disturbed' him: that of reconciling the 'conflict between what is and what ought to be, a conflict peculiar to idealism'.²⁴

In his letter to his father Marx reports a fundamental shift in his thinking as a result of an intellectual trauma experienced in his struggle to think this problem: 'A curtain had fallen, my holy of holies had been shattered, and new Gods had to be found'.²⁵ Marx concludes that his error was

came to his conception of historical materialism in dispute, located variously in his dissertation (Cornu), articles for the Rheinische Zeitung (1842-43), Critique (1843), Paris Manuscripts (1844) or German Ideology (1856), but he is alternatively regarded as a Hegelian, Feuerbachian, Fichtean, closer to Kant or Spinoza, or free from Hegelian influence. His thought has been either reduced to a systematic unity or regarded as a hodge-podge of various, conflicting elements impossible to reduce to a systematic position. We will attempt to cut through this debate by re-thinking the conditions of Marx's various solutions, and focusing his basic thought in relation to the problematic in which the positions of Kant and Fichte confront the position of Hegel.

²⁴'Letter to Father' (1837), in Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society, ed. and trans. Loyd Easton and Kurt Guddat (New York: Doubleday, 1967), p. 42. Hereinafter referred to as WYMPS.

²⁵WYMPS, p. 46.

that 'I understood under form the necessary architectonic of the formation of the concept, under matter the necessary quality of these forms', and in 'my belief that the one could and must be divided from the other'.²⁶ Marx was here drawn away from his romantic striving after a subjective ideal towards the position that the 'form can only be the continuation of the content' and that

the object itself must be studied in its development; there must be no arbitrary classifications; the rational of the thing must be disclosed in all its contradictoriness and find its unity in itself.²⁷

Thus does Marx, who 'set...out from Idealism -- which...I had compared to and nourished with that of Kant and Fichte...hit upon seeking the Idea in the real itself'.²⁸ In the curtain-fall of this shift, Marx draws away from Kant and Fichte, in whose position 'gods had dwelt above the world' towards Hegel in which 'they had now become its centre'.²⁹

Turning away from romanticism and Kant-Fichtean subjective idealism, Marx is drawn back towards Hegel, whose philosophy he studies from end to end, and discusses at Berlin's Doktorsclub. To dispel various 'specters haunting me' Marx undertakes to write a 'philosophic-dialectical dialogue' on the 'godhead manifested as a concept per se, as religion, as nature, and as history'.³⁰ As the dialogue ended with the

²⁶Ibid, p. 43.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., p. 46.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰ref. to dialogue: 'Cleanthes, or the starting-point and the necessary progress of philosophy' (24pp), in WYMPS, p. 47.

'beginning of the Hegelian system' it 'bears me like a false-hearted siren into the clutches of the enemy' (Hegel).³¹ The emotional trauma and intellectual crisis experienced by Marx in the writing of the dialogue is clearly recorded in Marx's letter to his father, where, with reference to his discovery of Hegel, he writes:

I was for several days quite unable to think because of the futility of my lost labours, from consuming vexation at having to make an idol of a view I detest, I fell sick.³²

And Marx did indeed fall sick, quite literally distracted out of his mind by the power of Hegel's realism over his erstwhile romantic subjectivism. Unable to resist the compelling logic of Hegel's realism, Marx records the shift in his mind from a subjective idealism which confronts reality with its ought to be, towards Hegel's position in which the actual world is the embodiment of reason, the manifestation of all-embracing Idea.

4

THE IDEALIST PROBLEMATIC OF MARX'S DISSERTATION

In the year following this encounter with Hegel Marx concentrated on his own readings, and discussion with his intimates in the Doktorsclub, an intellectual circle of Left-Hegelians.³³ He read widely, with his notebooks filled with excerpts from Hegel, Aristotle, Leibniz, Hume and Kant,³⁴ and in relation to a general project shared by Bauer and Koppen undertakes to write a doctoral thesis. Begun towards the end

³¹WYMPS, p. 47.

³²Ibid., pp. 47-48.

³³Cf. Cornu, op.cit., pp. 84ff.

³⁴Ibid., p. 133; with reference to MEGA,1,1(2), pp.908-105.

of 1838, and submitted in April 1841 it is the major source for the knowledge of Marx's ideas in this period, even though it survives in an incomplete form.³⁵

It is generally assumed that as of Marx's first traumatic encounter with Hegel that, while other Left-Hegelians returned to a pre-Hegelian or Fichtean position, Marx became a Hegelian. This is to say, rather than explaining, like other left-Hegelians, the development of history through the constant opposition of consciousness and the world, Marx conserved Hegel's notion of the profound unity of both, and considered the development of history as determined by a dialectic immanent in the world.³⁶

Marx's dissertation has supported mutually conflicting interpretations. On the one hand, his most authoritative biographers (Mehring, Cornu) consider Marx's critique of Epicurus the basis of a position opposed to the Left-Hegelian return to Fichte, and in fact, Cornu sees in it the basis of a new conception of man in the world, i.e., the 'germ' of historical materialism. On the other hand, some of Marx's most

³⁵The thesis, entitled 'The Difference between the Democritean and the Epicurean Philosophies of Nature', was accompanied by an appendix on Plutarch's criticism of Epicurus, and two notes on Hegel and Schelling; cf. its translation by Norman Livergood, in Activity in Marx's Philosophy (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1967) which translates the thesis without preliminary notes; Mehring (Nachlass, pp. 51ff) and Cornu (op.cit., pp. 136-155) provide useful exposition and interpretation, esp. Cornu, who reproduces the key passages in extensive footnotes; also Henry Mins, 'Marx's Doctoral Dissertation', Science and Society, vol. XII, No. 1 (Winter, 1948). The foreword to the dissertation is translated in On Religion (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1957), pp. 13-16; and the key sections of the preliminary notes in Cornu, op.cit. and WYMPS, pp. 51-66. Our primary textual reference is to Livergood's translation in Activity in Marx's Philosophy (hereinafter AMP).

³⁶Cf. Cornu, op.cit. p. 219, 134.

brilliant expositors and interpreters have seen in Marx's adherence to Bauer's radical interpretation of Hegel a position quite and totally consistent with the Left-Hegelian return to Fichte and Kant.³⁷ In his foreword to the dissertation, Marx in fact notes both his adherence to Hegel, and a radical interpretation of Hegel like that of Bauer, for whom the Idea is a function of human self-consciousness, rather than of Absolute Spirit.³⁸ In this revision of Hegel, the Idea, or Reason in reality, is understood in relation to the development of humans self-consciousness.

The conjuncture of Marx's thought, and the motif of his thesis, was set, according to Mehring's postulate and Cornu's careful study, within the Left-Hegelian problematic: to find an ideological support for the liberal bourgeoisie in their struggle for freedom, and adapt the Hegelian philosophy to this end.³⁹ The problem faced by the Left-Hegelians in general, and that moved Marx in his thesis, was that of a possible new beginning after the all-inclusive synthesis formed by the Hegelian system. Marx thought this problem in his preparatory note on 'Nodal Points in the development of philosophy'.⁴⁰

³⁷cf. McLellan, op.cit.; Roger Garaudy, Karl Marx: The Evolution of his thought; and Althusser, For Marx, pp. 45ff, 65ff.

³⁸Marx, On Religion (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1957), pp.13-6.

³⁹Cf. Mehring, Carlos Marx, pp.38ff; Cornu, op.cit., pp.133ff; Lowith, op.cit., pp.90-2; Mario Rossi, La Genesis del Materialismo Historico (Madrid: Alberto Corazon, n.d.).

⁴⁰WYMPS, pp.51-4.

In relation to Hegel's concept of the Idea in its unity Marx conceives of historic development as a dialectic between philosophy and its 'other', the world. This dialectic comes full circle in 'nodal points (of) philosophy that...rise to concretion (and) form abstract principles into a totality, and thus interrupt a straight-line continuation'.⁴¹ In these 'nodal points' philosophy unites with the world, the world acquires a rational character, and the abstract principles of philosophy become totally concrete. Such 'nodal points', in which a 'concrete totality' of reason and reality is formed, are represented by the systems of Aristotle and Hegel. The logic of dialectic, however, suggests that these nodal points must and do give way to moments in which the concrete unity of reason and reality breaks up to produce on the one side a world turned ir-rational, and on the other, philosophy opposed to it in the form of a will to transform it, and by virtue of its separation turned into an 'abstract totality':

While philosophy, as will, turns toward the apparent world, the system is reduced to an abstract totality, ie., it becomes one side of the world facing another. Its relation to the world is a reflexive relation. Enthusiastic in its drive to realize itself, it enters into tension with everything else.⁴²

In this situation its 'inner self-contentedness and roundedness' is broken down, and 'the former inner light becomes a consuming flame turned outward'.⁴³ Philosophy loses the 'objective universality' of the system, and 'reverts to subjective forms of individual consciousness'.⁴⁴ In the

⁴¹Ibid., p. 52.

⁴²WYMPS, p. 62.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 52.

process of this transformation -- of philosophy 'brought to the subjective point' -- Hegel's 'owl of Minerva (which) takes wings at dusk' gives way to the 'nocturnal moth (which) when the sun has set seeks the lamplight of the individual'.⁴⁵

With philosophy brought to the subjective point (converted into a 'will'), and the separation of philosophy from the world turned ir-rational, Marx poses the problem of 'reconciliation', of restoring the unity of reason and reality. The problem: to mediate (discover or create the means of mediating) the opposition of philosophy and its historic existence, of reason and reality. On the one hand, this situation of 'philosophy after its completion' clearly revives Kant's dualism of the real and the ideal, and Fichte's concept of an 'active will' which 'in its drive to realize itself' enters into tension with its 'other'. On the other hand, the problem of the world's 'redemption' is thought in relation to Hegel's problematic of the Unhappy Consciousness, given by Marx as the 'duality of philosophical self-consciousness'. Marx expresses the need for the Hegelian philosophy 'to turn against the apparent world' to redeem its 'split and contradictory' nature (ie., its ir-rationality), and so realize Hegel's principle of dialectical unity.

Marx clearly adopts Hegel's principle: the unity of reason and reality, and reality itself as the union of essence and existence. In the present situation, however, this unity is broken, and philosophy finds itself opposed to the world. The problematic of this situation leads to the formation of two attitudes that reflect the 'duality of philosophical self-consciousness': to either retreat from the world into itself; or to turn against, and act upon the world so as

⁴⁵MEGA, 1, 1, pp. 132, quoted by Löwith, op.cit., p.92.

to transform it.⁴⁶ The first attitude is given in the tendency of 'positive' philosophy to 'philosophize...the turning inward of philosophy'.⁴⁷ The second attitude is given in the tendency of the 'liberal party' in philosophy towards 'criticism...the turning outward of philosophy'.⁴⁸

In the case of the practical attitude of the 'liberal' party, which turns outward to engage the world, philosophy becomes a philosophy of praxis which opposes the world in the form of 'practical energy', as an 'active will':

It is a psychological law that the theoretical mind, having become free in itself, turns into practical energy. It turns against worldly actuality which exists outside it.⁴⁹

In this echo of Kant and Fichte, Marx clearly identifies with the 'liberal' party which 'adheres to the concept and the principle of philosophy' against the 'positive' party which adheres to the 'non-concept, the element of reality': 'In content only the liberal party makes any real progress, because it is the party of the concept'.⁵⁰ In the 'act' of positive philosophy, on the contrary, 'appears perversity, so to speak, insanity itself'.⁵¹ Marx's formulation is some-

⁴⁶WYMPS, p. 63. Cf. Löwith, op.cit., pp. 92ff, and Cornu, op.cit., p. 142.

⁴⁷WYMPS, p. 63. Marx's reference to the romantic-liberal movement of 'Young Germany' which represented, between 1831 and 1835 a protest (essentially literary) against reactionary romanticism and the Prussian state. Its most notable figure was the poet Heine.

⁴⁸Ibid., Reference is to the 'critical philosophy' of Bauer et.al.

⁴⁹WYMPS, p. 61.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 63.

⁵¹WYMPS, p. 63.

what enigmatic, and subject to a prevalent mis-interpretation. It is generally held that in this 'duality of...self-consciousness' Marx counterposes theory and practice, and asserts, like Kant and Fichte, the primacy of the latter. In actual fact, however, Marx clearly follows Bauer in asserting 'the praxis of philosophy...is itself theoretical'.⁵² The significance of the adherence to the concept becomes clear in relation to a later statement in which Marx asserts: 'The concept is, after all, the intermediary between form and content'. The practical attitude of the 'liberal' party relates to its idealism, ie., to the mediative function of the concept given in philosophy's drive to realize itself, in its 'criticism which measures individual existence against essence, particular actuality against the Idea'.⁵³

In the other direction, the 'perversity' or 'insanity' of the 'positive' party relates to its 'turning inward' away from the 'principle of philosophy' (the concept), and towards its non-concept, the element of reality'. Marx's thought here can be illuminated by reference to Hegel's critique of the Stoical attitude in the Phenomenology of Mind, and his History of Philosophy. In its 'avoidance of the world' and its withdrawal into itself, the Stoical attitude yields an abstract and empty freedom of 'inwardness' or pure 'self-relation' ('to think is to be free'). The weakness of this attitude is that in its attempt to escape its dependence on life (material conditions) by retreating into itself, it abolishes the world in thought (within philosophy) while the world is left as it is -- in the face of philosophy's 'perversity'. Thus Stoicism results in Scepticism, whose 'ironic'

⁵²Ibid., pp. 61-62. Cf. McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx (pp. 72ff) for Bruno Bauer's influence on Marx, viz., Bauer's letter to Marx" 'Theory is now the strongest form of practice' (Ibid., p. 73).

⁵³Ibid., pp. 61-62.

consciousness leads to the Unhappy Consciousness, which, conscious of its self-contradiction, enters into tension with the world and asserts itself against the apparent world in a struggle to re-possess its self-certainty (of being all reality).⁵⁴ As Marx put it:

...the theoretical mind, having become free in itself, turns into practical energy. It turns against worldly actuality which exists outside it.

In this emergence of philosophy from a world of reflection, and its transformation into 'subjective consciousness' which, as 'practical energy' revolts against reality, Marx thinks the present conjuncture of philosophy as 'an inner light (that has become) a consuming flame turned outwards'. The philosophic Idea, emerging from a world of reflection, and transformed into an active will, revolts and act against the world not yet shaped by the image of that Idea.

The superiority of the 'liberal' party, with which Marx identifies, is that in its adherence to the Idea (viz. the mediative function of the concept), in its praxis, it transcends philosophy itself to engage the world. This praxis, in relation to the concept, is theoretical: it is criticism which seeks out 'the deficiencies of the world to be made philosophical'. It is criticism 'which measures individual existence against essence, particular actuality against the Idea'.

⁵⁴ Compare Hegel's exposition in The Phenomenology of Mind of this transition with Marx's essay on 'Nodal Points...' in which he treats of the Post-Aristotelian and Post-Hegelian periods as epochs of 'unhappiness'. Cf. WYMPS, pp. 53-54.

The conjuncture disclosed by these preliminary notes, and within which Marx initiates his thesis, is thought within the Left-Hegelian problematic, and determined by Marx's need to think his own participation in the associated political struggle for freedom. Marx thinks this conjuncture as a historic moment in which philosophy assumes a practical attitude, and as 'subjective consciousness' (the philosophic Idea transformed into an active will) turns against a world whose existence contradicts its concept. Thus it is that Marx who in 1837 set out to 'seek the Idea in reality itself' discovers it instead in the subjective consciousness of the individual, of philosophy opposed to the world. Although Marx accepts Hegel's principle of Reason he, in effect, adopts a position closer to that of Kant and Fichte. Marx's idea of philosophy transforming itself into a will to transform the world, which expresses his first critical relation to Hegel, is in perfect agreement with the line of interpretation dominant among the Left-Hegelians in general. Marx, it can be said, at this point thinks within the Left-Hegelian problematic in which Hegel is made to speak against himself and brought into relation with the very position which he inveighed against.

The necessary and general condition of this Left-Hegelian problematic is to transform Hegel's speculative philosophy into a philosophy of praxis. As we have seen, the first two conditions of this problematic were given by Cieszkowski (philosophy as the determination of the future) and Bruno Bauer (criticism, which measures reality by the Idea). To realize these two conditions, which posits the possibility of freedom (and thus action) and reduces the Idea to the subjectivity of universal consciousness, it was necessary, first of all, to reject Hegel's 'speculative' standpoint of 'objective spirit' gained by reflection on the necessity (Reason) of the whole, and establish the standpoint of 'subjective spirit' of the self-conscious individual. This problem -- of bringing philosophy 'to the subjective point' -- was confronted

most directly as a critique of religion, ie., in the reduction of the 'divine' to the 'human'.

This problem, reflected in Marx's appeal to Prometheus as the symbol of man's creative power and freedom, underlies one of the critical leitmotifs of Marx's preliminary studies to his thesis. This theme has two points of reference: religion is the 'alienation of (man's) essence in God'; and 'divinity...is avoidance of the world'. With apparent reference to Feuerbach's critique of religion, Marx recognizes that the true Subject of God is constituted by the essential human qualities in relation to which the divine has only the value of attributes.⁵⁵ In a note on Plutarch, and again in one on Schelling, Marx follows Kant (both directly, and indirectly via Feuerbach) in seeing proofs of God as either pure tautologies or as a reference to the existence of the consciousness that man has of his own essence: 'Proofs of the existence of God are only proofs and logical explications of the existence of essential human self-consciousness'.⁵⁶ The significance of this point is developed in a passage of the Appendix where Marx criticizes Schelling for relapsing into orthodoxy, and abandoning his early views which, according to Marx, denied the existence of God as contradictory to the freedom and autonomy of Reason.⁵⁷ This interpretation of the

⁵⁵Cf. WYMPS, p.64.

⁵⁶Cited by Mins, op.cit., p. 168; cf. WYMPS, p. 65.

⁵⁷Cf. WYMPS, pp. 64, 66: "In general, Herr Schelling would be well advised to recall his first writings. For instance, he says in the piece on the Self as the principle of philosophy: 'If we assume...that insofar as God...is the real basis of our nature, then God himself enters the sphere of knowledge as object and hence cannot be the ultimate point for us on which this entire sphere depends'. And we remind Herr Schelling of the concluding sentence of his letter...: 'It is time to acquaint the new humanity with freedom of mind and no longer tolerate its crying about its lost restrictions'".

the early Schelling is revealing in that it indirectly reflects Marx's interpretation of Fichte. Reason, in this interpretation, is associated with the freedom of the individual rather than with the necessity of the whole.⁵⁸ Philosophy, in this interpretation, is not based on the principle of reflection, whose object is 'god', but on the principle of action, whose object is 'self' -- man in his subjective consciousness.⁵⁹

Following Bruno Bauer⁶⁰ Marx confronts the condition of this transformation of philosophy in Greek systems of Stoicism, Epicureanism and Scepticism, in which philosophy 'is brought to the subjective point', and that together constitute the 'complete construction of self-consciousness'.

After recapitulating Kant's critique of the 'proofs of the existence of God' Marx quotes from the early Schelling against the late Schelling: 'When you presuppose the idea of an objective god, how can you speak of laws which Reason produces from itself, since autonomy can be attributed only to an absolutely free being?'

⁵⁸This does not imply a liberal individualist concept of freedom, but like Rousseau, it implies a concept of 'man' in which the individual and the community are forced into identity by reference to the principle of equality.

⁵⁹The principle of reflection and action bring into respective focus as the object of philosophy, the 'object' of knowledge and the 'Subject' of knowledge. The theoretical interest in the 'object' is consummated in 'god', the totality of conditions, or the absolutely unconditioned; the practical interest in the 'subject' recognizes the freedom and position in the world of 'man'. In other words, the speculative stand-point converts an active Subject ('man') into a passive object, which is converted into a means with which the absolute being produced in hypostasis realizes itself.

⁶⁰Cf. McLellan, op.cit., pp. 72ff; Cornu, op.cit., pp. 138ff; Mehring, op.cit. Mehring plausibly reconstructs the motives for Marx's theme out of the efforts of what Ruge called the philosophical 'Montagne' (Rutenberg, Bauer, Koppen, Marx) to find the ideological support for the liberal bourgeoisie in their struggle for freedom (the rational development of freedom) by taking Hegel and going beyond him (Mehring,

The starting point for Bauer, Koppen and Marx's treatment of the philosophy of self-consciousness was Hegel's account in the History of Philosophy. In this account, Stoicism and Epicureanism constitute the general and individual aspect of 'subjective spirit', representing respectively the abstract-general and abstract-individual consciousness of self -- of the individual's 'pure self-relation'. The Stoics (to which one can assimilate Spinoza are philosophical determinists in that their principle supports a pantheistic surrender to the necessity of the whole. The Epicureans (to which one can assimilate Fichte) are philosophical indeterminists, in that their principle is that of the atomistic isolation of the individual -- the freedom of will.⁶¹

According to the view of the Montagne from which Marx wrote, Hegel was unable to appreciate the importance of the Greek philosophy of self-consciousness because of his 'speculative' standpoint -- of reflection on the necessity of the whole, reason in reality, or God.⁶² The significance of the Greek systems of self-consciousness, in which Marx thinks his post-Hegelian situation, is that it 'solve(s) a thus far unsolved problem': the role of the 'historic individual...as a representative of a species'. This is to say, it looks at

Nachlass, 1, pp. 42ff). This view is solidly supported by Cornu's extensive studies (op.cit., pp. 118ff). The point chosen as decisive was Hegel's treatment of the Greek philosophy of self-consciousness (Selbstbewusstsein) which they proposed to correct with reference to Hegel's underestimation of their significance (cf. also Mins, op.cit.).

⁶¹Cf. Mehring, Carlos Marx (Barcelona: Ed. Grijalbo, 1967), p. 39. Cf. below for our argument and point of interpretation inserted here.

⁶²Cf. Cornu, op.cit., p. 137. We re-focus this point somewhat differently from Cornu, in order to suggest the relationship that runs through 'speculation' (qua standpoint), necessity of the whole, reason in reality, God.

man as the active subject of the historic process, which discloses the possibility of man's action upon the world, and allows philosophy to formulate an 'energizing principle' of action based on the possibility of freedom.

In thinking the present (post-Hegelian) conjuncture of philosophy in relation to the post-Aristotle conjuncture, the 'duality of philosophical self-consciousness' takes the form of two opposed attitudes to the world: passive reflection, or conformism (Stoicism, the positive party); and active criticism (Epicureanism, the liberal party). It is the second attitude or party which in its practical attitude and adherence to the concept realizes the principle of philosophy (ie., idealism), and makes progress.

The problem confronted by the liber-critical party is to realize the 'principle of philosophy' by defending it against its 'non-concept, the element of reality'. This problem is raised by the question of the relation: thought-being, reason-reality, philosophy-world; and is posed within the problematic of two viewpoints: materialism, which recognizes development according to 'necessity', and idealism, which recognizes development according to 'freedom'. Marx confronts this problematic, which had been formulated in turn by Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, in the opposed philosophies of nature of Epicurus and Democritus.

In Democritus' philosophy of nature Marx recognizes a determinist and materialist theory of the world. For Democritus the universe is composed of an infinity of atoms that fall in empty space. In this fall the large atoms fall more quickly and repulse the smaller, producing a vortex of movements which determine possible combinations and separations of atoms. In the course of these movements the lighter atoms are pushed towards the outside, while the heavier tend to the centre. In these movements -- which are the basis of the origin and development of the universe -- there is no element of chance or freedom: the necessity of all developments is axio-

matic, in function of the mechanical determinism of universal law. By thus converting necessity into a universal law, and reducing the totality to a combination of atoms, Democritus allows between these atoms only differences of quantity (size, form, weight), and assigns to the qualities (colour, smell, taste, temperature) a subjective value, dependent on our sensations and not on reason. Sceptic in request to the various senses, which provide an unreliable knowledge of things, Democritus presupposes the objective reality of the world, and believes in the possibility, for man, to grasp it in his capacity of reason which provide knowledge of the universal laws that govern the world.⁶³

Taking as a point of departure the fundamental principles of Democritus' philosophy of nature, Epicurus profoundly modified Democritus's atomism by introducing changes which allowed him to reject Democritus' determinism, and affirm instead the essential freedom of man in a world dominated by chance.

Marx explains the profound difference between Democritus and Epicurus' philosophies of nature in terms of their opposed methods, respectively based on the principle of 'real possibility' and 'abstract possibility'. These two opposed modalities of possibility explain to a great part the difference in conception, materialist and determinist the one, idealist and indeterminist the other. In relation to 'real' possibility, we have the 'sceptic and empiricist' (Democritus) who holds chance and freedom a subjective illusion, considers nature from the point of view of necessity, and attempts to explain the real existence of things; in relation to 'abstract'

⁶³ AMP, pp.69ff.

possibility, we have the 'dogmatist and philosopher' (Epicurus) who considers appearance as real, sees only chance (and thus freedom), and whose manner of explanation tends to destroy the objective reality of nature.⁶⁴

To elaborate: Democritus' philosophy of nature is based on the principle of 'real possibility' which pre-supposes the effective (objective) existence of the object, and from which is deduced its relative necessity or determinism: 'Necessity appears in finite nature as relative necessity, as determinism...only...deduced from real possibility' (cf. the 'ambience of conditions, causes, grounds, etc., by which this necessity is mediated').⁶⁵ In this connection 'Epicurus is directly opposed to Democritus. Chance is reality, which has merely the value of...abstract possibility...the exact antipode of real possibility...(which) is confined within sharp limits'.⁶⁵

Real possibility, like reason, is confined within limits, and tries to justify the necessity and reality of its object; abstract possibility, like imagination, does not recognize limits, in that its interest falls not on the explained object, but rather on the Subject that explains. Its only purpose is to make the object possible at the level of thought. That which can be thought (abstractly possible) does not constitute a limit for the thinking subject ('to think is to be free'). For Epicurus the principle of philosophy is to establish the world as thinkable and thus as possible -- is, Marx

⁶⁴Cf. thesis, Part 1 (3) 'Difficulties with regard to the identity of the Democritean and Epicurean philosophy of nature', in AMP, pp. 75-76.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 74.

⁶⁶Ibid.

points out, a matter of profound indifference to Epicurus.⁶⁷

The two modes of explanation that correspond to the principles of 'real' and 'abstract' possibility, respectively secure the determinism of necessary laws, and the freedom of man. The respective modes of explanation, one of which supposes the necessity and reality of its object and the other recognizes the essential freedom of the Subject, clearly have a different function, in terms of a corresponding theoretical interest in the object and a practical interest in the Subject. Democritus has a theoretical interest in natural knowledge or science, and, consequently, is satisfied with 'empirical reflection' on his object, the material element of reality. In this reflection, the atom is the material expression of necessity, and as such 'the general objective expression of empirical natural enquiry... (which) remains apure and abstract category, a hypothesis which is the result of experience, not its animating principle'.⁶⁸ Epicurus denies determinism of necessary laws, and thus science, in order to save the possibility of freedom. In relation to this practical interest in freedom, Epicurus' mode of explanation 'aims only at the composure (ataraxia) of self-consciousness, not natural knowledge in and for itself'. Accordingly, Epicurus sees in the atom not only

⁶⁷Quoted by Cornu, op.cit., p.155: 'Real possibility seeks to give a basis for the necessity and reality of its object; abstract possibility is not concerned with the object to be explained, but with the Subject that does the explaining. The thing need only be possible, thinkable. What is abstractly possible, what can be thought, does not stand in the way of the thinking subject; it is not a limitation....Whether this possibility is actual is a matter of indifference (to Epicurus)'.

⁶⁸ Quoted by Mins, op.cit., p.162.

the substance of the material world, but the symbol of individual human consciousness.

In context of Democritus and Epicurus' opposed interests Marx notes that Democritus considers only the empirical existence of the atom, whereas Epicurus considers also its spiritual essence or concept. Whereas for Democritus the atom is the material expression of 'necessity', for Epicurus its spiritual expression is 'chance and the arbitrary'.⁶⁹ In considering the ideality or form of the atom, as opposed to its materiality or matter, Epicurus introduces the change in which the whole science of atomics is placed on different ground: the declination of atoms. If Democritus deduced from the motion of the straight-line or fall of the atoms an axiomatic necessity, Epicurus introduces a 'declination' from the straight-line to allow for and vindicate man's freedom, to affirm the autonomy of the self-conscious individual. This is to say, where Democritus symbolized the materiality of the atom in the straight-line, Epicurus symbolized the ideality or spiritual essence of the atom in the declination from the straight-line.

The necessary consequence of declination is 'repulsion' (negation) -- the first form of self-consciousness gained in grasping itself as 'an immediately existing entity, an abstractly individual thing'.⁷⁰ By seeing only the 'material side, the scattering, the change' of repulsion, Democritus makes an 'act of blind necessity' out of what is for Epicurus the 'realization of the concept of the atom'. In this concept Marx

⁶⁹ Quoted by Cornu, p.154: 'Epicurus tends to establish the possibility of the world, and thought. His mode of proof, the principle according to which the proof is realized is, once again, abstract possibility, being-for-itself, that finds its concrete expression in the atom and its spiritual expression in chance and the arbitrary'.

⁷⁰ AMP, p. 84.

recognizes the 'ideal side according to which all relation to something is negated and the motion is posited as self-determination'.⁷¹ With the spiritual essence or form of the atom expressed in its declination, the ideality of repulsion yields the 'real soul' of the atom, the concept of 'abstract particularity': 'pure being-for-itself, independence from immediate existence, negation of relativity'.⁷² The 'relative existence opposed to the atom, the existence which it must negate' is the straight-line; ie., the atom frees itself from its relative existence by abstracting from it (deviating from the straight-line). The concept of the atom is thus actualized (its form determined) by abstracting from the existence opposed to it. Thus Epicurus' principle is ideated (vorges-tellen) in the form of 'being against the concrete world', and its 'dialectic and inner essence' emerges from its immediate and necessary 'collision with the concrete world'. In this ideation the atom emerges as the isolated individual, the formal principle of individual consciousness, which in the face of a hostile world, affirms its freedom and independence by withdrawing from it, in 'abstraction of the existence that limits the individual'.⁷³

In grasping the ideal side of repulsion (the spiritual essence of the atom) Epicurus changed the 'whole inner construction of the realm of atoms', and rises above Democritus' 'external' determinism. He did so by 'making valid the determination of form through (the atom), and by realizing the con-

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Cf. Cornu, op.cit., pp.147ff, who refers to and quotes from MEGA,1,1 (1), pp.27ff.

⁷³ Ibid., p.147 n.124, in which Cornu quotes at length from MEGA,1,1 (1), pp.27, 29. Also AMP, p.84.

tradition which lies in the concept of the atom'.⁷⁴ In line with Hegel's principle of idealism, the ideality here affirmed has the concept not as an 'external' form imposed on reality from the outside, but as its essential element (ie., as self-determined). Against Hegel, however, the ideality relates not to the necessity of the whole conceived as Spirit, but to the freedom of the absolutely autonomous individual, who, as an atom in repulsion, negates all relations to other existents, and posits his motion as self-determination.⁷⁵

In grasping the essence of repulsion rather than its material existence, the atom emerges not as in Democritus -- as an abstract category (empirical hypothesis) -- but as a symbol of the absolutely autonomous individual who has the centre of his gravity in himself. It establishes the principle of his abstract individuality (individuality freed from its relative existence), and as such the 'energizing principle' of freedom which is necessary for its activity.

By recognizing in Epicurus' analysis both the material and ideal sides of repulsion (the material existence and the spiritual essence of the atom) Marx indirectly returns to Kant's distinction of phenomena (atom as substratum of matter) and noumena (atom as pure form), and to Kant's insistence on the 'objectivity' of the contradiction between existence and essence. To 'objectify' this contradiction (as Epicurus does, but Democritus does not) is to simultaneously recognize the atom as (a) 'the natural form of the abstract, particular self-consciousness' and as (b) 'the empirical, particular self-

⁷⁴AMP, p. 85.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 84.

consciousness made into a thing'.⁷⁶ In this simultaneous recognition, repulsion emerges as a synthetic unity of form and matter, and man is looked at in two different senses: as an active Subject (free) and as a passive object (determined). In the first sense, in which the individual is viewed from his 'ideal side', man is intelligible in the freedom of his action (the criterion for which is reason); in the second sense, which looks at the individual from his 'material side', man is sensible in the 'effects' of the action (the criterion for which is sensation).

This distinction of form and matter within the atom discloses an apparent contradiction (essence vs. existence) which, as in the case of Kant, 'constitutes the main interest of Epicurus'.⁷⁷ According to its concept, the atom constitutes the absolute, essential or pure, form (spiritual essence) of nature, but in contradiction to its concept the atom also constitutes the material substratum of the phenomenal world in which it acquires variable 'qualities'. In its essence as pure form, the atom cannot have qualities, inasmuch as their variability give the atom an existence which contradicts its concept.⁷⁸ In this existence, viz. the sensible world of phenomena, the atom appears 'in a mode of alienated being differentiated from its essence'.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 97ff; Mins, op.cit., p. 164: 'As the atom is nothing but the natural form of the abstract, particular self-consciousness; so sensible nature is but the empirical, particular self-consciousness made into a thing, and this is sensible. The senses are therefore the only criteria in concrete nature, as abstract reason is in the world of atoms'.

⁷⁷AMP, pp. 85-86.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

Unlike, Epicurus, Democritus does not objectify this internal contradiction of the atom's concept and existence. For Democritus, appearance is totally confused with essence (appearance considered as to its existence) or is entirely separated from it (appearance as to its concept). In either case 'appearance is...degraded to the state of subjective illusion'.⁸⁰ As with Kant and Hegel's criticism of Spinozist rationalism or Hobbesian empiricism, the reduction of an objective appearance to a subjective illusion (cf. freedom and chance) results from confusing existence and essence.⁸¹ In Epicurus' objectification of the contradiction 'appearance (is) comprehended as appearance, ie., as alienation in its essence which asserts itself as alienation in its reality'.⁸²

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 97.

⁸¹We suggest here a parallel between Epicurus' revision of Democritus, and Kant's critique of empiricism-rationalism. Both Democritus and the seventeenth century pre-Kantian philosophers 'confuse' existence and essence, and consequently affirm the axiomatic necessity of universal law (mechanical determinism) at the expense of freedom and chance which are reduced to a subjective illusion. Both Epicurus and Kant insist on the objectivity of the contradiction which is resolved by looking at man in two different senses as disclosed by a theoretical interest in the object, and a practical interest in the Subject. This relation between Kant and Epicurus is strengthened in particular by Epicurus' theory of time. For both Democritus and Epicurus the concept of atom as an eternal element excludes time (birth and death), but while Democritus transfers time from the world of being to the subjective consciousness of the Subject, Epicurus transfers it to the phenomenal world of appearance wherein it represents the absolute form of sense-perception. As such it establishes a necessary connexion with phenomenal reality, which allows Epicurus to affirm a relation of congruence and objective reference between the object and its perception; ie., the phenomenal appearance of the object given in sense-perception represented in space-time is objective. The criterion for phenomenal appearance, of concrete nature, is sensation, whereas its substratum, the atom, has as its criterion abstract reason (Cf. Cornu, op.cit., p.148, in which extensive quotes are drawn from MEGA, I, I(1), pp.41-4.

⁸²AMP, p. 97.

In other words, essence only appears in the form of alienation: the atom's existence contradicts its concept. Because Democritus is trapped in the empiricism of the object, he does not grasp this contradiction, and confuses the atom's spiritual essence with its material existence (ie., does not recognize the latter as the alienated form of the former). As a result, Democritus makes an 'act of blind necessity' out of what for Epicurus is the 'realization of the concept of the atom'.

Kant, as we have seen, confronted this confusion of existence and essence, by insisting on the objectivity of the contradiction while holding that knowledge does not have an immediate relation to 'things in themselves', but is confined to their phenomenal appearance. Kant's solution was to conceive of man in two different senses as determined by the respective standpoints of theoretical understanding (science) and practical reason (ethics). From the standpoint of science man appears as a phenomenal being subject to the natural causality of nature (necessity); from the standpoint of ethics man appears as a noumenal being intelligible in the freedom of his action. Although these two standpoints disclose a theoretical and practical faculty of knowledge whose corresponding principles apply to different realms, they converge on the same territory of experience. This is to say, they bring into focus the world in which man acts as a synthetic unity. This synthetic unity or totality, however, emerges as a regulative idea of reflective judgement, and cannot be constituted as an object of knowledge.

This solution given by Kant has three conditions: (1) the world is a totality or synthetic unity of existence and essence (2) The objectivity of their contradiction discloses two alternative possible standpoints based respectively on a theoretical interest in the object, and a practical interest in the Subject; (3) the world as a synthetic unity cannot be constructed as an object of knowledge; ie., one must adopt

a dual perspective given by the standpoints of science and ethics -- both of which have objective validity.

Epicurus approximates Kant in respect to the first two conditions of his solution, but diverges from him in respect to the third in a direction followed by Fichte in his double revision of Kant and Spinoza viz. the synthetic unity (knowledge) of the world disclosed from a standpoint of an ethics based on the principle of freedom.

The world in which man acts is, first of all, a synthetic unity of form and matter that corresponds to the atom's spiritual essence and material existence, and that is determined by the ideality and materiality of repulsion. In adopting the standpoint of science determined by a theoretical interest in the object, Democritus confuses the atom's essence with its existence, and considers only the 'material side' of repulsion. As a result man appears as the passive support of a rigorous determinism or objective reason, and his freedom, limited by circumstances of life, is reduced to a subjective illusion.

Epicurus confronts this determinism viz. its negation of freedom, by adopting the standpoint of ethics, formed by a practical interest in the Subject, and based on the principle of freedom. This is to say, Epicurus subordinates science to ethics, materialism to idealism. From this standpoint Epicurus grounds knowledge (synthetic unity) in the Subject considered in its ideality or spiritual essence. In seeing the world not as an immediate unity, but a synthetic unity, Epicurus objectifies the contradiction of existence and essence, but resolves it by recognizing within the world of phenomena the alienated form of the atom's appearance: 'In Epicurus... appearance (is) comprehended as appearance, ie., as alienation of the essence which asserts itself as alienation in its reality'.⁸³

⁸³Ibid.

In that the atom alienates its essence or pure form in the world of phenomena (in which it is projected as its substratum) it only conserves its essence outside its phenomenal appearance. To affirm 'its concept, its essence... its independence from immediate reality' the atom suppresses 'its relative mode of existence' by 'abstraction' of the world opposed to it.⁸⁴ In effect, Marx concludes, Epicurus actualizes his concept of the atom, and ideates his principle of freedom, by conceiving the atom in the form of the isolated individual who affirms himself and secures his freedom by making 'abstraction' the goal of his action. In this 'abstraction' (negation of its 'relative existence') the individual protects his freedom by withdrawing from the world, and thereby securing the composure (ataraxia) of his self-consciousness.

In this composure of self-consciousness, or freedom of thought, Epicurus draws the ultimate conclusion from a philosophy of self-consciousness based on the principle of 'abstract possibility', and posited in the form of 'abstract individuality'.

Marx confronts this Epicurean philosophy with a balanced critique. On the one hand, Marx lauds Epicurus' conversion of Democritus' philosophy of nature into the basis of an idealist ethic whose objective is to secure and justify human freedom.⁸⁵ That Marx considered idealism as the true

⁸⁴Cf. above notes 74-76.

⁸⁵ Quoted by Cornu, p.151: 'In Epicurus the theory of the atom, with all its contradictions, is the natural science of the philosophy of self-consciousness, posited in the form of abstract individuality as its absolute principle, and developed to its extreme consequence in which its conscious opposition to the universal leads to its own destruction. In Democritus, on the other hand, the atom is only the general and objective expression of his empirical conception of nature. The atom continues to be the a pure, abstract category, a simple hypothesis derived from experience, and not a principle of action; thus not driven to realize itself it

foundation of science is clearly reflected in his positive evaluation of Epicurus, in respect to both his distinction of essence and existence, and his subordination of the material element to the spiritual element: 'What is enduring and great in Epicurus is that he gives the circumstances no priority over ideas (Vorstellungen) and makes no effort to maintain them'.⁸⁶ On the other hand, by conceiving man in the form of 'isolated and abstract individuality' Epicurus represents a 'freedom isolated from the world, not freedom integrated in the world'.⁸⁷ This 'abstract' freedom secured by abstraction from the individual's relative existence, or withdrawal from the world, satisfies Epicurus' philosophic aim: the composure (ataraxis) of self-consciousness. In its avoidance of the world, however, it frustrates the real possibility of man acting upon the world so as to transform it. In the form of 'abstract individuality' the atom (ie., man) cannot affirm itself as the 'idealizing power capable of dominating the world':

isolated and abstract individuality cannot affirm its concept, its essence, being-for-itself, its independence in respect to immediate reality, suppression of its relative mode of existence, by abstraction of the world opposed to it.⁸⁸

Epicurus based his philosophy on the principle: what is thinkable, is possible. However, the isolation of abstract individuality, and its impotency to act, forced Epicurus to

has no influence on the concrete development of natural science'.

⁸⁶cited by Mins, op.cit., p. 167.

⁸⁷Cornu, op.cit., p.154, quoting from MEGA,1,1(1), pp.40, 50-1.

⁸⁸Ibid., quoting from MEGA,1,1(1), p.29.

construct a world in its image, and confer reality to the product of its consciousness. Marx indirectly criticizes the ideological position on which such recourse is based in a note on Plutarch.⁸⁹ In this note Marx directly, although loosely, follows Kant in referring the traditional ontological argument for the existence of God based on deducing from the Idea of an absolute being its effective existence.

Supported directly and indirectly by Kant, Marx demonstrates that while Democritus errs in his concept of reality by confusing existence with essence, Epicurus errs in his mode of reasoning (hypostasis) which confuses abstract and real possibility. In this confusion (to attribute real existence to a mere concept) Epicurus only admits reality inasmuch as it agrees with the laws of thought, and affirms the freedom of abstract self-consciousness -- the absolute freedom of the individual's pure self-relation. This however is clearly not a satisfactory solution to the problem of philosophy's relation to the world. In effect, while Democritus' philosophy of nature leads to determinism, ie., negation of freedom, that of Epicurus leads to a false concept of freedom -- conceived in the absolute form of self-relation, and not in its dialectical relation with necessity (within the framework of man's relation to objective nature). In his desire to secure the freedom of man in a world which he cannot dominate Epicurus is forced to separate man from the world, which makes it impossible for him to act upon the world, and renders his freedom abstract.

Against Epicurus, and with reference to Hegel's position, Marx considers that the problem of freedom only yields a solution when placed within the framework of man's relation to necessity (which implies a relative limitation of man's autonomy) and not in abstraction from it. Hegel's solution,

⁸⁹Ibid., quoting from MEGA,1,1(1),p.80.

however, is given from the speculative standpoint: the inner reflection of a realized ideal -- of reason in reality. In its recognition of this objective rationality, disclosed from the standpoint of the absolute, philosophy is reconciled to the world.

Consistent with the general project adopted by the Left-Hegelians in general, and with a conscious reference to the liberal-critical party in philosophy, Marx revises this speculative conception, and converts Hegel's philosophy into a philosophy of praxis supported by the principle of freedom established by Epicurus. Marx accepts in principle Hegel's principle of unity, but in transforming Hegel's speculative philosophy into a philosophy of praxis, he shifts from the standpoint of the absolute in which reason is a realized ideal, to the standpoint of man in which reason is an ideal to be realized; and moves from an objective idealism based on the power of a universal reason to a subjective idealism based on the freedom of the 'historic individual', the creative power of human reason. The Subject of history is not God, but man.

In this transformation of philosophy into an 'active will' turned against the 'apparent world' -- a world that contradicts its concept (ie., is alienated from its essence) -- Marx clearly adopts a position closer to Kant and Fichte than to Hegel. In this subjective idealist conception, thought in relation to Kant's practical reason and Fichte's 'active urge', the task of philosophy is to criticize the world-turned-irrational, to measure its existence against the philosophic idea and bring it into line with its concept.

It is with this concept of philosophy as theoretical praxis or criticism that Marx thinks his participation in the Left-Hegelian movement to represent the liberal struggle for freedom.

CONCLUSION

The central problem of Marx's dissertation, and indeed of all his Early Works, concerns the relation between 'philosophy' and the 'world', a modality of the problem posed by Kant and Hegel: to secure a relation of unity between thought and being, spirit and matter. Within the idealist problematic of Kant and Hegel's opposed solutions to this problem, the first terms in the type-structure of this subject-object relation is homologous with the principle of idealism (freedom) while the second forms the basis of the principle of materialism (necessity). The project of German Idealism was to constitute the 'unifying truth' of these two principles, which is that the Idea is the 'essence' of the real. This project clearly shapes Marx's dual critique of Democritus and Epicurus, and it does so with reference to a Left-Hegelian revision of Hegel that takes Marx back to the rationalist humanism of the bourgeois Enlightenment and draws him towards a position closer to Kant and Fichte than to Hegel. This is to say, the 'essence' of the real, the Idea, is associated not with the universal reason of an Absolute Subject, God, but with the reason of a human subject, Man. Whereas for Hegel, reason is in reality, embodied in the totality of its conditions as its immanent truth, for Marx and the Left-Hegelian movement in general reason confronts reality as its critical measure, and as such, as a subjective ideal. Its centre of reference: the concept of 'Man', the 'essence' of man (freedom, reason).

With reference to this concept of Man, 'philosophy' is brought to its 'subjective point' and set against a 'world' turned irrational -- ie., in violation of the human essence, in contradiction to its concept. Marx's dissertation viz. its search for a 'principle of action' -- of theoretical criticism that is -- is shaped by the subjective idealism and rationalist humanism of this 'philosophy-world' relation. Like

the Enlightenment philosophes and his companions in theory, Marx believed in the power of ideas -- ie., of human reason -- to change the world and determine its development. In other words, philosophy is invested with an active force, with the power to compel reality to conform to its concept.

It is this 'philosophy of praxis' which underlies the structure of Marx's Critical Method: to reduce all phenomena to their inner essence -- ie., their universal form (defined by reference to a concept of 'Man', and thus given a 'human meaning').

The dissertation, however, does not move beyond the suggested form of this conception of philosophy as critique and a presentation of its initial conditions. To illuminate the structure of Marx's philosophic critique, and to demonstrate the effectivity of its underlying problematic, we need to consider Marx's thought in action, which is to say, we need to examine Marx's application of this critique. This takes us beyond the dissertation into the next phase of Marx's intellectual development based on his journalist experience, and from there on to the most critical point of Marx's theoretical formation, the works of 1843-44.

CHAPTER FOUR

MARX'S ENTRY INTO POLITICAL STRUGGLE: A LIBERAL- DEMOCRATIC CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL LIFE, AND THE POWER OF FREE PRESS

1

Despite the divergence between the interests and concerns of the Rhenish merchants and industrialists, and their movement of bourgeois liberalism, on the one hand, and the philosophical interests and concerns of the Left-Hegelians on the other hand, a common ground was found in the conjuncture of shared aspirations for change, and in opposition to the Prussian bureaucratic-feudal state. This common ground established the basis for an 'affair', the fruit of which was the Rheinische Zeitung, a journal founded as a mouthpiece for the interests of the liberal bourgeoisie, and supported by the Left-Hegelians who assumed editorial control.¹

With the political radicalization of the Hegelian Left, brought about by the reactionary intervention of the state, which deprived the Young Hegelians of their traditional means of expression -- university positions -- philosophy was obliged to 'install itself in the press'. 'The press', observes Marx, who took over as editor in October, 1842, 'is the freest form in which the mind evidences itself nowadays'.²

¹On the Rheinische Zeitung (hereafter RhZ), see esp. Cornu, op.cit., vol. 2, ch. 1. For Marx's role see Robert Pascal, Karl Marx: His Apprenticeship to Politics (London: Labour Monthly, 1943).

²Cf. 'The Debates on Freedom of the Press', in Saul K. Padover ed. & trans. Karl Marx: On the Freedom of the Press and Censorship (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), p. 13. Hereafter: On Freedom.

The standpoint of 'critical' opposition adopted by the Left-Hegelians was thought in relation to the problematic of a world turned ir-rational: the actual existence of the Prussian state contradicts its essence as disclosed by the concept of a 'rational state'. Within this problematic the Left-Hegelians defined the need for philosophy to realize itself by turning against the 'apparent' world in criticism which measures the existence of the state against its concept. Within this conception of philosophy the 'critic' tried in the last instance to convince the state itself to assume its essence. The sphere of the critic's action -- to struggle for freedom and realize philosophy -- was journalism. Above all, the struggle took the form of freedom of the press: since 'freedom is...the essential species of the whole intellectual existence' it is 'also', Marx adds, 'that of the press' which relates itself to the condition of the people as intelligence'.³

The Rheinische Zeitung period (January, 1842-Marx 31, 1843) as a journalist and editor, was decisive for the formation of Marx's political and theoretical development: it signalled his entry into political life, as a critic of the socio-political conditions of exploitation and oppression, and his first confrontation with 'material interests'.⁴ Par-

³On Freedom, pp. 26, 77.

⁴Cf. Marx's Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859), p. 19: 'In the year 1842-43, as editor of the Rheinische Zeitung, I first found myself in the embarrassing position of having to discuss what is known as material interests. The deliberations of the Rhenish Landtag on forest thefts and the division of landed property; the official polemic...against the RhZ about the condition of the Moselle peasantry, and finally the debates on free trade and protective tariffs caused me in the first instance to turn my attention to economic questions'. Cf. on the RhZ period as decisive for the transition from 'idealism to materialism, and radical democracy to communism' see Lenin, Karl Marx (New York: International Publishers, 1989). We, it will be seen,

ticularly as editor Marx had the opportunity of showing whether a philosophic understanding ergo critique of actual events (giving society a consciousness of itself, showing it the reason for its conflicts) could play an effective role in bringing about radical change: to free the state from irrational elements, and bring it into line with its concept.

Forced to confront the 'so-called material questions' Marx's writings ranged over many areas: censorship; provincial diets, and their estate-representation; divorce laws; peasants accused of stealing wood; poor vintagers in the Moselle region, etc. To each of these questions, in relation to the Left-Hegelian problematic, Marx brought the unifying concept of 'rational state', used as a norm to measure actual socio-political conditions.

Marx formulated this concept of a 'rational state' in terms of a metaphysical principle of freedom: 'freedom is the essence of man as gravitation is the essence of bodies'.⁵ In relation to this unifying concept based on the principle of freedom (ie., the 'essence of man') Marx's philosophy is, throughout this period, dominated by what can be called 'liberal-rationalist humanism'.⁶ This philosophic position has been subject to diverse, mutually conflicting

disagree with Lenin's judgement, given that the character of a thought is determined by its mode of reflection rather than its objects.

⁵Cf. 'Debates on the Freedom of the Press' (RhZ, May 5-19, 1842), in On Freedom, p. 23: 'Freedom is so much of the essence of man that even its opponents realize it in that they fight its reality'.

⁶Cf. Louis Althusser, For Marx, pp. 223ff; Franz Mehring, Karl Marx, ch. 2; Cornu, op.cit. vol. 2, ch.1.

interpretations. In this period Marx has been alternatively regarded as either a Hegelian⁷, Feuerbachian⁸, or Kantian⁹. Although most commentators see Marx's unifying concept of 'rational state' as Hegelian, Maximilian Rubel insists that Marx is 'practically free from Hegelian influences'¹⁰, and according to Franz Mehring Marx 'reaches back to the bourgeois enlightenment movement...recogniz(ing) Kant as the theorist of the French revolution'.¹¹ Another, and perhaps most prevalent position, recognizes the respective points of these contending interpretations, and declares that Marx throughout this period is an eclectic polemicist whose thought does not yield a systematic idea, but rather, a mixture of unsynthesized elements.¹²

We ourselves have tentatively defined Marx's thought at this point as locating an unspecified space somewhere between Hegel, on the one hand, and Kant-Fichte on the other.

⁷Cf. in particular, Easton and Guddatt, Introduction to Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society.

⁸Cf. Althusser, op.cit.; W. Schuffenhauer, Feuerbach und der junge Marx (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag, 1965), pp. 27ff.

⁹The relation to Kant is alleged on the basis of a return to an Enlightenment concept of Reason based on a philosophy of man, and of criticism in terms of this reason (cf. Mehring and M. Rubel); also, as formed indirectly via Feuerbach (cf. Althusser).

¹⁰Maximilien Rubel, Karl Marx: Essai de biographie intellectuelle (Paris: M. Riviere, 1957), pp. 34ff; cf. Sydney Hook, From Hegel to Marx, p. 159 commenting on Marx's article on the Diet debate on the peasants' theft of wood: 'This event marked the complete abandonment of the Hegelian theory of the state'.

¹¹Mehring, Carlos Marx, p. 67.

¹²David McLellan, Marxism before Marx, pp. 133ff.

To move beyond this point, we hold that it is possible to form a systematic idea of Marx's thought, and that to grasp this thought it is necessary to reduce it not to its diverse elements, but to its unifying concept.

Generally speaking, the interpretation of Marx as Hegelian is supported by Marx's concept of the state, whereas that which relates Marx to the Enlightenment is supported by Marx's concept of freedom based on a philosophy of man. The principle of reason relates to both these concepts, and, we will argue, is subject to the ambiguity of a double interpretation that allows us to grasp the unity of Marx's thought vis-a-vis both Hegel and Kant.

2

The eighteenth century French Encyclopedists and English theorists, in the name of natural law, sought to defend the individual against the despotism of the state, which was regarded as the external necessity of civil society, and as such, a rational restriction on individual freedom. Marx follows Rousseau and Hegel in opposing this liberal-individualist conception of the state so as to conceive of it as the 'actualization of rational freedom'.¹³ This concept of the state as 'rational freedom' relates not to the 'subjective' reason 'in the individual' but to the 'objective' reason 'of the whole':

While the earlier philosophers of state law derived the state from drives of ambition...or from reason -- though not reason in society but rather in the individual -- the more ideal and

¹³Cf. 'Leading article in No. 179 of the Kölnische Zeitung: Religion, Free Press, and Philosophy' (July 1842), in WYMPS, p. 128.

profound view of modern philosophy derives it from the idea of the whole.¹⁴

From the standpoint of the 'Idea' of 'viewpoint of essence' the state is

a great organism in which legal, ethical and political freedom has to be actualized and the individual citizen simply obeys the natural laws of his own reason, human reason, in laws of the state.¹⁵

From the standpoint of this 'Idea', which Marx opposes to the 'childish standpoint (of) sensible perception (which sees only the particular)', philosophy apprehends the 'invisible nerve threads which connect the particular with the general -- which everywhere in the state animate the material parts into an intellectual whole'.¹⁶ This intellectual whole or ideal totality of the 'people's spirit' (Volksgeist) forms an ethical state whose 'spirit of sovereignty...is (or should be) realized in free institutions and laws'.¹⁷

Law, conceived as the 'positive being of freedom', is the embodiment of the 'spirit of sovereignty'.¹⁸ Freedom, embodied in law, can and has existed as either a 'particular prerogative' or as a 'general right'.¹⁹ In the first case, freedom is not one of law, strictly speaking, but one of

¹⁴Ibid., p. 130.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Cf. 'Debates on Freedom of the Press' (May 5-19, 1842), in On Freedom, op.cit., p. 6.

¹⁷Cf. 'Marginal Notes on changes made in the Ministerial Rescript' (Feb. 12, 1843), in On Freedom, op.cit., p. 86. Marx's parenthesis.

¹⁸Cf. 'Debates on Freedom of the Press', in On Freedom, op.cit., p. 29: 'A law text is the bible of freedom of a people'.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 23.

'privilege' in that it is regarded as a 'supernatural gift... as an individual characteristic of certain persons and estates'.²⁰ In the second case, freedom is regarded as the 'natural gift of the universal sunlight of reason', and as such the 'essential species of the whole intellectual existence'.²¹ Freedom, as embodied in law, is in short predicated not on freedom of the will, but on the 'general freedom of the mind'.²²

The first concept of freedom, given in the 'unethical materialistic view' of the state abolishes 'the equality of all citizens before the law' and establishes the 'law of a party against another party' which 'divides rather than unites'.²³ In a clear echo of Rousseau, Marx adds that law, based on 'class unreason' ('private egoism of the classes'), divides, and as such is 'reactionary'.²⁴ In effect, 'it is not a law; it is a privilege'.²⁵ The second concept of freedom, given from the 'viewpoint of essence', is based on 'civic reason' of the ethical state rather than on 'class-unreason' (egoism), and establishes not a law of 'party against...party' (which divides) but a law of the 'state for all the citizenry'

²⁰Ibid., p. 21.

²¹Ibid., pp. 21, 26.

²²Ibid., p. 8.

²³Cf. 'Comments on the latest Prussian Censorship Instruction' (written Jan-Feb 1842; published in Ruge's Anekdoten, Sep. 1843), in WYMPS, p. 80.

²⁴Cf. 'Debates on Freedom of the Press', in Padover, p. 87; WYMPS, p. 80.

²⁵Cf. 'Comments on...Censorship...', in WYMPS, p. 80.

(which unites). In this case of law -- as the form of an ethical state -- law is the 'conscious expression of the will of the people created with and through it'. It is, in short, the embodiment of the 'people's spirit' or the 'civic reason' of Rousseau's 'general will'.

As the expression of the 'people's spirit', and, as such, the embodiment of an objective reason, laws are 'positive, clear universal norms in which freedom has won an impersonal theoretical existence independent of the caprice of any individual'.²⁶ As such, law is based on the 'essence of man', the 'unconscious natural law of freedom': 'Where law is real law -- ie., where it is the essence of freedom -- it is the real essence of the freedom of man'.²⁷ As a universal which 'I do not possess' but 'which possesses me' real law is not 'prescribed from outside me' but is the 'conscious expression of the people's moral spirit', the 'recognition of its inner laws':

The legislator...does not make laws; he does not invent them; he only formulates them. He expresses the inner principles of spiritual relationships in conscious positive laws.²⁸

In this formulation of the people's spirit as law, the unconscious natural law of freedom (moral spirit) becomes the conscious law of state (political spirit). As for the individual, in respect to this law

until his real action shows that he has stopped obeying the natural law of freedom, the law of the state compels him to be free.²⁹

²⁶On Freedom, p. 29.

²⁷Ibid., p. 29.

²⁸Cf. 'On a Proposed Divorce Law' (Dec. 19, 1842), in WYMPS, p. 140.

²⁹Cf. 'Debates on Freedom of the Press', in On Freedom, p. 30.

Marx derives this conception of state-law not from either 'ambition' or 'reason' in the individual (cf. the liberal-individualist position grounded in natural law), but from the 'more ideal and profound view of...the idea of the whole'. In regard to this 'whole' -- and this is very important -- Marx clearly approaches Rousseau rather than, as commonly asserted, Hegel.

This requires elaboration. Rousseau and Hegel converged on the concept of 'reason in society' which is formed by the integration of all individuals into an indivisible whole -- the ethical state -- and their submission (in total alienation) to the state. They differed, however, in their respective conceptions of the 'reason' of this state. Rousseau saw as the Subject of this reason 'man' -- conceived not in the form of the isolated individual, but in the form of a moral and rational community, of men in a relation of fundamental unity. Within this community (Gemeinwesen) reason is disclosed as the conscious expression of the 'general will' (cf. Rousseau) or 'people's spirit' (cf. Marx), but is ultimately interrogated within the individual as a social being -- in respect to the individual's 'moral spirit'. This 'general will' declares itself -- a people's spirit manifests itself -- in an intellectual whole (concept of the state) in which the 'private egoism of the classes' is abolished. The condition of this abolition is either that of equality imposed by freedom as a function of law (Rousseau) or of universality imposed by law as a function of freedom (Marx).³⁰ This moral

³⁰We will elaborate the concept of this distinction below. His difference from, yet relation to, Rousseau allows Marx to insist with Rousseau on 'popular representation' or democracy in terms of an equality before the law; and with Hegel, that 'in popular representation one should not make an abstraction of actually existing differences' but that 'demands, rather, that one should recognize the actual differences created and conditioned by the inner structure of the state' (cf. the suppression of Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung (Jan. 1943), in

and civic reason, or people's spirit, is 'objective' in the sense of its universal necessity (viz. its independence from individual caprice) embodied in the very concept of law, but is yet 'human': its Subject is the moral and rational community in which individuals obey in the law of state the law of 'their own reason, human reason'. The reason which governs the state (Staatsvernunft) is the combined intelligence (Volksintelligenz) of the people as a whole.

For Hegel it is quite different. Man is not the Subject of the reason that governs the state. This reason, as the 'spirit' of the whole, the 'essence' of the state's phenomena, realizes itself through the mediative activity of 'man' who appears as its unwitting, unconscious instrument. This supra-human, universal reason, manifests its 'cunning' by using the mediative activity of the historic individual as a means to its own realization. The condition of this reason is not the suppression of 'civil society' viz. its atomized and class-divided nature, and the formation of a community viz. the equality or universality imposed as a condition of law. On the contrary, the individual's integration into the state, and the emergence of reason, presupposes the very conditions of class-division and alienation that characterizes civil society. Reason emerges through and in the dialectic of these very conditions as the immanent end of its real development which proves to be, despite its phenomenal appearance, a rational process.

Marx, like Rousseau, does not accept the existence of class-division (inequality), nor the particularity of private interests (egoism) with 'civic reason' whose most uni-

On Freedom, p. 62).

versal form is the general will or combined intelligence of the people as a whole -- of a 'moral and rational community'.

By establishing 'reason in society' from the standpoint of 'man' rather than from the speculative standpoint of the 'absolute', Marx revises Hegel, and, as Mehring puts it, 'reaches back to the bourgeois Enlightenment movement'. In doing so, however, Marx does not as Mehring suggests, turn to Kant. In Kant Marx recognizes the view which derives the state from 'reason, though not reason in society, but...in the individual'.³² Marx does not conceive of freedom in relation to the 'free will' vis-à-vis the external necessity of the state, but in relation to the 'general freedom of the mind' in which every individual constitutes a 'necessary and integral part...a reciprocally complementing (element)' of an organic whole that 'unites within itself harmoniously all true moments of the people's spirit'.³³

The combined intelligence of the people as a whole constitutes an objective reason which Marx conceives in terms of law as a function of freedom. In terms of this freedom whose 'ethical essence' is the 'essential species of the whole intellectual existence' Marx establishes a standpoint 'that is deliberately universal, the standpoint of philosophy of law'.³⁴ This standpoint, based on a philosophy of man -- on the essential freedom of the mind -- yields the concept of

³²Cf. 'Leading article in No. 179 of the Kolnische Zeitung: Religion, Free Press and Philosophy' (July 1842), in WYMPS, p. 130.

³³Cf. 'the suppression of LAZ', in On Freedom, p. 56, with ref. to the press the organ of the mind, in which the views of different segments of society articulated by individual journalists are combined into an intellectual whole, the united view of the people as a whole.

³⁴Cf. 'On a Proposed Divorce law' (Dec. 19, 1842), in WYMPS, p. 136. For the concept of the universality of law, Marx appears lean on Kant's 'problematical' judgement: 'law

the state as the 'actualization of rational freedom'. As such, according to its concept, the rational state is not an external organization above civil society -- defined in the mere political functions of government -- but is the whole life of society permeated by the people's spirit, an organic totality of ethical relationships -- relations of real (ie., ideal) unity.

However, Marx adds,

there is no...state (ethical relationship)...that completely corresponds to its concept...No ethical existence corresponds to its essence or at least does not have to correspond to itWorld history decides whether a state is so much at odds with the idea of the state that it no longer deserves to continue.³⁵

What guarantees that the state corresponds to its essence is law as the conscious expression of the will of the people. Under conditions of law the people's spirit feels 'at home' in 'political forms...as the forms of its own life'.³⁶ The state no longer corresponds to its concept when instead of expressing the universal spirit of the people it expresses the 'spirit of the estates' which is governed not by the 'general freedom of the mind' but by the 'individual interests of the particular estates'. The essence of 'true law' is universality which establishes freedom not as a 'particular prerogative' or privilege, but as a 'general right' based on the 'real essence of the freedom of man, and thus on the general interest of the people as a whole, the condition for which is universal participation.

is universal....To subsume the individual under the universal requires a judgement. The judgement is problematical' (Cf. 'Debates on Freedom of the Press', in Padover, p. 32.

³⁵Cf. 'On a Proposed Divorce Law' (Dec. 19, 1842), in WYMPS, pp. 140-7.

³⁶Cf. 'the suppression of LAZ' (Jan. 1843), in On Freedom, p. 62.

This struggle for freedom as a general right -- realized when the state fully corresponds to its essence, ie., when the people's spirit is embodied in free institutions and laws -- provides the historical context for the emergence of philosophy, the form in which reason in society becomes conscious:

Philosophers...are the fruits of their time, of their people, whose most subtle, precious and invisible sap circulates in philosophical ideas. The same spirit that builds philosophic systems in the brain of the philosopher builds railroads by the hands of the workers.³⁷

Marx's elaboration of his conception of philosophy as the 'spiritual quintessence of its time' is very revealing. It clearly suggests the influence of Feuerbach's philosophy of man, but just as clearly does it suggest that Marx has not recognized or accepted the 'materialist' meaning of Feuerbach's new conception of philosophy:

philosophy does not stand outside the world... but philosophy...is in the world with its brain before it stands on the earth with its feet.³⁸

³⁷Cf. 'Leading article in No. 179 of the KZ', in WYMPS, p. 122. 'Since every genuine philosophy is the spiritual quintessence of its time, the time must come when philosophy comes into contact and mutual reaction with the actual world not only internally by its content but also externally through its appearance. Then philosophy ceases to be a specific system... it becomes the philosophy of the present world'. ('leading Article of the KZ; Easton & Luddat, pp. 122ff).

³⁸Ibid. Cf. The categorical imperative of Feuerbach's new philosophy: 'Think as one who exists, as one who is in the world and is part of the world...'; in Zawad Hanfi, ed. The Fiery Brook, p. 36; cf. Marx, 'Luther as Arbiter between Strauss and Feuerbach' (Jan. 1842), in WYMPS, p. 95: 'free yourself from the concepts and pre-suppositions of existing speculative philosophy if you want to get at things as they are...'. On the contribution of Feuerbach to Marx's concept of philoso-

Marx clearly conceives of philosophy in terms of Hegel's idealist principle of 'reason in reality'. It is 'spirit', albeit the spirit of 'man', that is in the world as its driving force. As the 'spiritual quintessence' of its age philosophy has its basis in the world itself. This is to say, the concept against which the world is measured is derived from a philosophic enquiry into the world itself, and presupposes a thorough study of what exists -- to disclose the Idea in the real itself.

Given that 'no ethical existence (state) corresponds to its essence, or at least does not have to correspond to it' the relationship of philosophy to the world depends on whether the world is 'real' (rational) or merely 'apparent' (irrational). In the first case, existence corresponds to essence, and the people's spirit is satisfied -- ie., embodied in the laws and institutions of a rational state. In relation to, and consistent with, Marx's earlier formulation, philosophy here reaches a 'nodal point' in which the world is rational, and philosophy is 'concrete'. In the second case, existence contradicts essence, and the people's unsatisfied spirit, as reflected in its philosophy, enters into tension with, and turns against the 'apparent' world.

Like the other Left-Hegelians, Marx continues to believe that the best way to realize philosophy, to promote the rational development of the state, is informed criticism (enlightened thought) that measures actual conditions of life against the Idea. This Idea, in the name of which philosophy criticizes the world, is not, Marx insists, an imagined ideal:

phy see Chapter five below.

'philosophy must seriously protest when it is confused with imagination'.³⁹ Marx explicitly rejects the 'romantic tendency' to confront the world with an ideal derived from the 'sky of imagination instead of the solid ground of reality'.⁴⁰ True criticism Marx insists, must adopt the 'realistic standpoint', and analyze questions in terms of 'historical actuality'.⁴¹ This 'historical actuality', however, relates not so much to its 'factual conditions' as to the 'moral soul' or 'historic spirit of a people' that animate them: 'the true actuality...inherent in existing actuality as its ought to be and goal'.⁴² Marx here explicitly differentiates his conception of philosophy from the positivism (empiricism-historicism) of the 'Historical School of Law' which asserts that the historic existence of factual conditions demonstrates their rational necessity.⁴³ Marx opposes the 'method of...principle' in which the Historical School of Law confuse the concept of the state with its historic existence. The true method of philosophy is to neither confront a historic actuality with an imagined ideal, nor accept its existence as the measure of its rationality, but to grasp the reason within the real in philosophic criticism that 'expose(s) the world to full daylight' so as to 'shape the new along positive lines'.⁴⁴

⁴⁰Cf. 'The Debates on Freedom of the Press', in On Freedom, p. 38.

⁴¹Cf. 'The Centralization Question' in WYMPS, pp. 106-8, and 'Philosophic Manifesto of the Historical School of Law'.

⁴²Cf. 'Suppression of LAZ' (Jan. 1843), in On Freedom p. 54; 'letter to Ruge' (Sep. 1843) in WYMPS, p. 213.

⁴³Cf. WYMPS, pp. 96ff.

⁴⁴Cf. 'letter to Ruge', in WYMPS, p. 210.

Given that 'every people expresses its spirit in the press' the proper medium for philosophic criticism is the press in which philosophy 'relates itself to the people as intelligence...(and) equally as mood'.⁴⁵ Given, furthermore, that the 'free press is the most ruthless expression, the manifest aspect of the historic spirit of a people' the necessary condition for the press is 'freedom': 'freedom is... the essential species of the whole intellectual existence, and hence also of the press'.⁴⁶ In a flourish worthy of Hegel, Marx elaborates:

The free press is the omnipresent open eye of the spirit of the people, the embodied confidence of a people in itself, the articulate bond that ties the individual to the state and the world, the incorporated culture which transfigures material struggles into intellectual struggles and idealizes its raw material shap....It is universal, omnipresent, omniscient. It is the ideal world which contently gushes from the real one and streams back to it ever richer and animated anew.⁴⁷

As the 'ruthless expression' of the people's spirit, the free press is the 'intellectual mirror in which a people sees itself' and, Marx adds, 'self-viewing is the first condition of wisdom'.⁴⁸ As Marx explains: 'the first necessary condition of freedom...is self-awareness' which 'is an impos-

⁴⁵Cf. 'Defense of the Moselle Correspondent' (Jan. 15, 1843), in On Freedom, p. 77.

⁴⁶Cf. 'Debates on Freedom of the Press' (May 5-19, 1842), in On Freedom, p. 26.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁸Ibid.

sibility...without self-confession'.⁴⁹ The condition for self-awareness, which provides an ideal (non-real) freedom⁵⁰ is the 'ruthless confession of a people to itself'. 'It is well known', Marx continues, 'that the power of confession is redeeming'.⁵¹ With reference to the 'redeeming' power of 'self-confession' Marx notes that in order 'to have its sins forgiven mankind has only to declare them for what they are'.⁵² As a condition of this declaration (erklarung) the significance of the free press is that the people see in it their own condition....The people know that their press bears their sins...(and) exhibits the rose of a moral spirit within the thorn of the present.⁵³

These enigmatic and metaphorical formulations allow us to bring into focus Marx's conception of philosophy as critique. For Marx, throughout his year of journalism, an 'existing actuality' contains simultaneously its own inherent principle of truth (essence) and its absence; ie., it is the 'phenomena' of an essential contradiction:

The critic...can start with any form of theoretical and practical consciousness and develop the true actuality out of the form inherent in existing actuality as its ought-to-be and goal.⁵⁴

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁰Cf. 'Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction (Jan.-Feb. 1842), in WYMPS, p. 92.

⁵¹Cf. 'Debates on Freedom', in On Freedom, p. 31.

⁵²'Letter to Ruge' (Sep. 1843), in WYMPS, p. 215.

⁵³Cf. 'Suppression of LAZ', in On Freedom, p. 54.

⁵⁴'Letter to Ruge' (Sep. 1843), WYMPS, p. 213.

The inherence of this inner truth means that its coming to consciousness takes the form of an erklären: to simultaneously declare and explain. This is to say, to declare factual conditions ('sins of humanity') for what they are -- the presentation of experience -- is already their explanation. To declare-explain is to 'expose the world to full daylight' by grasping the truth inherent in an existing actuality. This inherent truth relates not to the particularity of phenomena which remain 'sins of humanity', but to the universal form (freedom) or human meaning (essence of man) of an objective contradiction: alienation of man from his essence. To expose to the world its own 'sins' is to express the nature of the contradiction within an actuality between its phenomena ('thorn of the present') and its essence ('rose of a moral spirit'); and to grasp its human meaning (Ver menschlichun) by discovery of the original unity of the concept.

We have here the contours of Marx's critical method: to proceed from factual conditions towards the formulation of their concept; to move from phenomena to essence, and to disclose the latter as the 'truth' of the former. The structure of this critique, which Marx will apply first to Hegel's philosophy of law (1843) and then to political economy (1844), will be elucidated below, in relation to the critical contribution of Feuerbach. At this point we will just point out its initial and formal conditions.

The first condition of the critique (the terms of its structure: phenomena-essence) has already been brought into focus in relation to Marx's doctoral dissertation. The structure of this relation was here supported by two theses: (1) the objectivity of the contradiction between (material) existence and (spiritual) essence; (2) discovery within this contradiction of existence as the 'alienated form of being differentiated from its essence'. In this discovery, disclosed by the original unity of the concept, freedom or ideality emerges as the truth of necessity or materiality; and the appearance

of the contradiction is reduced to its universal form: the alienation of man from his essence.

Taking as a point of departure the critique of Epicurus' philosophic principle of 'abstract particularity' (freedom of the isolated individual), Marx's writings for the Rheinische Zeitung move beyond his doctoral dissertation in a significant direction. In these writings, Marx shifts from Epicurus' individualism to Hegel's Idea of the whole, which is re-interpreted on the basis of an Enlightenment concept of reason and a Feuerbachian philosophy of man. In this shift Marx moves from the 'abstract particularity' of the isolated, autonomous individual to the 'concrete universality' of the historic individual -- conceived as an essential being (Wesen) of a rational community (Gemeinwesen), a pars totalis of the people's spirit. Against Hegel, Marx conceives the Idea of the whole (universal reason) not as an absolute, self-identical spirit (God), comparable to the Greek Nous or Christian Logos, but as the 'people's spirit', as the reason of man in society. In this Idea Marx approaches Rousseau or Montesquieu rather than Hegel: the 'whole' emerges as an expressive totality of an inner principle which is grasped in the unity of its concept as the 'spirit of sovereignty' (freedom) which 'is (or ought to be) realized in free institutions and laws'.⁵⁵ The universality of this spirit embodied in laws and free institutions yields the concept of the state which emerges as the 'form inherent in existing actuality as its ought to be and goal'. According to this concept, by which existing socio-political conditions are measured, the

⁵⁵Cf. 'Marginal Notes on changes made in the Ministerial Rescript' (Feb. 12, 1843), in On Freedom, p. 86.

state is a 'moral and rational community...which must and can be realized under any form of government'.⁵⁶

5

Hegel published the Philosophy of Right in 1821 with the conviction that the modern state embodied rational freedom, organic unity, and harmony toward which history had long been striving. The state effectively mediated the conflicts of civil society and provided a rational social order in which the freedom of the individual and civic duty coincided. In keeping with the standpoint of his system Hegel claimed that his conception of the state was not merely a projection of an ideal proposed by philosophy, but was the work of history itself -- of a reason in reality.

In terms of this reason, embodied in the Prussian state, Hegel formulated a theory that generalized three necessary conditions for a rational state: (a) a hereditary monarch -- to ensure stability and unified decision-making; (b) a bureaucratic executive government formed by a 'universal class' dedicated to the administration of laws' (c) a legislative assembly based on the representation according to fixed 'estates' whose 'organic institutions' (primogeniture, corporation) are based on modes of property ownership. In this representation, the particularity of private and class interests are mediated with the general interest of the state.

In these three features, Marx comments, 'Hegel believed that he had laid down the basis of the Prussian constitution'.⁵⁷ Further, Marx adds, 'the German public believed it with him (and) the government proved (it) among other things

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Cf. 'Marginal Notes...', in On Freedom, p. 85.

by the official dissemination of his writings'.⁵⁸ In the light of Hegel's theory the Prussian government officially defined the constitution of the Prussian state as a 'monarchy surrounded by (liberal) republican institutions' (1830) or by 'Christian institutions' (1843).⁵⁹

Under the circumstances of the period (the 1840's) politically oriented young Hegelians like Ruge and Marx necessarily rejected this Hegelian-Prussian constitution as contrary to its concept, and irrational in its actuality.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰The political thinking of the Left-Hegelians was especially disseminated by the Hallische Jahrbücher (1838-41) and its successor, the Deutsche Jahrbücher (1841-42), both published by Arnold Ruge, who was responsible for the specifically political orientation of a group of Left-Hegelians, most of whom centred their criticism against religion. One of Ruge's articles, 'Towards a Critique of Present-day Constitutional and International Law' (June 24-30, 1840) has a particular relevance in that it anticipates a great number of Marx's later criticisms of both Hegel and the Prussian state. See, in particular, the account given by A. McGovern in Science and Society, vol. 34 (1970), pp. 433-34: '...in demanding the realization of a constitutional monarchy Ruge ...criticizes Hegel for failing to vindicate popular sovereignty and for making (the state) purely an affair of government officials. As for Hegel's defense of a hereditary monarchy, Ruge finds it 'inept to the point of absurdity' (and) reproaches Hegel for lack of confidence in the masses....Ruge directs his sharpest criticism against Hegel's conception of a corporative state...in which the people are represented... indirectly through deputies from the social estates to which they belong. In Ruge's opinion, these naturally-defined estates can never get beyond their own selfish interests... (to) become the basis of a truly rational state'. Both of these criticisms, directed against both hereditary monarchy and estate-representation, anticipate Marx's criticisms expressed especially in his articles on 'free press' as debated in the Rhenish Diet, and the 'Marginal Notes' on the changes made in the Ministerial Rescript (Feb. 12, 1843). On this, see the following discussion.

Already in March, 1842, Marx declared in a letter to Ruge that this constitution is 'thoroughly self-contradictory and self-destroying hybrid'.⁶¹ AS a journalist and editor in the year that followed Marx substantiated this view by turning against both Hegel's concept of the state, and the state in its present form. On the one hand, Marx argues, Hegel's concept of the state contradicts its principle (as 'the actualization of rational freedom') which Marx turns against Hegel's own conclusions. In his various articles Marx anticipates his later systematic critique (1843) of Hegel's philosophy of law, by attacking the chief supports of Hegel's concept of state: (a) monarchy; (b) bureaucracy; (c) estate representation.⁶² On the other hand, the state in its present form is the 'negation' of the true state: 'actual political life', Marx comments, 'is without political spirit...the political spirit does not exist in the actual state'.⁶³

The true state, founded on reason, is neither grasped in Hegel's false concept, nor embodied in the Prussian constitution, but develops through philosophic criticism which measures the actuality of the state against the Idea, and confronts actual conditions of life -- ie., the irrational character of the actual state -- with the concept of a 'rational state'.

Marx confronts the actual conditions of life in a wide range of questions: censorship; estate-representation in the provincial diets; divorce laws; the social situation of

⁶¹Cf. 'Letter to Ruge', MEGA 1, 1(2), p. 269; McGovern, op.cit., p. 434.

⁶²See Chapter five for further exposition of these criticisms.

⁶³Cf. 'Debates on Freedom of the Press', in On Freedom, p. 6.

of peasants accused of stealing fire-wood, and of poor vintagers in the Moselle region, etc. To each of these questions Marx brings the unifying concept of a 'rational state' which is ranged against the socio-political conditions of the actual state.

Estate Representation versus Universal Participation

Marx's first confrontation with the 'irrational' character of the actual state is on the issue of free press debated by the Rhenish diet (May 23-July 25, 1841) and raised by the Prussian Censorship Instruction.⁶⁴

The relation between the issue of free press and Marx's ideal of a rational state can be simply put: the reason that governs the state is not the exclusive property of a privileged bureaucratic elite within the government; it is the product of combined intelligence of the people as a whole the spirit of which is expressed by the press. For the people's free spirit and reason to become manifest requires a free press: 'censorship kills the political spirit'.⁶⁵ Since the 'essence of a free press is the...reasonably ethical essence of freedom' censorship is the 'aspect of unfreedom, a polemic of the viewpoint of semblance as against

⁶⁴Cf. 'Remarks on the latest Censorship Instruction' (written between Jan. 15 and Feb. 10, 1842. Published in Anekdoten, Feb. 1843); and 'Debates on Freedom of the Press', published in RhZ, May 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 19 (1842); in Padover pp. 3-47, 89-108. Marx originally conceived a series of five articles on the Rhenish Diet debates. Of these the first was 'Debates on the Freedom of Press and Publication of the Parliamentary Proceedings' (written early April, 1842); of the other projected articles, only the one on wood-thefts was published. See below.

⁶⁵Cf. 'Debates on Freedom...', in On Freedom, p. 34.

the viewpoint of essence'.⁶⁶ Censorship stifles reason in its more universal form -- the community as a whole -- and is incompatible with the essence of law, namely: universality. This reason requires the conscious representation of the people as a whole (Volks-representation).

The significance of the debates on the freedom of the press is that

we find the specific spirit of the estates nowhere more clearly and fully expressed than in the debates on the press. By preference, in the opposition to freedom of the press, as in the opposition to general freedom of the mind in any given sphere, the individual interests of the particular estates, the natural one-sidedness of their character, appear most blunt and ruthless.⁶⁷

In respect to this 'one-sided' spirit of the estates Marx formulates a devastating criticism of the positions and expressed opinions of precisely the two estates defended by Hegel: the 'feudal estate' of the landed nobility, and the 'city estate' of the liberal bourgeoisie.

As to the representative of the nobility:

because [such men] wish to acknowledge freedom not as the natural endowment of the universal light of reason, but as the supernatural gift...[they] treat freedom only as the in-

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 22-23. Cf. 'Remarks on the Latest Censorship Instruction', in On Freedom, p. 99: 'A society in which one organ thinks of itself as the only exclusive possessor of political reason and political morality, a government that in principle opposes the people, and assumes, therefore, their political opposition to be the...normal opinion (or) evil conscience of a faction' invents laws (cf. censorship) based on an 'unethical, materialistic view of the state'.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 8.

dividual property of certain persons and classes and...[in] order to save the particularity of privilege, they proscribe general freedom of human nature.⁶⁸

As to the representative of the city estate, Marx notes that the 'indecision' and 'half-hearted' request for 'three-eighths of freedom' illuminates the 'natural impotence of semi-liberal vacillation'.⁶⁹ Anticipating the Rousseauian distinction between bourgeois and citizen formulated in the Jewish Question (1843) Marx observes that the position represented by the delegate from the city estate defends the 'bourgeois' interests of a specific social class rather than the general interest of the state.⁷⁰ Ridiculing the timidity of the speaker, more bourgeois than citoyen, Marx notes that it reflects the indecision of his class caught between desire for independence and fear of change. In like fashion Marx criticizes the 'foggy and misty reasoning of those German liberals who think they honour freedom when they place it in the starry sky of imagination instead of the solid ground of reality'.⁷¹ In respect to its half-hearted and vacillating support for freedom the viewpoint represented by the delegate of the city estate (bourgeois class) is no better than that of the nobility in its defense of the 'deliberate obduracy of privilege'.⁷² The city estate, Marx comments, in its attitude to freedom shows itself to be a 're-

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 20-21. Revised translation according to McLellan, Marx before Marxism, p. 113.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 45-46; Werke, 1 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1961), pp. 75-76, cited by Michael Lowy, La Teoría de la Revolución en el Joven Marx (Madrid: Siglo veintiuno, 1973), p. 40.

⁷⁰Cornu, op.cit., p.238, quoting from MEGA, 1,1(1), p.217: 'We are here faced by the opposition of the bourgeois not of the citizen'.

⁷¹Cf. 'Debates on Freedom of the Press', in On Freedom, p. 38.

actionary estate' (Städtischen Reaktion).⁷³

The viewpoints represented by the delegates of both the fuedal-landed and the city estates, in their respective acceptance and timid opposition to the tendentious press law, are infected by the egoistic particularity of class spirit, and defend the private interests of their respective classes instead of the general interest of the people as a whole. The principle of class interest cannot form the basis of a rational state, which must guarantee law as such, and not become an 'instrument of private property contrary to the principles of reason and justice'.⁷⁴ The only 'genuinely historical view', one that reflected the general interest of the people as a whole, was presented by the few representatives of the peasant estate, whose 'valiant, dignified and decisive opinions' gave unflinching support for freedom of the press, and hence, of the mind.⁷⁵

Marx's judgement of the 'irrational' character of the state viz. the representation of private interests, was sharpened with a direct confrontation of the socio-economic reality of the 'lowest mass of the property-less', a condition experienced in his editorial discussion on the economic question of 'material interests'.⁷⁶ The first experience of this

⁷³ Lowy, op.cit., p.40, who quotes from the Werke edition (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1961), vol. 1, pp.65-6.

⁷⁴ McLellan, Marx before Marxism, p.127, who quotes from MEGA, 1,1(1), p.269.

⁷⁵ Cf. 'The Debates on Freedom of the Press', in On Freedom, p. 45; see Cornu, op.cit., pp. 238ff.

⁷⁶ Cf. 'Preface to a Critique of Political Economy', in Marx-Engels, Selected Works, 1, pp. 361ff.

question was raised by the proceedings of the Rhenish Diet on peasants accused of stealing fire-wood -- the private property of local landowners.

Confronting the Rhenish Diet law which condemns peasants as thieves for taking dead branches in the forest for fire-wood, Marx notes that in an ideal state every part of society is integral to the whole, and that when the state declares peasants criminals it cuts them away from itself, thus amputating itself.⁷⁷ The problem is that the state in the case of this law threatens the organic unity of all the people in that it expresses not the general interest but, rather, the particular interests of the landowners whose soul is 'spiritless (Geistlos), stupid and egoist'.⁷⁸

With reference to the landlords' pretension to transform the state into an instrument that serves their particular interests, Marx criticizes the landlords' 'depraved materialism that sins against the spirit of the people and of humanity' by failing to give 'to each material question a political solution, ie., a solution in accordance with reason and the morality of state'.⁷⁹ With reference to the landowners' 'miserable soul (that) has never been illuminated ...by the thought of the state' Marx notes that particular interest is 'always coward, because its heart, its soul, is an external object'.⁸⁰ To expand this thought, Marx declares:

⁷⁷ McGovern, op.cit., p.439, who quotes (and thus translates) from MEGA,1,1(1),p.276.

⁷⁸ Lowy, op.cit., p.43, who quotes from Werke, v ol.1, p.120.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.43, quoting from Werke, vol. 1, p.147; Cornu, op.cit., p.284, quoting from MEGA,1,1(1), p.304.

⁸⁰ Ibid.,p.41.

any system that represents particular interests...gives pride of place to an unethical, uncomprehending and insensitive abstraction from a limited material and a limited consciousness that is slavishly subject to it.⁸¹

In effect, Marx introduces into his critique of particular class interests the concept of reification: man is de-humanized in that social relationships become 'fetishes' -- dead things that come to dominate living men; the natural relationships of domination and possession are reversed, and man is enslaved to the objectified forms of his own socio-political relationships.⁸²

As a consequence of this experience Marx gains an increasing understanding that the state, in contradiction to its concept, tended to express the interests of a particular class, and that its constitutional forms were a product of property-relations.⁸³ To defend law as such, and free the apparatus of state from the spirit of particular class inter-

⁸¹ McLellan, op.cit., pp.127-8, who quotes from MEGA, 1,1(1), p.304.

⁸² At the end of his article Marx for the first time uses the concept of 'fetishism' to characterize social relations. Pointing out that fire-wood considered as such, isolated from the social relations that link it to men, convert it for the Rhenish Diet into a species of 'fetish' which acquires a sacred character reflected in inhuman laws. Marx compares the Rhenish Diet to the natives of Cuba who considered gold as the fetish of the Spanish conquistadores. These ideas on fetishism seem to derive from a book by Brosses, On the Cult of Fetishism (Paris, 1760) trans. in German by E.B.H. Pistorius in 1785; cf. Cornu, pp. 284ff. cf. Lowith, 'Man's self-alienation in Marx's Early Writings', Social Research (1954), pp. 211ff.

⁸³ The gathering of dead wood had traditionally been unrestricted, but the scarcities caused by the agrarian crises of the 1820's and the growing needs of industry led to legal controls. By the 1840's 5/6 of all prosecutions in Prussia dealt with wood-theft, and this was even higher in the Rhineland (See H. Stein, ref. McLellan, op.cit., p. 126). As confronted by Marx, the landowners manages to impose their private interest on the question in that it was being proposed

ests, Marx argues in a series of articles on Standing Committees in the Prussian Assembly that such committees should not represent particular class interests, but all the people:

representation is not to be the representation of some substance which is not the people, but must be viewed only as self-representation, as the state's action...through the universality of its content'.⁸⁴

Representation, Marx argues, must be true self-representation of the people as a whole, ie., democracy, predicated on the universality of law. In the true state, no particular element, whether landed property, industry, or other 'material' factors, can make a separate contract with the state. Only when these material elements are fused harmoniously in the whole life of the state are they entitled to a voice in the state:

The state penetrates the whole of nature with spiritual nerves. At any point, it must be evident that what dominates is not matter (particularity) but form (universality), not nature without the state, but the nature of the state, not an unfree object, but free man.⁸⁵

that his paid-servant, subject to dismissal, be the sole arbiter, on top of the fact that the landlord was compensated for his wood, and pocketed the ensuing fine. In Marx's legal discussion of these questions he claims that the state should defend customary law against the 'degrading materialism' of the rich. For some things could never become the private property of an individual without injustice; moreover, 'if every theft? Do I not, by my private property, deprive another person of his property (and) destroy his right to property?' Marx here reflects his reading of Proudhon, although he does not argue from his position of socialism, but from a legal and political standpoint that does not attack the very institution of private property, but, rather, calls upon the state to recognize the true character of law.

⁸⁴ WYMPS, pp. 9-10.

⁸⁵ McGovern, op.cit., p.441, who quotes from MEGA, 1,1(1), p.335.

The bureaucracy versus the free press

In his earlier essay on the wood-theft law, Marx criticizes state-law for supporting the particular interests of the landlords against the voice of the suffering poor whose well-being is in the general interest of the state. In another confrontation of the 'material question' -- raised by a correspondent's report on the dire economic distress of poor wine-growers in the Moselle region -- Marx similarly indicts the irrationality of the state, but deepens his analysis to identify its root cause: the contradictory character of the bureaucracy.⁸⁶

In its bureaucracy the state confronted both the correspondent's report on the vintagers' oppressive situation, and an earlier petition of economic grievances presented by their delegate to the Diet, as 'exaggerated cries which ignore the facts' and which, consequently, constitute an 'insolent, disrespectful criticism of the law'.⁸⁷ To protect its 'law' the government first lodged criminal proceedings against the representative of the vintagers, instituted a censorship instruction, and moved eventually to suppress the Rheinische Zeitung for adding insult and slander to injury and disrespect (in its defense of the Moselle correspondent) by 'stirring up dissatisfaction and discontent'.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Cf. 'Defense of the Moselle Correspondent', 'The "Rhenund Mosel-Zeitung"', and 'The relation of the Mosel region to the Cabinet Order of Dec. 24, 1841, and the more free movement of the press effected thereby'; trans. Padover op.cit., pp. 69-83; also WYMPS, pp. 143-50.

⁸⁷Cf. On Freedom, p. 83.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 71.

In his response to the government's action, Marx argues that the problematical relation between the private condition of the vintagers and the government (viz. its 'maxims of administration') has to be presented from a 'realistic standpoint' which 'goes beyond personalities' to focus on the 'necessary conditions' whose 'objective relationships determine the actions of private persons as well as those of individual authorities and that are as independent of them as is the manner of breathing'.⁸⁹ From the standpoint of this 'objective understanding' (reason in reality) the actual conditions of the Moselle region -- in which persons appear to act, but that reflect the 'power of general relationships in the will of the acting persons' -- emerges as an objective relationship between the 'private condition' and the 'political condition'.⁹⁰ The first aspect of this actuality relates to civil society governed by the particularity of material need; the second aspect relates to the 'maxims of administration' which ought-to-be governed, but are not, governed by the universality of law. The determining factor, and the point at issue, is the nature and supports of the objective relation that exists between these two conditions.

⁸⁹Cf. 'Relation of the Mosel Region to the Cabinet Order of Dec. 24, 1841...' (RhZ, Jan. 17, 19, 20, 1843); On Freedom, p. 75: 'In the investigation of political conditions one is too easily tempted to overlook the factual nature of relationships and to explain everything as emanating from the will of the persons acting. But there are relationships that determine the actions of private persons as well as those of individual authorities and that are as independent of them as is the manner of breathing'. In this 'realistic standpoint' which 'demonstrate(s) that something is made necessary by conditions (beyond personalities)' Marx clearly adopts Hegel's principle of reason in reality. It has, nevertheless, been pointed to as the first statement of 'historical materialism' in 'germinal' form.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 75.

As to this objective relationship Marx notes that the 'constant distress of a part of the country...is a contradiction between reality and the maxims of administration'.⁹¹ This is to say, the condition of economic distress, and the constant collision between this reality and the administrative maxims, discloses the presence of a fundamental contradiction which arises as a problem requiring 'mediation'. The problem: to reconcile the particularity of private needs with the universal end of the state.

Hegel's solution, as we have seen, has two supports: (a) the representation by fixed social estates; (b) the bureaucracy. Marx, who in his earlier essays already rejected the first in favour of popular representation, now attacks the second. In the first place, Marx argues, the government takes its administrative maxims to be law as such, and, accordingly,

in its bureaucratic essence sees the causes of the distress not in the area of administration but only in the natural and private-bourgeois sector that lies outside the administered area.⁹²

In the second place,

With the best will, the most eager humanity and the strongest intelligence, the administration, except for momentary and transitory collisions, cannot solve a constant collision between reality and its maxims, for not only is this not its task, but also the best intentions cannot break through an essential relationship or fate at will.⁹³

The 'essential relationship', Marx adds, 'is the bureaucratic one, both inside the administered body itself, and in its relation to the administered body'.⁹⁴ Because in its

⁹¹Ibid., p. 76.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

bureaucratic essence the administration confuses its maxims, which are 'intentionally or unintentionally muddled by private interests', with law as such, it cannot solve the difficulties that arise between the 'administration' and the 'administered'. In its 'one-sided bureaucracy' the government cannot relate itself to the real needs of the people in their 'pitiful voice of distress' and 'cries for help'.⁹⁵

To solve this 'difficulty' Marx calls for a third element, which is political without being bureaucratic ...an element... that is civic without being directly entangled in private interests and their needs.⁹⁶

For Hegel this third factor, or mediating function, was performed by the bureaucracy itself. For Marx, however, the 'complementary element, composed of a political head and a civil heart' is constituted by the free press:

In the realm of the press the administration and the administered can criticize each other's principles and demands as equals...no longer as persons (in subordinate relationship) but as intellectual powers (with equal political worth) with a basis of reason.⁹⁷

Marx elaborates:

as (the free press) is the product of public opinion (it) also produces public opinion, and it alone has the power to make a particular interest into a general interest; it alone has the power to make the distress of the Moselle region an object of general attention...; it alone has the power to alleviate the misery...⁹⁸

⁹⁵Cf. 'Defense of the Moselle Correspondent...'; WYMPS pp. 143, 148; On Freedom, p. 69.

⁹⁶Cf. On Freedom, p.76.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 77.

⁹⁸Ibid. Marx's argument for the free press is in this article based on the need for the people's spirit for expression; ie., the free press is compelled by the particularity of conditions in the Moselle region (cf.On Freedom, pp.70, 75-81).

'The press', Marx argues, 'relates itself to the condition of the people as intelligence, but...equally as mood'.⁹⁹ Consequently,

its language...is not merely the wise language of judgement that hovers over conditions, but also the affective language of the conditions themselves...which cannot and should not be expected in bureaucratic reports.¹⁰⁰

'Finally', Marx argues,

the free press carries the people's misery to the foot of the throne, not in a bureaucratically approved form but in its own medium, before which the distinction between administration and the administered disappears.¹⁰¹

Thus it is that 'in a lively press', under conditions of freedom, 'the whole truth makes its appearance'.¹⁰²

To sum up this 'whole truth', and thus, Marx's argument, the alleviation of the vintagers' distress -- the symptom of an essential contradiction -- requires action from the state in terms of 'universal participation in the interests of the fatherland', action that can transcend the bureaucracy so as to truly represent all the citizenry, and manifest itself in a free press. In effect, Marx calls for a radical form of liberal democracy -- without delegated representation, with a free press.

Monarchy versus liberal democracy

Marx's conclusion establishes that the requisite feature of a rational state is universal participation, the necessary condition of which is the unconditional freedom of

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 70.

the press. This raises an important question: What is the form of such a state? Marx's answer can be gleaned, apart from considerations outlined by us, from his marginal notes on the 'Ministerial Rescript' which, issued on Feb. 21, 1843, ordered the suppression of the Rheinische Zeitung as of April 1, 1843.¹⁰³ This Rescript accuses Marx of

attacking the constitution of the state at its foundations, of developing theories aiming at the destruction of the monarchical principle...of inciting one class against another, of stirring up dissatisfaction with existing legal conditions ...¹⁰⁴

Marx takes up each accusation in turn. First, as to his attack on the monarchical principle, Marx notes that the constitution which he was alleged to have subverted was officially defined as 'liberal sovereignty'. In terms of Hegel's Philosophy of Right this 'liberal sovereignty' was understood as a 'monarchy surrounded by republican...(and) Christian institutions'.¹⁰⁵ Marx comments that by 'liberal sovereignty' one can understand either (a) 'that freedom is merely the personal disposition of the king' or (b) 'that freedom is the spirit of sovereignty which therefore is also realized in free institutions and laws, or at least ought to be realized'.¹⁰⁶ In the former case, one has 'enlightened despotism', ie., 'the person of the prince vis-a-vis a whole state made up of spiritless (Geistlos) and unfree material'. In the latter case, with which Marx clearly identifies,

¹⁰³Written Feb. 12, 1843; Cf. On Freedom, pp. 84-88.

¹⁰⁴Quoted by Marx at head of article, written Feb. 12, 1843; in On Freedom, p. 84.

¹⁰⁵Cf. above, p. 149.

¹⁰⁶Cf. 'Marginal Notes...'; On Freedom, p. 86.

one does not confine oneself to the limits of the prince as a person, but regards the whole state as his body, so that the institutions are the organs in which he lives and works, so that the laws are the eyes with which he sees.¹⁰⁷

In context of our earlier exposition this concept of the state is illuminated as the embodiment of the people's spirit, whose sovereignty is based on the essential freedom of man, and whose condition is universal participation. In effect, Marx formulates a radical-democratic concept of the state based on a 'liberal-rationalist humanism'. In this concept, Marx does not 'express any special preference for a particular form of government' but conceives of it as a 'moral and rational community which must and can be realized under any form of government'.¹⁰⁸

6

After defending himself against the charge of subversion of the constitutions, Marx takes up the charge that he incited class conflict and stirred up discontent with existing legal conditions.¹⁰⁹ It is, however, with reference

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹As to these charges Marx observes that against many Rhenish liberals he has pointed to the 'wisdom of the government of the classes' (ibid., p. 88). Further, Marx insists that RhZ has never 'sought to incite individual classes... against other individual classes'. It has, rather, 'sought to incite each class against its own egoism and narrow-mindedness; it has everywhere asserted civic reason against class unreason and human love against class hate' (ibid., pp. 86-87). Here Marx clearly echoes arguments by Moses Hess, and more directly those of Feuerbach. As to the second charge, Marx comments that it is hardly a reproach inasmuch as 'a legal development is not possible without a development of law (which)...is impossible without a critique of the laws ...' (ibid., p. 87).

to the charge of fomenting a 'systematic opposition' to the government, that Marx introduces a point that we need to expand upon. In defense of this charge Marx comments:

if the Rheinische Zeitung had wanted to build a systematic opposition against the government, it would have had to pursue a totally opposite tactic....It would have leaned on French, instead of German theory.¹¹⁰

Marx does not elaborate this distinction between French and German theory, but in context of his intellectual milieu we can recognize its implications, and in relation to an earlier essay for the Rheinische Zeitung, a later essay for the Deutsche-Französische Jahr bücher, and a correspondence with A. Ruge, we can draw it out.

'French theory' unquestionably refers to the 'materialist' doctrines of socialism and communism propogated among the Left-Hegelians by Moses Hess¹¹¹ and brought to their at-

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 87-88.

¹¹¹ According to Cornu (op.cit., pp.334ff) the socialism of Considerant, Blanc and Proudhon, whose point of departure was Fourier, tended to express the aspirations of the petit-bourgeoisie oppressed by big capital it sought not revolution but a progressive transformation of bourgeois society through reforms; the communism of Babeuf, Cabet, Weitling and Blanqui, etc. was more thorough-going, but also opposed present-day society with an idealized future (Cf. esp. Cornu, op.cit., pp. 334ff). Moses Hess, self-learned on the basis of readings in philosophy, esp. Rousseau, Hegel and Spinoza, familiarized himself with socialist and communist doctrines in a series of travels, esp. St. Simon, Fourier, and Babeuf (ref. Cornu, pp. 177ff). His Sacred History of Humanity (1837) gave expression to what, with the works of L. Gall, constituted the first expression of socialist thought in Germany (ibid., p. 179). In the early 1840's Hess approached the Left-Hegelians as can be seen in his book European Triarchy (1841), which is inspired by Cieszkowski's philosophy of praxis -- on thought conceived as will, whose objective was the effective realization of not only freedom, but also of equality. In opposition to the liberal left-Hegelians, Hess underlined in European Triarchy that the essential problem is not 'political' but 'social': ie., not the privation of political rights, but the exploitation of the people by a new; aristocracy of money' (Cornu, op.cit., pp.222-

tention by the publication of Socialism and Communism in Contemporary France (1842) by Lorenz von Stein.¹¹² 'German theory', on the other hand, clearly relates to an idealist philosophy of law suspended, as we have seen, somewhere between Hegel and Kant. German theory, on the basis of the principle of freedom seeks above all to transform the state -- to bring it into line with its concept (universality). French theory, on the other hand, on the basis of the principle of equality, sees the fundamental problem as social (social injustice viz. inequality), and seeks, therefore, to transform the foundation (private property) of society itself.

This difference between the concept of the state and the principle of equality is well expressed by Lorenz von Stein. According to von Stein, the principle of equality is quite incompatible with the concept of the state in which

21). Hess demonstrated that after the 'intellectual' revolution in Germany, and the 'political' revolution in France would come a 'social' revolution in England, where the opposition of rich and poor was the sharpest. In abolition of private property, this revolution would replace bourgeois society with a new society -- communist and anarchist -- that assures both absolute freedom and social equality. Both Engels and Bakunin were early converted to communism by Hess, and Marx came under his influence late 1843 in particular.

¹¹²Cf. Stein's influence on Marx's conception of the proletariat see Robert Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Marx (London: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 114ff (although it is such a misconceived and worthless book one should perhaps let it die a quiet death); see esp. K. Mengelber, 'Lorenz von Stein and his contribution to Historical Sociology', Journal of the History of Ideas, X11 (1961); J. Weiss, 'Dialectical Idealism and the work of Lorenz von Stein', International Review of Social History, V11 (1963); also, English translations of major sections of Stein's book, ed. and introd. by K. Mengleberg, The History of the Social Movement in France 1789-1850 (Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster Press, 1964), esp. pp. 25-31. It is likely that Marx read Stein's book soon after its publication in 1842.

one must locate the only 'rational' solution to the social problem -- the subordination of particular interests of individual wills to the general interest of the state expressed as law: 'There is no conciliation possible between the idea of living totality represented by the true state, and of pure coexistence, implied by the principle of equality'.¹¹³

This distinction between the concept of the state and the principle of equality is echoed, and apparently accepted, by Marx in his stated demand that in popular representation 'one should (not) make an abstraction of actually existing differences but...should recognize the actual differences created and conditioned by the inner structure of the state'.¹¹⁴ We ourselves have to this point registered this distinction in the alternative conception of reason in terms of (a) law as a function of freedom (under condition of universality); and (b) freedom as a function of law (under the condition of equality). Both these concepts oppose the standpoint of individualism, and converge on the Idea of the whole in which freedom is not opposed to law but brought under law; they diverge in respect to the method by which the respective conditions of universality and equality are secured: penetration of reason into the real to disclose an immanent Idea; 'abstraction' from real conditions in terms of an 'imagined ideal' or 'subjective desire'.

This interpretation of the object and method of reason allows us to close in on Marx's thought. As to its object, conceived from the standpoint of totality, the problem is to determine the reason of the whole, the essence of its

¹¹³ Lorenz von Stein, Socialismus und Kommunismus des heutigen Frankreichs (Leipzig: 1842), cited by Cornu, p. 355.

¹¹⁴ Cf. 'The Suppression of the 'Leipziger Allgemeine' in Prussia'; On Freedom, p. 62.

phenomena: does it have an absolute subject (God) or human Subject (man)?

Marx's response to this problem is clearly expressed in his analysis of the Diet debates -- in the evaluation of the point of view held by the representative of the landed feudal class:

Since the real situation of these gentlemen in the modern state does not correspond to the idea that they invent for themselves, since they live in a world situated beyond the real world, and consequently, imagination takes the place of head and heart, their practical dissatisfaction obliges them to turn to...a theory of the beyond, ie., to religionThis then is what we note in the speaker: to practical needs he opposes a mystico-religious theory stemming from his imagination...to what is humanly rational he opposes sacred entities, superior to man.¹¹⁵

Marx here follows Feuerbach in his criticism of the Idea of God as the illusory beyond of a reality which man believes he is powerless to transform.¹¹⁶ Like the Idea of God, the Idea of freedom, when placed in the 'sky of imagination instead of the solid ground of reality', is an illusory ideal without -- as Kant puts it -- existence. Against the romantic tendency, which supports itself by the 'imagination', Marx insists on the 'realistic' standpoint: 'true theory must be expanded and developed in relation to concrete facts and the existing conditions'.¹¹⁷ This realistic standpoint, like Hegel, seeks the Idea in reality, but unlike

¹¹⁵ McLellan, op.cit., p.113, who quotes from MEGA, 1,1(1), p.199.

¹¹⁶ See chapter five below. Cf. also note 71 above re: 'foggy...reasoning' of German liberals who, as sentimental enthusiasts, 'see every contact of their ideal with common reality as a profanation' (On Freedom, p. 38).

¹¹⁷ Cf. 'Letter to Oppenheim' (end of August, 1842); MEGA, 1, 1(2), p. 280, quoted by McLellan, op.cit., p.123.

Hegel, bases it upon 'what is humanly rational', ie., upon the 'head' and the 'heart' of the people's spirit. The 'humanly rational', developed in relation to 'concrete facts and existing conditions' involve either the reason of the 'head' (intelligence) or the reason of the 'heart' (mood).

It is our thesis that Marx's first encounter with communism was thought in relation to this alternative way of looking at a 'real situation': from the point of view of the 'head' (German theory) or of the 'heart' (French theory). Already in his essay on 'The Mosel region and Cabinet order of Dec. 24, 1841' Marx pointed to the press as the medium in which philosophy relates to the people both as 'intelligence' and 'mood'. In relation to the people's head (intelligence) philosophy (viz. German theory) seeks an 'objective understanding' of actual conditions, whose 'essence' is disclosed from a standpoint that is 'deliberately universal...the philosophy of law'. In relation to the people's heart (mood) philosophy (French theory, ie. communism) responds to the people's 'practical needs' and 'subjective desire', viz. a struggle for social justice and equality:

communist ideas...(are) ideas that have overcome our intellect and conquered our conviction, ideas to which reason has riveted our conscience...chains from which one cannot break loose without breaking one's heart.¹¹⁸

One of Marx's first tasks as editor was to answer the accusation of communism brought against the Rheinische Zeitung with reference to the recent contributions by Moses Hess. Marx replied to the charge with the following declaration of principle:

¹¹⁸Cf. 'Communism and the Augsburg "Allgemeine Zeitung"' (Oct. 1842), Werner Blumenberg, Karl Marx (London: NLB, 1972), p. 47.

The Rheinische Zeitung does not even concede theoretical validity to communist ideas in their present form, let alone desires their practical realization, which it...finds impossible...¹¹⁹

Marx adds, however, some significant observations:

books like those of Leroux and Considerant and, above all, the acute work of Proudhon cannot be criticized by superficial and transitory fancies but only after consistent and probing studyWe are firmly convinced that the true danger does not lie in the practical attempt to carry out communist ideas but in their theoretical development; for practical attempts, even by the masses, can be answered with a cannon as soon as they have become dangerous, but ideas that have overcome our intellect and conquered our conviction, ideas (that) are chains from which one cannot break loose without breaking one's heart (are) demons that one can only overcome by submitting to them. Yet the Augsburger Zeitung never got to know the crisis of conscience caused by the rebellion of man's subjective desires against the objective insights of his own reason ...¹²⁰

The text of this article leads us to the following observations. (a) Marx is not unsympathetic to communist ideas -- especially with reference to the 'acute work' of Proudhon which 'cannot be criticized by superficial...fancies' but that require 'consistent and probing study'; he directs his criticism against communist ideas 'in their present form'. The significance of this becomes clear in a letter to Ruge written about a month later (Nov. 30, 1842). In this letter Marx sides with Herwegh and Ruge against the Berlin group, Die Freien, who Marx accuse of improper and unethical 'smuggling [of] communist and socialist dogmas, ie., a new weltanschauung' into their incidental literary criticism. Declaring himself against their 'radical' verbalism and frivolence, Marx notes that he demanded of the Freien

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

less vague rationalization, fewer high-sounding phrases and self-complacent preening, and more precision, more penetration into concrete conditions, more expertise in their analysis.¹²¹

Further, in demanding 'more content for the people' Marx insisted

that religion be criticized in the critique of political conditions rather than political conditions in religion... since religion in itself empty, lives not from heaven but from earth, and with the dissolution of the reverse reality, whose theory it is, it collapses of itself.¹²²

(b) In its 'present form' Marx sees communist ideas as systems of dogmas, a constellation of ideas, and even a world-view, that are important, serious, penetrating, etc., as theoretic works, worthy of prolonged and profound study. What gives these ideas a 'demonic' force is that they express the real factual conditions of the life-situation of the 'class possessing nothing' and give form to its practical demand 'to share in the wealth of the middle class -- a fact clearly evident in the streets of Manchester, Paris and Lyons'.¹²³ These facts, of course, are consistent with Marx's social consciousness of the exploited and unequal conditions of 'the bottom mass of humanity' experienced in his study of the wood-theft law and the Moselle vintagers' distress. Marx's 'crisis of conscience' clearly relates as he himself put it to the rebellion of his 'subjective desires' against his 'objective understanding'. This is to say, Marx struggles between the 'subjective' tendency of his 'heart' towards communism viz. the principle of equality, and the

¹²¹Cf. On Freedom, p. 162.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³'Communism and the Augsburg AZ'; WYMPS, p. 133.

abolition of private property -- the very 'basis' of civil society; and the 'objective' tendency of his 'intelligence' towards philosophy of law and its concept of the state.

(c) Communism can provoke 'practical attempts' in the masses to realize their demands, but they can be answered with brute force; the true danger lies not in these 'practical attempts' but in their 'theoretical development'. Marx here re-affirms the Left-Hegelian thesis of the hegemony of the 'activity of spirit' over 'crude material practice' found in Bruno Bauer, for whom theory constitutes the strongest form of practical activity; in Ruge, who believed that ideas are 'the best weapons with which to win...and that determine action and history'; and above all, in Hess, for whom the 'great error' of L. von Stein was to consider communism as the material aspiration of the proletariat instead of a struggle between the 'principle of communism' and the 'principle of private property'.¹²⁴

Caught between German and French theory with a troubled conscience Marx recognizes the hold that communist ideas have on his 'heart', and the need to submit them to a serious study, but cannot as yet concede them 'theoretical validity'. In effect, Marx continues the political struggle -- as editor of the Rheinische Zeitung -- in relation to German theory which develops a philosophic critique of the state. This struggle, which is to appeal to the state for it to assume its essence, becomes increasingly more difficult -- a constant battle against censors. In relation to these censors Marx had to contend with the radical verbalism of the Freien on

¹²⁴Cf. Bauer see McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, pp. 72ff; cf. Ruge see Lowy, op.cit., p. 53 and Cornu, op.cit., pp. 234ff; cf. Hess see Cornu, op.cit., pp. 333ff (ref. to 21 Sheets from Switzerland) and Lowy, p. 54, n. 48.

the one hand, and the timid 'moderation', concessions and cowardice of the bourgeois shareholders on the other. In a letter to Ruge (Nov. 30, 1842) in which Marx announces his break with the Freien of Berlin, he also complained of 'being burdened from morning to night with the most frightful censorship harassments, stockholders' screamings, etc.'¹²⁵

The directors of the Rheinische Zeitung at the beginning of January, 1843, decided to avoid all conflict with the government, a decision with which Marx likely disagreed. Even so the government continued to press its decision to suppress the Rheinische Zeitung, upon which Marx wrote to Ruge on Jan. 25, 1843:

I see in the suppression of the Rheinische Zeitung a progress in political consciousness, and am therefore resigning. Furthermore, the atmosphere had become very oppressive for me. It is hard to perform menial services even for freedom, and to fight with needles instead of clubs. I have become tired of hypocrisy, stupidity, raw authority, and our cringing, bowing, back-turning and word-picking. Thus the government has given me my freedom again.¹²⁶

The government decree ordered the suppression of the Rheinische Zeitung for April 1, 1843, but in the heat of conflicts on two fronts -- against the censorship of the government, and against the capitulation of the liberal shareholders -- Marx wrote Ruge on the 13th. March that he wouldn't stay as editor at any price, and on the 18th. of March publicly announced his decision to abandon his editorialship. In doing so, Marx effectively announces his break with liberalism.

¹²⁵On Freedom, p. 162.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 164.

The indifference of the Rhenish bourgeois liberals to the loss of freedom, and the general failure to reform the state, constituted the generally shared experience of the Hegelian Left, whose break with liberalism ushered in a period of fermentation, ideological confusion and intellectual crisis.

The condition of this crisis -- the capitulation of the Rhenish bourgeoisie to the government, and their indifference to the suppression of its press -- was generalized by the Hegelian Left to demonstrate that the bourgeois liberals could not play the revolutionary role that they had in the French revolution. Marx registers this evaluation in the observation that Germany is philosophically, but not historically contemporaneous with the times.¹²⁷ In effect, condemned to think what other nations have done, German philosophy is situated at the level of modern thought, but its 'theoretic over-development' is the expression of the 'historic under-development' of the bourgeoisie whose backwardness incapacitate it for the realization of the destiny traced out for Germany by philosophy.

This break with liberalism and the ensuing intellectual crisis brought about a profound split within the Left-Hegelian movement. After attempting, successively and vainly, to represent the liberal bourgeoisie and to constitute themselves as the ideologues of the rational state, the Young Hegelians in 1843 fragmented into various tendencies that were united in the rejection of the Prussian state and bourgeois liberalism, but radically divergent in the response to a shared crisis.

¹²⁷Cf. Introduction (1843) in WYMPS, pp. 251-6.

These tendencies were (a) the Freien of Berlin (the Bauer brothers, Meyen, Stirner) who interpreted the failure of liberalism as the 'retrocession of the masses', and increasingly withdrew from the political struggle into pure theoretic 'activity' of the 'critical spirit'; (b) a democratic-humanist tendency (Ruge, Feuerbach, Froebel, Wigand, Herwegh) whose desire to unite the 'head' and 'heart' of the people's spirit resulted in a loose identification of 'humanism' and 'communism'; (c) a philosophic-communist tendency (Hess, Bakunin, Engels) in which communism presents itself as a category opposed to egoism, and that suggested a relation to the democratic-humanists, and the possibility of working together within the confines of a new journal.¹²⁸

Within these tendencies the first line of demarcation emerged between the Freien on the one hand, and the democratic-humanists and philosophic-communists on the other. This line of demarcation was formed in opposed tendencies to either divorce or unite theory and practice.

Those in Berlin led by Bruno Bauer had imagined their influence to be such that the suppression of their views would lead to strong protests among the liberal bourgeoisie. When nothing of the sort happened, a failure blamed on the 'retrocession of the masses' they contented themselves increasingly with purely intellectual criticism that renounced hope of immediate political influence. Isolated from both the bourgeoisie and 'the masses' the Freien increasingly lim-

¹²⁸Our interpretation is supported by, and takes its point of departure the various studies of Auguste Cornu: Marx and Engels (vol. 11); The Origins of Marxian Thought (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 1957); 'German Utopianism: "True" Socialism', Science and Society, XI, No. 1 (Winter 1948). Our interpretation differs in some respects...

ited their action to an abstract critique of religion and the Christian state to which they no longer opposed the rational state but, rather, the autonomy of universal consciousness. With their isolation and impotence reinforcing their idealist tendencies and accentuating their inclination to subjectivism and anarchism, the Freien retreated from socio-political activity as below their free spirit. Drawn to egocentrism and individualism this tendency ended by deprecating the people, 'the masses', as the chief obstacle for the development of spirit. The extreme conclusions of this tendency were drawn by Max Stirner, who became a principal target for Marx and Engels' criticism in the German Ideology.

The tendency of the group that loosely centred around Arnold Ruge responded quite differently: wishing to pursue the political struggle in an ever more practical manner, they oriented their action in a diametrically opposed direction -- towards the unity of thought and practice. Although the divergence between the political radicalism of the democratic-humanists (Ruge, Herwegh, Froebel) and the social radicalism of the philosophic-communists will soon appear, for the moment the two tendencies would unite in a loosely defined project to forge a new philosophy (humanism) that unites the 'head' and 'heart' of the people's spirit.

The pre-condition for this unity of the 'head' and the 'heart' is, in Marx's words, 'the existence of a suffering mankind that thinks and of a thinking mankind that is suppressed'.¹²⁹ Its conditions: to simultaneously realize social equality and absolute freedom.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ 'Letter to Ruge' (May 1843); WYMPS, pp. 210ff.

¹³⁰ Nearly all the left-hegelians had, in fact, called for such a unity, including non-Hegelians like the poet Heine who called for the unity of the 'French revolutionary spirit' and 'German speculative spirit' (Cf. Cornu, op.cit., p.182).

To realize the condition of this unity the Left-Hegelians posited the necessity of Franco-German co-operation, and called for an alliance of French and German intellectuals. To give this idea of Franco-German co-operation practical expression there emerged among the Left-Hegelians in 1843 several projects to set up in exile -- beyond the reaches of the Prussian censors -- a new journal that would represent the combined force of German and French theory. As the rallying-point for an opposition to the Prussian state and liberalism this search for Franco-German co-operation thus brought together two divergent tendencies: democratic-humanism and philosophic-communism. The basis for a common project was the loosely-defined identity of 'humanism', whose conception was formulated by Feuerbach¹³¹, and 'communism', whose doctrine was propogated by Moses Hess.

Despite this convergence of views on a matter of principle -- in opposition to 'egoism' -- it is, however, quite possible to distinguish the two tendencies supported by divergent interpretations of Feuerbach's humanism. The group influenced by Hess (Bakunin and Engels) sees the essential problem not as political (privation of political rights) but as social -- the exploitation of the people by a new 'aristocracy of money'.¹³² The anticipated solution requires the radical transformation of bourgeois society -- abolition of private property -- and its replacement with a new society -- anarchist and communist -- that would assure both absolute freedom and social equality; ie., secure the autonomy of the individual within the framework of social life.¹³³

¹³¹See below, Chapter five, pp.193-200.

¹³²Cornu, loc.cit., pp. 220-221.

¹³³Ibid., p. 221.

On the other hand, the group around Ruge still saw the essential problem as political, requiring the radical transformation of a reactionary state, and its replacement with a truly democratic state. Whereas the group influenced by Hess rejected liberalism and interpreted humanism in terms of a philosophic-communist ideal realised through an alliance of French and German intellectuals, the group around Ruge likewise rejected liberalism but interpreted Feuerbach's humanism in terms of a democratic humanism -- likewise realised through an alliance of French and German intellectuals.

Marx's evolution roughly corresponded at this point to the tendency associated with Ruge, Herwegh and Froebel, whose respective attempts to set up a new Franco-German journal were enthusiastically endorsed by Marx. When Ruge announced the formation of such a journal, and asked for Marx's collaboration, Marx replied: 'Franco-German annals -- that would be a principle, an event of great importance, an undertaking that fills one with enthusiasm'.¹³⁴

The basis for Marx's enthusiasm is illuminated by a letter written to Ruge in May, 1843, and published later in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher:

The system of industry and commerce, of property and exploitation of men...leads...rapidly to a rupture within the present society....The old system cannot heal this rupture because it does not heal and create at all; it merely exists and enjoys itself. The existence of a suffering mankind that thinks, and of a thinking mankind that is suppressed, must necessarily become...indigestible for the passive animal kingdom of philistinism [the German regime].... The more...events allow for thinking men to reflect, and for suffering men to rally, the better will be the product to be born which the present carries in its womb. 135

¹³⁴Letter to Ruge (January 25, 1843); MEGA, 1, 1(2), p. 307, quoted by McLellan, Marx before Marxism, p. 138.

¹³⁵WYMPS, pp. 210ff.

Having already decided to leave Germany whose 'philistine' regime leaves 'nothing to be done' Marx makes plans to join Ruge in Paris at the end of the year. But in order to settle, besides his family affairs, his troubled conscience, Marx proceeds to Kreuznach for an extended study-retreat. The crisis of conscience with which Marx struggled was brought on by the implacable resistance of the Prussian government to the demands for a rational state, and consequently, by the failure to resolve the 'political' problem: how to protect the universality of the state from its enslavement to the egoism of particular class interests. The rebellion of Marx's 'subjective desires' against his 'objective understanding' furthermore posed the need to reconcile the concept of the rational state supported by German Theory (philosophy of law), with the principle of equality supported by French Theory (communism/socialism). It was necessary, in other words, to come to terms with Hegel's philosophy, especially his Philosophy of Right, which to this point had dominated Marx's thought and directed his political action.

The need for such a critique had already been on the agenda as far back as March 1842, when Marx wrote to Ruge:

Another article I also intend...is a critique of the part of Hegel's natural Right where he talks of the constitution. The essential part of it is the critique of the constitutional monarchy -- a bastard, contradictory and unjustifiable constitution. 136

Over the next year Marx periodically refers to this projected critique, but it is not till his Kreuznach study-retreat where, in preparation for his Jahrbücher essays, Marx undertakes extensive readings in French history and philosophy, that he is able to approach Hegel's philosophy in a systematic critique.

¹³⁶ Letter to Ruge (January 25, 1843), in On Freedom, p.164.

The detailed commentary and critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right elaborated in this Kreuznach period¹³⁷ constitutes the philosophical documentation of an intellectual crisis: Marx's theoretical and practical experience can no longer be thought within the limits of his Hegelian education. Together with the articles written for the Jahrbücher (On the Jewish Question, Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction) the 1843 critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right is the work in which Marx re-thinks his theoretical and practical experience with a view to adequately represent his emerging political position. The Critique constitutes a critical work in Marx's transition from political radicalism or democratic liberalism to social radicalism or communism; and from idealism to materialism.

¹³⁷ Cf. Marx, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, ed. Joseph O'Malley (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), based on the German edition in Werke (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1964), pp.202-333. The dating of this Critique has been disputed. Riazanov, first editor of the MEGA edition, set the date of composition between March and August of 1843, supporting his conclusion with careful evidence (MEGA,1,1(1), pp. LXXIff. and MEGA,1,1(2), pp.XXIVff). But in 1932, Landshut and Mayer published their own edition of Marx's Frühschriften, in which they placed the date as April 1841 to April 1842. Most commentators on Marx, however, clearly subscribe to the 1843 date. The clear influence of Feuerbach's Preliminary Theses for the Reform of Philosophy, which we will document below, and the close continuity of thought between the Critique and On the Jewish Question (written in the Autumn of 1843) argue rather conclusively for the later dates. Cf. O'Malley's introduction to the English edition.

CHAPTER FIVE

MARX'S FEUERBACHIAN CRITIQUE OF HEGEL

The demonstrated irrationality of the state and the inadequacy of the Hegelian philosophy of law as a guide to action compelled the Left-Hegelians to come to terms with Hegel's philosophy. On the one hand, the accentuation of the reactionary policies of the Prussian government, viz. the suppression of the liberal press, was taken as sufficient evidence that the state in general, and the Prussian state in particular, did not have the rational character given it by Hegel. On the other hand, Marx recognized through the study of socio-economic problems that as well as Ideas, which he still regarded as determining, socio-economic relations played an important part in historic development, and that, in fact, the essential problem was not political, but social; that, furthermore, it could not be solved at the legal-political level -- through political reform. On the contrary, the solution required the profound transformation of society itself. A necessary corollary: the state, far from being the determining factor in the development of society, is, on the contrary, determined by it in its essential features. The upshot of this shift in focus is that the relation between the state and civil society became the object of a critical scrutiny, effected by Marx in relation to extensive studies of French history and philosophy, and particularly the theories of state developed by Machiavelli, Montesquieu and Rousseau.¹

¹Cf. Cornu, op.cit., p.373, with reference to MEGA, 1,1 (2), pp.118-36. Marx's five notebooks contain extracts from twenty-four works. Especially Wachsmuth, History of

In response to the democratic and revolutionary tendency which draws Marx away from liberalism Marx becomes increasingly oriented towards communism viz. its defence of the interests of people in general. Even so Marx did not have a clear vision of the road to take or of the objectives to realize. This theoretical uncertainty is evident even as late as September when, upon completion of his Critique, Marx wrote to Ruge:

Even though there is no doubt about the 'whence' there does prevail all the more confusion about the 'whither'. It is not only the fact that a general anarchy has broken out among the reformers; each one will have to admit to himself that he has no exact idea of what is to happen.²

At this conjuncture of ideological confusion and theoretical indecision, in which the Hegelian philosophy demonstrated its inadequacy as a guide to action, Feuerbach came on the scene with a philosophic critique of both religion and idealism which provided a theoretical solution to the Left-Hegelian crisis.³ With a few but precise strokes Feuerbach dissolved the problem of the Left-Hegelians (cf. the contradiction between the state's essence and existence). He did

France in a Revolutionary Epoch; Ranke, German History; Hamilton, Northamerica; Machiavelli, The State; Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws; Rousseau, The Social Contract. As observed by Cornu, these studies do not include the great French historians (Thierry, Mignet, Guizot) whose works Marx read some time later in Paris; nor did Marx study the doctrines of the socialists and communists.

²WYMPS, p. 212.

³Cf. Althusser, For Marx, p. 225; 'The confluence of Feuerbach and the theoretical crisis in which history had thrown the young German radicals explains their enthusiasm for the author of the Provisional Theses, of the Essence of Christianity and of the Principles of the Philosophy of the Future. Indeed Feuerbach represented the theoretical solution to the young intellectuals' theoretical crisis. In his humanism of alienation, he gave them the theoretical concepts

so by calling for a new philosophy based on the total inversion of the Hegelian philosophy: from speculative idealism to materialist humanism. The liberating impact of Feuerbach's 'theoretical revolution' is graphically recorded by Engels:

Then came Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity. With one blow it pulverised the contradiction in that it placed materialism on the throne again....The spell was broken; the system of Hegel was exploded and cast aside...one must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general, we all became at once Feuerbachians.⁴

Although we have traced the influence of Feuerbach as of Marx's doctoral dissertation Marx recorded his enthusiastic reception of Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity in an article written in late January 1842:

I advise you, speculative theologians and philosophers: free yourselves from the concepts and presuppositions of existing speculative philosophy if you want to get at things differently, as they are, that is to say, if you want to arrive at the truth. And there is no other road for you to truth and freedom except that leading through the stream of fire (the Feuerbach). Feuerbach is the purgatory of the present times.⁵

Marx's enthusiasm for Feuerbach's theoretical humanism, clearly evident throughout his writings for the Rheinische Zeitung,⁶ was re-affirmed with the publication of Feuerbach's

that enabled them to think the alienation of the human essence as an indispensable moment in the realization of the human essence, unreason (the irrational reality of the State) as a necessary moment in the realization of reason (The Idea of the State). It thus enabled them to think what they would otherwise have suffered as irrationality itself: the necessary connexion between reason and unreason'.

⁴Cf. Feuerbach and the end of classical German philosophy in selected works. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970).

⁵'Luther as Arbiter between Strauss and Feuerbach' in WYMPS, p. 95.

⁶McLellan (The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, pp.93ff)

Provisional Theses in February 1843, although, given the political conjuncture in which Marx found himself, Marx's enthusiasm was tempered with a significant qualification. Immediately, on reading Feuerbach's Theses, Marx wrote to Ruge:

Only in one respect are the aphorisms of Feuerbach not to my liking: he is too much concerned with nature and too little with politics. It is, however, only through a link with politics that present philosophy can emerge as truth.⁷

The significance of this qualification will become clear as Marx proceeds in the following months to apply Feuerbach's conclusions to a critique of Hegel's philosophy of the State. To grasp the thought that underlied and governs this Critique it is necessary to reconstruct the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's humanism. It is this problematic

disputes Engels' version as 'completely at variance with the facts'. According to McLellan, the Rheinische Zeitung articles 'show no trace of Feuerbach's influence' (*ibid.*, p. 98) and that it is the later articles of Feuerbach's that influenced Marx. Against this position we argue -- it will be obvious -- that Feuerbach's influence can be traced all the way back to Marx's dissertation, and is quite evident in his various Rheinische Zeitung articles with particular reference to Marx's conception of philosophy in relation to the world. McLellan is led to argue his point because he does not recognize the dual theses of Feuerbach's problematic: humanism and materialism. It is quite true that most of the other Left-Hegelians, Marx included, did not appreciate the materialist implications of Feuerbach's revision of Hegel. All the Left-Hegelians endorsed Feuerbach's humanism while retaining the idealist principle. The materialist implications of Feuerbach's new philosophy were clearer in his later publications in 1843, but even then, throughout 1843, Marx continued to adhere to the idealist principle; i.e., his humanism was idealist. Strictly speaking Marx's position as of the Dissertation was to unite the principles of idealism and materialism (the 'head' and 'heart' of philosophy), and this unity was grasped precisely in the concept of 'man'. In this respect, we will argue, Marx returns indirectly via Feuerbach to Kant's solution to the problem of knowledge.

⁷Cf. MEGA, 1, 1 (2), p. 308, quoted and translated by Zawar Hanfi, The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings of Ludwig Feuerbach (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972), p. 38.

we will argue, that governs Marx's thought as of his Doctoral dissertation (1841) until the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts (1844): it determines both the way Marx poses his problems and the way he constructs his various solutions.

FEUERBACH'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMATIC

In Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy, which appeared in 1839 in Ruge's Jahrbücher, Feuerbach announced his rejection of Hegelianism. Demonstrating that the Hegelian 'system', based on the identity of the real and the ideal, is problematical Feuerbach proceeds to attack its two most characteristic features: its reliance on speculation and its drive towards system.⁸ Hegelianism, argues Feuerbach, is the most developed form of 'speculative philosophy' begun by Spinoza, rejected by Kant, restored by Schelling and consummated by Hegel.⁹

The starting-point of speculative philosophy is 'that which is in itself and conceived through itself' (absolute), the principle of identity underlying the phenomenal forms of its appearance. Speculative thought is identical with the power of thought to transcend all that presents itself by its own particularity. In this extension of thought beyond human experience thought grasps the totality of conditions, and thus elevates itself to the 'Absolute Idea', the principle of identity underlying the distinction of subjectivity and ob-

⁸Cf. above, Chapter two, pp. 69 ff.

⁹Cf. Preliminary Theses (2): 'Spinoza is actually the initiator of modern speculative philosophy; Schelling its restorer; and Hegel, its consummator'; Hanfi, p. 153; also, Towards a Critique (1839); in Hanfi, p. 73. All following quotes from Feuerbach are taken from Zawar Hanfi's translation in The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings of L. Feuerbach (hereinafter referred to as FB).

jectivity. As the science of this Idea, Hegel's System gives a philosophical expression to the speculative standpoint: the truth of the real is not in the real itself, but in the ideal, which is posited as an autonomous, self-identical and absolute Subject whose universal reason 'objectifies' itself in the phenomenal forms of its appearance -- in thought and materiality.

It is this speculative-idealist standpoint, premised on the primacy of thought, that becomes the symptomatic point of Feuerbach's 'theoretical revolution': the establishment of the human-materialist standpoint and the critical reform of the Hegelian dialectic. The inspiration for this transformative critique, we will argue, is Kant's scepticism of reason and his critique of metaphysics. Although we cannot fully develop this thesis -- that, in relation to the problem of knowledge, Feuerbach criticizes Hegel by reverting to Kant's position -- we will attempt to outline its argument as supported by our exposition in chapter three. We do so for two reasons. On the one hand, the essential contribution of Feuerbach's theoretical humanism to the formation of Marx's thought, as a condition of his method of philosophical criticism, is undeniable and widely recognized.¹⁰ Marx's early thought is do-

¹⁰The most obvious point of reference is, of course, the assessment given by Engels in his Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy, which has been supported by scholars as diverse as Plekhanov, Max Adler and Sidney Hook. Nevertheless, the obvious relation between Marx and Feuerbach is generally over-emphasized by the writings on Marx in the humanist and social-democratic tradition (Nicolaevsky-Maenchen, Mayer, Riazanov, Rubel, Cole, Laski, Blumenberg, Kamenka among others). Other writers who call attention to the persistence of Feuerbachian ideas in Marx's mature work include Rodoiro Mondolfo (Marx y Marxismo), Breuer (Der Junge Marx), Popitz (Der Entfremdete Mensch) and A.J. Gregor ('Marx, Feuerbach, and the Reform of the Hegelian Dialectic', Science & Society, XXI,1 (1965)). Characteristic of these writers is a failure to take account of Marx's break with Feuerbach. It is in this regard that Althusser's ideas are so important.

minated by the philosophical problematic of Feuerbach's humanism. On the other hand, Feuerbach's theoretical humanism establishes the basic condition of Marx's epistemology, and constitutes the source of Marx's revision of Hegel and thereby his indirect return to Kant's position. This second argument is not so well understood and clearly runs counter to the traditional scholarship of theoretical Marxism, which has tended to support Hegel against Kant.¹¹

Feuerbach's critique of speculative idealism is formulated in relation to the problem of knowledge posed within the problematic formed by the opposed positions of Kant and Hegel. Although the condition of Feuerbach and Marx's solution -- humanism and materialism -- clearly derives from Kant's position rescued from Hegel's critique, Hegel's epistemology has been generally, albeit erroneously, upheld against Kant. In our view, Feuerbach's critique of Hegel constitutes the basis of Marx's indirect return from Hegel to Kant -- in respect to the problem of knowledge, viz. the relation of 'philosophy' to the 'world'.

The touchstone of Feuerbach's critique of speculative idealism, on the basis of which Feuerbach destroyed the speculative basis and unhinged the entire structure of the Hegelian system, is the problematical identity of the real and the ideal. This problem was faced by Feuerbach in the form posed by Kant: what are the conditions and limits of knowledge?

The Problem of Philosophy's Beginning

The problem of knowledge faced by Kant and now by Feuerbach consists in resolving the antithesis of its two condi-

¹¹We think, in particular, of the tradition of so-called 'Critical Theory', whose notable exponents have been Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, and whose point of departure is Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness. The Hegelian interpretation of Marx reverbrates strongly and persistently within 'Western Marxism', and is the basis of a serious error traceable to a failure to specify adequately the break of Marx from Hegel.

tions: sense-experience of a given reality, and the formative activity of thought. The problem is essentially: does one proceed from the element of reality as a condition of thought, or does one proceed from thought as an unconditioned universal, and as such, the condition of reality?¹²

As the presentation (from a speculative standpoint) of the Absolute's self-development, Hegel's System claims to start from a beginning without presuppositions, namely the simple immediacy of 'pure being', an abstractum of thought -- the Idea in its immediacy. As to this beginning, Feuerbach notes: 'A philosophy that presumes nothing is a philosophy that presumes itself'.¹³ Beginning with itself (ie., thought) philosophy presupposes the Idea as an immediate truth which becomes in the end what it already is in the beginning. By presenting the immediate presupposition of the Idea as a mediated result, Hegel -- Feuerbach points out -- presupposes the Idea at the outset in anticipation of its own truth. In doing so, adds Feuerbach, Hegel contrasts thought with another (and impossible) form of pure thought instead of with its true antithesis, sense-experience.¹⁴ As a result, Hegel reduces the opposition between sense-experience and thought to an opposition within thought. Not surprisingly, Feuerbach comments, 'thought is...certain of its victory over its adversary in advance'. The Absolute Idea is a certainty from the beginning before being expressed in systematic form. At the same time, however, 'it also goes to show that thought has not been able to refute its adversary'.¹⁵ The standpoint of the Idea uncritically asserts an unproved identity. Instead of proving the

- ¹²Cf. chapter two, pp.44-6, 70-2, and passim.

¹³'The Beginning of Philosophy', FB, pp.138-9.

¹⁴'Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy', FB, p.79.

¹⁵Ibid.

identity of thought and reality as Hegel purports to do, Hegel presumes it at the outset in an immediate presupposition of its own conclusions: the Idea posits itself in advance as true.

It is this speculative construction of a presupposed identity that Feuerbach proceeds to question. In order to escape the speculative method which uncritically assumes or dogmatically demonstrates its object, Feuerbach posits a 'genetic-co-critical' method which 'examines its origins' and 'questions whether an object is a real object, only an idea, or just a psychological phenomenon'.¹⁶ To establish the condition of this method Feuerbach turns to the 'natural standpoint of man (human understanding) which Feuerbach explicitly bases on Kant's distinction of the subjective and the objective'.¹⁷ In terms of this distinction -- the 'very condition of all criticism' -- Feuerbach observes: 'to prove is at the same time to refute. Every intellectual determination has its antithesis, its contradiction. Truth exists not in unity with, but in refutation of its opposite'.¹⁸

This concept of 'truth', based on Kant's distinction of thought and being clearly turns away from Hegel's conception of reason as an organon of knowledge (ie., a theory of reality) towards Kant's conception of reason as a canon of knowledge. The condition of this canon is Kant's 'correct' distinction of thought and being:

The Kantian philosophy is the contradiction of subject and object, essence and existence, thinking and being...Existence without essence is mere appearance...sensuous things; essence without existence is mere thought...entities of the intellect and noumenon; they are thought of but lack existence -- at least for us -- and objectivity; they are true [ideal] but not

¹⁶ FB, p.18.

¹⁷ 'Principles of the Philosophy of the Future', FB, p.84.

¹⁸ 'Preliminary Theses' (1843), FB, pp.172-3.

real.¹⁹

Feuerbach here interprets Kant's distinction of thought and being as an antithesis of what is 'true' (rational) and what is 'real'. In doing so, however, he fails to acknowledge Kant's critical distinction between 'understanding' and 'reason', and relates 'truth' to the latter (true because thought) instead of to the former, as would be fair to Kant's actual position (as constructed by us). For Kant the ideal of reason is opposed to the real, but as such is not 'true'. The dialectic of reason produces not a logic of truth, but rather a logic of illusion. 'Truth' relates to the congruence of thought with the reality external to it, i.e., with the condition of experience. To be 'true' it must also be 'real'. Nevertheless, although Feuerbach misrepresents Kant's position as we understand it he in fact proceeds to criticize Hegel according to and in line with Kant's effective position.

To separate reality from the truth, comments Feuerbach, is an absurd contradiction, and, as can be expected, speculative philosophy begins to eliminate it (reality) so as to produce a

philosophy of identity in which the objects of the intellect, i.e., the objects that are true because they are thought -- are also the real objects, in which the essence...of the objects of the intellects correspond to the essence...of the intellect or of the Subject, and where the Subject is no longer limited and conditioned by something existing apart from it and contradicting its essence. 20

¹⁹'Principles of the Philosophy of the Future', FB, p.208. Feuerbach refers to Kant's distinction between \$100 in reality and in the imagination, and explicitly recognizes it to be 'correct' (ibid., p.212). This is, of course, the very example which Hegel takes up in the Encyclopaedic Logic to demonstrate the non-speculative, empiricist character of Kant's philosophy. It is also the very example taken up by Marx in a preparatory note to his doctoral dissertation.

²⁰'Principles', FB, p.208.

The possibility of this identity is Kant's alleged location of 'truth' in self-thinking, infinite thought (reason) rather than in congruence with reality. Its premise: 'the rational alone is the true and real'.²¹ This identity, posited by Idealism, but (in our interpretation) rejected by Kant, is based on the speculative extension of thought beyond its proper limits -- of 'possible experience' (Kant) or of 'natural boundaries' (Feuerbach):

Thought that 'seeks to reach beyond its other' -- and the 'other of thought' is being -- is thought that oversteps its natural boundaries. This reaching beyond its other...means that thought claims for itself that which does not properly belong to thought but to being. ²²

This speculative extension of thought beyond its 'extreme limits' (as Kant puts it) or 'natural boundaries' (as Feuerbach puts it) takes a condition of knowledge (the reality of thought) as a condition of the real (reality as thought). In terms of this speculative insight into its own presupposed truth, idealist philosophy moves beyond or transcends Kant's distinction of thought and being, which is to '[leave] something outside thought -- a residue...that [can] not be dissolved in thought...[and whose] image...is matter -- the substratum of reality'.²³ In moving beyond the subject-object distinction so as to grasp the principle of its identity (reason), speculative philosophy negates the 'rational limit of subjectivity' -- matter -- by making 'reason, the idea...concrete', ie., to turn the things of this world into mere predicates of thought.²⁴

²¹Ibid., p.239.

²²Ibid., p.217. We interpret Feuerbach's 'natural boundaries' as a reformulation of Kant's 'extreme limits of possible experience'. The point of reference in either case is the same: human understanding.

²³Ibid., p.217. ²⁴Cf. 'Theses', FB, p.166.

The identity of the real and the rational in the 'concrete idea' is, Feuerbach (who continues to reproduce the general lines of Kant's argument) comments, a speculative 'illusion' based on an act of abstraction: to conceive of 'objects only as the predicate of thought thinking itself'.²⁵ Since the 'concrete' element has no reality in itself, 'the identity of thinking and being expresses...only the identity of thought with itself'.²⁶ As a result:

The Hegelian philosophy is the resolution of the contradiction between thinking and being as, in particular, expressed by Kant; but NB, the resolution of the contradiction still remains, within the contradiction; ie., within one element -- thought. 27

In effect:

if the reality of thought is reality as thought it is itself only thought, and we are forever imprisoned in the identity of thought with itself, in idealism -- an idealism that differs from subjective idealism only insofar as it encompasses the whole of reality, subsuming it under the predicates of thought. 28

It is clear from this genetical-critical exposition that the idealist identity of the real and the rational (in which 'matter' is conceived as the 'self-alienation of spirit) is, to say the least, problematical. Against the speculative-idealist standpoint of this presupposed identity, Feuerbach insists that

Philosophy has to begin not so much with itself as with its own antithesis; ie., with non-philosophy. This being which is distinguished from thought, which is unphilosophical...is the principle of sensualism. 29

- 25, 'Theses', FB, pp.167-8.

26, 'Principles', FB, p.211.

27, 'Theses', FB, p.167.

28, 'Principles', FB, pp.222-3.

29, 'Theses', FB, p.164. The opposition that Feuerbach

In terms of this principle:

The beginning of philosophy is neither God nor the Absolute, nor is it as being the predicate of the Absolute or of the Idea; rather it is the finite, the determinate and the real.³⁰

On the basis of this new beginning, philosophy no longer generates thought from itself, from a self-thinking thought, but rather, generates thought from 'the opposite of thought, namely, matter, being and the senses'.³¹ And, by thus inverting the idealist relation of thought and being, Feuerbach formulates as the basis for a 'new' philosophy the principle of materialism: 'The true relationship of thought and being is this only: Being is the Subject, thought the predicate. Thought comes from being, but being does not come from thought.'³²

The Reform of the Hegelian Dialectic

With this principle of materialism, the first condition of Feuerbach's new philosophy, the primary and independent reality of nature is restored. This restoration, effected in Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy (1842) as the 'secret of theology', and in the Theses and Principles (1843) as the 'secret of speculative philosophy', forms the basis of a philosophical anthropology, viz. the opening statement of the Theses: 'The secret of theology is anthropology, but theology...is the secret of...philosophy'.³³ Feuerbach's 'theoretical

sees between philosophy and non-philosophy is thought with reference to two principles, an active principle (thought) and a passive principle (being). On this quite Kantian distinction see ibid., p.163. The implications of this distinction for a Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis, and as a schema that governs Marx's conception of the philosophy-world relation will be traced through various chapters below.

³⁰'Theses', FB, p.160.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p.168.

³³Ibid., p.153.

revolution', formed in a critique of religion and its application to idealist philosophy, consists in striking this double secret (Geheimnis); to reduce the Absolute -- God, self-thinking reason -- to its hidden, human meaning: the object of theology (God) and the object of speculative philosophy (universal reason) is man himself.

Feuerbach's critique of religion can be briefly summarized as follows: God does not exist in and for itself, i.e., as a Subject, but rather, as an object -- as the objectified (entäussert) form of the human essence; as the predicate of the true Subject, man. Since man is not conscious of the fact that the object of religion -- God -- is his own product, the relation between the subject and object acquires the form of alienation. God is the idealized image of man's essential attributes placed outside man: 'Man -- and this is the secret of religion -- objectifies his being, and then again makes himself the object of his objectified being, transformed into a Subject, a person'.³⁴ The conditions of religion alienation: (a) the Subject is active, and in his activity creates the object; (2) the object is his product, but the Subject does not recognize himself in it; he is estranged from his own product; (c) the object, divorced from its real, natural basis, acquires a power that turns against its producer, dominates man, and converts him into its predicate.

By inverting the subject-predicate relation, which is to make real man the subject, and God or the Idea the predicate, Feuerbach reveals the anthropological root of both religion and idealist philosophy:

-34 Introduction to the Essence of Christianity,
FB., p.127.

The essence of theology is the transcendent, ie., the essence of man posited outside man; the essence of Hegel's Logic is transcendent thought, the thought of man posited outside man.³⁵

Feuerbach elaborates:

The course taken so far by all speculative philosophy, from the abstract to the concrete, from the ideal to the real, is an inverted one [which] never leads one to the true and objective reality but only to the realization of one's own abstractions. ³⁶

In effect, speculative-idealist philosophy, especially that of Hegel, is the ultimate form of theology, and as such, a mystified presentation of reality:

To speak of what is as it is, or, in other words, to speak truly of the true, appears superficial; to speak of what is as it is not, or in other words, to speak of the true in an untrue, inverted way, appears to be profound. ³⁷

In the mystery of a speculative presentation, the predicate (reason) is separated from its true subject (man), hypostatized, and converted into a self-subsistent subject which prevails over human reality and degrades man and nature into predicates of the Idea:

The Absolute Spirit of Hegel is nothing other than the finite spirit abstracted, self-estranged; just as the infinite being³⁸ of theology is nothing other than abstract and finite being.

³⁵ 'Theses', FB, p.157: 'to abstract means to posit the essence of, nature outside nature, the essence of man outside man, the essence of thought outside the act of thinking. The Hegelian philosophy has alienated man from himself insofar as its whole system is based on these acts of abstraction'.

³⁶ Ibid., p.161. With an obvious reference to Kant's thesis of the primacy of the Practical Reason, Feuerbach continues: 'the transition from the ideal to the real has its place only in practical philosophy'.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p.156.

Thus does Feuerbach strike the secret, the mystery of speculative philosophy: 'Man...objectifies his being and then again makes himself the object of his objectified being, transformed into a subject'.³⁹

The method by which this truth is brought to light entails the inversion of the subject-predicate relation defended by speculative philosophy:

The method of the reformative critique of speculative philosophy as such does not differ from that already used in the philosophy of religion. We need only turn the predicate into the subject and thus as subject into object and principle -- that is, only reverse speculative philosophy. In this way, we have the unconcealed, pure, and untarnished truth.⁴⁰

In the light of this truth (the secret of theology and speculative philosophy) disclosed by the transformative critique of the Hegelian dialectic, philosophy has for its principle

not the substance of Spinoza, nor the ego of Kant and Fichte, not the Absolute Identity of Schelling, not the Absolute Spirit of Hegel; in short, no abstract, merely ideated or imaginary being, but rather the most real of all beings, the true Ens realissimum -- man.⁴¹

Feuerbach elaborates:

The real in its reality and totality, the object of the new philosophy, is the object also of a real and total being. The new philosophy therefore regards as its epistemological, as its subject, not the ego, not the absolute -- ie., abstract spirit, in short not reason for itself alone -- but the real and the whole being of man. Man alone is the reality, the subject of reason. It is man who thinks, not the ego, not reason.⁴²

³⁹ Introduction, Essence of Christianity, in FB, p.127.

⁴⁰ 'Theses', FB, p.154.

⁴¹ Preface, 2nd.ed of Essence of Christianity, in FB, p.254.

⁴² 'Principles', FB, p.239.

The position of the old philosophy ('the rational alone is the true and real') had misplaced the truth ('the human alone is the true and real') by a speculative inversion of the true relation between reason and its subject. To disclose this hidden truth philosophy has to abandon the speculative standpoint of an absolute identity (reason) and adopt the 'natural standpoint of man, the standpoint of the distinction between...subject and object'.⁴³ Similar to the speculative standpoint of the old philosophy, this human standpoint of the new philosophy is based on reason, but 'on a reason whose being is the same as the being of man': 'the unity of thought and being (reason) has meaning and truth only if man is comprehended as the basis and subject of this unity'.⁴⁴

⁴³Ibid., p.243.

⁴⁴Ibid., p.240. In order to grasp Feuerbach's thought and to defend it from a common misunderstanding, it is necessary to record Feuerbach's critical distinction between two forms of objects: as projections of man's essence (Objekte) and 'sensuous objects' (Gegenstände), cf. introduction to Essence of Christianity, FB., p.109. In the latter case, consciousness and self-consciousness are distinguishable; in the former case, they directly coincide. When Feuerbach talks of man as the basis and subject of the unity of thought and being, ie., of reason, he has in mind specifically the former case of the subject-object relation. This is to say, man is the rational unity of thought and being when man has himself as his object: 'Whatever the object of which we become conscious we always become conscious of our own being' (ibid., p.103). Feuerbach has in mind here the specific difference between man and the animal: 'consciousness', which, strictly speaking, is only given 'in the case of a being to whom his species, his mode of being, is an object of thought' (ibid., p.97). This being is, of course, 'man, -- man as an objective being, a being without the objects that express his being' (ibid., p.100). This specificity of man is consciousness, and it is in this sense that Feuerbach explicitly refers to consciousness as the 'real unity of spirit and nature, head and heart' ('Theses', FB., p.162). A relation that exemplifies

As the basis and subject of reason, man unites within himself the two conditions of knowledge: thought and being. In order to register the condition of this unity -- the 'whole and real being of man' -- Feuerbach formulates a philosophy of man based on a theoretical distinction made between the 'head' and 'heart' of philosophy:

The essential tools and organs of philosophy are: the head, which is the source of activity, freedom, metaphysical infinity; and the heart, which is the source of suffering, finiteness, needs, and sensualism. Or theoretically expressed: thought and sense-perception, for thought is the need of the head, and sense-perception, the sense, is the need of the heart. 45

Feuerbach's concept of consciousness as the basis and subject of the unity of thought and being is that which pertains between man and the religious object. The religious object clearly is the projection of man's own essential nature, and, in this object (God) man has his own essence as his object. Feuerbach's theory of the subject-object relation, as a relation of consciousness, clearly does not extend to the relation between man and 'sensuous objects' of which man is not the subject. The failure to make this distinction -- between the real object (Gegenstand) and the thought-object (Objekt) -- is the basis of much confusion, a problem that characterizes many interpretations of Feuerbach and Marx, as for example that of Rodolfo Mondolfo, Marx y Marxismo (Mexico, D.F.: FCE, 1960).

⁴⁵ 'Theses', FB, p.165. The 'heart', the passive principle of materialism, is receptive, sensible, and passive in relation to its practical (material) needs which make it dependent on a 'being' (Nature) external to it. The 'head' on the other hand represents the active principle of thought, which has itself as its object and finds its essence in itself. It is clear enough that this schema (passive heart/active head) gives form to the Left-Hegelian thesis of theoretical praxis; and that, despite the first condition of Feuerbach's new philosophy materialism -- the second condition -- humanism -- is based on the principle of idealism. We return below to this ideological schema which, within the framework of Feuerbach's humanism, governs Marx's conception of the relation between philosophy and the world, and informs his philosophical discovery of the proletariat.

At the basis of this theory is Kant's distinction of thought and sense-experience, which for Feuerbach is thought as a relation between (a) 'the masculine principle of self-autonomy and self-activity' (idealism), and (b) 'the feminine principle of receptivity and passivity' (materialism).⁴⁶ In this theory, which despite Feuerbach's protestations is thoroughly consistent with Kant's subjective idealism, the 'heart' (the 'passive' principle of materialism) and the 'head' (the 'active' principle of idealism) of philosophy are respectively represented by French sensualist-materialism and German metaphysics:

Perception gives being that is immediately identical with existence; thought gives being that is mediated though the distinction and separation from existence. Life and truth are, therefore, only to be found where essence is united with existence, thought with sense-perception, activity with passivity, and ...German metaphysics with...French sensualism and materialism. 47.

With this theory, sealed in the alliance of French materialism and German idealism, the new philosophy, real humanism, lays the foundation of a 'rational unity of head and heart, of thought and life'.⁴⁸ This new philosophy -- 'the complete and absolute dissolution of theology into anthropology' -- makes 'man, together with nature as the basis of man, the exclusive, universal, and highest object of philosophy'.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.166

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp.164-165.

⁴⁸ 'Principles', FB, p.243.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Cf. Marx., 'Introduction: Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law' WYMPS, p.264 : 'The only emancipation of Germany possible in practice is emancipation based on the theory proclaiming that man is the highest essence of man'. In our interpretation, the theoretic condition of this philosophic problematic is Kant's subjective idealism. The condition of this subjective idealism is constructed by Kant in his reconciliation of rationalism and empiricism, a reconciliation re-focused by Feuerbach as an alliance between French materialism and German idealism. The two conditions of this subjective idealism: materialism and humanism. The principle of material-

The philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's propped philosophy, real humanism, allows Feuerbach to think the unity of the active head and passive heart (sealed in the essence of man) as the condition of a truly human existence, and to think, on the other hand, their separation as the condition of an inhuman existence -- the alienation of reason, the alienation of man from his essence (freedom-reason).

The problem of alienation arises with man's projection of his essential, species-attributes in religious-speculative consciousness which separates the individual from the community, his species-life, and converts him into an isolated, egoistic individual at odds with his own true nature as a communal being:

The single man in isolation possesses in himself the essence of man neither as a moral nor as a thinking being. The essence of man is contained only in the community, in the unity of man with man. 50

ism applies to the thesis of objectivity: thought is essentially dependent on, and heterogeneous from, a reality external to it (nature). The principle of idealism applies to the doctrine of humanism: man is the basis and subject of reason. The unity of reason (human understanding) is given in the 'synthetic activity of apperception' (Kant) or the identity of consciousness and self-consciousness (Feuerbach). The basis of this idealist humanism is to view man in two relations (theoretical and practical) and two senses (homo phenomenon, homo noumenon). As homo phenomenon (the 'heart' of philosophy) man is subject to external necessity or material need, and is sensible in the effects of his action; as homo noumenon (the 'head' of philosophy) man is intelligible in the freedom of his action (thought). The support for our argument -- that Feuerbach's 'head' and 'heart' translates Kant's 'homo phenomenon' and 'homo noumenon' -- can be found in our introductory exposition, chapter two. This same philosophy of man underlies Marx's critique of Democritus in his doctoral dissertation, viz. the 'spiritual' and 'material' sides of repulsion; and the 'spiritual essence' and 'material existence' of the atom (cf. chapter 3).

⁵⁰ 'Principles', FB, p.244.

The ground of reason and freedom, and thus of the state, is man as a universal, communal-being (Gemeinwesen) who comes to himself (overcomes his self-alienation) theoretically (via science) and practically (via politics) in his universal relations (speciesbonds) with his fellow-men and nature. Only in these universal relations, within the framework of a human community or true state, is man truly himself and does he realize his essence:

Man is the existence of freedom, the existence of personality, and the existence of law...Man is the fundamental being of the state. The state is the realized, developed, and explicit totality of the human being. 51

This new theory of man as a universal, species-being, forms the basis for a new type of political action: the politics of the practical re-appropriation of man's essence. Only when the full implications of Feuerbach's materialism and humanism were digested did the progressive Left-Hegelians realize the futility of appealing to the reason of the state, and of trying to adapt the Hegelian philosophy to democratic politics. Feuerbach's humanism allowed the Left-Hegelians to think the contradiction between the state's essence (reason) and its existence (unreason) as the alienation of man from his social essence. Whereas the Hegelian philosophy gave alienation a positive, rational character -- as the way in which the Absolute Idea (Hegel) or universal consciousness (Bauer) realizes itself -- Feuerbach gave it a negative character.

⁵¹Cf. 'Preliminary Theses', FB., p.172. Cf. 'Principles', F.B., p.242: 'Man is not a particular being like the animal; rather, he is a universal being; he is therefore...an unlimited and free being, for universality, being of man'. This concept of the state as the realized totality of man, under the condition of universality, predicated on the freedom of man, clearly illuminates Marx's concept of the 'rational state' used in the Rheinische Zeitung articles. As we will demonstrate below it supports even more directly Marx's concept of 'true democracy'.

Instead of alienation being, as with Hegel and Bauer, a creative act or a rational process in which absolute spirit or universal consciousness produces the world by externalizing its own substance which it progressively re-appropriates into itself, alienation appears as an act that divests man from his social essence, estranges him from his species-life. To realise his species-life, in conformity with his true nature, it is necessary for man to re-appropriate his alienated essence, and to constitute a truly human existence in a rational state which no longer, as in religion, appears as an external force or transcendental illusion, but constitutes the true expression, the actual existence, of species-life, and which makes the supreme law of life not the love of God but rather the love of humanity.⁵²

⁵²Cf. 'Principles', FB, pp.225-7: 'In love alone resides the truth and reality of...God....The Christian God himself is only an abstraction from human love and an image of it....Thus, for example, love is the true ontological demonstration of the existence of objects apart from our head: there is no other proof of being except love or feeling in general....The new philosophy bases itself on the truth of love....Love is not only objectively but bjectively the criterion of being, the criterion of truth and reality. Where there is no love there is also no truth'. In applying to man, conceived in his universality as a socially undifferentiated humanity, Feuerbach's anthropological conception of ethics effectively reduced the class struggle into an opposition between egoism and altruism, and presented 'love', the unity of man's species, as the essential manifestation of man's being, the solution to all his social problems. Although there are echoes in Marx of this emphasis on 'human love' as the solution to social problems both in his Rheinische Zeitung articles and the 1844 Manuscripts, Marx both posed the problem and the conditions of his proposed solution in more concrete, socially specific terms. Despite its obvious inadequacy, Feuerbach's doctrine of social humanism exercised a decisive influence on all the Young Hegelians. Although Feuerbach did not find a definitive solution to the Left-Hegelian problem -- that of adapting philosophy to socio-political action -- he at least indicated the formal conditions of such a solution. Nevertheless, we have to disagree with Cornu (op.cit., pp.323-5) who states that Feuerbach rejected the subjective idealism of the Hegelian Left by attacking its basis, effecting

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE STATE

In an article, 'Judgement on my Book Essence of Christianity', published February 1842 in the Deutsche Jahrbücher, Feuerbach derived from his critique of religion its practical conclusions. Applying, as we have seen, these principles to speculative philosophy (cf. Preliminary Theses, February 1843) Feuerbach showed that the speculative method consisted in a process of abstraction and hypostasis which makes concepts to be the essence of the real, and presents the Idea as the subject of the world. To strike the secret of this speculative construction so as to disclose the 'truth' Feuerbach demonstrated the necessity of an inversion: to restore the apparant subject, the Idea, to its true subject, man, and present the Idea as the predicate rather than the subject of man. It is this transformative critique of religion and speculative philosophy which directly inspires and determines the structure of Marx's Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.

In adapting Feuerbach's critique of religion to a critique of the state under the influence of Moses Hess⁵³ Marx recasts the framework within which the critique was originally proposed. Whereas in 1842 Marx had sought, together with the other Left-Hegelians, and in collaboration

thereby its 'total inversion'. By inverting the Hegelian philosophy, Feuerbach gives a different solution to the same problem, different answers to the same questions, which is to say, he never escapes the Hegelian problematic. Within this problematic Feuerbach moved from a speculative to an ethical (ie., human) standpoint, from speculative idealism to a humanist idealism.

⁵³Like Feuerbach, Moses Hess considered that the fundamental problem was the suppression of alienation, but contrary to Feuerbach and to Marx (in the Paris MSS), believed alienation to be the effect, not the cause of the system of private property.

with Bruno Bauer, to isolate Hegel's dialectical method from his conservative system, Marx now follows Feuerbach in denouncing the process of 'mystification' through which Hegel transforms the objective reality of man (the family and civil society) into the phenomenal appearance of the Idea (the state). The focus of this critique is the problematical relation of civil society to the state, in respect to which Hegel sets up an 'unresolved antinomy': 'on the one hand, external necessity, on the other hand, immanent end'.⁵⁴

The Exposé of Hegel's Method: the Mystery of Speculation (nn.262-9)

Hegel's point of departure in the Philosophy of Right is, Marx points out, a recognition of the historically conditioned existence of two opposed spheres within political society, and the assertion that the rationality of the modern state depends on its being the synthesis of these two spheres, a synthesis built on their very opposition: '[Hegel] presuppose[s] the separation of civil society and the political state...and develop[s] it as a necessary moment of the Idea, as an absolute truth of reason'.⁵⁵

In Hegel's presentation the family and civil society are conceived as spheres of the concept of the state which splits itself into these two spheres, and which it then presupposes 'in order to rise above its ideality and become

⁵⁴ Marx, Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right', trans. J.O'Malley (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.6, (Hereafter Critique). The first four pages of Marx's manuscript are missing; the critique in its available form centres on the section of Hegel's Philosophy of Right dealing with the State (pars. 261-313).

⁵⁵ Critique, p.73. Cf. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p.12: 'to recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to enjoy the present, this is the rational insight which reconciles us to the actual'.

explicit as infinite actual spirit'.⁵⁶ The so-called 'actual Idea' of State, Marx points out, is here described as though 'it acted according to a determined principle, and toward a determined end', which clearly manifests, Marx adds, Hegel's 'logical, pantheistic, mysticism':

The actual situation is that the assignment of the material of the state to the individual is mediated by circumstances, caprice, and personal choice of his station in life. This fact, this actual situation is expressed by speculative philosophy as appearance, as phenomenon (of the actual Idea in its self-mediation).⁵⁷

In this speculative presentation the reality of the family and civil society, the real life of man, is not expressed as it is in itself, but is presented as having its basis in another reality:

The Idea is made into subject and the actual relationship of family and civil society to the state (the Idea) is conceived to be its inner imaginary activity. ⁵⁸

The family and civil society constitute the real basis and effective presuppositions of the state, but speculative philosophy reverses this true relation: by conceiving of the determinate reality of the existing state, the real starting point, not as such, but as a 'mystical result' (the mediated result of the Idea's self-development) Hegel converts

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.7,9-10 where Marx quotes Hegel: 'In these spheres in which its moments, particularity and individuality, have their immediate and reflected reality, Spirit is present as their objective universality glimmering in them as the power of reason in necessity (cf.par.184), ie., as the institutions of the state '.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp.7-8. Cf. 'logical, pantheistic mysticism' see Feuerbach's 'Preliminary Theses' (FB, pp.153-54) and 'Principles...' (FB., pp. 196ff).

⁵⁸ Critique, p.8.

this reality (civil society) into the phenomena of the state's essence, the Idea. 'The entire mystery of the Philosophy of Right and of the Hegelian philosophy in general', Marx observes, 'is contained in these paragraphs', to wit:

empirical actuality is admitted just as it is, and is also said to be rational; but not rational because of its own reason, but because the empirical fact in its empirical existence has a significance which is other than itself. 59

As to this transition from the state's phenomena (family and civil society) to its essence (the Idea) Marx notes:

the transition is not derived from the specific essence of the family, etc., and the specific essence of the state, but rather from the universal relation of necessity and freedom. 60

This transition, Marx adds, is exactly the same as that effected by Hegel in his Logic (from the sphere of Essence to the sphere of the Concept) and his Philosophy of Nature (from Inorganic nature to Life):

It is always the same categories offered as the animating principle now of one sphere, now of another, and the only thing of importance is to discover, for the particular concrete determinations, the corresponding abstract ones. 61

This observation forms the basis of a general, very Feuerbachian criticism:

Hegel has done nothing but resolve the constitution of the state into the universal, abstract idea of the organism; but in appearance...he has developed the determinate reality out of the universal idea. He has made the subject of the Idea into a predicate of the Idea. He does not develop his thought from what is objective (Gegenstand), but what is objective in accordance with a ready-made thought which has its origin in the abstract sphere of logic. It is not a question of developing the determinate idea of the political

59 Ibid., p.9.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

constitution but of giving the political constitution a relation to the abstract idea...⁶²

This speculative presentation of the Idea as the truth of the real is, Marx comments, an 'obvious mystification':

'There is no bridge by which one can pass from the universal idea of the organism to the particular idea of the organism ...or the constitution of the state, nor will there ever be'.⁶³

This mystification (the abstraction of the predicate, the object, from its real subject, and its attribution to a mystical subject, the Idea) is based on a disguised dualism:

Hegel does not consider the universal to be the actual essence of the actual, finite thing...nor the real Ens to be the true subject of the infinite. ⁶⁴

As a result of this speculative attribution of the objective to a mystical bearer (the Idea) the character and necessity of the present state derives not from its own specific nature or determinate reality but from an ab extra presupposed element, a 'ready-made' (a priori) idea. The soul of the object, so to speak, is determined before the existence of the body, its material reality, which is reduced to a

⁶² Ibid., pp.14-15. As a result of this apriori construction of the state Hegel derives the following principles: (a) 'The self-knowing and self-willing spirit is the substance of the state'; (b) 'The universal interest...is the universal end and content of this spirit, the existing substance of the state'; (c) 'The self-knowing...spirit...attains the actualization of this abstract content only as a differentiated activity, as the existence of various powers, as an organically structured power' (ibid., pp.16-17).

⁶³ Ibid., p.14

⁶⁴ Cf. ibid., p.24: The Feuerbachian inspiration of Marx's thought is clear as witness further: 'Hegel makes the predicates, the object, independent as separated from their real independence, their subject. Subsequently...the real subject appears to be the result, whereas one has to start from the real subject and examine its objectification...' (ibid.).

mere appearance. In this reduction, the material, empirical reality is emptied of its intrinsic meaning, and at the same time, assigned another -- as the phenomenon of the Idea. The empirical content is, in effect, invested with a mystical form, which, Marx observes, creates the impression of something profound.⁶⁵ It can be said, Marx concludes:

Hegel's true interest is not the philosophy of right but logic. The philosophical task is not the embodiment of thought in determinate political realities, but the evaporation of these realities in abstract thought. The philosophical moment is not the logic of fact but the fact of logic. Logic is not used to prove the nature of the state, but the state is used to prove the logic.⁶⁶

As regards this transposition of the 'logic of fact' into the 'fact of logic' Marx comments: 'Hegel is not to be blamed for depicting the nature of the modern state as it is, but rather for presenting what is as the essence of the state'.⁶⁷ Marx here carefully distinguishes between the philosophical form ('mystification') and the empirical content of the Philosophy of Right. In Marx's judgement Hegel accurately depicts within his speculative framework, the actual institutions of political society. The crux of Marx's investigation is to disengage the empirical content or 'exoteric' history of the state, from its speculative form or 'esoteric' history. Hegel, in effect, treats of a double history, esoteric and exoteric, but what interests Hegel is only the profound mystery or esoteric history: 'to recover the history of the logical Concept in the state'.⁶⁸ The vulgar empirical facts of the objective, or exoteric history, constitute for Hegel mere phenomena of the Idea and only interest Hegel as predicates of this Idea.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.39: 'In this way the impression of something mystical and profound is also created; cf. Feuerbach, Preliminary Theses'; FB., p.161.

⁶⁶ Critique, p.18.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.64.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.8: 'There is a two-fold history one esoteric

Marx's general critical conclusion: 'The important thing is that Hegel at all times makes the Idea the subject, and makes the proper and actual subject...the predicate. But the development proceeds at all times on the side of the predicate'. 69

From the perspective of this critical conclusion Marx confronts Hegel's speculative method (idealist dialectic) with a method of 'true' philosophical criticism (materialist dialectic):

true philosophical criticism of the present state constitution not only shows the contradictions as existing, but clarifies them, grasps their essence [internal genesis] and necessity. It comprehends their own proper significance but this comprehension does not, as Hegel thinks, consist in everywhere recognizing the determinations of the logical concept, but rather in grasping the proper logic of the proper object. 70

In order to expose the 'uncritical spirit, this mysticism', to penetrate the 'enigma of the modern constitution as well as the mystery of the Hegelian philosophy, especially of the Philosophy of Right and the Philosophy of Religion' Marx calls for a criticism based on reality -- that starts from the real and develops thought out of what is objective (Gegenstand). In short, as Della Volpe has emphasized, Marx calls for a materialist dialectic. 71

and one exoteric. The content lies in the exoteric part. The interest of the esoteric is always to recover the history of the logical concept in the state. But the real development proceeds on the exoteric side'.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.11

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.92

⁷¹ According to Della Volpe, Marx here ('in grasping the proper logic of the proper object') establishes the basis for a new dialectical-materialist method, an experimental-dialectic (a la Galileo) to be applied later in Capital. In Della Volpe's analysis, Marx here establishes the gnoseological and logical basis of Marx's method per se, which illuminates the obscurities in Marx's methodological introduction to the 1859 Critique (cf. Della Volpe, Rousseau y Marx, pp. 105ff). This exposition is supported by others who have followed Della Volpe, like Lucio Colletti and Valentino Gerratana. At a very general level we have to agree with this general position

In this materialist dialectic or true criticism, instead of giving a 'political body' to one's logic (abstract idea), which Hegel did by recognizing everywhere the determination of the pure concept, one gives the logic (determinate idea) of the 'body-politic'.⁷² In order to dispel the 'illusions' of the speculative construction, and to grasp the proper logic of the proper object, Marx clearly seeks to apply the method of Feuerbach's transformative critique:

The best way to rid oneself of this [speculative] illusion is to take the substance as what it is, ie., as the actual determination, then as such make it the subject, and consider whether its ostensibly proper subject is its actual predicate, ie., whether this ostensibly proper subject expresses its essence and true actualization. 73

Criticism of Hegel's Concept of State (nn.269-97)

The initial section of Marx's commentary deals primarily with Hegel's method which gives the political state the appearance of rationality by converting it into a product of the Idea. After an expose of this speculative method,

in respect to its stress on the scientific nature of Marx's method, and to the formal condition of his method (the proper logic of a determinate object). We do not agree, however that Marx's mature method is adequately established for all intents and purposes in the 1843 Critique.

⁷² Ibid., p.48.

⁷³ Ibid., p.84. Marx's method can be called a "materialist dialectic" in the sense of its direct, Feuerbachian, inversion of the 'idealist dialectic': 'It is evident that the true method is turned upside down. What is most simple is made most complex and vice versa. What should be the point of departure becomes the mystical result, and what should be the rational result becomes the mystical point of departure' (ibid., p.40). The direct relation to Feuerbach's transformative critique is too obvious to bear further mention.

Marx, demonstrates how it leads to an uncritical attitude towards the status quo⁷⁴ and proceeds to apply Feuerbach's transformative critique to Hegel's concept of the state, and thereby, to the actual monarchical-feudal Prussian state.

Having attributed to the state an ideal necessity as the incarnation of objective reason and freedom, Hegel reduces the state to its essential element, the constitution, and argues that the spirit of sovereignty is embodied in the constitution and personified in the person of the hereditary monarch. Marx first of all underlines the arbitrary character of this speculative construction through which Hegel excludes the people from sovereign power and confers on the monarch absolute power, and then shows how sovereignty is first of all hypostatized as an independent entity, made into a subject, and then incarnated in the person of the hereditary monarch.⁷⁵

⁷⁴The criticism of speculative thought (that it asserts on the theoretical level the primacy of the ideal over the empirical order, which leads, on the practical level, to the uncritical acceptance of empirical contradictions) is a persistent leitmotif of Marx's subsequent writings: Cf. the 1844 MSS (MEGA 1,3,pp.167-8; WYMPS, pp.322-2); Holy Family (Werke 11,pp. 88-90; WYMPS., p.332; letter to P.V. Annenkov (28 Dec. 1846), Appendix of Poverty of Philosophy. See also the section on speculative political economy.

⁷⁵Critique, pp.19-40 (nn.272).Cf. 'Thus the constitution is rational insofar as its moments can be reduced to abstract logical moments. The state has to differentiate and determine its activity not in accordance with its specific nature, but in accordance with the nature of the Concept which is the mystified mobile of abstract thought. The reason of the constitution is thus abstract logic and not the concept of the state. In place of the concept of the state we get the constitution of the concept' (ibid., p.19).

Cf. 'Insofar as this moment of ultimate decision or absolute self-determination is divorced from the universality of content [ie., the constitution and laws ...it is actual will as arbitrary choice [Willkur]. In other words...the power of the crown is arbitrary choice' (ibid., p.21).

Cf. 'Had Hegel started with real subjects as the bases of the state it would not have been necessary for him to let the state become subjectified in a mystical way...Subjectivity

Supported by his historical studies, Marx proceeds to argue that constitutions are not independent of historic development, but are products of revolutions, which, in terms of either executive or legislative power, can be either reactionary or democratic.⁷⁶ Since Hegel saw the state as the realization of freedom and reason he could not attribute to the monarchy a completely arbitrary and absolute (ie., irrational) power, and accordingly, sought to limit it by

is a characteristic of the person. Instead of considering them to be predicates of their subjects Hegel makes the predicates independent and then lets them be subsequently and mysteriously converted into their subjects....Accordingly, sovereignty, the essence of the state, is here first conceived to be an independent being; it is objectified. Then, of course, this object must again become subject. However the subject then appears to be a self-incarnation of sovereignty, which is nothing but the objectified spirit of the state's subjects' (ibid., pp.23-24).

Cf. 'Hegel makes all the attributes of the contemporary European constitutional monarch into absolute self-determinations of the will. He does not say the will of the monarch is the final decision, but rather the final decision of the will is the monarch. The first statement is empirical, the second twists the empirical fact into a metaphysical axiom. Hegel joins together two subjects, sovereignty as subjectivity sure of itself, and sovereignty as ungrounded self-determination of the will, as the individual will, in order to construct out of that the Idea as 'one individual'....because subjectivity is actual only as subject, and the subject actual only as one, the personality of the state is actual only as one person. A beautiful conclusion. Hegel could just as well conclude that because the individual man is one the human species is only a single man' (ibid., pp.25-27).

⁷⁶ Cf. Ibid., pp.57-58: 'The legislature produced the French Revolution. In general, when it has appeared in its special element, the legislature has produced the great organic, universal revolutions. It has not attacked the constitution, but a particular antiquated constitution, precisely because the legislature was the representative of the people, ie., of the species-will [des Gattungswillens]. The executive, on the other hand, produced the small retrograde revolutions, the reactions. It revolted not against an old constitution against a new one, but against the constitution as such, precisely because the executive was the representative of the particular.

giving it the pseudo-constitutional form that it actually had at the time in Prussia. This solution, however, responded to Hegel's desire to make concessions to the bourgeoisie, whose historic significance in the socio-economic domain was fully understood, while yet subordinating the principle of the classes to the principle of the state.⁷⁷ Hegel's solution: to affect a compromise between the contradictory class-interests of the feudal aristocracy, expressed in the organic institution of primogeniture, and of the liberal bourgeoisie, expressed in the organic institution of Corporation. Hegel effects this compromise with the participation of these classes in the government -- in the executive (bureaucracy) and the legislative assembly of Estates. Since both the bureaucracy and the Estates represent in its own way the general interest, as opposed to the particular interests of the two civil classes, they prevent the exercises of an arbitrary and absolute power (by the monarch), and constitute a link between the universality of state-power (the monarch) and the particularity of civil society (the people).⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Cf. above chapter 2, pp.79-80. Only the state, with its institutions, especially the police and the bureaucracy, seemed to Hegel capable of mediating the evils of bourgeois-civil society. The state mediated the particularity of civil society by wrenching individuals from their private interests and securing their integration as members of an organic whole. In reaction to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, whose translation of bourgeois aspirations placed in the foreground the rights of the individual opposed to the state, Hegel followed Rousseau in insisting on the right of the state, which is idealized as the embodiment of the general interest as opposed to civil society, a riot of self-seeking individuals.

⁷⁸ Hegel finds the principles of socio-political unity, and thus the agencies of 'mediation', within the institutional schema of the state. These mediating institutions reduce to four: a bureaucracy of civil servants whose aims are identical with the end of the state; two 'organic' institutions of the 'unofficial' classes of civil society: 'primogeniture', the first ethical root (basis) of the state (cf. the family); and the 'corporation', the second ethical root of the state (cf. civil society); and an assembly of Estates, wherein the particularity of these civil classes is brought into relation with the general represented interest.

As in the past year as editor, Marx denounces this hybrid pseudo-liberal conception of the state which serves only to disguise the reactionary character of the Prussian monarchy; and proceeds to criticize the institutional schema (monarch, bureaucracy, assembly of estates) which Hegel presents as the solution to the problem originally posed by Rousseau: the dualism of particular interests and general interests, of man as bourgeois and citoyen.

Hegel had sought to prove against Rousseau that the 'rational state' took the form of a constitutional monarchy, which, accordingly, constitutes the concrete unity of the particular and the universal. Supported by his readings of Rousseau,⁷⁹ Marx sets out to prove the opposite, viz: that the ideal unity achieved through the mediation of state-power is illusory; that Hegel confuses the modern political state, 'depicted...in fact as it is', with the 'essence of the state' -- with the 'state as the whole existence of the people'.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Rousseau's Social Contract is one of the first works examined and excerpted by Marx at Kreuznach in the course of his critical analysis of Hegel's Philosophy of Right cf. O'Malley, op.cit, xlv; ref. MEGA 1,1(2), pp.120-1. In effect we will argue, Marx's critique of Hegel constitutes a critique of Hegel's critique of Rousseau. The gist of our interpretation is that just as Marx returned to Kant in respect to the problem of knowledge indirectly through Feuerbach, Marx likewise returns indirectly to Rousseau, with respect to the problem of civil society, again through Feuerbach. In this interpretation, we disagree with Cornu who sees Marx's new concept of 'real democracy' as a clearly different concept from his earlier concept of a 'rational state'. In our interpretation, the two concepts are essentially the same, thought in relation to Rousseau's solution, and to Feuerbach's philosophy of man.

⁸⁰ Cf. Critique, p.70. Ref. Feuerbach's concept of the state: 'Man is the fundamental being of the state. The state is the realized, developed, and explicit totality of the human being' ('Preliminary Theses', FB., p.172); cf. above p.107.

Sovereign Power: Monarch or the People? (nn. 275-86)

According to Hegel, each branch of government or state-power (sovereign, executive, legislative) mediates in its own way the divisions of civil society, and secures the unity of the particular and the universal. In this conception, monarchy allegedly confers on the state a unifying power in that it integrates the 'universal' (legislative proposals) and the 'particular' (executive administration) in the 'concrete individuality' of the monarch. As in his earlier criticism, Marx protests this concept in which sovereignty is embodied in the person of the monarch to the exclusion of the people: 'sovereignty of the monarch, or...of the people, that is the question'.⁸¹ Re-affirming the view expressed by Rousseau, Marx insists that sovereignty belongs to the people as a whole, and cannot be alienated or delegated; it can only be affirmed in 'true democracy' which is both 'form' and 'content'; ie., in which the ideal universal ('form') truly penetrates the material 'content', and man is no longer alienated from his essence (species-life).⁸² In terms of such a 'human existence'

all forms...of the state have democracy for their truth, and for that reason are false to the extent that they are not democracy. ⁸³

Executive-Power: the bureaucracy as a universal class? (nn. 287-97)

Marx's basic criticism of the political state as a sphere separated from the rest of human life -- as the alienated form of the human essence -- is further supported by

⁸¹Critique, p.28.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., p.31.

Hegel's presentation of the executive power or bureaucracy, which Marx proceeds to criticize in a manner distinctly reminiscent of his earlier criticism in the Rheinische Zeitung. According to Hegel the bureaucracy, as a universal class motivated by the general interest, mediates between the universality of the sovereign power and the particularity of civil society. In this concept, Marx comments, Hegel makes the bureaucracy 'society's Christ': to mediate between God (the sovereign power) and the people.⁸⁴ This mediation, Marx proceeds to argue, is illusory -- 'purely in thought and abstraction'.⁸⁵ With the apparent dedication to the general interest as a mask for its own ends, the bureaucracy gives rise to the practical illusion of an imaginary state: 'the bureaucracy is the imaginary state alongside the real state; it is the spiritualism of the state. As a result everything has a double meaning, one real and one bureaucratic...'⁸⁶ This double meaning exposes the bureaucracy as an 'imaginary identity... antithetical to itself'.⁸⁷ Far from mediating between the state and civil society the bureaucracy only proves their separation. It claims to represent the interests of the people as a whole, but it does so as a corporation, as a 'particular closed society within the state'. As a consequence, Marx comments, 'the state's interest becomes a particular private purpose opposed to other private purposes'.⁸⁸ According to Hegel any citizen can become part of this 'universal class', but says Marx:

⁸⁴Critique, p.87.

⁸⁵Ibid., p.48.

⁸⁶Ibid., p.47.

⁸⁷Ibid. Translation revised as per Easton and Guddatt in WYMPS, p.187.

⁸⁸Ibid., p.48. Translation revised as in WYMPS, p.187.

In a true state it is not a question of the possibility of every citizen to dedicate himself to the universal in the form of a particular class, but of the capability of the universal class to be really universal, ie., to be the class of every citizen. 89

Hegel's mistake was 'to proceed...from the postulate of the pseudo-universal, the illusory universal class, universality fixed in the form of a particular class'.⁹⁰ What he does, in effect, is 'give...us an empirical description of the bueeaucracy, partly as it actually is, and partly according to the opnion...it has of itself'.⁹¹ On the basis of this false premise, Hegel idealizes the bureaucracy by imputing to it 'an essence which is foreign to it': 'the ethical spirit, state consciousness'.⁹² Thus it is that the bureaucracy constitutes the 'spiritualism of the state', the illusory representation of the general interest in a state whose form is separated from its true content -- the entire citizenry, the people as a whole.

Legislative Power: Estates or the People (nn.298-312)

To form a 'true state' of the entire citizenry requires that the legislative power be truly representative. Accordingly, Marx directs his most detailed and telling criticism against Hegel's treatment of legislative power. After attacking Hegel's argument that the constitution lies outside the direct determination of the people, Marx criticizes Hegel's restriction of representation to its form in the Estates and the

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.50.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.50-1.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.45.

⁹² Ibid., p.61.

Corporations to which the people belong.⁹³ First of all, Marx notes that for Hegel 'just as the sovereign is mediated with civil society through the executive, so society is mediated with the executive'.⁹⁴ In respect to this double-mediation, Marx sarcastically comments that Hegel makes of the executive society's Christ, and of the Estates its priest. In this priestly function, the Estates constitute the middle term between the people and the sovereign, between civil society and the executive. As such, as a middle term within a rational relation (syllogism), the Assembly of Estates forms a 'mixtum compositum of both extremes: the sovereign principle and civil society...subject and predicate'.⁹⁵

⁹³The people as a whole constitutes for Hegel an empirical mass (the 'many') whose thoughts and opinions are 'particulars'. For these 'many' to relate consciously to 'universal affairs as if they were their own' (ibid. p.61) they need to constitute a deputation to the state, ie. be represented by Estates. Marx levels against this indirect representation of the 'public consciousness' a virulent criticism which illuminates the structure of his general critique: 'It is significant that Hegel, who shows such great respect for the state-spirit -- the ethical spirit, state-consciousness -- absolutely disdains it when it faces him in actual empirical form ('the Many'). This is the enigma of mysticism. The same fantastic abstraction that re-discovers state-consciousness in the degenerate form of bureaucracy, a hierarchy of knowledge, and that uncritically accepts this incomplete existence as the actual and full-valued existence -- the same mystical abstraction admits with equanimity that the actual empirical state-spirit, public consciousness, is a mere pot-pourri of the 'thoughts and opinions of the Many'. As it imputes to the bureaucracy an essence which is foreign to it, so it grants to the actuality of that essence only the inferior form of appearance. Hegel idealizes the bureaucracy and empiricises public consciousness' (Critique, p.61).

⁹⁴Ibid., p.87.

⁹⁵Ibid., p.85.

It is in this 'development of the rational syllogism' that the 'mystical dualism' of Hegel's system becomes apparent: 'The middle term is...the concealed opposition [illusory identity] between universality and particularity'.⁹⁶

The essential point of this judgement, and the subsequent critique, is that the legislative Estates do not and cannot bring the people as a whole into a true relation with the life of the state. This is so because of the very nature of civil society as a sphere of particularity without social or political unity (as the 'realized principle of individualism'). The state and civil society are irreconcilable opposites, and the Estates are 'more the existence of the contradiction than the mediation'.⁹⁷ 'It is remarkable', Marx adds, 'that Hegel, who reduces this absurdity of mediation to its abstract, logical and hence pure and irreducible, expression, calls it at the same time the speculative mystery of logic, the rational relationship, the rational syllogism'.⁹⁸ What Marx here attacks is the very structure of the Hegelian dialectic. In this respect, Marx observes:

actual extremes cannot be mediated...precisely because they are actual extremes. But neither are they in need of mediation, because they are opposed in essence.⁹⁹

Marx here introduces a critical epistemological distinction between 'opposites of existence' ('truly real extremes') and 'opposites of essence' ('opposed determinations of one essence').¹⁰⁰ The former -- 'actual extremes' -- cannot

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 86

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 88-89

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 89

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 89, 117. Although we bring this epistemological distinction into an indirect relation to Kant's

be mediated. As to the latter

the chief characteristic lies in the fact that a concept (existence, etc.) is taken abstractly, and that it does not have significance as independent but rather as...and only as this abstraction. Thus, for example, spirit is only the abstraction from matter. It is evident that precisely because this form [spirit] is to be the content of the concept, its real essence is rather the abstract opposite, i.e., the object from which it abstracts, taken in abstraction -- in this case, abstract materialism. 101

These epistemological considerations are highly significant in that they clearly bring Marx into an indirect (via Feuerbach) relation to Kant's critique of the logical-

Critique of Pure Reason, it is anticipated as far back as 1939 when, in a critique of a book by Trendelenburg, entitled 'logical investigations', Marx thinks the same distinction with respect to Aristoteles. Cf. MEGA, 1, 1(2); p.107 in Cornu, op.cit., p. 134: 'Aristoteles was right when he said that synthesis is the cause of all errors. [emphasis added]. Thought, in the form of representation and reflection, is constituted by the synthesis of thought and being, of the general and the particular, of appearance and essence. False thought or conception, is born from the synthesis of relations that are not immanent but external, of objective and subjective determinations'. This formulation, of course, could just as well have been given by Kant, or thought in relation to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Throughout the period 1939-41, after Marx's apparent conversion to Hegel (1837) and before his dissertation, Marx's lecture-notes were primarily on Aristoteles (Treatise of Soul), Spinoza (Letters), Leibniz, Hume and the Kantian school (ref. MEGA, 1, 1(2), pp. 98-105, in Cornu, op.cit., p.133). Marx was already brought into relation with Bauer's return to Fichte, and other Left-Hegelians like Feuerbach who, in effect, returned to the Enlightenment concept of reason based on a philosophy of man. In this respect too the Left-Hegelians in general revised Hegel in the direction of Kant -- unknowingly for the most part.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.89.

ontological confusion perpetrated by Leibniz and all the old metaphysical school.¹⁰² The crux of this critique was the 'confounding' of the 'logical process' and its object (Objekt) with the 'real process' and its object (Gegenstand). Within this critique Kant anticipates Marx's criticism of Hegel by rejecting the identity in principle that Leibniz and the old metaphysics in general established between opposition in reality and logical contradiction or opposition.¹⁰³ In a parallel construction to Kant, Marx proceeds to argue that had the 'difference within the existence of one essence not been confused, in part with the abstraction given independence ...and, in part, with the actual opposition of mutually exclusive essences' then a three-fold error could have been avoided, namely: (a) 'that because only the extreme is true, every abstraction...takes itself to be the truth, whereby a principle appears to be only an abstraction from another, instead of a totality in itself'; (b) 'that the decisiveness of actual opposites, their formation into extremes, which is nothing other than their self-knowledge...is thought to be something which should be prevented if possible'; and (c) 'that their mediation is attempted'.¹⁰⁴

Hegel, according to Marx, grasped the internal contradiction in existing political society, but mystified it. Because Hegel takes the empirical world to be a mere appearance of the Idea, and the determinate elements of civil society to be particular modes of its being, Hegel is committed apriori to the principle that the empirical world is in the last instance rational. By a sleight-of-hand, supported by the sophistic insertion of terms like 'hence' at

¹⁰² Cf. Kant's 'Note to the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection', CPR, pp.281-96.

¹⁰³ CPR, pp.284, 289-93.

¹⁰⁴ Critique, pp.89-90. The centre of reference for

key points of his argument (cf. between the abstract categories of Logic and the actual institutions of political society) Hegel resolves the real (essential) contradiction by acknowledging it at the phenomenal level, while claiming it to be overcome at the level of the Idea.¹⁰⁵ In short:

Hegel's chief mistake consists in the fact that he conceives of the contradiction in appearance as being a unity in essence, i.e., in the Idea; whereas it certainly has something more profound in its essence, namely an essential contradiction. 106

It can be said, in other words, that Hegel mediated in thought what cannot be so mediated, namely an 'essential contradiction' between man's 'earthly existence' (civil society) in which he is forced to be egoistic, unequal, and in a state of universal and hostile competition with his fellow men, and man's abstract, 'heavenly life' in the political state, where he is formally equal and participant in the general interest.

In Hegel's presentation, the illusory mediation of the essential contradiction is constituted by Estate representation, conceived as the 'genuine link' between the particular and the universal, and hence, as the 'solution to the riddle' of the civil society-state relation.¹⁰⁷

this argument is clearly Feuerbach.

¹⁰⁵Ibid, pp.12-31, 20, 25, 27, 123. Cf. similar argument see The Holy Family, WYMPS, pp.373ff.

¹⁰⁶Critique, p.91.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p.71. Cf. Hegel (par.303): 'The universal class of civil servants...[has] the universal as the end of its essential activity. In the Estates...the unofficial class acquires its political significance and efficacy; it appears, therefore, in the Estates neither as a mere indiscriminate multitude, nor as an aggregate dispersed into its atoms, but as what it already is, namely a class subdivided into two, one subclass [the agricultural class] being based on a tie of substance between its members, and the other [the business class] on particular needs and the work whereby these are met...It is only in this way that there is a genuine link between the particular which is effective in the state, and the universal'.

As to this solution, Marx observes: 'all the contradictions of Hegel's presentation are found together in this development'.¹⁰⁸ To begin with, Hegel presupposes the separation of civil society and the political state as a 'necessary moment of the Idea' and hence 'as the absolute truth of reason'.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly, Hegel makes the Estates into an expression of the separation between civil and political life, but at the same time they are supposed to represent their identity -- which Marx points out 'does not exist': The Estates are the established contradiction of the state and civil society within the state. At the same time they are the demand for the dissolution of the contradiction'.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ibid., p.73

¹⁰⁹ibid.

¹¹⁰ibid., p.67. At this stage of the argument Marx reviews the changing relationship between the state and civil society in various historical periods: the Graeco-Roman world; the Middle Ages and the Modern (Christian-bourgeois) World. Departing from Hegel's Philosophy of History Marx notes that the classical polis was characterized by a lack of differentiation between the social and political (res publica is the real content of individual life). The political penetrates all spheres of private life (their separation defines the status of slaves as opposed to men). The Middle Ages presents the inverse form of the same relationship: the private sphere acquires political status, and property, commerce, social relations, even the private person, become political. The power of property is paramount because its distribution is political (rather than economical as in modern times). Only in medieval times is politics an immediate reflection of socio-economic relations; all other formations entail a degree of tension between both spheres. Thus it is that Stände refers in German to both class distinction, and political organization or 'political' as opposed to 'social' significance. Thus it is that in the Middle Ages, the Stände expresses an 'identity' of social and political life of the particular and the universal. However, says Marx, this identity of the political and social life is a 'democracy of unfreedom, accomplished alienation' (p.32). In modern times, Marx continues, this identity breaks up, and the consciousness of alienation is formalized and institutionalized: what was latent and limited in earlier periods becomes manifest and universal in modern life. Civil society is emancipated from political form, and the dichotomy between civil society and the state, between private and public life, becomes universal. From this account (ibid., pp. 70-83) Marx draws two conclusions:

This attempt to re-unite the political state and civil society by means of the Estates -- as a middle term within a rational, syllogistic relation; a mixtum compositum of two extremes, particularity and universality -- is destined to failure: The Estates do not represent the general interest but are part of bourgeois civil society whose internal contradictions it expresses.¹¹¹ Civil society, profoundly opposed to the state, cannot for its part -- as a sphere of particular interests -- constitute a political society representative of the general interest.¹¹²

(a) the separation of civil society and the state, formulated by Hegel as a principle, is a historically specific development, subject to analysis; (b) the identity of the classes (Stände) and the Estates (Stände) of civil society, characteristic of the Middle Ages, is absolutely illusory in modern life. The German language lends support to this confusion by maintaining a unity which once obtained, but today, with the French Revolution in particular, no longer does: the modern state, as conceived by Hegel, is the apotheosis of the alienation of the political form from the social content. Hegel's 'inconsistency' is that he recognized on one level the separation between the social and the political, but that on another level (of the Idea) he leans on the word Stände to find a unity-in-essence (in Idea) within a contradiction-in-appearance. In Hegel's case this 'inconsistency' constitutes an 'accommodation' and 'syncretism at its worst': 'Hegel wants the medieval system of Estates, but in the modern sense of the legislature; and he wants the modern legislature, but within the framework of the Medieval system of Estates! (ibid., p.96).

¹¹¹ Cf. ibid., pp.85-86: 'The middle term is...the concealed opposition between universality and singularity...for it is itself much more the existence of the contradiction than of the mediation'.

¹¹² Cf. ibid., p.76: 'Civil society is the unofficial class...the immediate, essential, concrete class of civil society. In virtue of its character, civil society, or the unofficial class, does not have the universal as the end of its essential activity....The class of civil society is not a political class'.

The synthesis of the state and civil society contradicts its own concept based on their radical opposition. By the same token, this opposition between the political state and civil society, on which Hegel's system is based, contradicts the true concept of the state which, as the expression of man's 'species-life', cannot constitute a sphere opposed to civil society. In the true state the life of the individual is as one with that of the community, as the sphere of private interests is with the sphere of general interests, and consequently it embodies the universal in a concrete form. Since Hegel does not make of the state the expression of the concrete universal, and of man as its true subject, he does not consider the state as the realization of the human essence, as the manifestation of collective life, but rather as an abstract universal (constitution) separated from man's social (species) life. As a consequence: 'The political constitution was until today the religious sphere, the cult of people's life, the heaven of its universality as opposed to the earthly existence of its reality'.¹¹³

¹¹³ Ibid., pp.31-2. The condition of the 'true state' is that established by Rousseau: a relation of fundamental unity between the individual and the community. Marx as will become clear below, clearly thought this condition in relation to Feuerbach's concept of man as a universal, species a true state (human existence) is the concrete unity of the individual and the community (like Hegel Marx considers only the whole to be 'concrete' and the individual separated from his essential relations with his fellow-men is 'abstract'). In this unity, the state is the realization of the human essence; and in their separation, the state is the alienation of the human essence: an illusory, abstract universality above man's earthly existence. Just like Rousseau, Feuerbach and Marx see the subject of the universal (reason) as the 'individual', but not the individual as an autonomous unit externally related to his fellow men in society in the particularity of his self-interest, but the individual who unites within himself the universal and the particular. Like Rousseau, Marx interrogates the 'universal' within each individual who, as a Gemeinwesen (communal being) is a pars totalis of the state: 'This is the dualism: Hegel does not consider the universal to be the actual essence of the actual, finite thing...nor the

A Critique of Private Property

Hegel's philosophy, based on the mediated opposition of the state and civil society, discloses the state, a sphere of ideality, to be the truth of civil society, a sphere of materiality. In Marx's Feuerbachian critique of the state as a species of religious alienation -- the illusory representation of the human essence -- this relation of the state and civil society is inverted to disclose the socio-economic conditions of man's real life (civil society) to be the truth of the state, and as such the basis of religious alienation. It is because man no longer feels at home in this world that he takes refuge in another world above and outside reality. The hypostatized abstraction or religious alienation (God, sovereign-power) is not the cause, but rather, the result of man's fundamental alienation. Its real basis lies in the a-social (egoistic) individualism and particularity of civil society preserved by the practical illusion of the political state:

Just as Christians are equal in heaven and unequal on earth, the separate members of a people are equal in the heaven of their political world and unequal in the earthly existence of society. 114

real being to be the true subject...' (ibid., p.24). Also like Rousseau, Marx thinks of the subject of the state as the 'people', although Rousseau moves theoretically from the 'individual' to the 'people' via the principle of equality, whereas Marx does so via the principle of universality. Cf. ibid., p.24: 'sovereignty, the ideality of the state as person, as subject, exists...as many persons, many subjects, since no single person absorbs in himself the sphere of personality, nor any single subject the sphere of subjectivity'; Cf. ibid., pp.27-28: 'the actualization of the person [is] the most concrete thing'; 'As though the people were not the real state. The state is an abstraction; the people alone is the concrete'.

114 ibid., p.80.

A critical examination of Hegel's system yields as the basis of the state, and hence, of religious alienation, the system of private property. Within this system the state has two presuppositions ('ethical roots'): the family and civil society. The ethical (ie., social) basis of the first is landed, entailed (inalienable) property; and of the second, it is commercial (alienable) property. Together, these two modes of possession of property constitute the material basis or real presupposition of the state. Despite the primacy that Hegel concedes in principle to the 'general interest', what effectively predominates in his system is private property. In effect, Hegel's system yields the conclusion that the possession of private property is the constitutive element of the human personality, the foundation of civil society, and the substance of the state.¹¹⁵ To Hegel's thesis: 'The state is the reality of the ethical Idea', Marx responds: 'The actuality of the ethical Idea is manifest here as the religion of private property'.¹¹⁶

Hegel's disguised apology for private property is particularly evident in his defence of primogeniture -- the substance (ethical root) of the state, grounded in nature (birth and inheritance), the organic institution of the agricultural-feudal class based on landed, inalienable property. Marx devotes some forty pages to primogeniture (the 'superlative of private property'), and thus to private property in general.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵Cf. ibid., p.99: 'at its highest point the political constitution is the constitution of private property'.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p.103.

¹¹⁷Cf. ibid., p.107: '....primogeniture is the abstraction of independent private property....Independence, autonomy, in the political state...is private property, which at its peak appears as inalienable landed property. Political independence thus flows not ex proprio sinu of the political state....Rather the members of the political state receive their independence

The mediative function of the feudal class, Marx points out, is reduced by Hegel to '[t]heir wealth [which] becomes inalienable, entailed, and burdened by primogeniture' -- the principle of its 'adaptation' to the 'total political state'.¹¹⁸ As the ethical basis of the family¹¹⁹ primogeniture is presented by Hegel as a 'chain on the freedom of private rights' and hence, as the 'power of the political state over private property'.¹²⁰ Subjecting Hegel's presentation to a transformatice critique, however, Marx demonstrates that Hegel actually makes cause the effect, and the effect the cause. This discloses not the power of the state over private property, but rather the power of abstract private property over the political state:

What then is the power of the political state over private property? Private property's own power, its essence brought to existence. What remains to the political state in opposition to this essence? The illusion that it determines when it is rather determined. 121

¹¹⁸Ibid., p.97. Also see ibid., p.106: in the independence of private property, in the form of entailed landed wealth, primogeniture is the 'preserving moment in the relation -- the substance'. To establish the principle of the agricultural class's adaptation to politics Hegel equates 'livelihood as possession of land' with 'a will which rests on itself alone', which Marx points out, are 'two quite different things' (ibid., p.95).

¹¹⁹In primogeniture Marx treats of private property in general, and, in effect, collapses the distinction between the two modes of possession characteristic of the agricultural and business sub-classes of civil society (cf. ibid., pp. 104-6).

¹²⁰Ibid., p.100.

¹²¹Ibid.

As the 'abstraction of independent private property' primogeniture is the 'political sense of private property, private property in its political significance, ie., in its universal significance'.¹¹⁸ The significance of this point can be grasped in the criticism that Marx levels against the dual derivation of primogeniture (independent private property): from (a) 'direct alienation' (in the sphere of state rights): and (b) 'the contract' (in the sphere of private rights).¹¹⁹ On the one hand, Marx argues:

in primogeniture landed property...becomes an inalienable good...which constitutes the very private personality and universal essence of self-consciousness of the class of noble entailed estates, its personality as such, its universal freedom of will, its ethical life, its religion. 120

It is, accordingly, consistent to say that 'where private property, landed property, is inalienable, universal freedom of will...and ethical life...are alienable'.¹²¹ This critical thought turns on the immediate connexion ('thus') of a compressed argument: 'In general, then, the inalienability (dependence) of universal freedom of will and ethical life'.¹²² The necessary conclusion: 'Here it is no longer the case that property is insofar as I put my will into it, but rather, my will is insofar as it is property. Here my will does not own but is owned'.¹²³ In other words: 'private property has become

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.109.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.102.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.101.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., Cf. Hegel(par.65): 'The reason I can alienate my property is that it is mine only insofar as I put my will into it...provided always that the thing in question is a thing external to nature'.

the subject of the will, and the will is merely the predicate of private property'.¹²⁴ Hegel presents the condition of this alienation (viz. the independence of private property) as the 'renunciation of willfulness' (cf. 'the unethical crude will') and as such, as the 'highest synthesis of the political state'.¹²⁵ In the light of this presentation Hegel praises the 'imaginary nobility of independent property as opposed to the uncertainty of business, the quest for profit...and dependence on the state's capital'.¹²⁶ In other words, Hegel presents a defence against bourgeois liberalism in favour of the feudal regime based on landed, inalienable property, the socio-economic basis (agricultural-feudal class) of the Prussian monarchy. This defence of the feudal regime, together with its presentation of independent property, is limited to the sphere of 'state rights', which is to say, it is cast at the level of the state. At the level of civil society, within the sphere of private rights, wherein primogeniture is derived not from direct alienation but from the Contract,¹²⁷ Hegel gives the independence of private property quite a different meaning viz. 'the alienability and dependence of private property

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid. p.102: 'Over against the crude stupidity of independent private property, the uncertainty of business is elegaic, the quest for profit solemn (dramatic), fluctuation in possessions a serious fatum (tragic), dependence on the state's capital ethical. In short, in all these qualities the human heart pules throughout the property, which is the dependence of man on man'.

Cf. ibid., p.104: 'What then is the quality which ostensibly specifies the owners of entailed estates (and thus) constitutes the ethical quality of an inalienable wealth? incorruptibility....In opposition to it (the feudal class) stands the business class, which is dependent on needs and concentrated on their satisfaction...'

¹²⁷Marx here uses primogeniture to refer to 'independent, abstract private property', but strictly speaking, Marx is wrong to use primogeniture in this context. In Hegel's own presentation, primogeniture involves the 'total alienation'

on a common will as its true idealism'.¹²⁸

Marx does not push this double meaning assigned to private property -- in the 'heaven of the political state' (state rights) and in the 'court of abstract right' (private rights) -- very far. He points out, however, that in the context of Hegel's whole procedure, and in relation to the opposition on which his system is based, it is 'absolutely unavoidable'. Its function: to reconcile the two sub-classes of civil society (feudal, bourgeois) by conceiving their respective forms of property (landed, commercial), and modes of possession (use, alienation) as reciprocal conditions (substantial basis, formal unity) of the state. The system of private property forms the rational basis of the state, and the framework for its self-development. By treating primogeniture as the determination of private property by the state it constitutes, Marx comments: 'private property which has become a religion for itself...absorbed in itself, enchanted with its autonomy and nobility'.¹²⁹ As such, as the ultimate

of all claims against the state. At the level of civil society, alienation is indirect, or rather, mediated (through the reciprocal satisfaction of material needs), but nevertheless, the Contract has as its condition, total alienation. The form of possession (property) is at this level not primogeniture, but commerce. Marx clearly does not grasp the significance of Hegel's transposition of Adam Smith's exposition of the labour-theory of value, and thus, of capital-formation.

¹²⁸Ibid.,, p.102. Cf. Hegel (par. 71): 'The sphere of contract is made up of this mediation whereby I hold property not merely means of a thing and my subjective will but by means of another person's will as well and so to hold it in virtue of my participation in a common will'.

¹²⁹Ibid., pp.101-02.

basis of both civil society and the state, primogeniture is the superlative expression of a condition in which the true relation between the real subject of the state and the world is inverted so as to convert man into the predicate of the subject, property (subordinating man to his class status).

The General conclusion: [private property, instead of being a force for unity is, on the contrary, a power which alienates man from his social essence.] On the one hand, it turns the state into an illusory realization of man's species-life, and on the other hand, it turns civil society into a riot of self-seeking, self-related individuals. As the source of alienation private property produces a separation between man as bourgeois, viz. the particularity of material needs, and man as citoyen, viz. the universality of his social existence. As bourgeois, man lives his earthly existence as an isolated individual, in hostile opposition within civil society, dominated by the particularity of his needs (egoism). As a citoyen, man lives his social essence or species-life in the ideal universality of the political state, but he does so by abstracting from the conditions of his real existence:

The socio-political body [Gemeinwesen], the communal being [Kommunistische Wesen] within which the individual exists, is [reduced to] civil society separated from the state, or in other words, the political state is an abstraction of civil society. 130

This opposition between bourgeois civil society and the state parallels the dualism produced by religion between a heavenly and earthly existence. Just as in religious domination man lives his true nature in an illusory, imaginary

- 130 Ibid., p.79. Cf., note by translator: 'Marx first wrote Kommune, then crossed it out and substituted Gemeinwesen. The latter term appears to have been chosen to avoid using Kommune twice in the same sentence, and more importantly because it seems to signify at once both the ...socio-political body, and the universal nature of man, the social or communal being. Rubel holds that Marx uses the express Kommunistische Wesen to signify man's social being'. Cf. Avineri, The Social and Political Thought, pp.34-5; Rubel, Essai, p.74.

form (in heaven) so does man as a citizen live an analogous life in the heaven of the state:

Just as Christians are equal in heaven and unequal on earth, the separate members of a people are equal in the heaven of their political world and unequal in the earthly existence of society. 131

True Democracy

In Hegel's schema, the state, as a sphere of ideality, emerges as the essence of social life, a sphere of materiality. By demonstrating that the universality of the state is but the 'religion of popular life', and that the only concrete is the 'people', Marx inverts this schema: the social life of man is the essence of the state.

In 1842 towards early 1843 Marx's central problem was: How to protect the universality of the state against the particularity of material interests that threaten to enslave it? With the inversion of the state-civil society schema, the problem posed is quite different: Why is the essence of man alienated in the abstract universality of the state? and How can this alienation be overcome?

As to the first question, the condition of an answer is already provided by Marx's critique of private property: the specific essence of civil society, governed by the principle of private property (particularity, egoism), and thus by the principle of atomistic individualism, separates man from his species-life, which is lived in an illusory fashion within the ideal universality ('heaven') of the political state.¹³²

¹³¹Ibid., p.80.

¹³²Marx criticises Hegel's attempt to view the state from a 'concrete' point of view when the object (ie., the state) is 'abstract'; cf. loc. cit., p.79: 'This point of view is undeniably abstract but it is the abstraction of the political state as Hegel himself develops it. The point of view cannot be concrete atomism of society itself. The point of view cannot be concrete when the object of the point of view is abstract. The atomism into which civil society is driven by its political act results necessarily from the fact

As to the second question, the condition of an answer is implicit in the inversion of the state-civil society schema, and the application of Feuerbach's concept of alienation: to constitute a genuine state it is not sufficient to transform the political form, but it is necessary to abolish the condition of its social content, namely private property.¹³³

Having demonstrated that in the political state adapted to civil society, there operates an alienation of the human essence determined by the base of that society, Marx necessarily concludes that the re-appropriation of the human essence requires the abolition of private property and the formation of a new state which responds fully to human nature: 'true democracy'. Hegel had insisted that the Idea of the state requires the concrete unity of form and content, universality and particularity. Using Feuerbach's concept of alienation, and criticising Hegel's dismissal of Rousseau's sovereignty of the people, Marx argues that these conditions are met with only in 'democracy', the 'true unity of the general and particular'.¹³⁴ To suppress the opposition between civil society

that the commonwealth (das Gemeinwesen), the communal being (das Kommunistische Wesen), within which the individual exists, is (reduced to civil society separated from the state, or in other words, that the political state is an abstraction of civil society'. What is clear is that Marx fully accepted Hegel's idealist schema in which only the whole is concrete, and the individual isolated from the whole is abstract. In accepting the idea of organic totality as against the idea of atomistic individualism, Marx relates more to Rousseau than to Hegel, however. In any case, Marx turns Hegel's principle of 'concrete unity' against his concept.

¹³³ This position, which brings Marx into relation with the solution proposed by Moses Hess and other communists, has significant 'political' implications which we will draw out in the following chapter.

¹³⁴ Marx, loc. cit., pp. 30--31.

and the state, and thereby overcome the alienation of the human essence (inhuman existence), it is necessary to replace them with a democratic state which re-unites within itself social and political life as a 'concrete' universal. In this concrete unity of the social and the political, man does not live his species-being or universal nature in an illusory form, in the abstracted condition of his real, material existence, but effectively, in his everyday, truly human, life (Gemeinschaft).¹³⁵ In 'true democracy', instead of being excluded from the state, the people constitute its essence. In effect, this concept of 'true democracy', as the realization of man's species-life, translates Marx's earlier concept of a 'rational state', the embodiment of the 'people's spirit'. This condition of this 'rational state' or 'true democracy': the sovereignty of the people, a condition not realized in a political reform of the state, but in the radical transformation of society. The form of this genuine state or truly human life, the embodiment of what Marx earlier called the 'people's spirit' and now calls 'species-life', is the 'republic', but only insofar as it no longer has a mere 'political' character.¹³⁶ The political state, conceived as a constitution distinct from the life of society, becomes superfluous, and has to be abolished as such.

¹³⁵ Marx's concept of 'democracy' has a very specific meaning deriving from Feuerbach's philosophic humanism: the abolition of the contradiction between the social and the political, the particular and the universal. As will be demonstrated below, Marx does not have in mind a bourgeois democratic republic like that in North America or that established by the French Revolution. Marx's position before such a political system is clear: just like the Prussian monarchy, the republican form of government are mere political forms of the same social content -- private property.

¹³⁶ Here Marx approaches the conclusion of 'French theory' (communism). Cf. loc.cit, p.31: 'The modern French have conceived it thus: In true democracy the political state disappears (der politische Staat untergehe). This is correct inasmuch as qua political state, qua constitution it is no longer equivalent to the whole.

Not yet having recognized the role of the class struggle and of the proletarian revolution in the revolutionary transformation of society and the state -- from monarchy to the republic -- Marx conceives of it within the framework of radical bourgeois democracy: direct, popular participation, not of all as individuals, but of individuals as all.¹³⁷ Its formal condition: self-government of the people through universal 'unrestricted suffrage'. 'The vote', Marx observes, 'is the actual relation of actual civil society to the ... legislature, to the representative element...the direct..existing and not simply imagined relation of civil society to the political state'.¹³⁸

¹³⁷Cf. loc. cit., p.117: 'In a really rational state one could answer 'Not every single person should share in deliberating and deciding on political matters of general concern', because the individuals share in deliberating and deciding on matters of general concern as the 'all', that is to say, within and as members of society. Not all individually, but the individuals as all'. Cf. Rousseau, Social Contract, Bk.II,3: 'There is often a considerable difference between the will of all and the general will. The latter is concerned only with the common interest, the former with interests that are partial, being itself the sum of individual wills'. In relation to Rousseau's construction of the problem of direct participation of all the people, Marx confronts Hegel's solution by criticising the very way he posed the problem ('either...the Man, the multitude...shares through deputities in deliberating and deciding on political matters of general concern, or all as individuals do this'). Marx re-poses this problem by recognizing two alternatives: (a) under the condition of the state's separation from civil society 'it is impossible that all as individuals participate in the legislature'; (b) under the condition of civil society as actual political society, 'the legislature is a representation in the same sence in which every function is representative, ie., in fulfillment of social need, as species-activity represents only the species' (loc.cit. p.119).

¹³⁸Ibid., p.121.

Thus it is that, consistent with Marx's procedure -- to find the conditions of the solution within the womb of present society -- Marx concludes: 'the reform of voting advances the dissolution (Auflösung) of the political state, but also the dissolution of civil society'.¹³⁹ The reform of voting is the dissolution of civil society in that unrestricted suffrage, the condition of democracy, allows civil society '(to) actually raise itself for the first time to an abstraction of itself, to political existence as its true universal and essential existence'.¹⁴⁰ By universalizing this abstraction (political existence) unrestricted voting overcomes the separation of the political state from civil society: 'Within the abstract political state the reform of voting advances the dissolution of the political state, but also the dissolution of civil society'.¹⁴¹

And thus, in this general conclusion, Marx completes his critique, whose point of departure was anthropological (Feuerbach), but whose point of arrival is political, close to Moses Hess. In this transition the Critique effects a decisive step towards a new politics (real humanism-communism) whose necessary conditions are formulated in an exchange of letters and two articles written for the Deutsche-französische Jahrbücher (Paris, 1844).

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. ibid.: 'In unrestricted voting, both active and passive, civil society has actually raised itself for the first time to an abstraction of itself, to political existence as its true universal and essential existence. But the full achievement of this abstraction is at once the Aufhebung of the abstraction ... Within the abstract political state the reform of voting advances the dissolution of this political state, but also the dissolution of civil society'.

¹⁴¹ Besides the obvious influence of Feuerbach and Rousseau, Marx's concept of democracy reflects his reading of both Spinoza's Tractatus Theologico Politicus and of Thomas Hamilton's exposition of Northamerican democracy; of Rubel, 'Notes on Marx's Conception of Democracy', New Politics, 1

(winter, 1962), pp. 80-5. The central concept that Marx derives from his readings on democracy, as a basis of his critique of Hegel's philosophy of state, is the distinction between 'formal' (ideal) and 'substantive' (material) democracy (Cf. loc.cit. pp. 123ff), a distinction which Marx finds useful even in his more mature, later formulations.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FORMULATION OF A NEW POLITICS: REAL HUMANISM

The general reproach leveled by the 'democratic' Hegelian Left, and by Arnold Ruge in particular, against communism was its 'apolitical', purely social character, a thesis derived from the Hegelian concept of the state as a sphere of ideality or universality vis-a-vis the materiality or particularity of civil society. In his 1843 Critique Marx inverts this schema by demonstrating that the ideal universality of the state is abstract and illusory, constituting the 'religion of popular life', the 'heaven of its universality against the earthly existence of its reality'; and that furthermore, 'only the people is concrete'. With this Feuerbachian 'de-mystification' of the political sphere, Marx no longer looks to the state as the 'truth' of social problems (misery, inequality, etc.), but to the conditions of social life. The solution requires not the reform of the state, but the radical transformation of society itself. As a result of this shift in focus Marx moves away from the political democracy of Arnold Ruge, and closer to a communism in the style of Moses Hess, whose principal leitmotif was precisely the primacy of the 'social' vis-a-vis the 'political', a thesis that Marx will defend in his Jahrbucher essays.

During 1842-early 1843 Marx's central problem was: How to protect the universality of the state against the particular interests which threatened to enslave it. With the inversion of the Hegelian state-civil society schema, and the appropriation of Feuerbach's anthropology, the problem

posed is quite different. The inversion of Hegel's schema, and the application of Feuerbach's concept of alienation, allowed Marx to demonstrate in each section of his Critique that the political state adapted to civil society produced the alienation of (a) political and social reality in the Idea; (b) the essence of man in the political constitution; and (c) human personality, the universal essence of man, freedom, in the system of private property. From Feuerbach's conclusion that the history of man is the history of alienated man, supported by his own studies, Marx derives the following propositions:

- (1) there is an essence (freedom, reason) pre-existing history (one does not lose what one does not have);
- (2) the life of man is made by man, although alienated man projects the essential qualities and powers of his species outside himself -- in property, religion, the state;
- (3) there is a contradiction between man's essence (reason) and his concrete, real existence (unreason), between man's 'head' and his 'heart';
- (4) there will be a re-appropriation of the human essence, or at least, the possibility and its theoretic-political necessity is recognised.

The problem that is posed within the framework of these propositions: How can man re-appropriate his essence? In terms of Feuerbach's philosophic problematic of theoretical humanism, this question establishes the condition for a new type of political action: the politics of the practical re-appropriation of the human essence.¹

The necessary conditions of this new politics are formulated by Marx in an exchange of letters with Ruge, and in two essays written expressly for the Deutsch-französische

¹Cf. Louis Althusser, For Marx, p. 226.

Jahrbücher: (a) On the Jewish Question, and; (b) A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right": Introduction.² According to Auguste Cornu the condition of this new politics is a shift in Marx's concept of the state, from (a) the state as the incarnation of collective life, the essence of civil society, to (b) the state as an illusory ideal, an abstract force in which individuals have alienated their human essence.³ According to Louis Althusser, who supports himself on Cornu's distinction, the condition of this new politics is that politics is no longer limited to (a) an appeal to the reason of the state, or (b) the enlightenment of reason through the free press.⁴ Although our own investigation supports the general conclusion shared by Cornu and Althusser, we have to take issue with the suggestion that the Critique marked a fundamental shift in Marx's concepts of the state and philosophic criticism. We will argue that the earlier term 'rational state' and the later term 'real democracy' express the same concept unified by the principle of Feuerbach's humanism. The relation between the concept of the state as the incarnation of collective life ('people's spirit'), and the concept of the state as an illusory ideal and alien force, does not represent a fundamental shift. In both cases, Marx expresses the contradiction between the essence or ideal form of the state and its existence or actual form.⁵ Furthermore, we will argue that Marx's earlier appeal to the reason of the state, and the enlightenment of reason through the free press, are

²The probable date of composition of both essays, September 1843-January 1844 (cf. WYMPS, pp. 203-64). The evidence suggests that Marx began both essays in Kreuznach, but finished both in Paris.

³Cornu, op.cit., pp. 439ff.

⁴Althusser, loc.cit.

⁵Althusser distinguishes between an earlier Kant-

consistent with each other, and with the newer politics of practical re-appropriation. What does change is the class-orientation of Marx's political action: from the liberal bourgeoisie to the proletariat. In regard to this political and ideological shift we agree substantially with both Cornu and Althusser, although in our opinion Cornu mis-represents Marx's first theoretical encounter with the proletariat. Our investigation strongly supports Althusser's contention that Marx's theoretical discovery of the proletariat is distorted by the ideological schema of Feuerbach's anthropology, which we relate to the general Left-Hegelian problematic within which it is cast. Our precisions of Marx's ideological shift towards the proletariat, and its corresponding theoretical shifts, expands Althusser's formulations and takes issue with what can be called the prevailing interpretation.

An Exchange of Letters: Marx and Ruge

The most striking feature of the correspondence between Ruge and Marx in 1843 is the contrast between the

Fichteian problematic (1840-42) and a later Feuerbachian one (1843-45). Although we agree substantially with Althusser's programmatic and theoretic distinctions, we do not see the necessity of this distinction within the humanist problematic (Kant-Fichteian, Feuerbachian). In the first place, Marx never did come as close to a Fichteian position as Bauer, Hess and others. In the second place, although it is true that Marx's humanism (1840-42) was close to Kant's rationalism (Enlightenment reason), but Marx, in our interpretation, approaches Kant precisely through Feuerbach. In any case, the revision of Hegel towards an enlightenment concept of reason, and the associated philosophy of man, took place even before Marx wrote his Doctoral dissertation. From the beginning, furthermore, this rationalist humanism, best expressed by Feuerbach, is not 'liberal', ie., 'individualist'. We also, needless to say, disagree with those interpreters like McLellan who deny any influence of Feuerbach over Marx before 1843.

profound pessimism of the one, and the revolutionary optimism of the other. In answer to Marx's first letter (March 1843), which speaks vaguely of the 'impending revolution', Ruge asks: 'Will we live long enough to see the political revolution? Us, the contemporaries of those Germans (liberals)'.⁶ The key word here is 'political', as it registers the distance between Marx and Ruge, and ultimately indicates the condition in relation to which they will split up in enmity. In effect, Ruge thinks in terms of a 'political' (democratic-bourgeois) revolution, and in observing the passivity and cowardice of the German bourgeoisie Ruge despairs of the very possibility of revolution: 'Oh! this German future! Where has its seed been sown?'⁷ Marx like Ruge does not believe in a revolution supported by the bourgeoisie, but contrary to Ruge thinks that philosophy can and must seek other allies: the 'seed of the future' has been sown not in bourgeois 'philistinism' but in the dispossessed and exploited, 'suffering mankind'.⁸ In the Critique which Marx elaborated over the following three months, Marx's orientation towards the 'suffering mankind' is reflected in one, but significant phrase: 'the dispossessed (Besitzlosigkeit) and the class in need of immediate labour, of concrete labour, forms less a class of civil society than the basis upon which the spheres of civil society rest and move'.⁹

⁶Quoted in Lowy, op.cit., p. 67.

⁷Ibid., p. 68.

⁸Cf. 'Letter to Ruge (May 1843); WYMPS, pp. 210-11: 'If I do not despair it is only the desperate situation of the present that fills me with hope. . . the enemies of Philistinism, in other words, all thinking and all suffering men, have arrived at an understanding for which formerly they lacked the means. . . . The existence of a suffering mankind that thinks and of a thinking mankind that is suppressed must necessarily become . . . indigestible for the passive animal kingdom of Philistinism . . .'.

⁹Critique, p. 81.

In relation to this dispossessed (property-less) class in need of immediate labour, the revolution of which Marx dreams is not purely 'political': its basis is located within 'the womb of the present', in a rupture provoked by the 'system of profits and commerce, of possession and the exploitation of men'.¹⁰ Marx's revolution seems to be 'political' in that Marx's letter speaks of a 'democratic state', and of 'the human world of democracy'. However, as we have seen, Marx understands by democracy not the simple transformation of 'political form', but rather the transformation of the very basis of society, the transformation of society into a 'community of men'.¹¹

The condition of this revolution is an alliance of the 'enemies of Philistinism' viz. 'suffering mankind (Leidenden Menschheit) that thinks and of a thinking mankind that is suppressed'.¹² The condition of this alliance leads us to an important observation: it is thought within the Left-Hegelian schema of a 'head', which is active, spiritual, idealist, political and free; and a 'heart', which is passive, sensible, materialist, social, suffering, and subject to need, and thus external necessity.¹³ In this schema, 'suffering mankind' appears as the passive side of the alliance, and 'thinking mankind' as its active side, which brings us back to the Left-Hegelian opposition of an active

¹⁰Cf. 'Letter to Ruge (May 1843); WYMPS, pp. 210-11.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 206-8. Cf. p. 206: 'Freedom, the feeling of man's dignity, will have to be awakened again. . . . Only this feeling . . . can again transform society into a community of men to achieve their highest purposes, a democratic state'; Cf. p. 207: 'The principle of monarchy in general is man despised . . . de-humanized'; Cf. p. 208: 'the human world of democracy'.

¹²Ibid., pp. 210-11.

¹³Cf. above Chapter Five, pp.198-99 ; Feuerbach, 'Theses'; FB, pp. 165-6.

spirit and a passive matter. The effectivity of this schema is evident, on the one hand, in the double sense of the German word Leiden, both 'passive' and 'suffering'; and on the other hand, in the broken form of the inverse-couple: suffering mankind that thinks/thinking mankind that is suppressed. Because of its passive character, 'suffering' cannot be associated with the intellect, which is essentially 'activity' (suppressed by the world of Philistinism).

The structure of this ideological schema (active head/passive heart), which Marx earlier associated with the free press¹⁴ and now with a political alliance of thinkers and sufferers, is formulated by Feuerbach in his 1843 Theses. In these Theses formulated a new philosophy on the condition of an alliance of German theory (idealism-philosophy of law) and French theory (materialism-socialism), a 'new philosophy of German-Franco blood' which translates on the philosophical level the theory of a contrast between the 'head' and 'heart' of philosophy.¹⁵

At the basis of this theory is the distinction between the feminine principle of receptivity and passivity (materialism) and the masculine principle of self-activity or thought (idealism). The 'heart' is passive because (a) the heart is a prisoner of 'passions' (Leidenschaft) and sufferings (Leiden), which are suffered in a passive (Leiden) manner; (b) the heart has needs, ie., it is dependent on a 'being' external to it; its essential object (that defines it) is 'the other'; 'thinking being', on the other hand, refers to itself; it is its own object, and has its essence in itself; (c) the heart is sensible, ie., receptive or contemplative, and is thus dominated by objects external to it;

¹⁴Cf. above, Chapter Four, p.161.

¹⁵Cf. above, Chapter Five, pp. 198-99 ; Feuerbach, 'Theses'; FB, pp. 165-6.

thought, on the other hand, dominates objects; (d) the heart is materialist, and the essential determination of matter is the 'determination of its passive being'.¹⁶

Within the framework of this theory the essential unity of an active head and a passive heart is reflected in the concept of 'man'. In this concept, man becomes conscious of himself as a species-being, and in effect, emerges as the totality of the subject-object relation, the identical subject-object of history.¹⁷ The condition of this totality is the essential unity of man's (ideal) essence and (material) existence, ie., a human existence. The separation of man's 'head' from his 'heart' (the contradiction between essence and existence) constitutes the fundamental problematic of philosophy: the alienation of man from his essence, ie., an inhuman existence.

It is evident that this conception of a passive heart and an active head with which Marx thinks the alliance of a thinking and a suffering mankind constitutes an ideological schema which distorts, and in fact, inverts the real situation: it is the active rebellion of the working masses which

¹⁶Cf. Feuerbach, 'Theses'; FB, p. 104.

¹⁷Cf. above, Chapter Five, pp. 193-202. This concept of man is the reference-point for the unity underlying Marx's earlier concepts 'what is humanly rational' (Debates on Freedom), 'structures of human rationality' (Philosophic Manifesto of the Historical School of Law), 'reason in society', 'state-reason', 'truth is universal', the 'spirit of the people' manifest in the free press, which has a 'political mind' and a 'civic heart', 'criticism from a standpoint that is deliberately universal, the standpoint of philosophy of law' (On a Proposed Divorce Law), philosophy as the 'spiritual quintessence' of its time (Leading Article in No. 179 of the KZ), etc. Cf. Chapter Two: Throughout his year as journalist and editor for the Rheinische Zeitung Marx's rationalist humanism based on Feuerbach's concept of man is unmistakable. This philosophy of man is the basis for his unifying concepts: 'rational state' and 'real democracy'.

is suppressed, and it is the 'moral suffering' of discontented intellectuals which is passive. Nevertheless, even though Marx shares this Left-Hegelian illusion (whose social origin is in the particular situation of Germany: a Left-Hegelian confrontation with the state; a lack of a mass movement) he moves beyond the political position of Ruge, Feuerbach and the majority of Left-Hegelians, by attributing to the 'suffering' masses a necessary role in bringing about a new world:

The more time the events allow for thinking men to reflect and for suffering men to rally, the better will be the product to be born which the present carries in its womb.¹⁸

The significance of Marx's last letter to Ruge (September 1843) lies in its conception of philosophy, particularly as it relates to communism, which he will adopt some months later. The letter shows Marx to be, first of all, disoriented:

Even though there is no doubt about the 'whence' there does prevail all the more confusion about the 'whither' . . . each (reformer) will have to admit to himself that he has no exact idea of what is to happen.¹⁹

The focus of this ideological disorientation relates to the vague and ambiguous concepts of 'suffering mankind' and 'true democracy', which reflect the fact that Marx has not yet discovered the proletariat, and that he still maintains a critical attitude towards communism. The criticism which Marx levels against communism falls into two categories: on the one hand, a series of reservations, which he will abandon the following year; on the other hand, a general criticism of utopian socialism, which will always remain a hallmark of Marx's position.

¹⁸Cf. 'Letter to Ruge' (September 1843);
WYMPS, p. 211.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 212.

The basis of his reservations are the following criticisms reflecting Marx's interpretation of Feuerbach's principle of humanism: (a) socialism is 'one-sided' in that it considers only the materialist (passive) side of human life, and neglects its spiritual (active) side:

And the entire socialistic principle . . . is only one side of the reality of true human nature. We have to be concerned just as much with the other side, the theoretical life of man. Hence, we have to make religion, science, etc., the object of our criticism.²⁰

This criticism clearly relates to Feuerbach's theory of the 'head' and 'heart' of philosophy (man as the unity of the ideal and the material), and, in fact, goes all the way back to Marx's doctoral dissertation viz. the critique of Democritus.²¹ (b) With specific reference to 'actually existing communism as Cabet, Dezamy, Weitling, etc., teach it' communism is a 'dogmatic abstraction'.²² 'This communism', Marx continues, 'is itself only a separate phenomenon of the humanistic principle, infected by its opposite, private property'.²³ As a result, the 'dissolution of private prop-

²⁰Ibid., p. 213.

²¹Cf. above, Chapter Three. The crux of this critique was that Democritus had failed to 'objectify' the contradiction between essence and existence, confused the atom's 'spiritual essence' with its 'material existence', and considered only the 'material side' of repulsion (negativity), whereas Epicurus gave expression to its 'spiritual' (ideal) side. We relate (cf. Chapter Two, pp. 36-7) the problematic of this critique to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, and demonstrate later (Chapter Three) that Marx indirectly returns to Kant's critical philosophy through Feuerbach viz. the theory of man's 'head' and 'heart'.

²²Loc.cit., p. 212.

²³Ibid. Translators render 'Privatwesen' (private essence) as 'private property' in context of following remarks.

erty . . . is in no way identical with communism'.²⁴ Communism is 'only a special, one-sided realisation of the socialistic principle (which) . . . in turn is only one side of the reality of true human nature'.²⁵

In his criticism of 'abstract' and 'dogmatic' socialism Marx calls for action and criticism which can realise the 'demands of reason' in the modern state 'not yet conscious of socialistic demands'. These demands are presented by a 'community of men' inspired by 'freedom, the feeling of man's dignity', and realised in a truly human, fully democratic, state.²⁶

Marx's criticism levelled against utopian socialism is of even greater interest in that it directly links Marx to Hegel's realism viz. the dialectic of history, and will constitute a central tenet of mature Marxist socialism.

Consistent with Hegel's principle (which Marx confronted in his very first encounter with Hegel and from which he never departs) Marx rejects the utopian tendency to confront the reality of 'things as they really are' with an arbitrary construction of an ideal future or a ready-made system (eg. Voyage en Icarie). Contrary to the tendency of utopian socialism to confront the real world with its ideal ought-to-be, Marx rejects the implicit 'moralistic' standpoint and seeks as it were, the Idea in reality, to grasp the rationality of the real itself:

Construction of the future and its completion for all times is not our task. What we have to accomplish at this time is all the more clear; relentless criticism of all existing conditions . . . we do not face the world in doctrinaire

²⁴Ibid., p. 213.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Cf. Marx's Letter to Ruge in May; WYMPS, p. 206.

fashion with a new principle, declaring, "Here is truth, kneel here!" We develop new principles for the world out of the principles of the world.²⁷

On the basis of this realistic standpoint, Marx constructs an 'ideological platform' for a 'new orientation' proposed for the Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher:

We do not tell the world, "Cease your struggles, they are stupid; we want to give you the true watchword of the struggle." We merely show the world why it actually struggles, and the awareness of this is something the world must acquire even if it does not want to.²⁸

The aim of the new journal, says Marx, can be summed up in the following formula:

A self-understanding (critical philosophy) of the age concerning its struggles and wishes. This is a task for the world (suffering mankind) and for us (thinking mankind). It can only be a task of united forces.²⁹

This conception of philosophic criticism as 'self-understanding of the age' is entirely consistent with, and in fact, illuminates the conception given more than a year before in his articles on the freedom of the press, and for that matter, that of the doctoral dissertation.³⁰ The 'self-understanding of the age' (a task of united forces), Marx observes, 'is a confession. To have its sins forgiven mankind only has to declare (erklären) them for what they are'.³¹

²⁷Cf. 'Letter to Ruge' (September 1843); WYMPS, p. 214.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p. 215. Revised, according to Oeuvres philosophiques, ed. Costes, Paris, 1948, vol. v, pp. 210-11. Easton and Guddat's translation elliptical, too compressed.

³⁰Compare the note 'Philosophy after its completion' to the doctoral dissertation (WYMPS, pp. 6-62), 'Debates on Freedom of the Press' (esp. On Freedom, Padover, p. 31), 'Leading Article in No. 179 of the KZ' (WYMPS, pp. 122-3), 'Suppression of LAZ' (On Freedom, p. 54); Cf. above, Chapter One, pp. 19-24; Chapter Two, pp. 52-56.

³¹Cf. 'Letter to Ruge' (September 1843); WYMPS, p. 215.

In terms of this 'confession' the task for us (philosophic critics) is 'reform of (public) consciousness' which is to 'make the world aware of its own consciousness . . . (to) awaken the world out of its own dream . . . to explain to the world its own acts'.³² In order to awaken the world from its dream, Marx observes that one should adopt the slogan:

Reform of consciousness, not through dogmas, but through analysis of the mystical consciousness that is unclear about itself, whether in religion or politics.³³

'The critic', Marx adds, 'can start with any form of theoretical and practical consciousness (of religious or political problems) and develop the true actuality out of the forms inherent in existing actuality as its ought to be and goal'.³⁴ To disclose the 'true actuality' within 'existing actuality', so as to awaken the world from its dream, is to bring 'religious and political problems into the self-conscious human form', ie., to resolve the contradictions of real life to their universal form or human meaning: the alienation of man from his essence (freedom, reason).

In the light of this truth inherent in existing actuality as its ought to be and goal, Marx reflects: 'The world has long dreamed of something (freedom and reason) of which it only has to become conscious in order to possess it in actuality'.³⁵ The condition of this practical re-appropriation of man's essence (human emancipation): 'for thinking men to reflect, and for suffering men to rally'.³⁶ For its

³²Ibid., p. 214.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 213.

³⁵Ibid., p. 214.

³⁶Cf. 'Letter to Ruge' (May 1843); WYMPS, p. 211; 'It is up to us to expose the old world to full daylight and

part, the task for 'thinking men' (the active 'head' or critic) is: the 'reform of (public consciousness)'; to disclose reason in its rational (most universal) form, so as to awaken among Germans 'freedom, the feeling of man's dignity'.³⁷ For its part, the task for the 'world' (the passive 'heart') is 'confession': 'to have its sins forgiven, mankind only has to declare them for what they are'.³⁸

Marx's exchange of letters with Ruge suggests the following general observation: the conception of Critique is entirely consistent with earlier formulations in Marx's doctoral dissertation and in his various Rheinische Zeitung articles. In other words, it is thought in relation to the Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis governed by the problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, and thus by an Enlightenment-Kantian concept of reason. As far as Marx's thought goes, the general condition of this philosophic critique is already formulated in the doctoral dissertation: for philosophy to become practical it turns against the 'apparent' (ir-rational) world as 'active' criticism. Its premise: the objectivity of the contradiction between man's 'material existence' (un-reason) and his 'spiritual essence' (reason). A further condition is formulated in various forms in the

to shape the new along positive lines. The more time events allow for thinking men to reflect and for suffering men to rally, the better will be the product to be born which the present carries in its womb'.

³⁷Cf. 'Letter to Ruge' (September); WYMPS, p. 213; 'Reason has always existed, but not always in rational form (with reference to the contradiction between a state's 'ideal character' and its 'real pre-suppositions').

Cf. 'Letter to Ruge' (May); WYMPS, p. 206: 'Freedom, the feeling of man's dignity, will have to be awakened again . . . Only this feeling, which disappeared from the world with the Greeks, and with Christianity vanished into . . . heaven, can again transform society into a community of men to achieve their highest purposes, a democratic state'.

³⁸Cf. 'Letter to Ruge' (September); WYMPS, p. 215.

Rheinische Zeitung, and echoed in his correspondence with Ruge: the 'reason' against which philosophy criticises the world is inherent in existing actuality as a 'rose' withing the 'cross' of the present. It is not grasped as an imagined ideal, a utopian ready-made system nor a 'dogmatic' or abstract' principle. It is grasped by resolving the contradictions of an existing actuality ('the sins of humanity'), given in either theoretical or practical forms of consciousness (ie., as religious or political problems), into their universal form or human meaning: the alienation of man from his essence. This concept of alienation derives its meaning and has its theoretic function within the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, whose condition is Kant's concept of 'man' as the basis and subject of reason; of 'man' as simultaneously a phenomenal being, and thus subject to material needs or external necessity (as a passive 'heart'), and as a noumenal being, and thus free (as an active 'head'). Within this philosophic problematic, the condition of alienation defines an ir-rational state/inhuman existence, and establishes the basis for a new politics: the practical (political) re-appropriation of the human essence.

On the Jewish Question

While still in Kreuznach, and on the basis of his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Marx formulates a project for political action: its object -- the re-appropriation of the human essence (human emancipation); its method -- the reform of public consciousness (active criticism); its medium -- the Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher. In relation to this project Marx produces two articles, 'On the Jewish Question' and 'Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction', in which he thinks through the necessary conditions of human emancipation. These two articles, begun in Kreuznach (around September 1843) and finished in Paris (in January 1844) document a crucial transition in

Marx's thought: from a disillusionment with the liberal bourgeoisie to a discovery of the proletariat; from democratic radicalism to communism.

Within this ideological and theoretical itinerary On the Jewish Question expounds the condition which makes a radical transformation of bourgeois society and the political state (viz. the abolition of private property) necessary. The terms of reference for this condition (human emancipation) clearly reflect the influence of Rousseau, Feuerbach and Moses Hess; and in relation to Rousseau's politics and Feuerbach's humanism 'On the Jewish Question' records Marx's shift towards communism in a form similar to that expounded by Moses Hess.

It is possible to distinguish within 'On the Jewish Question' the part composed in Kreuznach and that in Paris. In the first part, the themes are those of the 1843 Critique: the illusory sovereignty of the citizen in the state; the religious alienation of political life; defence of democracy, etc. Then we have a shift towards new and different problems, whose origin one can reasonably assume relate to an article, 'The Essence of Money' sent by Moses Hess to the editor (but unpublished). Its themes: a critique of alienation in money; the 'egoism of the Rights of Man', etc.³⁹

In the form of a polemic against B. Bauer, 'On the Jewish Question' is essentially a radical critique of modern (ie., bourgeois) civil society as a whole -- in its philosophic pre-suppositions, political structures and economic foundation: (a) a critique of the religious-philosophic ideology of bourgeois liberalism viz. the Rights of Man as the rights of the bourgeois individual in civil society wherein the only bond between men is that of private interest;

³⁹Cf. Cornu (op.cit., pp. 479-82) who establishes the intellectual relation and parallel construction of Hess and Marx's articles.

(b) a critique of purely political emancipation which merely converts political life into an instrument at the service of civil-bourgeois life, and that constitutes the political state as the illusory, alienated life of bourgeois man, a critique of bourgeois society itself as a sphere of egoistic particularity, as a state of universal war of all against all, which breaks all species-bonds between men, and converts society into a world of isolated individuals; (d) a critique of the economic foundations of bourgeois-civil society and the political state: money (the essence of man separated from man and worshipped as an alien, superior force), private property, and commerce.⁴⁰

The Problem Posed

Marx, first of all, criticises Bauer for attaching to the Jewish Question a 'universal significance independent of specific German conditions', ie., for a speculative construction of the problem.⁴¹ Consistent with the realistic standpoint of the critical method, Marx re-poses Bauer's problem by raising the critical question of its 'underlying conditions'.⁴² In this question Marx resolves the 'theological question' (cf. 'the contradiction between the state and religion') into a 'secular question' (cf. 'the contradiction between the state and its presuppositions'). In this 'secularisation' of the problem: 'the question of the relation of political emancipation to religion becomes . . . a question of the relation of political emancipation to human emancipation'.⁴³ This is to say, the opposition

⁴⁰As always, our exposition of Marx's article is supported by Cornu's superb biographical study, cf. Cornu, op.cit., pp. 426-38.

⁴¹Cf. WYMPS, pp. 218-19.

⁴²Ibid., p. 221.

⁴³Ibid., p. 223.

between religion and the state resolves into an opposition between the state and society, and accordingly, expresses the 'separation of man from his community, from himself and from other men'.⁴⁴ In effect, Marx transposes a 'particular' form of an actual contradiction into its universal form or 'underlying condition': the alienation of man from his essence.⁴⁵

In terms of this 'underlying condition' (alienation) Marx re-focuses the major theme of his 1843 Critique: the dualism of civil society, as a material sphere of particular, unsocial interests (egoism), and the state, as an ideal sphere of general interests (universality).⁴⁶ With reference to the

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 227: 'Man emancipates himself politically from religion by banishing it from the sphere of public law into private right. It (religion) is no longer the spirit of the state where man . . . associates in community with other men as a species-being. It has become the spirit of civil society, of the sphere of egoism, of the bellum omnium contra omnes. It is no longer the essence of community but the essence of division. It has become what it was original-ly, an expression of the separation of man from his community, from himself and from other men'. The problematic of this original separation (alienation of man from his community) brings Marx's thought into direct relation with Rousseau's construction of the problem, as will be discussed below. The theme of 'secularisation' of the religious problem into its underlying 'human' problem can be traced all the way back from Marx's notes to the doctoral dissertation, and underlies his criticism of Die Freien (Cf. Letter to Ruge, November 30, 1842): 'I demanded (of the Freien) that religion be criticised in the critique of political conditions rather than political conditions in religion . . . since religion, in itself empty, lives not from heaven but from earth, and with the dissolution of the reverse reality, whose theory it is, collapses of itself'. This represents a persistent leitmotif in Marx's writings from his doctoral dissertation onwards, and, in effect, 'On the Jewish Question' settles this question beyond dispute, allowing Marx to pass on to other more 'profane' forms of alienation.

⁴⁵Cf. our discussion, above Chapter Two, pp. 56-57.

⁴⁶The terms of reference of Marx's concept of 'civil society' are provided by both Hegel and Rousseau. In the con-

liberal-democratic constitution produced by the French Revolution, Marx speaks of:

The difference between the religious man and the citizen (as) the difference between the shopkeeper and the citizen, between the day-labourer and the citizen, between the landowner and the citizen, between the living individual and the citizen. The contradiction between the religious and political man is the same as that between bourgeois and citoyen, between the member of civil society, and his political lion skin.⁴⁷

Thus does Marx, supported by Feuerbach's concept of alienation, go back to the original problematic diagnosed by Rousseau: man is two things in a single person, belonging on the one hand to himself, and on the other, to the 'civil order', a man of individual and unsocial interests -- as bourgeois -- and at the same time a member of a political community, a citoyen. Within this problematic, the state, as the product of an alienation of the human essence, rises as a 'heavenly' sphere (religion) of spiritual life opposed to individuals in their 'earthly' existence, the 'reality' of

struction of his concept 'civil society' as a 'sphere of egoism', as a state of universal war of all against all, Marx refers to the 'secular contradiction' between 'general and private interest . . . between the political state and civil society' (loc.cit., p. 226). The effect of this contradiction is to split man into a 'bourgeois' and a 'citoyen'. As to the latter, Marx refers explicitly to Rousseau (loc.cit., p. 241). With reference to Bauer's exposition of 'civil society' Marx notes that it 'it closely follows the main features of Hegel's philosophy of law' (loc.cit., pp. 226-27). Cf. our exposition of Rousseau and Hegel's construction of the problem of 'civil society' (Part 1.B).

⁴⁷WYMPS, p. 226. Cf. Rousseau, Emile: 'He who wishes to keep the first place in the civil order for the feelings of nature, does not know what he wants. Forever in contradiction with himself, forever veering between his inclination and his duty, he can never be either man or citizen. He is no good to himself or to others. He will be a man of our time: a Frenchman, an Englishman, a bourgeois. He will be nothing'. (Cited by L. Colletti, From Rousseau to Lenin, p. 172.)

their material life. Supported by Rousseau's analysis of the relation Christianity-state, Marx continues:

Man leads a double life, a heavenly and an earthly life, not only in thought or consciousness but in actuality. In the political community he regards himself as a communal being, but in civil society he is active as a private individual, treats other men as means, reduces himself to a means and becomes the plaything of alien powers.⁴⁸

On the one hand, as a 'profane being' of civil society, man exists as an isolated, self-centred individual opposed to others as means to his own ends, and lives a life in contradiction to his true nature. On the other hand, man lives in conformity with his essential nature in the state, but he does so as an 'imaginary member of an imagined sovereignty, divested of his actual individual life and endowed with an unactual (illusory) universality.'⁴⁹

This diagnosis allows Marx to resolve the religious problematic (cf. 'the contradiction between the state and religion') into its secular basis (cf. 'the contradiction between the state and its presuppositions'): the religious problematic of the state emerges as the phenomenal form of an internal contradiction (underlying condition') which separates man into a bourgeois and a citoyen, making him on the one hand, a member of an imaginary, un-real community, and, on the other hand, an egoistic, unsociable individual of the earthly world. Resolved into its secular

⁴⁸WYMPS, p. 226.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 225-26: 'By its nature the perfected political state is man's species-life in opposition to his material life. All the presuppositions of this egoistic life remain in civil society outside the state, but as qualities of civil societies. . . . The political state is as spiritual in relation to civil society as heaven is in relation to earth!'

basis, religion yields the following conclusion:

The members of the political state are religious by virtue of the dualism between individual life and species-life, between the life of civil society and political life. They are religious inasmuch as man regards as his true life the political life remote from his actual individuality, inasmuch as religion is here the spirit of civil society expressing the separation and withdrawal of man from man.⁵⁰

In a remarkable echo of Rousseau's diagnosis of the religious problematic, Marx notes that:

Political democracy is Christian in that it regards man -- not merely one but every man -- as sovereign and supreme. But this means man in his uncivilised and unsocial aspect, in his fortuitous existence, and just as he is, corrupted by the entire organisation of our society, lost and alienated from himself, oppressed by inhuman relations and elements -- in a word, man who is not yet an actual species-being (ie., a truly social being).⁵¹

By concluding that the state has a 'religious character' ('The political state is as spiritual in relation to civil society as heaven is in relation to earth') it becomes clear that 'political' emancipation is not true, human eman-

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 231.

⁵¹Ibid. Cf. Rousseau's argument about 'civil religion' in the Geneva Manuscript and the Social Contract (Bk.V, viii) reviewed by Colletti (loc.cit., pp. 175-80). On the basis of K. Lowith's analysis of the problematic of bourgeois man, Colletti establishes the link between the religious problematic and the division of modern man into bourgeois and citoyen as the critical contribution of Rousseau to Marx's thought. And Colletti's point is beyond dispute. Although Colletti is indubitably correct in pointing to the 'Jewish Question' as the most mature and developed form of this aspect of Rousseau's thought in Marx, the basis of Marx's analysis of the religious problematic of bourgeois society is well established in the 1843 Critique, as is attested to not only by our general exposition above, but especially in his discussion on the relation between Democracy and Christianity (O'Malley, p. 30), his analysis of the 'Estates' ('in the modern sense, namely the actualisation of state citizenship, or of the bourgeois') as the 'priests' of society (O'Malley, pp. 87-91).

cipation: 'Political emancipation is . . . not . . . the final form of universal human emancipation, but it is the final form within the prevailing order of things'.⁵² In order to distinguish 'human' emancipation from mere 'political' emancipation, Marx turns his attention to the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen proclaimed by the French Revolution -- the movement which realised the greatest possible political emancipation within the prevailing order.

Problem One: Christianity: The Religion of Political Life -- The Alienation of State-Power

As the political form of the Christian idea that all men, as creatures of God, are born equal, the French Constitution, based on equal rights to liberty, security and property, expresses the religious character of the state viz. the duality of its ideal universality and its real presuppositions. In the first place, Marx points out, the individual right to 'liberty', and its practical application, 'the right of private property', are both based on the 'right of self-interest' which lets every man find in other men not the realisation but rather the limitation of his own freedom. In the second place, 'equality', as the equal right to 'liberty' in the above sense (of the individual 'equally viewed as a self-sufficient monad') authorises the right to 'security' -- 'the concept that the whole society exists only to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights and his property'.⁵³ As the 'guarantee of egoism' this concept of 'security', Marx comments, is the 'supreme social concept of civil society'.⁵⁴ The necessary

⁵²Ibid., pp. 225, 227.

⁵³Loc.cit., p. 236.

⁵⁴Ibid. With reference to Hegel's treatment of the state as 'external necessity'. Both Rousseau and Hegel, of course, criticised this liberal-individualist concept of the

conclusion:

None of the so-called rights of men goes beyond the egoistic man, the man who, in bourgeois society, is separated from the community and withdrawn into himself, his private interest . . . and separated from the community as a member of civil society. Far from viewing man in his species-life itself -- society -- rather appears to be an external framework for the individual, limiting his original independence. The only bond between men is natural necessity, need and natural necessity, the maintenance of their property and egoistic persons.⁵⁵

Thus does Marx argue that the so-called 'Rights of Man' as distinguished from the Right of the Citizen are only the rights of bourgeois man. By conceiving of political life as the guarantee of the rights of man, citizenship, the political community, is reduced, in effect, to a mere means for preserving these so-called rights, and the state is made to contradict its own concept as a political community or citizenship: 'This man, the member of civil society, is now the (natural) basis and (real) presupposition of the political state'.⁵⁶ In relation to this effective presupposition of the state, the citizen is reduced to an abstraction, an 'allegorical, moral person':

Finally, man as a member of civil society is regarded as authentic man . . . while political man is only the abstract and artificial man, man as an allegorical, moral person. Actual man is recognised only in the form of an

state as 'external necessity', but because of his manner of treatment Hegel more or less sanctioned it at the level of Understanding, ie., at the level of civil society, while claiming that at the level of Idea (reason) this apparent external necessity betrays an inner necessity, which reconciles us to the state in its actual form.

⁵⁵WYMPS, pp. 236-37.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 240.

egoistic individual, authentic man, only in the form of abstract citizen.⁵⁷

Problem Two: Judaism: The Religion of Civil Life -- The Alienation in Money

The reduction of man to a member of civil society, to an egoistic, unsociable individual on the one hand, and an abstract, moral person on the other hand, is the 'secular' condition of the religious problematic which governs both the state (Christianity) and civil society (Judaism), and thus underlies the question of political versus human emancipation. The religious problematic of bourgeois society and state is defined on the one hand by Christianity as the religion of political life, and on the other hand, by Judaism as the religion of civil life.⁵⁸ Both the theoretical (Christian) and practical (Jewish) forms of religious consciousness are particular forms of the same underlying condition: the alienation of man's social being in state-power (Christianity) and in money (Judaism). Both Christianity and Judaism, as forms of alienation, have the same secular basis: the system of private property based on 'practical need, self-interest'.⁵⁹ Judaism (the 'commercial spirit'), as the practical-religious form of the principle of civil society (self-interest), and thus, as a mystified form of the human essence, reaches its height with the perfection of civil society which takes place only in

⁵⁷Ibid. 'The abstraction of the political man', Marx comments, 'was correctly depicted by Rousseau'. Marx explicitly refers to the Social Contract, Bk. 11 (London, 1782), p. 67. Cf. WYMPS, p. 241.

⁵⁸Cf. WYMPS, p. 247: The Christian, Marx comments, is a 'theoretical Jew' while the Jew is a 'practical Christian'. Cf. 'political emancipation', WYMPS, pp. 238-41; cf. money and Judaism, Ibid., pp. 241-48.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 243.

the Christian World:

Only under the reign of Christianity, which makes all rational, natural, moral and theoretical relationships external to man, was civil society able to separate itself completely from political life, sever all man's species' bonds, substitute egoism and selfish needs for those bonds, and dissolve the human world into a world of atomistic, mutually hostile individuals.⁶⁰

Thus does Marx reconstruct Rousseau's problematic of Christian-bourgeois society.⁶¹ At this point, with the shift of focus away from the political state and towards civil society, Marx takes up the problem of alienation in a different way, incorporating a general argument advanced by Moses Hess in a recent article.⁶² As the essence of bourgeois-civil society, the 'commercial spirit' (Judaism) acquires a universal character through 'money', the God of practical necessity and egoism, and as such the 'supreme practical expression of human self-alienation':

Practical need, egoism, is the principle of civil society . . . the God of practical need is money. . . . Money is the general, self-sufficient value of everything. Hence it has robbed the whole world, the human world as well as nature, of its proper worth. Money is the alienated essence of man's labour and life and this alien essence dominates him as he worships it.⁶³

Marx elaborates:

Selling (Veräußerung) is the practice of alienation

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 247.

⁶¹Cf. the construction of this problematic see our Part 1 (B) which traces the leitmotif of a 'Christian-bourgeois World' in both Rousseau and Hegel.

⁶²Cf. Cornu, op.cit., pp. 440ff. for parallel construction of Marx's article with Hess's article, 'On the Essence of Money'.

⁶³WYMPS, pp. 245-46.

(Entäusserung).⁶⁴ As long as man is captivated in religion, knows his nature only as objectified, and thereby converts his nature into an alien illusory being, so under the domination of egoistic need he can only act practically, only practically produce objects, by subordinating both his products and his activity to the domination of an alien being, bestowing upon them the significance of an alien entity -- of money.⁶⁵

The Condition of a Solution: Human Emancipation

With man split into a bourgeois and citoyen, his essence doubly alienated in the abstract universality of political life (state-power) and civil life (money), the problem faced by a suffering and thinking mankind is that of 'human emancipation': 'the restoration of the human world and the relationships of men themselves.'⁶⁶ If man is to be restored to his true nature alienated in the form of Gods (religious), power (political), and money (civil), emancipation must not merely be 'partial' or 'political' (radical-liberal reform of the state) but 'total' or 'human': the radical suppression of the 'secular' basis of political and civil alienation. On the one hand, emancipation needs to be 'political': the recognition and organisation of his own powers as social powers so that social

⁶⁴Bottomore translates 'Veräusserung' as 'objectification' and Easton and Guddat as 'externalisation'. But as Mészáros makes clear, Marx's meaning in this context is better rendered by 'selling' (cf. Mészáros, Marx's Theory of Alienation, p. 315). Even so, however, the 'Contract Theory' of society which Marx encountered both in Hegel's PR and Rousseau's SC, . . . relates the three senses of the word through the concept 'renunciation' . . . Cf. the conceptual relation between 'Entäusserung', 'Veräusserung' and 'Entfremdung'. See Chapter Seven, pp. 326-28. The connection between 'Veräusserung' (renunciation) and its effect, 'Entäusserung' (externalisation) is here already made with 'Entfremdung' (estrangement), but at this point directly relates to Hegel's argument in the Philosophy of Right.

⁶⁵WYMPS, p. 248.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 241.

force is no longer separated from him as political power.⁶⁷ On the other hand, emancipation needs to be 'social': 'the emancipation of society from Judaism'.⁶⁸ 'Total', universal or human emancipation is the only means of resolving the inner contradiction (cf. the universal condition of alienation underlying all secular and religious problems) of bourgeois-civil society; it is the only possible resolution (Aufhebung) of the conflict between the individual and species existence of man.⁶⁹

3

A Contribution to the Critique of
Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction

The critique of political emancipation in On the Jewish Question develops conclusions derived from Marx's systematic critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State: that the phenomena of alienation analysed by Feuerbach at the religious level, by Rousseau at the political level, and Moses Hess at the social level, are engendered by private property, the source of egoism which opposes the individual to the community and bourgeois society to the political state. With reference to this underlying condition of alienation On the Jewish Question expounds the reasons which make a radical transformation of bourgeois society and its political state necessary, and establishes

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 248. NB. the concluding sentence of On the Jewish Question: 'The social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from Judaism'.

⁶⁹In this concept of 'human existence' which governs Marx's solution, Marx brings a common focus to Rousseau's concept of 'relations of unity' (as opposed to 'relations of division') or 'community', Hegel's concept of 'universality', and Feuerbach's concepts of 'species-life', of man as a 'communal being' (Gemeinwesen).

the theoretical condition for human emancipation (the re-appropriation of the human essence): the concrete universality of a human community, of man conceived in his generality as a communal being.

This solution suffers from an absence: it establishes only the theoretical condition of why a radical transformation of bourgeois society is necessary, and not the practical condition of how this human emancipation is to be effected. The problem: to move from the theoretic necessity of human emancipation to the practical conditions of its realisation; how to actualise the 'demands of (human) reason (in society)? Thus it is that Marx confronts the problematical relation of theory to practice, and he does so in a revised 'Introduction' to his earlier Critique, on the basis of conclusions drawn from On the Jewish Question. In the context of the Left-Hegelian problematic (of criticism become practical) from which Marx has by no means escaped, and which the Introduction gives a more precise formulation, the problematic of this relation takes the form of a critical thought in search of a concrete, material basis, a 'head' in search of a 'body'. This search, it will be argued, determines the structure of Marx's well-known essay, the 1843-44 Introduction.

In setting up his 'Introduction' Marx transposes Feuerbach's critique of religion ('the premise of all criticism') to the social level by arguing that for man to re-appropriate his alienated essence, it is not enough to destroy the illusionary reality of religion, but it is necessary to abolish the social conditions which support and produce these illusions:

For Germany the criticism of religion has been essentially completed . . . Man, who has found only the reflection of himself in the fantastic reality of heaven . . . will no

longer be inclined to find the semblance of himself, only the non-human being, where he seeks and must seek his true reality. The basis of ir-religious criticism is: Man makes religion, religion does not make man. . . . But man is not an abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man, the state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an inverted consciousness of the world because they are an inverted world. Religion . . . is the fantastic realisation of the human essence inasmuch as the human essence possesses no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion. . . . Religion is . . . the heart of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. . . . The demand to abandon illusions about (the people's) condition is a demand to abandon a condition which requires illusions.⁷⁰

To abolish the underlying real condition rather than its ideal reflection it is necessary to turn from the criticism of heaven, religion and theology to the criticism of earth, law and politics: 'The task of philosophy, which is in the service of history is to unmask human self-alienation in its unholy forms now that it has been unmasked in its holy form'.⁷¹ The problem, in short, is to arrive at 'truly human problems':

The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that man is the highest being for man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a

⁷⁰WYMPS, pp. 249-50. The writer must apologise for such lengthy quotation, but its thoroughly Feuerbachian presentation of the religious problematic is no where better expressed or encapsulated by Marx than here. Sentences 2-7 in particular are taken directly from Feuerbach. The continuity of Marx's thought with that as a journalist for the Rheinische Zeitung more than a year before is clearly reflected in: 'man is not an abstract being squatting outside the world'; 'religion is . . . the heart of a heartless world . . . the spirit of spiritless conditions' etc.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 251.

degraded, enslaved . . . being⁷²

To unmask human self-alienation in its 'unholy' forms, and arrive at 'truly human problems', it is necessary to subject to criticism 'modern political and social reality itself'. This poses for Marx an immediate problem: 'Germans are the philosophic contemporaries of the present without being its historical contemporaries. German philosophy is the ideal extension of German history'.⁷³ In the light of this anachronistic situation between Germany's real history and its abstract continuation, a critique of its philosophy (of law and the state) does not coincide with a critique of its real conditions or actual state. Instead of effecting a 'practical break with modern political conditions' a critique of philosophy merely constitutes a 'critical break with the philosophic reflection of those conditions'.⁷⁴ The problem here posed: active criticism of speculative philosophy (of law and the state) establishes the theoretic necessity of a revolutionary transformation of society, but the historic backwardness of Germany militates against the formation of the practical conditions for its realisation. Within the Left-Hegelian problematic of Marx's thought the problem is this: 'revolutions require a passive element, a material basis'.⁷⁵ The 'active' element or 'head' of the revolutionary movement is philosophy --

⁷²Ibid., pp. 255, 257-58. Cf. Feuerbach's conception of the 'new' philosophy which 'makes man, together with nature as the basis of man, the exclusive universal, and highest object of philosophy' ('Principles'; Hanfi, p. 243); cf. Feuerbach's 'categorical imperative' for the new philosophy: 'think as a living, real being . . . as one who exists, as one who is in the world and is part of the world . . . not as a solitary monad. . .' (loc.cit., p. 240).

⁷³WYMPS, p. 255.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 259

critical thought seeking self-actualisation. A 'head', however, requires a body or material basis':

Theory is actualised in a people only insofar as it actualises their needs. . . . It is not enough that thought should seek its actualisation, actuality must itself strive towards thought.⁷⁶

Within the framework of this problem (to effect the unity between the 'head' and 'heart' of philosophy), and with reference to the anachronistic situation of Germany, philosophic criticism cannot simply 'proceed in its own sphere (ie., within theory) but proceeds to tasks that can be solved by one means -- praxis'.⁷⁷

Thus does Marx pose the problem of a relation between theory and praxis, between philosophy and the world. In order to properly grasp Marx's conception of this relation, subject to frequent misunderstanding or forced reading on the basis of Marx's later thought, it is necessary to situate the Left-Hegelian problematic within which it is thought: if reality is to be changed philosophy must be the instrument of its transformation, hence a critique of reality. Philosophy itself, however, as criticism of the real, does not 'change' reality. To accomplish this change, ie., to realise philosophy, philosophy as such must be abolished, ie., we must abandon the terrain of pure theory.

Marx brings his conception of the problematical relation of philosophy to the world into focus by opposing it to two false conceptions of this relation, respectively associated with the 'practical-political party' and the 'theoretical party'. Within the anachronistic situation of Germany, the 'practical-political' party aims for the direct and immediate transformation of the existing actuality

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 257.

without philosophy, while the 'theoretical' party does so within philosophy. The former, in negating speculative philosophy errs by turning its back on philosophy -- denying the role of theory, of philosophic criticism itself. The latter errs by reducing praxis to a body-less 'head' -- a theoretic category. One party abolishes philosophy without realising it; the other, realises it without abolishing it, ie., without ever moving beyond mere thought.⁷⁸

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 256. Marx here returns directly to one of his principal themes of the notes to the Doctoral dissertation viz. 'Philosophy after its completion'. The crux of this theme is the thesis: 'the world's becoming philosophical is at the same time philosophy's becoming worldly . . . its realisation is at the same time its loss' (WYMPS, p. 62). As expressed in the Introduction: 'you cannot actualise philosophy without transcending it' and 'you cannot transcend (aufheben) philosophy without actualising it' (ibid., p. 256). In this dissertation note Marx also defines his conception of philosophy as practical criticism by contrasting two parties in philosophy, the 'liberal' and the 'positive' (ibid., p. 63). The respective arguments of his dissertation notes and the Introduction written about three years later make it clear that (a) Marx's conception in the Introduction bears resemblance to what he earlier called the 'liberal' party in philosophy; (b) the 'theoretical' party bears resemblance to what he earlier called the 'positive' party in philosophy. This comparison records a significant change. The earlier distinction more or less separates the 'practical' attitude of the 'liberal' party from the 'contemplative' attitude of speculative philosophy. Within this 'liberal' party Marx at that point ranged Bauer and the group associated with him, including himself. By 1843 Marx distinguishes between two tendencies within the 'liberal' party: 'practical-political' and 'theoretical-political', the first of which probably refers to the 'Young Germany' movement, although it re-calls also Feuerbach; and the second of which clearly refers to Bauer and his followers. It does not mean, however, that Marx has changed his conception of the philosophy-world relation, rather, he has concluded that Bauer and company have turned away from the 'practical' realisation of philosophy, while at the same time he recognises the problem with over-reacting to the Feuerbachian critique of philosophy by abolishing it outright without realising it.

Against this latter, inadequate conception of the practical problem of moving from philosophy to reality, Marx notes: 'The weapon of criticism obviously cannot replace the criticism of weapons. Material force must be overthrown by material force'.⁷⁹ Against both 'one-sided' conceptions of the 'practical' problem, Marx insists that 'it can only be a task of united forces': for us, philosophic critics ('thought should seek its actualisation') and for the world ('actuality must itself strive towards thought'). The Revolution, says Marx, 'begins in the brain of the philosopher',⁸⁰ but in order to realise itself philosophy must become 'practical': the weapons of criticism must yield to the criticism of weapons; philosophic criticism must become a material force. How can philosophy be converted into a material force? On the condition of a 'material basis', a 'passive' element: it must 'penetrate' the masses.

Theory . . . becomes a material force once it has gripped (ergreift) the masses. Theory is capable of gripping the masses when it demonstrates ad hominem, and it demonstrates ad hominem when it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp things by the root. But for man the root is man himself. . . . (R)evolutions require a passive element, a material basis. Theory is actualised in a people only insofar as it actualises their needs.⁸¹

In short, philosophic criticism can 'grip' the masses, and

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 257.

⁸⁰Marx here adopts the Hegelian principle of the power of ideas, although it is specifically related to the fact that 'Germans think what other nations have done'. This is to say, philosophy is an ideal reflection of a real, material practice (the French Revolution, for example), but in the anachronistic situation of Germany, philosophy presents an ideal history in advance of its real history (ibid., p. 258). Marx thinks this anachronism through a principle established by Feuerbach: 'the head brings things into existence, the heart sets them in motion'. (FB, p. 165).

⁸¹Ibid., p. 259.

becomes 'practical', when it 'actualises' the 'practical needs' of the masses, the material basis for its activity.

At this point of his argument, Marx faces a problem: 'Will the enormous discrepancy between the demands of German thought and the answers of German actuality correspond to a similar discrepancy between civil society and the state, and within civil society itself?'⁸² It is this problem to which Marx addresses himself in the second half of the Introduction. He does so by seeking within the existing actuality of civil society a social class that can constitute the material basis of critical thought, and thus of the German Revolution. Marx initiates this search by stipulating the necessary conditions, ie., the material basis, of a 'partial and merely political revolution':

It is part of civil society emancipating itself and attaining universal supremacy, a particular class by virtue of its particular situation undertaking the general emancipation of society. This class emancipates the whole of society but only on the condition that the whole of society is in the same position as this class . . .⁸³

Since a particular class can claim 'general supremacy' only in the name of the 'general rights of society' this condition of a 'political' revolution has as its corollary:

If a popular revolution is to coincide with the emancipation of a particular class of civil society, if one class is to stand for the whole society, all the defects of society must conversely be concentrated in another class. . . . For one class to be the class of emancipation par excellence, conversely another must be the obvious class of oppression.⁸⁴

On the basis of both his earlier experience with the various German classes as a journalist, and his readings

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid., p. 260.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 261.

of French history, Marx notes the failure of any German classes, and particularly, with reference to the bourgeoisie, to play the revolutionary role played by the French bourgeoisie in 1789:

The negative, general significance of the French nobility and clergy determined the positive, general significance of the bourgeoisie opposing them. . . . But in Germany every class lacks not only the consistency, penetration, courage, and ruthlessness which could stamp it as the negative representative of society. There is equally lacking in every class that breadth of soul which identifies itself, if only momentarily, with the soul of the people -- that genius for inspiring material force towards political power, that revolutionary boldness which flings at its adversary, the defiant words, I am nothing and I should be everything.⁸⁵

Marx, however, does not simply observe the class-difference between the two historical junctures, but he essays an explanation, which anticipates in general terms his mature theory of class struggle as it relates to his concept of uneven development, and the theory of 'permanent revolution':

Every section of civil society goes through a defeat before it celebrates victory, develops its own obstacles before it overcomes those facing it, asserts its narrow-minded nature before it can assert its generosity so that even the opportunity of playing a role has already passed before it actually existed, and each class is involved in a struggle against the class beneath as soon as it begins to struggle with the class above it. Hence princes struggle against kings, the bureaucrat against the nobility, and the bourgeoisie against them all, while the proletariat is already beginning to struggle against the bourgeoisie. The middle class hardly dares to conceive the idea of emancipation from its own perspective. The development of social conditions and the process of political theory show that perspective to be already antiquated or at least problematic.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 261.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 261-62. We have here the first mention by Marx of the 'proletariat', the significance of which we discuss below.

Within the historic context of this class struggle, Marx demonstrates the impossibility of a 'partial' (political) revolution: there can be no bourgeois-liberal revolution with a historically backward, non-revolutionary bourgeoisie. In contrast to its French counterpart in 1789 the bourgeoisie in Germany is already threatened by the proletariat at the moment in which it struggles against the ancien regime. It turns conservative and timid at the precise moment in which history demands of it a revolutionary role. As a consequence:

Radical revolution, universal human emancipation, is not a utopian dream for Germany. What is utopian is the partial, the merely political revolution . . . which would leave the pillars of the house standing. . . . In France, partial emancipation (by the bourgeoisie) is the basis of universal emancipation is the conditio sine qua non of any partial emancipation.⁸⁷

What then constitutes the practical condition of German emancipation, the material force which can be inspired by philosophy towards political power?

Answer:

In the formation of a class with radical chains, a class in civil society that is not of civil society, a class that is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society having a universal character because of its universal suffering. . . a sphere . . . that cannot emancipate itself without emancipating them; a sphere, in short, that is the complete loss of humanity and can only redeem itself through the total redemption of humanity. This dissolution of society as a particular class is the PROLETARIAT.⁸⁸

With this discovery of the proletariat Marx's search for the practical condition of human emancipation reaches its terminus: the revolution, which takes form in the 'head' of the philosopher -- as theoretic necessity -- acquires in

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 261-62.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 262-63.

the proletariat its 'heart', its material base -- the practical condition of its realisation. Within the horizon of the Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis, the 'proletariat' is clearly a philosophic discovery.⁸⁹ The proletariat appears

⁸⁹Marx's discovery of the proletariat and his conception of its 'world-historical mission' has been subject to considerable interpretation. According to Popitz (Der entfremdete Mensch) Marx arrives at the proletariat by a direct 'inversion' of the essential connexions that Hegel had established between the different forms of 'Objective Spirit'. According to Avineri ('The Hegelian Origins of Marx's Political Thought', Review of Metaphysics, Sept. 1967) Marx did not arrive at the proletariat by an economic study or historical analysis, but through a series of arguments within the framework of the Hegelian philosophy, and in relation to Hegel's concept of the 'universal class'; according to Wackenheim (La Faillite et la Religion d'après Karl Marx, p. 200) and Hyppolite (Studies on Marx and Hegel) the proletariat is thought in relation to the Hegelian dialectic of the universal and the particular, and more questionably, to the Master-Slave dialectic. There are a series of interpretations, by and large hopeless, misguided (Eric Fromm) or inept (Tucker, Lobkovich) that place Marx's thought within the salvific Judeo-Christian tradition; the more general interpretation of a similar but much more acceptable position emphasizes Marx's subjective (ethical) indignation at the proletarian condition. Several writers have stressed the contribution of Lorenz von Stein's book, Socialism and Communism in Contemporary France (Tucker, Marcuse, . . .). Besides these general interpretations, which stress the theoretical conditions of Marx's discovery of the proletariat, a series of writers have stressed both the earlier experience with the 'material question' and Marx's recent experience with the proletariat in Paris, and with Marx's first-hand contacts with socialist intellectuals in Paris at the beginning of 1844 (Lowy, Mandel, McLellan, etc.). And, as Lowy has well-documented, the intrusion of the working-class movement upon Marx's theoretical consciousness is evidenced by the fact that both On the Jewish Question and the Introduction can be divided into two parts, the first written in Kreuznach, and developing themes of the 1843 Critique, the second written in Paris, with a corresponding shift in themes. As relates to the Introduction this shift is reflected in a shift from the vague categories 'people' and 'masses' to the more socially concrete category 'proletariat'. Nevertheless, although Marx's direct experience with the working-class movement definitely erupts into thought, and directs his political shift and ideological re-orientation, as will be

as the protagonist of Feuerbach's drama of human destiny, the incarnation of humanity, which derives from its total alienation ('total loss of man') its drive for revolutionary change, its reason for the re-appropriation of the human essence ('redemption of humanity'). As a category within the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's humanism ('the theory that man is the highest essence of man') the proletariat is defined by Marx as the antithesis of the bourgeoisie: (a) the proletariat is 'external' to civil society ('a class in civil society that is not of civil society'); ie., a class dispossessed of property, which constitutes the basis of civil society; (b) it has a 'universal' character because of its 'universal suffering' and because it is dispossessed from all property it has no particular class interest to defend. As a universal class, clearly thought more in relation to Feuerbach's schema than in relation to Hegel's, the proletariat does not merely oppose some of civil society's consequences, but opposes its premises;⁹⁰ (c) it is a class of 'radical chains', and as such, reduced to 'radical needs', the 'negative representative' of society, driven towards the 'total recovery of man'.⁹¹

Within the problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, in relation to the theory of the 'head' and 'heart', the pene-

clear from our exposition, we hold it to be indisputable that this experience is distorted through an ideological schema, more Feuerbachian than Hegelian, and that Marx's 'discovery' of the proletariat is, strictly speaking, philosophical.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 263: 'a class . . . claiming no particular right because no particular wrong but unqualified wrong is perpetrated on it; a sphere . . . which does not partially oppose the consequences but totally opposes the premises presuppositions of the German political system!.'

⁹¹Ibid.

tration of the passive, material element (the proletariat) by the active, ideal element (philosophy), fulfills the 'inner condition' of universal, human emancipation: 'As philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy'.⁹² The condition of this emancipation is a revolutionary alliance of philosophy and the proletariat: the theoretical affirmation and practical negation of man -- of philosophy which gives the proletariat a theory of what it is, and the proletariat, which converts philosophy into a material force. In the context of this alliance, the revolution is a conscious revolt of man (whose unity is sealed in the essence of man) against his own inhuman existence. The necessary condition of this universal, human emancipation (re-appropriation of the human essence) is the realisation-abolition (Aufhebung) of both the proletariat and philosophy in a new and fully human (communist) society without classes:

The head of this emancipation is philosophy, its heart is the proletariat. Philosophy cannot be actualised without the Aufhebung of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot be Aufheben without the actualisation of philosophy.⁹³

And thus does Marx's thought, taken up in his doctoral dissertation, come full circle.

Summation

It is clear from our exposition of On the Jewish Question and the Introduction that Marx's concepts, the state, communism, the proletariat, do not escape the horizon of the Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis, and that

⁹²Ibid. Marx adds the revealing comment: 'And once the lightning of thought has deeply struck this unsophisticated soil of the people, the Germans will emancipate themselves to become men' (ibid., pp. 263-64).

⁹³Ibid., p. 264.

they are thought within the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's theoretic humanism. Those interpretations that see in the Introduction a break with the earlier Critique, and as the initial statement of 'Marxism' are guilty of a forced reading on the basis of Marx's later work. Marx's direct experience with the French proletariat clearly intrudes upon Marx's theoretical consciousness, and leads Marx to adopt a proletarian political position, but just as clearly, this eruption of a direct experience in Marx's thought does not explode the ideological schema (passive heart/active head) of Feuerbach's philosophic problematic which has governed Marx's thought as far back as the doctoral dissertation. The central problem posed within this problematic is to secure a relation of practical knowledge between an active critical thought and concrete reality, a relation of unity between idealism and materialism. The problematic of this relation directs the search by critical philosophy for its material basis.

In Marx's 1843-44 Introduction this problematic relation or movement from theory to material praxis is conditioned by a determinate historic situation (cf. the 'anachronism' of Germany) and the existence of a social class able to convert philosophy into a material force. Marx's concept of the 'historico-universal mission' of the proletariat is clearly thought within the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, and as yet is by and large uninformed by an analysis of the 'anatomy' or bourgeois society. In the form of an alliance between the proletariat and philosophy, Marx formulates a theoretic expression of 'radical necessity': the unity of theory (qua philosophy) and socio-practico activity or material praxis (qua proletariat). This 'radical' necessity entails the theoretic necessity of an active, self-determining thought, and the practical necessity of a passive, other-determined, material praxis.

The limitations of Marx's conception are evident. All the key concepts -- 'emancipation', 'total recovery of man', 'radical necessity', 'radical revolution' -- derive their meaning from the problematic of Feuerbach's humanism. The proletariat appears as the 'negation of humanity', and not in relation to a specific system of production or level of development of productive forces. The concept of 'proletariat' is thought in relation to the subject-object dialectic of Feuerbach's problematic. The 'historico-universal mission' of the proletariat derives not so much from its socio-economic position within the mode of production, as it does from a philosophic conception (the proletariat is the negation and incarnation of the human universal) and of a specific situation -- anachronistic -- of the Germany of Marx's time. Making of necessity a virtue, Marx furthermore maintains that it is precisely the backwardness of Germany's historic development which creates favourable conditions for the proletariat's 'mission'. In short, Marx justifies the mission of the proletariat philosophically, rather than through a scientific analysis of objective conditions of a determinate historic situation. As reflected in his conceptual and terminological imprecision and vagueness Marx has not yet discovered the dynamic that governs capitalist production, nor has he situated the relations of class in bourgeois society, or discovered the nature and true function of the bourgeois state. Marx lacks above all a conception of history which permits him to establish scientifically, rather than philosophically, the necessity of the proletarian revolution.

Overview

Within the framework of a Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis, and Feuerbach's theoretic humanism, Marx's first field of action was as a journalist and editor of the Rheinische Zeitung, an opposition liberal paper in Cologne.

Marx's collaboration with the Rheinische Zeitung constituted his effective political apprenticeship, the basis of a politics of Enlightenment reason, whose object was to arouse in the German people a consciousness of its own essence -- human freedom. As a journalist and editor Marx was forced to approach political problems from a more concrete, socially specific, angle (in relation to the conflicting interests of the various classes) than was the custom in Berlin. In his political struggle against censorship and the reactionary policies of the Prussian state, Marx began to recognise more and more that social and political problems do not find their solution in a theoretic critique of the existing state of affairs (ie., in an appeal to the reason of the state) but that they require a more 'practical' form of political struggle, namely, an alliance with a material force driven by external necessity to realise the demands of reason. This recognition draws Marx away from his erstwhile fellows in thought and political struggle, die Freien of Berlin, whose theoretic criticisms increasingly become abstract and isolated from 'real' conditions, and draws Marx towards the democratic-humanism of the group around Arnold Ruge.

Through the necessary treatment of so-called 'material questions' (socio-economic problems) Marx began to see that the essential problem was not 'political' but rather 'social' -- that its solution required not merely the reform of the state, but rather, the radical transformation of society. The corollary of this recognition, held by the socialists and philosophic communists and towards which Marx was drifting, is that the state does not play the determining, historic role that Hegel attributed to it. This recognition, supported by the apparent subservience of the state to the interests of particular classes, brings into question the very relation between civil society and state on which German theory -- philosophy of law and the state -- is based. The

importance of this question was determined by two conditions of a general intellectual crisis: the demonstrated irrationality of the state, and, with the failure of the liberal bourgeoisie to support the demands of reason, the inability to reform the state.

In the conjuncture of this crisis, Feuerbach came on the scene with a call for a 'new philosophy' (materialism-humanism) which demonstrated a way out of the impasse in which the Hegelian Left were trapped. In the light of Feuerbach's intervention, the Left-Hegelians could think the predicament of their present situation as the contradiction between the state's essence (reason) and its existence (unreason), and as such, as the alienation of man from his social essence. Its underlying anthropological problematic: man is the real basis and subject of the state, and as such, the necessary unity (of 'head' and 'heart') underlying the ideality of its essence, and the materiality of its real existence.

In the case of Marx this anthropology inspired both a critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, and constituted the basis of a new type of political action: the practical re-appropriation of the human essence (human emancipation). In respect to the *Critique*, Feuerbach's anthropological problematic brought Marx into an indirect relation to Kant's solution to the problem of civil society. The central problem faced by Marx was that of the character of the social and political order, and the nature of their relation. On the basis of Feuerbach's critical method (transformative critique) and principle of humanism (concept of alienation) Marx revises the fundamental conception formulated by Hegel. In this revision Marx shows, first of all, that Hegel constructed his Philosophy of Right on the model of his Logic, in which by way of a speculative inversion of the real relation (dialectic) between subject and predicate, the Idea emerges as the absolute subject of the real. This is to say,

the state in the Philosophy of Right has the same function as the Idea in the Logic. Through an inversion suggested by Feuerbach's critique of religion Marx demonstrates that in reality it is not the state which determines civil society, but on the contrary, that it is civil society that determines the state; that Hegel's dialectic presents the relation of phenomena-essence the wrong way around, and inverts the dialectic between state and society.

On the basis of a subsequent transformative critique of Hegel's philosophy of the state, Marx demonstrates (a) that the state in its real existence, constitutes the illusory incarnation of the human, social essence, and as such, is an 'abstract' rather than a 'concrete' universal in which man lives his true nature only in appearance; (b) that to suppress the opposition between the state and civil society, and thereby, the alienation of the human essence, it is necessary to abolish both as such, and replace them with a 'democratic state' which re-unites within itself social and political life as a 'concrete' universal in which man lives his true nature not in an illusory form, but as an effective reality.

With this conception, Marx does not yet approach communism, but rather, a radical form of democracy, based on a critique of private property and its effects. The reforms proposed by Marx were within the framework of a radical form of bourgeois democracy. The transition from social democracy to philosophic communism is effected in an exchange of letters and two articles written for the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher. In these articles, Marx establishes the necessary conditions for a new type of political action: the re-appropriation of the human essence alienated at the religious level in Gods, at the political level in state-power, and at the economic level in money. In his exchange of letters with Ruge Marx outlines the ideological platform and the formal

conditions for the new politics: the reform of public consciousness: an alliance of a German 'head' with a French 'heart'. In the 'Jewish Question' Marx establishes the theoretic necessity of universal, human emancipation, predicated on the abolition of the condition of alienation underlying its ideological reflexes (Gods, power, money). In the 'Introduction' Marx establishes the practical condition of its realisation: the proletariat, the material basis of active philosophic criticism.

The basis of this new politics is Feuerbach's theoretic solution which enables Marx to think the existence of reason as un-reason: man is the true subject of freedom and reason, the basis of history and politics, because he is essentially a communal being who comes to himself theoretically and politically in the restoration of universal, human relations with man and nature. The theoretical principles on which both the 'Jewish Question' and the 'Introduction' are based constitute an extension of Feuerbach's critique. Neither can be understood outside the context of Feuerbach's philosophic problematic and theoretic schemata. All the expressions of Marx's humanism, as Louis Althusser has observed, are Feuerbachian: 'philosophy's world-to-be', 'inversion of subject and predicate', 'for man the root of man is man himself', 'the political state is the species life of man', 'the suppression-realisation of philosophy', 'philosophy is the head of human emancipation, and the proletariat its heart'.⁹⁴ In effect, as Althusser puts it, Marx is but an 'avant-garde Feuerbachian' applying an ethical problematic to an understanding of history, and the theory of alienation to politics.⁹⁵ Within this ethical problematic the state emerges as the incarnation of the alienated human essence,

⁹⁴Althusser, For Marx, p. 45.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 46.

rather than as an instrument of class domination; the proletariat emerges as the 'negation of humanity' whose 'historico-universal mission' derives not so much from its socio-economic position as it does from a philosophic conception of the human essence violated in actual life.

The Introduction clearly reflects Marx's recent experience with the French proletariat, which serves as a model for Marx who projects it into German reality. The French working class movement will give the signal for the uprising of the German proletariat: 'The German resurrection will be announced by the crowing of the French rooster'.⁹⁶ The intrusion of the reality of the proletarian struggle upon Marx's philosophic consciousness has a definitive effect on Marx's political orientation, but does not free his thought from the ideological schema of a Left-Hegelian philosophy of (theoretical) praxis governed by Feuerbach's anthropological problematic. To arrive at a less 'philosophical' and a more 'scientific' conception of the proletarian class struggle, and thus, communism, required of Marx a profound analysis of the 'anatomy' of bourgeois society.

The need for such an analysis was already forced on Marx in 1842 with respect to a discussion of the 'material question', but his critical method of procedure likewise leads him to it. With his adoption of Feuerbach's anthropology, and in the name of the necessity of a human revolution, Marx's attention was inevitably drawn to the study of alienation in its 'unholy', profane or secular forms -- in the spheres of political and social life. Accordingly, Marx first applies Feuerbach's ethical problematic (theory of alienation) to a critique of political conditions, and with the corresponding inversion of Hegel's state-civil society schema, he then turns his attention to the study of the

⁹⁶WYMPS, p. 264.

alienation of which both religion and politics are but phenomenal appearances. Thus it is that at the beginning of 1844, and supported by two articles, one by Engels, the other by Hess, that Marx extends Feuerbach's ethical problematic to the 'economic basis' of civil society. The product: The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MARX'S PHILOSOPHIC ENCOUNTER WITH POLITICAL ECONOMY

When Marx in October 1843 settled in Paris, ready to take up, alongside Ruge, the editing of the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher,¹ he was still groping towards a conception of communism, a radical critique of private property.¹ In his initial formulation of such a critique, levelled against Hegel's philosophy of law and the state, Marx based himself on Feuerbach's transformative critique of speculative philosophy, on its 'materialist' theory of alienation. In applying this critique to Hegel's philosophy Marx showed that just as Hegel had made of the Absolute Idea the creative subject of the world, and of man, the real subject, a mere phenomenon of this idea, so also he made the state into the essence of society, its phenomena. This idealist dialectic, both Feuerbach and Marx argued, inverted and mystified the real relation of state to society. In order to properly understand the state one must turn this relation of an essence to its phenomena, the dialectic of reason, the right way up, and start from social reality. In his speculative inversion of the true relation of state to society, and in his mystical solution to its apparent contradiction, Hegel both justified the system of private property and presented the Prussian state as the realization of reason and freedom. In de-mystifying the ideology of this solution, Marx showed that the opposition

¹We contend with the prevalent tendency to locate a fundamental transition within Marx's thought between his 1843 Critique and the Jahrbücher writings, or before his

between state and society can only be resolved in 'true' democracy, in which the state has as its content the life of the people, realizing in itself the 'concrete' unity of the universal and the particular--of the systems of general and private interests.

In his concept of this rational state, however, Marx is both vague and ambivalent. On the one hand, he conceives of a radical-democratic (and thus, bourgeois) form of a republic under the condition of universal suffrage. On the other hand, his critique of private property opens a path towards communism, although he did not appreciate the role of class struggle, nor yet of the proletariat, in the radical transformation of bourgeois 'civil' society--in the realization of the 'demands of reason', the emergence of a 'true', human community in which Man lives in accordance with his true nature. Marx's transition towards such a conception was made on the Jewish Question and the Introduction. Carrying further the idea that society 'explains' the state--i.e., is the essence of its phenomena--Marx concluded that neither religious nor political emancipation resolves the fundamental, underlying alienation of the system of private property; and that the abolition of this system, through a revolutionary alliance of the proletariat and philosophy, would bring about a truly 'human' existence, communism.

To schematically present this transition of Marx's thought towards communism, we make two general observations. First. Marx formulates against Hegel a critique that is

arrival to Paris, which gives the Jahrbücher a 'Marxist' slant which, despite Marx's own indications, is unwarranted. We think, in particular, of the otherwise excellent presentation by Auguste Cornu who rightly recognizes Marx's contact with French socialism and 'philosophic' communism (cf. Moses Hess) in his critique of private property, but too readily translates Marx's talk of 'true' democracy, of universal, full human emancipation, into a concept of communism. It is true that Marx's 'heart' had already been won over, as it were, by communist ideas, and that he tended

both philosophical and political. Its starting-point: Feuerbach's 'materialist' critique of speculative idealism. Its finishing-point: an exposé of the mysticism of Hegel's idealism, and of its underlying political conservatism. Second. Within this critique, which enables Marx to find his way to communism, to become politically committed to the working-class, the concept of 'alienation' commands the centre, as with Feuerbach. The concept enables Marx to question and criticize the world from the standpoint of 'philosophy,' in the name of the 'true' essence of Man. This philosophic approach is, it could be said, speculative in structure, and this speculation on Man's true essence accounts for the theoretic function assigned to the concept of alienation. For Marx, however, at this stage of his thought and life, the humanist problematic of this concept provides a basis for a critique of bourgeois society, and of grasping in a certain way the necessity of social revolution, providing him with a reason for identifying with its cause. Thus it is that on this new theoretical basis which combines (a) a critique of speculative idealism, a 'materialist' inversion of its dialectic, and (b) a political adherence to communism, justified on philosophical not historical grounds; and that directs Marx towards an analysis of the 'secular basis' of religious and political alienation, Marx goes forward to deepen his critique of bourgeois society, and at the same time to refashion the elements and very structure of this theoretical basis. He

more and more towards Moses Hess's interpretation of Feuerbach's humanism, towards 'philosophic' communism or 'true' socialism. Marx did not, however, call himself a communist until his Paris Manuscripts, after his discovery of the proletariat. Furthermore, the research of Michael Lowy indicates that there is no evidence for contact by Marx with the Parisian working class before February 1844, and thus, after the Jahrbücher essays. Without belabouring the point, we insist that the Jahrbücher writings are fully consistent with and extend the analysis made in the 1843 Critique, but that this critique effects an application of a Feuerbachian critique to the

will increasingly seek reasons for the necessity of communism that are not philosophical, but historical, internal to the development of capitalism. In doing so, Marx will become aware of the still speculative nature of this thought, his 'philosophic consciousness', and thereby of the ineffectiveness of all reflection that seeks a 'philosophic' basis to reality to base it on a concept. As a result, the theoretical function of the concept of alienation and its problematic of a human essence is overthrown; and the problem of the foundation of reality, and of its 'alienated' aspects, will be referred henceforth no longer to thought but to reality itself, to reality conceived as a totality of practical, historical relationships between men, and between men and nature, as 'praxis'. Before Marx turns to a study of reality itself, without any speculative presuppositions about its content, this concept of 'praxis' will take over for a time the philosophic function of the former concept of 'alienation'. But we have gotten ahead of ourselves here, ahead of the Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 wherein this process unfolds, and to which we now turn.²

two objects, law and the state, but that it represents no more than that. There is nothing specifically 'Marxist' in either the 1843 Critique nor the Jahrbücher writings, except a characteristic rigour of analysis, social consciousness and intellectual integrity. The underlying problematic of both sets of writings is that of Feuerbach's humanism. On this score, we are in fundamental agreement with Althusser, against the position of Della Volpe, Colletti, etc.

²CF. The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (March-August) translated from the complete German text as in MEGA, Abdt. 1, Bd. 3 (Collected Works, Sec. 1, v. 3) by Martin Milligan, and edited by D. J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1969). Our direct reading of Marx's text is supported by the comprehensive documentation and biographical summary provided by Auguste Cornu, op. cit., vol. 3, ch. 2. The interpretation that we offer below of Marx's transition from this concept of alienation

The Problematics of Hegel and Feuerbach

The text of the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 has for close to forty years been in the front line of polemics between defenders of Marx and his opponents, and has authorized conflicting lines of interpretation which, despite the noteworthy and studied presentation of Auguste Cornu and the salutary intervention of theorists like Louis Althusser, have not been settled within Marxism itself, let alone outside it. With reference to the belaboured but often badly-posed question of a 'continuity' between the Early and the Mature Marx, the unresolved dispute that continues to centre on the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 relate to the character of Marx's 'philosophic encounter with 'Political Economy.'³

to that of praxis, of his critique of Political Economy, etc., is rather different from that given by Cornu, to whom one should nevertheless turn for the details of our presentation.

³This debate has had many forums, but we refer in particular to Althusser's comments on the eleven studies presented by the journal Reserches Internationales (For Marx, Part two, pp. 49-86), and in general, to studies noted in our General Bibliography. The dispute in question revolves around three divergent lines of interpretation: humanist, historicist, and structuralist. The humanist and historicist traditions support the thesis of a 'continuity' within Marx's thought, but they do so from different angles, the one from a 'Feuerbachian' reading of Marx, the other from a 'Hegelian' reading of him. Our points of reference for the humanist tradition relates to biographies generally cast within the Social-Democrat tradition (Nicolaevsky-Maenchen, Bruanthal, Landshut, J. P. Mayer, Riazanov, Rubel, Cole, Laski, Blumenberg, etc.); and the existentialist and Judaic/Christian interpretations (Kojève, Sartre, Hyppolite, Fromm, Calvez, Bigo, Popitz, Thier, Leemans, De Man, Axelos, M. G. Lange, etc.). Our points of reference for the historicist traditions include the thoroughly 'left-Hegelian' interpretation of Marcuse, and the more Marxist interpretations which are, however, weakened by a vague, ill-defined concept of a 'transition' or failure to adequately specify the 'difference' between Hegel and Marx (Cornu, Oizerman, Rossi, Garaudy, Schaff, Kosik, Mészáros, etc.). Lucio Colletti, in our view, represents a special case, presenting, with Althusser, the most serious analysis and theoretical interpretation of the

This is the question then to which we address ourselves, and we do so by pointing to an ambiguity in Marx's thought which we trace back to an unresolved tension between two philosophic problematics, that of Feuerbach's humanism and that of Hegel's historicism, within which Marx thinks his encounter with Political Economy.⁴ To classify this encounter of 'philosophy' and 'political economy' within Marx's thought it is necessary, and we accordingly proceed, to examine the theoretic function of the concept of 'alienation' within its problematic of a 'human essence.' The meaning of this concept emerges in our analysis from two inversely-related problematics respectively unified by Feuerbach's concept of 'man' and Hegel's concept of 'history'. Within the theoretic space of these opposed, but inversely-related problematics we discover the necessary conditions for the formation of a new concept--'the social relations of production'--which escapes, as it were, its

problem in question. We will have occasion to bring into a comparative focus the respective points of interpretation established by Colletti and Althusser.

⁴Our 'theoretical' reference for these two concepts are two essays by Althusser: 'Marxism and Humanism' (For Marx) and 'Marxism is not a historicism' (Reading Capital). Nevertheless, the relation that we establish between historicism and humanism within Marx's thought in our analysis of the Paris Manuscripts, and the character of Feuerbach's relation to Hegel, are not authorized by Althusser nor anyone else for that matter. The general line of our interpretation is suggested by Althusser, and we also take up Althusser's challenge to think through-and-past his own tentative and schematic formulations towards a 'symptomatic' reading of Marx's own text; the structure and direction of our analysis is determined by our own specific interpretation of the relation Kant-Hegel within Feuerbach's thought, and of its impact on Marx's thought, and of Marx's theoretical changes.

own philosophic problematic, which is to say, Marx breaks with an epistemology based alternatively on an anthropological and a historical concept of a 'human essence.'

The first point to be made in regards to the 'philosophy' of Feuerbach's humanism and Hegel's historicism is that the problematic which governs a theory unified respectively by the concepts of 'Man' and 'history' is supported by the same invariant type-structure of a subject-object relation, or, what amounts to the same thing, the identity of thought and being. The relation between the problematic of Hegel's historicism and Feuerbach's humanism is one of direct inversion. In a 'transformative critique' of Hegel's 'system', which is based on this identity of thought and being, Feuerbach inverts (and thus maintains) the terms of its structure and of its theoretical schemata. The type-structure of these two inversely related problematics is constituted by the theoretic relation (dialectic of reason) of an essence to its phenomena, sublimated in the concept 'the truth of...'. Both the concept of 'history' and that of 'man', derived through the schema of this problematic, is based on the relation between two societies: (a) a 'system of needs' or civil society; and (b) a political society or state, and everything embodied in the state (religion, law, philosophy, in short, the epoch's self-conscious spirit). The schema of this relation: material life, on the one hand; and spiritual life, on the other. The problematic of this relation underlies both Hegel's historicism and Feuerbach's humanism. Within this problematic Hegel's concept of 'history' is regulated by the (idealist) dialectic of the Idea, which explains the material life of man; and Feuerbach's concept of 'Man' is regulated by the (materialist) dialectic of nature, which in turn, explains the spiritual life of man. The shared problematic of this subject-object relation, the principle of explanation, is constituted by the condition of an underlying unity-in-

essence (reason), the principle of identity underlying phenomena--a level of reality characterized by the distinction of thought and being, or, what amounts to the same thing, freedom and necessity.⁵

In Hegel's historicist problematic the point of reference for this unity--the subject of reason--is established from the speculative standpoint of 'God or the Absolute' rather than from the inversely-related standpoint of 'man and humanity.' From the speculative standpoint of the Absolute, material life (civil society or the economy), apparently autonomous, is subject to a law external to itself, the principle of its truth, the immanent end of a universal reason: the state, or spiritual life. As Hegel puts it: 'man's genuine realitywhat essentially and ultimately true and real....spirit [is] the true and essential being'.⁶ Since this point of reference for man's essence is the relation of the human spirit to the Divine (the essence of Man is God), and since 'thought, the constitutive substance of external things...is also the universal substance of what is spiritual', man's humanity, his divine spirituality, corresponds to his being the organ and vehicle of speculative thought, of an Absolute Reason.⁷

⁵We encapsulate here the central point of our argument to date, namely that Hegel's philosophy of history and Feuerbach's philosophy of man are unified by the same problematic that divides them, by a problematic whose conditions are established through the opposed solutions given by Kant and Hegel to the problem of knowledge. Our general point of reference: Feuerbach's critique of the Hegelian dialectic, of speculative philosophy, cf. above chapter five, part one.

⁶Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, Part Three of the Encyclopedia, trans. W. Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.1.

⁷Ibid., p.2, and Z.1 to sub. 24; cf. our introductory exposition of Hegel's philosophy.

From the speculative standpoint of an Absolute Reason, the material life or 'exoteric' history of man is but the phenomenal appearance or alienated form of a more profound and essential process, the dialectic of spiritual life (the Idea), the 'esoteric' history of an immanent reason (which Hegel traces in its history as a 'phenomenology of spirit' and systematises into a science as 'logic'). In the dialectic of this Idea, the apparent subject, man, emerges as a middle term within a rational process. It is not man who objectifies himself or even thinks about reality, but rather God (comparable to the Christian Logos or Greek Nous), and Absolute Reason which, by means of man, establishes a relationship to that which itself has posited as reality and thereby redeems itself from alienation to attain full self-consciousness.⁸ As Hegel has it: 'Consciousness of God is God's self-consciousness'.

In the speculative standpoint of this idealist proposition Hegel formulates a metaphysic of an absolute identity (universal reason), the principle of which governs the historicist problematic of his System, which is subjected by Fe_uerbach--and by Marx after him-- to a 'transformative critique'. In respect to its method this critique replaces the idealist dialectic of speculative thought with a materialist dialectic of a determinate logic;⁹

⁸See Lucio Colletti's brilliant discussion of this point in chapter eleven of Marxism and Hegel (London: NLB, 1973) which intersects with our own interpretation in our introductory exposition of Hegel's relation to Kant.

⁹We refer here to the discourse on Marx's method given by Della Volpe in Rousseau y Marx (Buenos Aires: Editorial Platina, 1963) which is substantially re-thought though accepted by Lucio Colletti, viz. the contrastive relation between a speculative method, the indeterminate abstraction of an apriori idea, and a critical method (adopted and formed by Marx) based on the determinate abstraction of a specific, and thus real, object. We do not accept the Della Volpean formulation of the 'materialist' dialectic in that it does not recognize the humanist prob-

and in respect to its object, moves from the speculative standpoint of an Absolute Reason to the standpoint of Man, a 'human' reason, on the basis of which Feuerbach--and Marx after him--directly inverts the relationship of 'truth' (essence-phenomena) between spiritual life and material life. Within the framework of this transformative critique the basis of unity, the subject of reason, is not 'God, absolute spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting Idea' but rather 'an objective, natural being', Man, 'a being which [has] ...its nature outside itself'.¹⁰ As the basis and subject of the predicate, reason, man unites within himself a passive (sensible) relation to an externally-given world, and an active (Intelligible) relation to a self-determined thought. This is to say, Feuerbach applies Hegel's identity of the subject-object (attributed by Hegel to a mystical subject, the Idea) to 'Man,' the synthetic unity of an active 'head' and a passive 'heart,' and as such, the identity of freedom and necessity, or, which is the same thing, of thought and being.¹¹

lematic within which it is found in the 1843 Critique, the epistemological and methodological basis of Marx's method according to Della Volpe and Colletti. Nevertheless, the formulation of Marx's method as determinate abstraction, as well as several epistemological precisions made by Colletti, constitute a very serious and useful contribution to an understanding of the Marxist dialectic, and we anxiously await Colletti's on-going study of it. This whole problem, however, we have to leave beyond the scope of our present study.

¹⁰Cf. WYMPS. p. 207.

¹¹Cf. FB., pp. 164-5; above, chapter five, pp. 196-199.

The problematic that governs both Hegel's historicism and Feuerbach's inversely-related humanism has as its presupposition the 'objectivity' of the contradiction between an essence and its phenomena--alienation of the subject from its object--and its suppression: to resolve the phenomenology of an objective appearance into its universal form or essence, the principle of its truth. This resolution of a phenomenon into its concept, supported by the idealist dialectic of speculative thought based on the standpoint of an Absolute identity, yields the unifying concept of Hegel's philosophy of history: the reason of history (the self-development of mind as a process); and, supported by the materialist dialectic of critical thought based on the standpoint of Man, yields the unifying concept of Feuerbach's humanism: the reason of a human community (man as a natural and social being, a species-being). Within the problematic of these two inversely-related discourses on reason--speculative, critical--the concept of 'alienation' is given two different meanings. Within the historicism of speculative idealism alienation emerges as a rational process; the contradiction-in-appearance or 'phenomenology' of man's exoteric history resolves into a unity-in-essence, the reason of a more profound and mysterious process, the esoteric history of an immanent Idea. Its problematic--that of speculative idealism: 'to recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby enjoy the present.'¹³ Within the humanism of Feuerbach's critical discourse alienation emerges as an irrational condition: the separation of man from his social essence, his species-life. Its problematic--that of positive humanism: to re-appropriate the human essence alienated in the phenomenal forms of its appearance (Gods, money, power, etc.).

For both Hegel and Feuerbach the problem is to resolve the problem posed by Kant: to resolve the contra-

¹³Hegel, Philosophy of Right, Preface, p. 12.

contradiction between existence and essence by securing a relation of unity between them. Both Hegel and Feuerbach pose this problem as a subject confronted by limiting conditions, the alienated form of its objectified essence. Feuerbach, however, accepts Hegel's concept of a process wherein a subject objectifies itself, alienates its original essence, and then struggles to re-possess it, but he does so with two points of difference: on the one hand, the process does not take place in history, but only in consciousness; on the other hand, the subject of this process is not God but Man.

It is the problematic of these opposed standpoints --God, Man--supported respectively by a speculative discourse on the identity of thought and being, and a critical discourse on the distinction of thought and being that governs Marx's 'philosophic' encounter with 'Political Economy'. To this we turn.

The Basis of Marx's Philosophic Critique

Without a shadow of doubt, the point of departure for Marx's encounter with Political Economy is the positive-critical discourse of Feuerbach's theoretical humanism. Within the framework of this critical discourse Marx's encounter departs from a contradiction-in-appearance or phenomenon pre-supposed by Political Economy, and taken by Marx to be 'an actual economic fact':

We proceed from a present fact of Political Economy. The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes a cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces. The increase of value of things is directly proportional to the decrease in value of the human world.¹⁴

¹⁴Cf. WYMPS, p. 289. Marx's thought here relates to a theme in Rousseau and recurring persistently in Feuerbach; cf. esp. the 'Essence of Christianity', trans. in Manifestes philosophiques (Paris: PUF, 1960), p. 93.

The political economists of the eighteenth century held that 'human labour' is the source of all value, of all wealth, a thesis that Marx translates into a philosophic category by recognizing Adam Smith as the 'Luther' of Political Economy: just as Luther with respect to religion, Adam Smith turned from wealth in its objective form external to man, to wealth in its subjective form, as a product of human labour.¹⁵ This consideration raises the question (and Marx proceeds to ask it): if labour is the source of all wealth, why does the realization of labour appear as the diminution of the worker, the objectification as the loss of...the object, and the appropriation as alienation (Entfremdung), as externalization (Entäusserung) (?)¹⁶.

To pose this question within the framework of a critical discourse, Marx observes that Political Economy grasps and expresses the phenomenon of this 'fact', but fails to comprehend and explain it--to grasp its 'essence': Political Economy proceeds from the fact of private property. It does not explain private property. It grasps the actual, material process of private property in abstract and general formulae which it then takes as laws. It does not comprehend these laws, that it, does not prove them as proceeding from the nature of private property. Political Economy does not disclose the reason for the division of capital and labour.¹⁷

The opposition of the two verbs fassen (to grasp or express and begreifen (to comprehend or explain) reflects the distinction (made by both a speculative and a critical discourse) within the real of an essence and its phenomena, in relation to which it expresses the failure of Political

¹⁵Cf. The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, ed. D. J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1969), P. 93. Hereafter EPM (Struik).

¹⁶Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁷WYMPS, pp. 287-88. All future references to WYMPS to the article in question, 'Alienated Labour' (1844 MSS).

Economy to formulate the concept of its immediately given phenomena, the condition of its 'truth'. Political Economy, in short, fails to 'objectify' the appearance of a contradiction. By taking a given phenomenon (economic fact) as its own truth, Political Economy confuses this phenomenon with its essence. Against this a critical immediate reading of an economic fact trapped in the empiricism of its object, Marx establishes the necessary condition of a theoretical discourse; to resolve the contradiction-in-appearance (phenomenon or economic fact) into its universal form or essence. In the speculative form of this discourse (supported by an idealist dialectic) this concept discloses an absolute identity, a unity-in-essence, a hidden reason. In its critical form (formulated by Feuerbach and adopted by Marx) a theoretical discourse discloses rather the human meaning of an essential contradiction: the essence of the phenomenon grasped by Political Economy is alienated labour:

This fact simply indicates that the object which labour produces, its product, stands opposed to it as an alien thing, as a power independent of the producer...The alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his work becomes an object, an external existence, but also that it outside him independently, alien, an autonomous power, opposed to him. The life he has given the object confronts him as hostile and alien.¹⁸

Marx derives the concept of alienated labour by applying Feuerbach's problematic of religious alienation to the worker-product relationship, and by the critical transposition of the economic categories of Political Economy into the terms of an anthropological discourse, the schema of this critical transposition (an operation not stated explicitly by Marx, but on which the possibility of his

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 289-90.

discourse is based):¹⁹.

<u>Political Economy</u>	<u>Critique</u>
worker	man
labour	species-activity
product	object
capital	estranged being
means of subsistence	means of life
exchange	community

In the course of this critical discourse (supported by a concept of 'Man') the 'economic fact' or phenomenon of impoverishment emerges as a particular form of an essential contradiction (the separation of man from his objectified essence) whose point of reference is an original unity (worker-product). Thus does Marx start from a contradiction-in-appearance (the phenomenon of impoverishment) expressed by Political Economy as an 'economic fact' so as to formulate its concept--to resolve it into its universal form, which is to say its human meaning: the separation of man from his objectified essence (expressed in the concept of 'alienated labour').²⁰

This key concept of alienated labour with which Marx thinks the whole of Political Economy so as to discover beneath all its categories the same fundamental alienation, derives its meaning from Feuerbach's critical discourse based on a philosophy of Man. As expressed by

¹⁹For the concept and an extended discussion of this critical transposition see Jacques Ranciere, 'The Concept of "Critique of Political Economy"', Theoretical Practice, Vol. 1, 1971.

²⁰The analysis of this concept of its conditions and structure has so often been attempted that our reconstruction of it is unwarranted; cf. EPM (Struik), pp. 110-17.

Marx: 'positive, humanistic and naturalistic criticism begins with Feuerbach'.²¹ Within the framework of Feuerbach's theoretical humanism, the status of concept alienated labour is commissioned by a concept of 'man' which derives from the 'social essence of man' the necessity and content of all economic concepts, of immediately given phenomena. Otherwise put, Marx resolves given social relations into their universal form the reference of which is an 'essential human being', the conceptual substratum of these relations, the essence of their phenomena.²²

With the adoption of Feuerbach's humanism, and the application of its concept of alienation, Marx's analysis of the 'worker-product' (labour-capital) realization parallels Feuerbach's critique of religious alienation, a parallel which Marx makes quite explicit:

All these consequences follow from the fact that the worker is related to the product of his labour as to an alien object...It is the same in religion. The more man attributes to God, the less he retains in himself. The worker puts his life into the object, then it no longer belongs to him but to the object. The greater this activity, the poorer is the worker.²³

This parallel leads Marx to see in private property not the cause, but rather the consequence of alienation (a position which Marx will later abandon):

on analysis of this concept [alienated labour] it becomes clear that though private property appears to be the source, the cause of alienated labour, it is rather its consequence just as the gods are originally not the cause but the effect of man's intellectual confusion. Later this relationship becomes reciprocal.²⁴

²¹WYMPS, p. 285 (reference to Feuerbach's 'Theses' and 'Principles').

²²Marx speaks over and over in the EPM of the 'essence of man', the 'human essence', 'human reality', 'the essential human being' etc., all having the same conceptual content unified by the same underlying concept.

²³WYMPS, pp. 289-90

²⁴EPM (Struik), p. 117.

It is clear, however, that this parallel has its limits, and Marx does not fall into the speculative trap of considering private property (the labour-product, capital) as a mere 'product' of false (religious) consciousness: 'religious alienation as such occurs only in the realm of consciousness, of man's inner life, but economic alienation is that of real life; its transcendence, therefore, embraces both aspects'.²⁵

With the transposition of Feuerbach's critique of religious alienation into the worker-product (labour-capital) relation, and with the subsequent extension of Feuerbach's humanist problematic from the level of consciousness to that of real life, Marx's thought confronts the theoretic space and limits of two opposed problematics, one governed by Feuerbach's concept of 'man'; and the other, by Hegel's concept of 'history'. The ambiguity of Marx's thought situated uneasily between Feuerbach's humanism and Hegel's historicism, is reflected in an unresolved relation between an anthropological and a historical concept of human nature. It is this unresolved relation that underlies the tortured text of the Paris Manuscripts, and that defines the structure of Marx's 'philosophic' encounter with Political Economy, to which we now turn.

Beyond Feuerbach Towards Hegel

The relation between religious alienation in the sphere of consciousness, and alienation in the sphere of real life, brings up a critical epistemological distinction of thought and being registered by Feuerbach as a distinction between (a) the religious object, the objectified essence of man, and as such, a thought-object (Objekt); and (b) the 'sensuous object', indifferent to and in-

²⁵Ibid., p. 136

dependent of man, and as such, a real-object (Gegenstand).²⁶ This critical distinction, rising from Kant's critique of metaphysics--of the absolute identity of speculative thought--registers two concepts of 'objectivity', whose difference is formulated by Kant, collapsed by German Idealism, and restored by Feuerbach: the objectivity (necessity, universality) of an intelligible essence, and the objectivity of the empirico-material manifold (nature).

From the speculative standpoint of Hegel's System, this Kantian-Feuerbachian or critical distinction between thought and being defines a condition of sense-experience, and hence, of human understanding; but the distinction is overcome at the level of the Idea, i.e. in Absolute Knowledge, in knowledge of the Absolute--the substratum and ground of the subject-object relation, an unconditioned, infinite self-actualising thought. Unlike experience, which is a condition of 'understanding', thought is an unconditioned universal, and as such, has the power to 'elevate itself to the absolute', i.e., know all reality and recognize itself as that reality. With this speculative extension of thought--the dialectic of reason--beyond experience towards knowledge of the Absolute, thought emerges as the 'essence' of the real, as its necessary and universal condition: the reality of thought becomes reality as thought. The subject of this unconditioned, self-actualising thought, and thus the basis of historic reason, is 'God, absolute spirit' which achieves self-consciousness through the mediative activity of man.

From the human standpoint of Feuerbach's critical discourse, this absolute identity of speculative thought with itself constitutes an illusory ideal produced by a process of abstraction--the idealist dialectic--in which, on the one hand, the predicate (reason) is separated from

²⁶Cf. FB., pp. 109, 212-25, with ref. to Feuerbach's 'Introduction' to the Essence of Christianity.

its real subject (man), hypostatized into an independent entity, and converted into a subject; and, on the other hand, the real subject is converted into the predicate of its predicate. In the 'transformative critique' of Hegel's speculative discourse, Feuerbach calls for a 'new philosophy' whose point of reference is not God, the Absolute, but rather man and humanity. From the standpoint of this 'new' philosophy, which recasts both the method and the object--and thus the entire problematic--of the speculative discourse, and rejects the metaphysical identity of thought and the real, Feuerbach faces the problem of establishing the condition of their unity, the true basis and subject of reason. Feuerbach's solution: man as a 'natural, objective being.'²⁹ As an objective, natural being, man is a synthetic unity of an active principle, the 'head,' in relation to which man is free, and a passive principle, the 'heart', in relation to which man is subject to material need or external necessity. In effect, Feuerbach formulates a form of subjective idealism, positive humanism, which in the eyes of Marx constitutes the 'unifying truth' of idealism and materialism.³⁰ The two conditions of this 'positive humanism' are (a) the essence of man's spiritual life (free, conscious

²⁹Cf. The Essence of Christianity, trans. George Eliot, (New York, Harper, 1957), pp. 4-5; FB, pp. 163-4, 172, 240ff.

³⁰Cf. EPM (Struik), p. 181; ref. to Feuerbach's 'Theses' (Hanfi, p. 164) where he formulates a theory of the 'head' and 'heart' of philosophy, in which he attempts to unite the truths of idealism and materialism. Within the schema of Feuerbach's theory as adopted by Marx the 'head' (thought) is active, spiritual, idealist, political and free; and the 'heart' (being) is passive, sensible, materialistic, social and suffering, subject to external necessity. The schema of this theory as we have seen, dominated Marx's thought from his dissertation, through the Rheinische Zeitung articles, to his discovery of the proletariat at the beginning of 1844; and as we shall see below, Marx was forced to reject it in the MSS of 1844.

and universal activity) and (b) the phenomena of man's material life (dependence on material need, and thus to external necessity). As a reference-point (cf. the 'original unity') of these conditions 'man' has both an 'active' and a 'passive' side, both a spiritual and a material existence. With this reference-point, the unity of these conditions defines a 'human' existence, and their separation, an 'inhuman' existence: the alienation of man from his essence.

Thus we have a summary exposition of Feuerbach's theoretic humanism, the point of departure for Marx's analysis of the economy of civil society. Although Marx adopted the entire problematic of this humanism, as well as its schemata and formulae, in its application to the relation labour-capital at the level of real life, Marx confronted the limits of Feuerbach's theory, and the need to think beyond it. In Feuerbach's schema, man's relation to objects of thought (eg. God) is 'active' and self-determining, while his relation to real objects is 'passive', determined by the external necessity of material circumstances. Otherwise put, man is an 'objective' being in relation to his 'head', the active principle of thought, but a 'natural' being in relation to his 'heart', the passive principle of materialism, causality or external necessity. This schema, which to date has dominated Marx's thought, is clearly inadequate for Marx. In applying Feuerbach's critique of alienation to the relation of Political Economy (i.e., labour-capital), and thus moving from the sphere of consciousness to that of real life, Marx necessarily has to conceive of Man's relation to the real world as 'active' as well as 'passive.' This is to say, man 'objectifies' his essence not only in thought-objects at the level of consciousness, but he does so in real life, in the objects of his labour.³¹ Accordingly,

³¹Cf. EPM (Struik), esp. 109-114.

Marx identifies Feuerbach's concept of 'species-life' (free, conscious and universal activity), the essence of man, with labour;

In creating an objective world [gegenständliche Welt] by his practical activity, in his labour upon inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species-being...production is his active species-life...The object of labour is, therefore, the objectification of man's species-life.³²

This identity of productive activity or labour--the objectivity of the real as the objectified essence of man's species-activity--forces Marx's thought beyond the horizon of Feuerbach's anthropological conception of human nature, and brings it into relation with Hegel's historical conception. The themes of the subject's objectification, i.e., the realization of his ideas, of his goals, and therefore of man's self-production in the labour-process, which effectively brings thought and being, freedom and necessity, spontaneity and receptivity, into a relation of concrete unity or reciprocity, are quite beyond the horizons of both Kant (viz. the dualistic separation of the theoretical and the practical) and Feuerbach (viz. his one-sided conception of man's 'passive' relation to the real world). Hegel is the first to understand how man's self-development passes through the process of self-objectification within the medium of productive activity. Thus it is that Marx remarks:

The outstanding achievement of Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind and of its final outcome, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle, is thus that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as transcendence of this alienation, that he grasps the essence of labour, and comprehends objective man--true because real man--as the outcome of man's own labour.³³

³²Ibid., p. 113.

³³Ibid., p. 177.

In this encounter with Hegel--forced upon Marx by the need to apply Feuerbach's critique of religion within the sphere of real life Marx moves from Feuerbach's anthropological conception of human nature and its ethical problematic of alienation, towards Hegel's historical conception and its problematic. The real history of objective, natural man is the history of the human essence, first of its alienation, and then of its re-appropriation. Within this historicist problematic, alienation takes place at the level of real life, and not merely in consciousness, the level at which Feuerbach posed the problem, and Hegel resolved it. This is to say, both the condition of the problem (private property) and the condition of its solution (communism) arise in history, and although the problem can be grasped in thought, it can only be solved in social praxis, at the level of real life where the problem arises. Thus comments Marx:

We see how subjectivism and objectivism, spiritualism and materialism...only lose their antithetical character and thus their existence as such antithesis in social centres ...how the resolution of the theoretical antithesis is only possible in a practical way, by virtue of the practical energy of man. Their resolution is, therefore, by no means a problem of understanding but a real problem of real life, which philosophy [i.e. Hegel] could not resolve precisely because it conceived this problem as merely a theoretical one. ³⁴

In context of this practical problem of real life, and its historicist problematic, Marx poses the problem of alienation in the form of two questions:

(1) 'What is the general nature of private property and its relation to truly human property?'

(2) 'How...does man come to alienate, to estrange, his labour? How is this estrangement rooted in the nature of human development?'³⁵

As to the first problem, Marx notes:

³⁴Ibid., p. 141

³⁵Ibid., p. 118.

We have already gone a long way to the solution of this problem by transforming the question of the origins of private property into the question of the relation of alienated labour to the course of humanity's development. For when one speaks of private property one thinks of dealing with something external to man. When one speaks of labour one is directly dealing with man himself. This new formulation of the question already contains its solution.³⁶

The condition of this solution brings up for us the question of Marx's ambiguous relation to both Feuerbach and Hegel. To begin with, in order to correctly pose the problem it is necessary to resolve the phenomenon of Political Economy (private property) into its essence ('man himself'), to transpose the central question of Political Economy into its universal form, into a discourse whose reference-point is the essential (human/inhuman) relation underlying economic facts. As a result of this critical transposition

alienated labour has resolved itself for us into two elements [labour-capital] which mutually condition one another, or which are but different expressions of one and the same relationship...Private property, as the material, summary expression of alienated labour [its inner essence], embraces both relations...(1) of the worker to work and to the product of his labour and to the non-worker, and ... (2) of the non-worker [capitalist], to the worker and to the product of his labour.³⁷

This 'essential relationship', based on the anti-thesis of labour and capital, is, however, not only a human one, but is also a historical one. Within the framework of Feuerbach's humanism, and with reference to the first question, Marx notes:

[t]he worker is the subjective manifestation of the fact that capital is man wholly lost to himself, just as capital is the objective manifestation of the fact that labour is man lost to himself.³⁸

Within the framework of Hegel's historicism, and with reference to the second question, this same relation-

³⁵ Ibid., p. 119.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 120.

ship is recast as a historic dialectic:

The movement through which [the relations between labour and capital] have to pass is: first. Unmediated or mediated unity...Second. The two in opposition. Third. Opposition of each to itself...Clash of mutual contradictions.³⁹

The second manuscript ends here, but Marx returns to the problem of this historic dialectic at the end of the next manuscript, in the context of Adam Smith's analysis of division of labour and exchange as a condition of private property, and thus as the basis of production. As to this condition, Marx observes:

to assert that the division of labour and exchange rest on private property is nothing but asserting that labour is the essence of private property--an assertion which the political economist cannot prove, and which we wish to prove for him: precisely in the fact that division of labour and exchange are embodiments of private property lies the two-fold proof, on the one hand, that human life required private property for its realization, and on the other hand, that it now requires the supersession of private property.⁴⁰

Marx here relates ambiguously, on the one hand, to Hegel's analysis of alienation as a condition of historical necessity, and thus as a rational process, and on the other hand, to Feuerbach's analysis of alienation as an inhuman and thus irrational condition. The ambiguity, and the unresolved relation, of these two problematics is determined by the way Marx poses the problem, namely by seeing the formation of private property (under the conditions of division of labour and exchange) as a result of alienation (a position abandoned by the time of The German Ideology.) In actual fact, neither the necessity of the problem (private property) nor of its solution (communism) are theoretically justified except with a general reference to a philosophic concept of a historic dialectic (i.e., within Hegel's historicist problematic) or an ethical conception

³⁹ Ibid., p. 126.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 163.

of a violated human essence (i.e., within Feuerbach's humanist problematic). The rationale of such a theoretical justification, or the principle of its explanation, emerges not as Marx would have it--from a 'wholly empirical analysis'--but through a Feuerbachian critique of the Hegelian dialectic, a problem to which we now turn.

Marx's Feuerbachian Critique of Hegel's Dialectic

The encounter within Marx's thought of Philosophy and Political Economy is defined by the respective conditions of the inversely-related problematics of Hegel's historicism and Feuerbach's humanism, and by Marx's adoption of both the method and object of a 'positive-critical' discourse clearly inspired by Feuerbach. The condition of this critical discourse--the transformative critique of the Hegelian dialectic--is formulated by Marx in the section that follows upon his analysis of the historic problem of alienation ('private property and communism') so as to 'explain and justify the ideas presented'.⁴¹ The reference-point for this method of explanation-justification is the critique of the Hegelian dialectic completed by Feuerbach, who, Marx comments, is the only one who has a serious, critical attitude to the Hegelian dialectic, and who has made genuine discoveries in this field. He is in fact the true conqueror of the old philosophy.⁴²

The conditions of Feuerbach's 'great achievement' are: (1) 'The proof that philosophy is nothing else but religion rendered into thought and expounded by thought, hence equally to be condemned as another form....of the alienation of the essence of man';

(2) 'His opposing to the negation of the negation, which claims to be absolute positive, the self-supportive positive, positively based on itself';

⁴¹Ibid., p. 171.

⁴²Ibid., p. 172. Marx refers to a need for a

(3) 'The establishment of true materialism and real science [by making the social relationship of] man to man [the fundamental principle of his theory]'.⁴³

The first two closely related conditions of Feuerbach's 'theoretical revolution'--expounded as a critique of the Hegelian dialectic, and supported by an analysis of the last chapter of Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind--are particularly revealing in that they establish the theoretical structure of Marx's own critique, the problematic of his method. In terms of these two conditions of Marx's critique strikes at the very foundation of the 'Hegelian philosophy as a whole', namely the principle of identity whose problematic governs both the method and object of speculative thought, and of their necessary relation. The principle of identity of opposites, rescued by Hegel from Kant's devastating critique, gives a rational appearance to the speculative masterpiece which serves as the undemonstrable, presupposed point of departure for Absolute Idealism, namely the postulate that 'being is thought'. From the speculative standpoint of this Idea, presupposed in advance as true but presented as a 'mediated result', Hegel converts the objectivity of the real into the estranged, alienated form of a self-identical thought, which is to say, he re-

settling of accounts with the Hegelian dialectic and Hegelian philosophy as a whole...absolutely necessary, a task not yet performed' (ibid., p. 64), for a 'critical settling of accounts with the mother of young Hegelianism' (ibid., p. 171). These aperçus are revealing in that they give the lie to those interpreters of Marx's thought who turn to the 1843 Critique for precisely such a 'settling of accounts' with the Hegelian dialectic; and secondly, in that Marx clearly turns to Feuerbach for the 'method' of such a critique, with reference to the 'Theses', and in detail, the 'Principles' had in principle 'overthrown the old dialectic' (ibid., p. 171).

⁴³Ibid., p. 172.

duces the opposition between thought and being to an opposition within thought.⁴⁴

With explicit reference to Feuerbach's critique, Marx here recognizes a 'double error' which he proceeds to submit to general criticism. In the first place,

the appropriation of man's essential powers which have become...alien objects is thus...only an appropriation occurring in--pure thought, i.e....in abstraction; it is the appropriation of these objects as thoughts and as movements of thought.⁴⁵

In the second place,

the vindication of the objective world for man...this appropriation or the insight into this process, appears in Hegel...in the form 'of'...spiritual entities, for only spirit is the true essence of man...⁴⁶

As a consequence,

the whole history of the alienation-process and the whole process of its retraction is...nothing but the history of the products of abstract thought, of logical, speculative thought.⁴⁷

Furthermore,

the estrangement, which therefore forms the real interest of this alienation and of the Aufhebung of this alienation, is the opposition of...consciousness and self-consciousness, of the object and subject--that is to say, it is the opposition within thought itself.⁴⁸

As a result: 'just as the entity, the object, appears as an entity of thought, so also the subject is always consciousness of self-consciousness', which means that the outcome of the process is only the 'identity of self-

⁴⁴Cf. Marx's reconstruction of Feuerbach explanation of the Hegelian dialectic, the 'negation of the negation' as 'only...a contradiction of philosophy with itself--as the philosophy which affirms theology after having denied it and which it therefore affirms in opposition to itself' (ibid).

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 175.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 175.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 176

⁴⁸Ibid.

consciousness--absolute knowledge--the movement of abstract thought not directed outwards but proceeding within itself, i.e., the dialectic of pure thought is the result'.⁴⁹

Marx concludes:

This movement, in its abstract form as dialectic 'negation of the negation' is regarded therefore as truly human life, and since it is nevertheless an abstraction, an alienation of human life, it is regarded as a divine process, and this is the divine process of mankind.⁵⁰

In other words, the real history of man is degraded into phenomenal appearance, a screen behind which unfolds the mystery of a more profound esoteric process, the dialectic of the Idea, whose subject is not man, a natural, objective being, but rather, 'a subject that knows itself as absolute self-consciousness [and] is therefore God, absolute spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting Idea.'⁵¹ As a result: 'real man and real nature become mere predicates, symbols of this concealed unreal man and unreal nature'.⁵²

There is no need to further focus or paraphrase Marx's critique of speculative idealism. It is all found in Feuerbach, summarized by us above. The crux of Marx's Feuerbachian criticism is that Hegel grasps the 'dialectic or negativity' as the principle of historical development (cf. 'the self-creation of man as a process...objectification as loss of object, as alienation, and as the Aufhebung of this alienation') but that he mystifies it by way of a speculative transposition of the real history of man into a 'dialectic of pure thought'.⁵³ By posing the problem of alienation from the speculative standpoint of a pre-supposed identity presented as a mediated result (the Absolute Idea),

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 176.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid

⁵³Ibid., pp. 173-89.

Hegel transforms contradictions of real life ('real, objective chains existing outside me') into a struggle within thought ('into merely ideal, merely subjective chains existing in me'), giving the problem thereby the illusion of a solution, a solution (the re-appropriation of the alienated essence) within one aspect of the contradiction--thought.⁵⁴ In this speculative presentation the real history of man is converted into the mysterious movement of abstract thought, a struggle between consciousness and self-consciousness whose original identity is restored in the 'mediated' unity of Absolute Knowledge.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Cf. Feuerbach's parallel argument in 'Theses' (Hanfi, pp. 157-67) and Principles' (*ibid.*, pp. 211-36); also see 'The Mystery of Speculative Construction' (The Holy Family) where Marx elaborates on the mental operation involved in the 'speculative presentation': to convert particular entities into different members of a life-process, to discover 'mystical interconnections' among them, and to discover in them the 'self-activity of the absolute subject' (cf. Easton & Guddat, pp. 370-73). To sum up this operation, likewise criticized in the German Ideology and the Poverty of Philosophy as the basic mechanism of 'idology', the essence of the speculative presentation is '(to conceive) Substance as Subject, as inner process, an 'Absolute Person' (*ibid.*, p. 373).

⁵⁵Cf. EPM (Struik), p. 188, with reference to Hegel's 'formal and abstract conception of man's action of self-creation or self-objectification': 'subject and predicate are...related to each other in absolute reversal--a mystical subject-object or a subjectivity reaching beyond the object--the absolute subject as a process, as subject alienating itself and returning from alienation into itself but at the same time retracting this alienation into itself, and the subject as this process; a pure restless resolving within itself'. Marx here makes clear the most significant point of Hegel's conception of the 'Absolute': it is the process itself in the totality of its conditions. There is no subject outside the process in its totality; the process only has a subject in the sense that it is itself this subject: the process is absolute. Hegel here translates into a philosophical category a concept apparently borrowed from the biological sciences the concept of a process without a subject.

Inevitably enough the focus of Marx's critique fails on the method by which Hegel presents a pre-supposed identity as a mediated result, and comes to his solution--the re-appropriation of the alienated essence in the restored identity of consciousness and self-consciousness, in Absolute Knowledge--namely, the 'dialectic of reason' whose structure ('the negation of the negation') is compressed into the double function assigned to the 'act of Aufhebung'.⁵⁶ As to this dialectic Marx noted the 'peculiar role' played by the 'act of Aufhebung in which denial and preservation--denial and affirmation--are bound together' to wit:

In Hegel...the negation of the negation is not only the confirmation of the true essence, effected precisely through negation of the pseudo-essence. With him, the negation of the negation is the confirmation of the pseudo-essence, or of the self-estranged essence in its denial; or it is the denial of this pseudo-essence as an objective being dwelling outside man and independent of him, and its transformation into the subject.⁵⁷

The double logic (Aufhebung) of the speculative construction, is, Marx observes: 'the germ, the uncritical positivism and the equally uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works--that philosophic dissolution and restoration of the existing world'.⁵⁸ The 'false positivism' or hidden mystifying criticism' supported by Hegel's dialectic lies in the fact that it 'leaves its object standing in the real world' while 'believing that it has really overcome it'.⁵⁹ The 'Aufhebung' of alienation, Marx concludes, 'is...nothing but an abstract, empty supersession of that empty abstraction--the negation of the negation'.⁶⁰ Within this dia-

⁵⁶Cf. the structure of this dialectic see EPM (Struik) pp. 174, 185-89. In Marx's exposition of Hegel's Encyclopedic Logic he gives a literal transposition of Feuerbach's analysis (cf. 'Theses', FB, pp. 157-67).

⁵⁷EPM, p. 185.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 175-76.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 186.

lectic 'the rich, living, sensuous, concrete activity of self-objectification is reduced to its mere abstraction--absolute negativity.'⁶¹

These aperçus against the very structure of the Hegelian dialectic--the negation of the negation--allow us, incidentally, to reject the traditional interpretation that conceives of Marx's relation to Hegel on the basis of an alleged separation of his method (the dialectic) from his System (absolute idealism) with a 'materialist' application of the 'revolutionary' method freed from the 'conservative' System.⁶² Although we cannot here treat of the questions raised by this problem it should be clear that the attempt to free Hegel's method from the metaphysic of its System is as peculiar as it is futile, given the fact that Hegel's method, the dialectic, is the precise and necessary means by which he secures a theoretical relation between the idealist principle on which his System is based and its theoretic objects, the Absolute--the means by which he can present a pre-supposed, apriori idea as a mediated result. On the basis of Engels' exposition Marx's metaphorical formulation of a 'materialist inversion' of the Hegelian

⁶¹Ibid., p. 189.

⁶²This standard interpretation relates back to a conception current among the Young Hegelians in the early 1840's (as a condition for the adaptation of Hegelianism to liberalism) and authorized by Engels himself both in his Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy. Cf. above, Chapter three, pp. 90-94; and below, Chapter nine, pp. 407ff.

dialectic, of the extraction of its 'rational kernel' from its 'mystical shell', is traditionally interpreted as the condition of a concept of a method freed from the metaphysic of an idealist system.⁶³ If one takes the formula of Marx's metaphor as the condition of such a concept, one faces a curious problem indeed: How does one 'invert' the structure of a 'negation of the negation'--the circle of a self-related, abstract Idea?

To escape the circle of this abstract Idea (to deduce reality from the concept, or reduce reality to the concept) so as to touch the 'dialectic' of the real history eluded and mystified by Hegel's speculative construction, Marx rejects the very structure of Hegel's method--of a speculative logic or idealist dialectic--namely, the negation of the negation. We treat of this problem below (chapter nine), but we can point to the first condition of Marx's rejection of the Hegelian dialectic as a method of thought: the abandonment of the speculative standpoint of a pre-supposed identity of thought and being, and the adoption of the critical standpoint of their distinction. Philosophy must begin not with itself (thought) but with its 'true antithesis': real being. As Marx puts it:

⁶³Cf. Marx's Afterword to the second German edition of Capital (vol 1., pp. 19-20): 'My dialectical method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite... With (Hegel, the dialectic) is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell. In its mystified form, dialectic...seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it...is in its essence critical and revolutionary'. The key question is : what is extracted from Hegel's dialectic in its 'materialist' inversion? a certain understanding or insight into the nature or process of historical development? Its method of analysis? Does one apply the same method to a different object? or a different method to the same object? For the present we leave this question open.

abstraction comprehending itself as abstraction knows itself to be nothing; it must abandon itself--abandon abstraction--and so it arrives at an entity which is its exact opposite--nature.⁶⁴

With reference to the third condition of Feuerbach's 'great achievement' ('the establishment of true materialism and real science') Marx here comes into contact with the fundamental principle of materialism established by Feuerbach's critical discourse, the basis thrust of which was to strike the secret and mystery of Hegel's speculative thought or idealist dialect, namely that Hegel had inverted the 'true' relation between the subject and its predicate, abstracted the latter from its material conditions, hypostatized it, and converted it into a subject. The major point of this critique of Hegel was to demonstrate that its self-presupposition, thought had overstepped its 'natural boundaries' a judgement registered by Marx's criticism of Hegel's tendency to reduce the objectivity of the real into the estranged, alienated form of thought, a speculative illusion that leads Hegel to confuse 'objectivity' and 'alienation'.⁶⁵ Against Hegel's tendency to deprive the objectivity of the real of 'any independence, any essentiality vis-à-vis self-consciousness' Marx insists that whenever real, corporal man...establishes his real, objective essential powers as alien objects by his externalization, it is not the act of positioning which is the subject in this process; it is the subjectivity of objective essential powers, whose action, therefore, must also be...objective..the activity of an objective, natural being.⁶⁶

This 'objective, natural being', the subject of history, is 'man', the conception of which is established by Marx in terms of Feuerbach's 'naturalism or humanism', the 'unifying truth' of idealism and materialism:

⁶⁴EPM (Struik), p. 189. Cf. Feuerbach's analysis on which Marx's exposition is based see above, chapter three, pp.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 178-80.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 180-81.

Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being...he is on the one hand endowed with natural powers of life--he is an active natural being..On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited creature...That is to say, the objects of his instincts exist outside him, as objects independent of him; yet these objects are objects that he needs--essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers.⁶⁷

This 'consistent naturalism or humanism' has a two-fold condition: 'man' as an 'objective, natural being', a being who is on the one hand, active and free, and on the other, a passive, suffering being subject to the external necessity of material needs. Marx here relates directly to Feuerbach's philosophy of man thought through the schema of a passive heart/active head, the 'objective' condition of man's existence--his 'active' relation to the world--is identified with the 'head' (i.e., at the level of consciousness), whereas the 'natural' condition of man's existence--his 'practical' relation to the world--is identified with the passive 'heart' conditioned by necessity. In other words, the objective or active is theoretical, whereas the natural or material (practical) is passive. Marx's conception of 'consistent naturalism' ('real humanism') clearly revises Feuerbach on this point, and it does so with reference to the 'positive aspect of Hegel's treatment of alienation--the self-objectification of man as a process. Marx's position in brief is that man's 'practical' relation to the world is both passive (viz. Feuerbach's position) and active (viz. Hegel's position). This position suggests a conception which in our opinion gives rise to a new concept, 'the social relations of production', which in turn will constitute the condition of Marx's escape from the problematic both of Hegel's historicism and Feuerbach's humanism.

To anticipate our discussion of this point: within the theoretic space of Feuerbach and Hegel's inversely-

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 181.

related humanism and historicism, and supported with studies by Weitling, Hess and Engels, Marx re-structures the concept of its problem (private property) and of its solution (communism), both of which arise in history.⁶⁸

⁶⁸Cf. the influence of Weitling, Hess and Engels as well as of other French and English socialists, see Cornu, op.cit., pp. 569-73. Marx himself notes in the 1844 MSS: 'It goes without saying that besides the French and English Socialists I have also used German socialist works. The only original German works of substance in this science, however, other than Weitling's writings--are the essays by Hess published in Einundzwanzig Bogen and Engels' 'Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy' in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher... (Preface, EPM (Struik), p. 63.

cf. Engels' essay, and its influence on Marx see Cornu, pp. 304-22. Engels brought into focus the irrational and inhuman character of capitalism, and argued that its internal contradictions result in a class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which leads towards the communist revolution. Engels' study allowed Marx to relate the capitalist system to the general development of history, and to conceive of its suppression as a result of the historic dialectic.

cf. Hess's essay, see Cornu, pp. 136-42. In his 'philosophy of action' Hess demonstrated that human activity determined the thought and life of man. In his 'Essence of Money' Hess expounded the nature and effect of alienation in bourgeois society, and showed that religious alienation is but an ideological reflex of a more fundamental alienation in bourgeois society in which the workers are excluded from private property. The proletariat, Hess argues, alienates its essential activity, its labour, in commodities which it produces but does not own, and that, transformed into money, into capital, dominates him as an alien force.

Marx took in part Hess's conception of the nature of human activity and alienation, but gave it a 'materialist' character, as supported by Engels, and as Cornu demonstrates very well, by a book written by W. Schultz, The Movement of Production (Zurich, 1843). Cf. Schultz, see Cornu, 571-3. Schultz explained historical development through production, and showed how different historical periods are determined by the development of material needs, whose satisfaction leads to the incessant transformation of the economy and social organization of society. Schultz both criticizes Political Economy for being interested only

The Problem: Alienation in Private Property

Marx's critique of Political Economy, the science of bourgeois society, and thus, to be precise, of the system of private property, follows upon a thorough study of the writings of Quesnay, Ricardo, Say and Schultz among others.⁶⁹ In this connection we will sum up the central argument of Auguste Cornu's studied presentation, but adapt

in the world of 'things', for failing to see that the basis of production is the nature of man; the Left-Hegelians for being enclosed by abstractions from life; socialists and communists for being interested only in the material aspects of production/consumption to the neglect of intellectual, political and social activity of individuals.

In Cornu's reconstruction, Marx, in his critique of the capitalist system, took from Engels his conception of the contradictory character of the system, which itself provokes its own suppression; from Hess, a reinforced conception of labour as the essential element of human life; and of the socio-economic character of alienation (and, Cornu, could add, of the 'power of money' in bourgeois society); from Schults, the idea of the development of production; and that the division of labour determines the succession of the forms of society and the state, as well as of the class struggle (in this interpretation, Schultz does indeed develop a materialist conception of history that prefigures Marx's presentation in The German Ideology).

We will not quarrel with these evaluations of critical influences on Marx. Be they as they may, we will concentrate on the underlying problematic, governed by Hegel and Feuerbach, within which Marx's thought is unified.

⁶⁹Cf. Cornu, p. 569, n.8 for listing of works analyzed and extracted by Marx. Of particular relevance is Cornu's exposition of the importance of a now-forgotten economist, Wilhelm Schultz, the author of Die Bewegung de Produktion (The Movement of Production), 'an historical and statistical study destined to provide the basis for a new science of the state and of society', from which Marx derived the primary elements of historical materialism (Cornu, pp. 571-73). For the details of Marx's critique of Political Economy, see Cornu, pp. 574-90.

it to our understanding of the philosophic problematic underlying Marx's thought.

In the capitalist order based on the system of private property labour has the character of alienation, which makes possible the free, conscious and universal activity in which man realizes his 'essential being'. The product of labour within this system is converted into a commodity, into an object in which man alienates his essential activity or creative force. As a result: instead of man dominating the world of 'things' he is reduced to its slave. With labour under the commodity-production of the capitalist system transformed into alienated labour, it loses its essential character and its social function, and the relations between man lose their 'human' character as they are transformed into exchange relations between 'things', the product of alienated labour.

This 'reification' of social relations, which determines the general alienation of all men irrespective of class, forms the basis both for a critique of Political Economy as an apology of the capitalist system of private property, and a critique of this system itself, of bourgeois society. The basis of this critique is the speculative, a-critical standpoint of Political Economy, which presupposes the system of private property in the same way as Hegel presupposes the Idea.⁷⁰ In pre-supposing private property as a natural, and thus necessary condition of production, Political Economy argues that production has as its object not the creation of use-value, but of exchange-value. Since Political Economy ties, the normal basis of social relations, it takes as its point of departure the inhuman, alienated form of social relations--'exchange and commerce'--

⁷⁰This critique of Political Economy, its standpoint based on the premise of private property, is found in all of Marx's later writings as of the Poverty of Philosophy (1847) where it becomes the basis of a fundamental criticism of Proudhon for moving within the horizon of this same unquestioned premise.

which converts all 'human' (social) relations between men into relations of 'private interests'.⁷¹ Since production-for-exchange converts the products of labour into an object for another, into a means for acquiring what others have produced, it no longer realizes the 'personality' turned into relations of exchange, into commerce of commodities. As a consequence of this transformation of the labour-product into an exchange-value, and of social relations into relations between objects independent of, and alien to man, man becomes subordinated to the God of Political Economy, the system of private property--to the power of his own labour-product, capital. Obligated to sell his labour, reduced to an element of production.⁷²

In this first critique of the capitalist system, the effects of which we have already referred to, Marx employs a concept of man which is both ethical and historical: man alienates in the production of exchange-value (expressed in relations of commerce) his human essence, labour, which can only be affirmed in the production of use-value, the objectification of his essence. The point of reference for this distinction use-value/exchange-value (read: the objectification/alienation of the human essence) is a concept of man whose ambiguous relation to two diverse sources determines the structure of Marx's critique

⁷¹Cf. 'Money and Alienated Labour' (from Excerpt Notes of 1844 on James Mill); p. 272: 'Political Economy understands the social essence (Gemeinwesen) of man, the self-activating human essence...in the form of exchange and commerce...It is evident that Political Economy establishes an alienated form of social intercourse as the essential, original, and definitive human form'. In this observation, which is echoed at various points throughout the 1844 MSS with particular reference to Adam Smith and Destutt de Tracy's concept of society, Marx comes into direct contact with the essays and views of Weitling and Hess, as well as with his own On the Jewish Question. See in particular MSS 111: 'The Meaning of Human Requirements' (Struik, 154- 63).

⁷²Cf. Cornu, pp. 574-96.

of the capitalist system and thus, Marx's solution to the problem of 'civil society'.

This point requires several observations, particularly since it speaks to Cornu's contention that we have in this encounter with Political Economy not only the formation of Marx's concept of praxis, but also the emergence of historical materialism.

We observe, first of all, that Marx grasps the central concept of Political Economy -- production or labour-- as a philosophic category, and that the reference for this category is found in Hegel.⁷³ In Hegel, the 'substance' of the world is the objective form of Spirit, and as such, the outward manifestation (Ausserungen) of life, the 'substantive basis' for 'universality', the essence of human consciousness.⁷⁴ For man to raise himself to universality, i.e., to realize his true nature as Spirit, unit with the social substance (objectification of 'personality') is essential: 'It is in the ethical [social] order that individuals are actually in possession of their own essence or their own inner universality'.⁷⁵ This is where 'production' comes in. Production relates to 'personality' (the true nature or essential being of man) in that it is the mediative activity through which 'property' comes to exist; and property is the 'embodiment of personality' through which alone it achieves objective reality.⁷⁶ Property is the 'first embodiment of freedom' in that through 'possession of property' an objective domain comes into existence for

⁷³Although our interpretation of the Hegel-Marx relation is much different, we support our following discussion with reference to : Lukács, The Young Hegel (chapter four, concluding section); H. Marcuse, 'The Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labour', Telos 16 (1973); K. Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche (Part two, 11, 1-3). Cf. our introductory exposition in chapter two.

⁷⁴Cf. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, par. 264 on 'spirit'; Phenomenology of Mind, p. 514 on the 'essence' of human consciousness, 'universality' (Allgemeinheit).

⁷⁵PR, par. 153.

⁷⁶PR, pars. 51, 41, 45.

the individual in which he can act freely: 'I as free will...for the first time am an actual will, i.e., am actually free, only when such a domain exists for me'.⁷⁷

Personality becomes actual only when one 'translates... his freedom into an external sphere' by acquiring property.⁷⁸ In production one acquires property by 'taking possession of 'things', i.e, in the appropriation of objects on which 'I impose a form' so that 'the thing's determinate character as mine (private property) acquires an independent externality'.⁷⁹

The analysis of production as an identity of personality and property, supported by an analysis of 'labour' in the Phenomenology of Mind and of the 'Life process' in the Logic, clearly suggests the similar identity established by Marx: 'labour, life-activity, productive life'.⁸⁰ As Marx puts it: production is the 'direct activity of personality' through which the individual 'reproduces himself', activity which constitutes the 'objectification (outward manifestation) the objective world becomes for man in society the 'world of man's essential powers', a 'human reality' in which 'man himself becomes the object...which confirm(s) and realize(s) his individuality'.⁸² Marx here translates Hegel's concept of production (personality-property) through the problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, and equates the 'species-activity' of an 'essential being' with the historic process of man's self-development, the realization of the human

⁷⁶PR, pars. 51, 41, 45.

⁷⁷PR, par. 45.

⁷⁸PR, par. 41.

⁷⁹PR, par. 56

⁸⁰EPM (Struik), p. 113.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 36, 114.

⁸²Ibid., p. 140.

essence. As with Hegel, property as such is for Marx essential to the realization of the individual's personality, and Marx urges its 'genuine appropriation', i.e., property released from its alienation (appropriation by another) in accordance with its essential function (self-development). One could say, in effect, that Marx accepts the 'essential connection' between property and personal self-development in production, but rejects the 'form' of property which sees 'labour...only in the form of acquisitive (wage-earning) activity', and whose 'purpose is merely the increase of wealth'--production for exchange.⁸³

In this rejection Marx leans on Moses Hess's interpretation of ideas derived from Rousseau and Feuerbach to diametrically oppose Hegel's solution to the problem of 'civil society'. Hegel defines the possible relations of production within a system of private property as a 'mode of possession' of which he recognizes three ('enjoyment', 'use', 'alienation'), which Marx will later reformulate as three 'modes of production' (slave, feudal, bourgeois), and of which the first two have as their object the creation of use-value as opposed to exchange-value, the object of the latter. In Hegel's speculative presentation, the transition from the feudal to the bourgeois modes of property-possession (from its 'use' to its 'alienation') represents a 'rational advance', although ultimately he will effect a compromise between both forms of property as reciprocal conditions of a rational state.⁸⁴ The rationality of this alienation (*veräusserung*) consists in the fact that in the mutual satisfaction of each other's needs (production for exchange) all individuals in bourgeois society surrender the 'use' of

⁸³Ibid., pp. 71-72.

⁸⁴Cf. our introductory exposition in chapter two. The details of the following argument, and the points of its interpretation, are found in our introduction on Hegel's solution to the problem of knowledge, the main lines of which we here summarize.

things in exchange for their 'value', the universal (and thus, for Hegel, the 'concept' of property) produced by the 'abstraction' of labour within a system of needs. It is precisely through surrender or mutual alienation that all individuals participate in the universal, whose mediated result is a compulsive process (capital formation) of which man is not the conscious subject, but rather the unconscious support. Although the 'phenomenology' of this universal (the world market) appears to these individuals as an external necessity', philosophic reflection on the essence of their phenomena reveals the inner necessity of an essential process, the dialectic of the Idea--the 'cunning of reason'.

Hegel's conclusion--that the mediative process of alienation discloses the form of a hidden rationality--is supported by the observation that in the alienated mode of possession (production for exchange) one does not surrender one's personality as such, nor its substantive basis (family property) but only what is already external--property as a 'thing'. For Hegel the submission (Veräußerung) of one's labour and the transfer (Entäußerung) of its product to another involves a transaction advantageous to both parties, to all members of civil society, in that each surrenders the 'use' of property in exchange for its 'value'---the universal in which all individuals participate, albeit unknowingly. In effect, as Rousseau would say with reference to the Social Contract, each individual by alienating his individual rights to that of the whole, and surrendering all particular claims against the state, has it all restored to him in a more rational form.

Marx rejects the rationality of this economic exchange, the labour-contract within a system of needs, both in its 'scientific' form (the doctrine of Political Economy) and in its 'philosophic' justification by Hegel. For Marx,

who in this respect takes up a view held by Rousseau and supported by Feuerbach, the practice of Veräusserung and its result, Entäusserung, does not involve a rational process or an advantageous exchange, given that 'the more objects the worker producer, the fewer he can possess, and the more he falls under the sway of his product, capital'.⁹⁰ In labour for another, 'the activity of the worker is not his own spontaneous activity ('free or self-directed'). It is another's activity and the loss of his own (forced labour, external, alien activity)'.⁹¹ Separated from his product, man sacrifices or surrenders what is essential to him, his essence--a thesis for which Marx finds support in Hegel's own text, to wit:

By alienating the whole of my time, as crystallized in my work and everything I produced, I would make into another's property the substance of my being, my universal activity and actuality, my personality.⁹²

The result 'The alienation (Entäusserung) of personality and its substantive being, whether this alienation occurs unconsciously or intentionally'.⁹³

Hegel himself qualifies the historic condition of this alienation:

I can alienate to someone else and I can give him the use of my abilities for a restricted period, because, on the strength of this restriction, my abilities acquire an external relation to the totality and universality of my being.⁹⁴

Marx, however, rejects this qualification and takes the submission of one's labour to another as the necessary and sufficient condition of its alienation from the worker. When a 'thing' is veräussert

⁹⁰Cf. EPM (Struik), p. 108.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 111.

⁹²Cf. PR, par. 67.

⁹³PR, par. 66.

⁹⁴PR, par. 67.

not only that his labour becomes an object, assumes an external existence, but that it exists independently, outside himself, and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power. The life which he has given to the object sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force.⁹⁶

In this concept of alienated labour Marx clearly associates the Entäusserung (renunciation, transfer) of labour with its Entfremdung (estrangement, loss of object), an association which is surely suggested by a reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind against his Philosophy of Right. Whereas in the latter Hegel speaks of the Entäusserung of labour as a condition of a rational process, the formation of capital, in the former he speaks of the Entfremdung and Entäusserung of personality, again as a condition of a rational process--the emergence of the state. In the Entäusserung (unreserved surrender, relinquishment or self-sacrifice) of one's 'particularity of need', of 'will... qua will', of one's 'independent existence' to the state, the individual overcomes his Entfremdung, and elevates himself to universality, which is to say, he becomes an indivisible part of an integral whole, a rational state.⁹⁷ Comparison of Hegel's two texts suggests the relation personality-labour which leads Marx to associate the submission of one's labour to another (Entäusserung) with its estrangement (Entfremdung), whose concept as we have seen is commissioned by the problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, but is brought within Hegel's framework of analysis--history.⁹⁸

⁹⁶EPM (Struik), 108; revised translation according to Bottomore, Karl Marx: Early Writings (New York; McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 122-3.

⁹⁷Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology of Mind, pp. 517, 528.

⁹⁸Marx's association of Entfremdung and Entäusserung is further suggested by Fichte who uses Entäusserung where Hegel uses Entfremdung--with reference to the 'externalization' of Spirit, its estrangement from its own object, cf. Lukács, The Young Hegel, pp. 658-59). Bottomore is one who notes that Marx makes no 'systematic distinction' between the two concepts (Early Works, xix). Cf. EPM (Struik), pp. 126-32.

Within this framework of analysis, the historic condition of alienation is provided by private property in its 'real movement' from an 'individual, natural mode' to its 'universal' existence as a 'world-historical power completing its domination over man'.⁹⁹ In short: the formation of the capitalist system of private property, of which the worker is the 'subjective' manifestation, and the capitalist is the 'objective' manifestation, but neither, one could say, is the subject.¹ This system, Marx adds, has to be grasped in its 'active connection', its 'internal relation', the dialectic of labour and capital:

Labour, the subjective essence of private property as exclusion of property; and capital, objective labour as exclusion of labour, constitute private property as its developed state of contradiction--hence a dynamic relationship [historic dialectic] moving to its resolution.²

What conclusion can we draw from this discussion? In this analysis of the capitalist system and its ideolo-

⁹⁹EPM (Struik), p. 131. This 'world-historical power' refers to the 'world market'; cf. Marx, the German Ideology, p. 429: 'In history up to the present it is certainly an empirical fact that separate individuals with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity have become more and more enslaved to a power alien to them (a hardship they conceive as chicanery on the part of the so-called World Spirit, etc), a power which has become increasingly great and finally turns out to be the world-market'. (marx's parenthesis). Cf. further, ibid., pp. 427-30. Within a speculative presentation (of the World Spirit, etc.) of this 'empirical fact', and to which Marx may refer, Hegel observes" 'This inner dialectic of civil society--to push beyond its own limits and seek markets, and so its necessary means of subsistence, in other lands which are either deficient in the goods it has over-produced, or else generally backward in industry, etc.' (PR, par. 246). This is a case of Hegel's 'sophistic mastery' in presenting within a 'speculative presentation' and 'actual, presentation, a presentation of the latter itself' (Marx, Holy Family, in WYMPS, p.373).

¹EPM (Struik), p. 120.

²Ibid., 132.

gical support, Political Economy, Marx departs from principles established by both Hegel and Feuerbach. From Hegel, Marx derives a dialectical conception of historic development, as determined by objective laws that apply under specific conditions (division of labour and exchange), and whose process alienates man from his social essence. Contrary to Hegel, who transposes this real process into the alienated form of a more essential thought-process, and who suppresses this alienation by conceiving it as the phenomena of an inner essence, a hidden reason, Marx agrees with Feuerbach that man's life-situation in bourgeois society is characterized by alienation, and that its abolition is a necessary condition for full, human emancipation. Marx differs from Feuerbach, however, by posing the problem of alienation not in its religious form, at the level of consciousness, but in its fundamental socio-economic form, at the level of real life. Within the framework of principles established by both Hegel and Feuerbach, Marx conceives of private property in two senses, both as a 'dynamic relationship moving towards its resolution', and as the condition of an alienated essence; as a historic process, and an inhuman condition. The specific form in which Marx integrates these two senses, the respective conditions of a scientific and an ethical conception of history, allows Marx to conclude:

precisely in the fact that division of labour and exchange are embodiments of private property, lies the two-fold proof, on the one hand, that human life required private property for its realization, and on the other hand, that it now requires the suppression of private property.³

The necessity of this suppression (the condition of man's re-humanization) is commissioned by the ethical problematic of Feuerbach's humanism, but it is secured by Hegel's dialectic of history, whose necessary product is communism, the 'real' antithesis of private property, and as such, the 'practical' solution to the historic problem of

³Ibid., p. 163.

alienation. Just as the condition of the problem, private property, appears in history, the necessary condition for its solution, communism, is a product of the historic dialectic.

The Solution: The Suppression of Private Property--Communism

Before coming to his own conception of communism, which Marx for the first time represents as his own position, Marx settles accounts with its various forms extant in the 1840's--'crude communism', 'directed at Babouvism, was already anticipated in his 1843 correspondence with Ruge⁴, but in the Paris Manuscripts Marx goes into more detail. According to Marx, this form of communism is 'only a generalization and consummation of (the) relationship (of private property)', and as such, its 'abstract negation' rather than its 'real appropriation':

For the sole purpose of life and existence is direct, physical possession. The task of the labourer is not done away with, but extended to all men. The relationship of private property persists as the relationship of the community to the world of things....In negating the personality of man in every sphere, this type of communism is really nothing but the logical expression of private property, which is its negation.⁵

In this critique of 'crude' communism Marx adopts the attitude shared by most of the other German (Left Hegelian) emigres in Paris in the face of French communism, and in particular, by Feuerbach and Hess, the ideologues of a 'noble' communism, a 'true' socialism. Although Marx will at various points of time continue to refer to Babouvism as 'crude', in the German Ideology he mocks this very same criticism directed by 'true socialism' against 'crude communism':

⁴See our discussion above in Chapter six.

⁵EPM (Struik), p. 133. Cf. the specific doctrines on which Marx bases this judgement see ibid., pp. 133-34.

French communism is admittedly 'crude' because it is the theoretical expression of a real opposition...As a matter of fact, these gentlemen (the 'true socialists') display a remarkable delicacy of feeling. Everything shocks them, especially matter; they complain everywhere of crudity.⁶

On the other hand, although Marx at this point accepts much of Hess's 'philosophic communism' and shares the attitude of 'true socialism' towards Babouvism, it is not because of a 'delicacy of feeling' which retreats from 'crude reality'. Marx also levels a critique against the idealism of 'true socialism' or 'philosophic communism' the antithesis, as it were, of 'crude communism': 'In order to abolish the idea of private property, the idea of communism is completely sufficient. It takes actual communist action to abolish actual private property'.⁷ In this connection, Marx even comes through with a formula which anticipates his renowned eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach:

we see how the resolution of the theoretical antithesis is only possible in a practical way, by virtue of the practical energy of man. Their resolution is therefore by no means merely a problem of knowledge, but a real problem of life, which philosophy could not solve precisely because it conceived this problem as merely a theoretical one.⁸

Finally, Marx repeats his earlier critique of the 'immature' (utopian) communism of Cabet, Villegardelle, etc., which 'seeks a historical proof for itself...among disconnected historical phenomena opposed to private property, tearing single phases from the historical process and focusing attention on them as proofs of its historical pedigree'.⁹ For Marx, on the contrary, the basis of communism is to be found in the logic of this historical process in the very development of private property:

⁶Cf. The German Ideology (New York International Publishers, 1969), pp. 84-5.

⁷EPM (Struik)., p. 154.

⁸Ibid., pp. 141-42.

⁹Ibid., p. 135.

It is easy to see that the entire revolutionary movement finds both its empirical and its theoretical basis in the movement of private property--more precisely, in that of the economy.¹⁰

Having thus defined his opposition to idealist and utopian forms of communism which, when all is said and done, do not escape the relationship of private property, Marx comes to his own conception of communism in a classic formula:

communism as the positive transcendence of private property, as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being--a return become conscious, and accomplished with the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man--the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution.¹¹

To grasp the full theoretical significance of this conception of communism it is necessary to pose the problem of its relation to Philosophy on the one hand, and the working-class movement on the other. To pose this problem, however, forces us to look elsewhere--to a polemic with Ruge on the Silesian Weavers' revolt, where the problem emerges and where Marx makes a dramatic discovery which gives Marx's concept of communism as entirely new meaning.¹² To anticipate our discussion of this discovery and its impact on Marx's thought, we can make the following observation: Marx's concept of communism is thought within the problematic both of Hegel's historicism and Feuerbach's humanism. In the first place, with reference to Feuerbach,

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 136.

¹² Ibid., p. 135.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 135.

the initial parallel that Marx had established between re- and alienated labour, between God and private property, is now re-established at the level of de-alienation as a direct relation between atheism and communism. In the first place, Marx recognizes a historic continuity between the two movements: 'Communism begins from the outset (Owen) with atheism'.¹³ In the second place, he identifies them as two forms--theoretical and practical--of the same principle, humanism:

atheism as the annulment of God is the emergence of theoretical humanism, and communism as the annulment of private property is the vindication of real human life...[and] also the emergence of practical humanism, for atheism is humanism mediated to itself by the annulment of religion, while communism is humanism mediated to itself by the annulment of private property. It is only by the supersession of this mediation [which is, however, a necessary pre-condition, that the self-originating positive humanism can appear.¹⁴

Marx presents this 'positive humanism' as a stage beyond communism, which is only the

negation of the negation...the appropriation of the human essence that serves as the mediation of itself, through the negation of private property...[and] not yet the true self-originating position....¹⁵

On the one hand, communism is defined as the 'negation of the negation' which places it in the position of Hegel's Absolute Knowledge (i.e., as the self-mediated result of the historic dialectic). On the other hand, Marx sees beyond communism on the basis of considerations directly inspired by Feuerbach, viz. 'his opposing to the negation of the negation, which claims to be the absolute positive, the self-originating positive, positively based on itself.' From this position (defined by Feuerbach's critique of Hegel)

¹³EPM (Struik), p. 136.

¹⁴Cf. Bottomore, Early Works, p. 213; preferred translation to Milligan in EPM (Struik), p. 187.

¹⁵EPM (Struik), p. 154.

[the self-affirmation and self-confirmation contained in the negation is taken to be a position which is not sure of itself, which is therefore burdened with its opposite 'private property' and, therefore, in need of proof, and which, therefore, is not a position demonstrating itself by its own existence--not a position that justifies itself...]¹⁶

In this conception of communism, Marx translates one of Feuerbach's 'Principles of the Philosophy of the future', namely;

The self-mediated truth is the truth that is still infected with its opposite. One starts with its opposite, but it is immediately Aufgehoben. If however, the opposite is... to be Aufgehoben and negated, why begin with it and not immediately with its negation? ¹⁷

On the basis of Feuerbach's concept of 'positive humanism' we can grasp a theme of the Manuscripts which has been persistently under-emphasized by most of its interpreters, a theme to be abandoned in Marx's later writings, namely: the limitation and supersession of communism. Communism appears as a 'revolutionary movement' beyond which is situated the 'true human society'. As the negation of the negation' it is the next stage of historical development, the pre-condition for human emancipation:

Communism is the necessary pattern and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development--which goal is the structure of human society. ¹⁸

In this vein Marx speaks of communism as a 'self-transcending movement', and, as the theoretical consciousness of a fully human society, a movement that transcends itself in consciousness:

This movement communism, which in theory we already know to be a self-transcending movement, will constitute in actual fact a very severe and protracted process... [Its] real advance [is] to have gained beforehand a consciousness of the limited character as well as of the goal of this historic movement--and a consciousness which reaches beyond it.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 172-73.

¹⁷ FB., p. 229.

¹⁸ EPM (Struik), p. 146. Emphasis added.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 154.

Although Marx speaks of 'actual communist action' as opposed to the 'idea of communism' his concept of social revolution, of its historic necessity, is still subject to a fundamental but unresolved ambiguity: is it authorized by the conditions of the working-class movement, by proletarian action? or by the philosophic standpoint of human essence, by a philosophic consciousness? It has to be said in this connection that only once does Marx talk of 'communist workers', as reflects his recent contact with the Parisian working-class and the eruption of their active struggle upon his philosophic consciousness:

When communist artisans associate with one another, theory, propaganda, etc., is their first end. But at the same time, as a result of this association, they acquire a new need--the need for society--and what appears as a means becomes an end. In this practical process the most splendid results are to be observed whenever French socialist workers are seen together...the brotherhood of man is no mere phrase with them, but a fact of life....²⁰

The struggle of the working-class for a human world was already elevated to Marx's philosophic consciousness early in 1844, but this consciousness was structured by the schema of an ideology which assigned to the proletariat a mere 'passive' function in the development of a social revolution. It is clear that the form taken by this social revolution, the task of united forces, is communism, the product of 'actual communist action'. What is not clear from the text of the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts is the relationship between philosophy and the proletariat: which is the 'active' force in the communist movement for social revolution--the struggle for a human world--the proletariat or philosophy? This question has no answer in the 1844 Manuscripts, and to be sure, the problem is not even posed. Nevertheless, within the ambiguity of an un-

²⁰Ibid., pp. 154-55.

resolved problem the Manuscripts provide us with a key to an answer. To this we turn.

An Unresolved Problem

The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 are, we must not forget, a set of preliminary notes; and Marx's cryptic and elliptical discussion of alienated labour--the condition of the problem--and of communism--the condition of the solution--express the rather obvious fact that Marx had not yet fully integrated two diverse conceptions, and that he was still groping towards a clear formulation of a distinctive theoretical perspective of his own. The conditions of such a perspective were worked out in the following year and a half, and its formation can be traced in a polemic against Ruge in the Paris Vorwärts and against 'Bruno Bauer and Co.' in The Holy Family; in eleven cryptic Theses on Feuerbach; and finally in a work with which Marx settles his 'philosophic consciousness' and breaks with his own past, The German Ideology. Nevertheless, even though Marx had by no means settled accounts with his philosophic consciousness, nor worked out his definitive critique of Feuerbach, by the time of the 1844 Manuscripts; and we need to resist the temptation to extract more meaning from them than their text will bear, the basic principles of a new scientific conception of history are already present. They are entailed, in fact, in Marx's conception of 'real-humanism', the conditions of which we have already discussed but which we will now bring into a sharper focus.

According to Marx, 'real' or 'positive' humanism constitutes the 'unifying truth' of idealism and materialism, or what is the same thing, of the active side (spiritual life) and passive side (material life) of man, of the subjective and objective, freedom and necessity, thought and being. The principle of this 'truth': 'Thinking and being are....no doubt distinct, but at the same time they are in unity with each other'.²¹ In the shared, inversely-related

²¹Ibid., p. 138.

problematic of Hegel's historicism and Feuerbach's humanism, the formal condition of this unity (the subject of which is, respectively, God and Man) is provided by the structure of a subject-object relation; and the formal condition of its truth, its principle of explanation, is provided by the concept of an essence and its phenomena. The problematic of Hegel's Philosophy of History is constituted by an idealist application of this concept of truth and its schema to the type-structure of a subject-object relation: spiritual life, the 'active' side of man, the 'subjective' factor, thought, or freedom is the truth of material life, the 'passive' side of man, the 'objective' factor, being or necessity. The inversely-related problematic of Feuerbach's Philosophy of Man is constituted by the direct inversion of Hegel's schema, i.e., by a materialist application of the concept of truth, of the relation of an essence to its phenomena: material life, the 'passive' side of man, the 'objective' factor, being, or necessity is the truth of spiritual life, the 'active' side of man, the 'subjective' factor, thought, or freedom. In both cases, both in Hegel's Philosophy of History and in Feuerbach's Philosophy of Man, it is man's thought which is active and free (self-determined); and man's being which is passive, subject to the external necessity of material need. In the case of Hegel's Philosophy of History, whose point of reference (the subject of the prescribed unity) is an absolute, self-determined thought, man's material life has only the status of an 'appearance', the phenomena of an inner essence. It is subject to a law outside itself, the freedom of an active, self-determined thought of which man is the bearer but not the subject. Since man is defined in his relation to this absolute thought, and thus, to his theoretical reason, he is understood as an active, thinking being whose freedom consists in 'pure activity' (self-consciousness) that posits the world as a condition for its self-development. In

Feuerbach's inversion of this problematic, man, a 'natural, objective being', is essentially 'passive': although free and active in relation to the power of thought, man has his practical relation to the world determined by the external necessity of material needs. Man is here understood as 'pure passivity', i.e., as a being whose action is determined by the given, material circumstances of his life.

Marx's own position in relation to the opposed principles (idealism, materialism) of Hegel and Feuerbach's philosophies is that Man's practical relation to the world is both active and passive, which is to say, his praxis is both determined by and determining of his circumstances of life. In the first place man cannot be understood as 'pure activity' (self-consciousness) which is to deprive the objective world of 'any independence, any essentiality vis-à-vis self-consciousness'.²² In the second place, man cannot be understood as 'pure passivity', which is to grasp 'the object (Gegenstand) or sense-perception (Anschauung), but not as sensuous human activity, as praxis; not subjectivity'.²³ With reference to the materialist principle established by Feuerbach, man as a 'natural, objective being' has a necessary (passive) relation to the

²²Ibid., 180.

²³Cf. 'Theses on Feuerbach, 1; appendix to The German Ideology, trans. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1973), p. 121.

world of material circumstances, but with reference to the idealist principle established by Hegel, man's 'natural' or 'practical' relation to the objective world is not only passive, but is also active. In short, man's praxis is both determined by and determining of the circumstances of his life; man is both subject to necessity and is free.

Marx's initial formulation of this concept:

Man is directly a natural being. As a...living natural being he is on the one hand endowed with natural powers of life -- he is an active natural being. These forces exist in him as tendencies and abilities -- as instincts. On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited creature...That is to say, the objects of his instincts exist outside him, as objects independent of him, yet these objects are objects that he needs -- essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers. 24

The condition of this concept -- the 'unifying truth' of idealism and materialism -- emerges as a result of Marx's Feuerbachian critique of Hegel. Feuerbach had demonstrated that Hegel had, on the one hand reduced the 'natural being' of 'real, corporeal man' into a phenomenon of his essential self-consciousness; and, on the other hand, alienated man's essential powers (freedom, reason) to an un-real mystical subject, Absolute Spirit. In an extension of this critique to Hegel's concept of history, Marx argues that Hegel had transposed the objective process of man's self-development, the dialectic of history, into a thought-process, the dialectic of the Idea. In so arguing Marx moves beyond the horizons of Feuerbach's thought, and for the first time, escapes its schema of an active (theoretical) head/passive (practical) heart. This critical relation to Feuerbach, however, is at this point (and throughout the Paris Manuscripts) unconscious, or, at the very least, unformulated. It is nevertheless, already implicit in the second part of the following statement:

²⁴EPM (Struik), p.181.

Whenever real, corporeal man...establishes his real, objective powers as alien objects by his externalisation, it is not the act of positing (ie., reason) which is the subject of this process; it is the subjectivity of objective essential powers, whose action, therefore, must also be...objective... the activity of an objective, natural being. 25

Within Feuerbach's schema, the 'subjectivity' or 'action' of man's essential powers' is not objective (ie., productive of an externally existing world) but is restricted to, or considered only in relation to the sphere of consciousness. Man's 'practical' relation to the objectivity of the natural world is 'passive' rather than 'active', which is to say, as Marx will later put it:

the chief defect of all materialism up to now (including Feuerbach's) is, that the object, reality...is understood only in the form of the Objekt or sense-perception, but not as...praxis, not subjectively...26

In opposition to this materialist stance, Idealism in general and Hegel in particular has developed (albeit abstractly) the 'active' or 'subjective' side of man's praxis. Hegel transfigures and mystifies the real process of this history, but he had grasped its dialectic ('a dynamic relationship moving to its resolution'), the abstract logic of its development. The medium of this historic dialectic of man's self-development, transfigured by Hegel into a thought-process, is the productive process of labour: the intermediary of man's active and passive relations to the real world, the condition of unity between subjectivity and objectivity, freedom and necessity, thought and being.

In this concept of productive activity or labour (whose reference-point is man as a natural, objective species-being) Marx recasts the problematic of Feuerbach's oblique relation to both Kant and Hegel. On the one hand, Feuerbach accepts

²⁵Ibid., pp.180-81

²⁶Cf. note 23. Marx's parenthesis.

Hegel's idealist principle that it is not man's practical reason but his 'theoretical' reason which manifests his 'species-life' (free, conscious and universal activity). On the other hand, Feuerbach opposes Hegel and approaches Kant in a thesis which accords a primacy to man's practical reason: 'the passage from the ideal to the real has a place only in practical philosophy'.²⁷ A point of distinction: whereas Kant conceives this praxis as self-determined and free, and Feuerbach conceives it on the contrary as determined by external necessity, Marx conceives it as the reciprocal condition of both freedom and necessity. This is to say (with reference to the dialectic of Hegel's historicism) labour is defined as man's self-production, not only in the sense that his labour-product is the objectification of the worker (and therefore the result of transformative process in which nature is adapted to a realized subjective end), but also in the opposite sense that in the labour-process man adapts himself to nature. Labour is man's self-production both in the sense of creativity' and of 'adaptation'. On the one hand, man's relation to objectivity manifests his relationship to other men, and therefore to his own species or to himself, implies -- since man is a being that has his nature 'outside himself' -- that in order to relate to himself he must relate to a 'being' that is 'other' than human, ie., nature. The circularity and interdependence of these relationships between man and nature, and between man and man, is the point of reference for Marx's concept of 'alienate labour', as witness:

²⁷'Preliminary Theses'; FB., p.161.

Man is a species-being...because in praxis and in theory he adopts the species as his object...because he treats himself as a universal and therefore free being...The universality of man appears in praxis precisely in the universality which makes all nature his organic body -- both inasmuch as nature is (1) his direct means of life, and (2) the material, the object, and the instrument of his life-activity... In estranging from man (1) nature, and (2) himself, his own active function, his life-activity, alienated labour estranges the species from man....In creating an objective world (gegenständliche Welt) by his practical activity, in his labour upon inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species-being....This production in his active species-life. Through and because of his production, nature appears as his labour and his reality...An immediate consequence of the fact that man is alienated from the product of labour...is the alienation of man from man...(in that) man's relation to himself only becomes for him objective (gegenständlich) and actual (wirklich) through his relation to the other man. 28

According to Lucio Colletti (who arrives at this point of our argument by a different road) we have here Marx's first formulation of the concept 'social relations of production', and hence, Historical Materialism in nuce.²⁹ Since this concept of productive activity within the labour-process is unquestionably at the heart both of Marx's scientific conception of history, Historical Materialism, and of his mature analysis of Capital, it is difficult to quarrel with Colletti's argument, which is furthermore strongly supported by Auguste Cornu in particular, and by Istvan Mészáros among many others.³⁰ Nevertheless, it seems to us that it is precisely at this point that these interpretations, despite their seriousness, fall short. And they do so by failing to analyse an ambiguity underlying both Marx's concept of productive praxis, labour, and social praxis, revolution, the necessity of which arises

²⁸EPM (Struik), pp.112-16.

²⁹Cf. Colletti, Marxism and Hegel, pp.227-28.

³⁰Cf. Cornu, op. cit., vol. 3, chapter two, esp. p.566; Cf. Mészáros, Marx's Theory of Alienation (London: Merlin Press, 1972). According to Meszaros, Marx's concept of 'the social relations of production' is precisely his concept of alienation..

on the one hand from the objective development and internal contradictions of the capitalist system of private property, and, on the other hand, from a contradiction between the historical reality of this system and the 'true' essence of Man.

To anticipate our analysis of these two problems we note first of all that within Marx's double presentation, the necessity of man's revolutionary praxis is not wholly internal to the concrete, objective conditions of the capitalist system, ie., it does not emerge entirely from an opposition between classes, from a real process under 'empirically verifiable' conditions. Rather it emerges from a conflict between this reality and the human essence, the concept of truth, and as such, the basis of a theory of alienation which enables Marx to criticise Political Economy, the phenomenology of bourgeois society, but prevents him from developing a scientific conception of capitalism. Marx's critique of Political Economy and bourgeois society is based on the way Marx imagines the 'true' manner of being human, namely, creating oneself, asserting oneself as human beings, acting upon nature so as to reproduce it in a human way -- to recognize oneself in it. By living in accordance with this essence, Man inaugurates a

This judgement, constructs the concept of 'alienation' as the 'basic idea' of Marx's 'system', ie., both of his materialist conception of history and of his analysis of capital (loc.cit. pp 94-95). According to Cornu, the basis of Marx's conception of Historical Materialism, again found in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, emerges in a displacement within Marx's thought which brings into the foreground the concept of 'praxis' at the expense of the former concept of 'alienation' whose theoretical function it usurps. Cornu's argument is more solidly grounded than Mészáros' but again the relationship between the concepts 'alienation', 'praxis', 'social relations of production', with respect to the formation of Marx's conception of Historical Materialism, is in our opinion, inadequately formulated or theorized. On this, below, Chapter nine.

truly 'human' society, the 'true resurrection of nature -- the naturalism of man and the humanism of nature both brought to fulfillment'.³¹

This ideal image of a human essence functions as a normative model that provides Philosophy with a norm both for criticising bourgeois society and, contrariwise, to deduce the necessity of the communist revolution, and of the content of the rational society of the future. Although Marx's thought within the 1844 Manuscripts shifts between an anthropological and a historical concept of human nature, its point of reference in either case is a concept of Man defined as an 'essential being', and as such, as an essence to its phenomena. The ambiguity of Marx's thought, based on an epistemology of a human essence is plainly reflected in a concept of historical necessity which falsifies real human activity, ie., contradicts the necessity of Man's essence.

To resolve the ambiguity of this 'necessity' Marx has to move beyond both Hegel and Feuerbach; to retreat from Philosophy -- back to 'real history'; to abandon, in effect, the problematic of a 'human essence' within which Marx's thought is still displaced. In our interpretation, Marx resolves this ambiguity in a later text, The German Ideology, a position that brings us into a supportive relation to the thesis formulated by Louis Althusser, and thus, into a critical relation to the humanist and historicist interpretations of Marx's later thought.

In order to settle this problem of interpretation, the symptomatic point of our study (which we will thus bring to a close), we confront finally the problem of - establishing within the formation of Marx's thought the relationship between the 1844 Manuscripts and The German Ideology; to determine the theoretical conditions of what Althusser has called an 'epistemological break'. And thus it is that we turn to the writings

³¹EPM (Struik), p.137

in which we find the pre-conditions for such a 'break', the key to the problem in question: (1) 'Critical Notes on "The King of Prussia and Social Reform"' (1844); (2) The Holy Family (1844); (3) the Theses on Feuerbach' (1845).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE FORMATION OF A PHILOSOPHY OF PRAXIS: A CRITICAL TRANSITION

Both in his Jahrbücher writings (1843-44) and the Communist Manifesto (1848) Marx refers his theoretical conclusions to 'actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, for a historical movement going on under our very eyes'.¹ The political conjuncture of this 'historical movement', first synthesized in the Jahrbücher, combined three important elements: (1) the successful revolutions of the French bourgeoisie in 1789 and 1830; (2) the abortive bourgeois revolution (viz. the press censorship and academic dismissals in 1842-43) and the radicalisation of democratic intellectuals in Germany; (3) the decisive appearance of the working-class movement. It was this historical conjuncture of an abortive bourgeois revolution and an exploited, combative proletariat that provided the crucial experience which pushed Marx's thought beyond the framework of a Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis out on the road to a new scientific theory of society, and, together with Engels, to forge a theoretical weapon against the bourgeoisie.

The first turning-point in Marx's theoretical synthesis of this historic conjuncture follows upon the general disillusionment and failure of a group of young radical German intellectuals to teach Germany reason and freedom,

¹Cf. Birth of the Communist Manifesto, ed. D. J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1971) p. 104.

with the consequent emigration to Paris where the direct experience of a working-class movement and its theorists broke through the ideology in which Marx, together with the other German exiles, had been living his relation to the world. The reality of the class struggle which had haunted Marx's thought as of his journalistic experience, and which in early 1844 erupted into his philosophic consciousness, was nevertheless still perceived through the ideological schema of Feuerbach's humanism. Within the problematic of this humanism the proletariat is invoked as the 'material basis' of the German Revolution, and as such, the solution to the ideological problem of Feuerbach's 'new philosophy': the 'passive element' or 'heart' of an alliance with Philosophy -- the 'active element' or 'head'.

Marx's decisive experience with the working-class movement, and contact with its theorists, French socialists and communists, determined his adoption of a new political position based upon the class-interests of the proletariat, and of a new conception of history and communism to represent this position in theory. Both his conception of history (positive humanism) and of the revolutionary praxis that leads to it (communism), however, are beset by the ambiguity of an unresolved relation. On the one hand, Marx's conception of Positive Humanism, based on an explicit critique of Hegel and an implicit critique of Feuerbach, shifts between an anthropological and a historical concept of human nature. On the other hand, Marx's conception of communism fails to resolve the problematical relation between Philosophy and the World. The ideological schema of Feuerbach's theoretical humanism (active head/passive heart) has governed Marx's concept of this relation all the way from his doctoral dissertation in 1841 to his 1844 discovery of the proletariat as the revolutionary class of German society.

In two sets of polemics, one against Arnold Ruge, his erstwhile companion in theory and politics, and another against 'Bruno Bauer and Co.', the erstwhile 'Freien', Marx breaks with the ideology of this schema and formulates a new concept of revolutionary praxis which, in our opinion, allows Marx to 'settle accounts' with his 'philosophic conscience' and formulate the conditions of a new problematic, the science of history. Although neither Marx himself nor his many interpreters have acknowledged or recognised the existence of this break, it is forced upon us as an inescapable conclusion to our reading of Marx's theoretic synthesis of a specific historic event, the weavers' revolt in Silesia, in which Marx discovers the action of a working-class movement obeying its own laws, ignoring both philosophy and philosophers, the beginnings of an independent working class in Germany.²

Critical Notes on "The King of Prussia and Social Reform"

To appreciate the significance of the uprising by the weavers in Silesia one needs to relate Marx's 'critical notes' (August 1844), an article written by Ruge for the Vorwärts, to Marx's argument in the Jahrbücher in which Marx had, on the one hand, identified the proletariat as the only revolutionary class in Germany, and on the other hand,

²While Marx was at work on the Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts, Arnold Ruge wrote an article for the Paris Vorwärts on the recent Silesian weavers' revolt under the misleading signature of 'a Prussian', which gave the impression that Marx was its author. Marx and Ruge had already quarreled over the finances of the Jahrbücher, and Ruge's hostility was aggravated by Marx's attachment to socialism as reflected in his discussions with Proudhon and his friendship with Heine. To clear up the misunderstanding about the authorship of Ruge's article and to critique Ruge's standpoint of political democracy based on a misconceived relation between social reform and political action, Marx wrote some 'Critical Notes' on it for the Vorwärts. Our reference: WYMPS, pp. 338-58.

established the superiority of the social revolution over the political revolution. In the first place, the uprising confirmed for Marx the thesis proclaimed some months back in the Introduction: the proletariat is the only revolutionary class in Germany. It is this confirmation that explains Marx's enthusiastic reception of the weavers' revolt, and his interpretation of its significance:

First of all, let us recall the Weavers' Song [by Heine], those bold watchwords of the struggle, in which hearth, factory, and district are not mentioned at all; rather the proletariat immediately screams out its opposition to the society of private property in a forceful, sharp, ruthless, and powerful way. The Silesian uprising begins precisely where the French and English labour revolts end, with the consciousness of the nature of the proletariat. The action itself bears this superior character. . . . While all other movements were directed first of all against the visible enemy, the industrial lord, this movement is at the same time directed against the invisible enemy, the banker. Finally, not a single English labour revolt has been conducted with equal courage, deliberation, and persistence.³

Apart from the question of the accuracy of Marx's assessment,⁴ the essential point of Marx's interpretation

³WYMPS, p. 352.

⁴Some commentators (Nikolaiivski-Maenchen and Mehring among others) agree with Ruge's negative assessment of the significance of the Silesian Weavers' uprising. According to Boris Nicolaevsky and O. Maenchen-Helfen, in Karl Marx, Man and Fighter (London: Allen Lane, 1936) p. 68, Marx overestimated the desperate rebellion of the weavers in that they were not members of the proletariat properly speaking, nor did they act against the industrial lords and bankers; they were rather, miserable artisans who destroyed machines as had occurred in England half a century ago. We will not go into the accuracy of this judgement, nor of the adequacy of Marx's assessment. A study by Lowy (op.cit., pp. 128-31), however, suggests that Marx's assessment was substantially well-grounded and correct as against Ruge. This commentator, Lowy, is as far as this writer can tell, the only one who has thus far recognised the theoretical significance of the essay under discussion.

of the weavers' uprising is its confirmation of his earlier thesis, with one unannounced but critical difference: Marx abandons Feuerbach's schema of an active thought/passive proletariat. In the first place, Marx compares the revolutionary courage of the proletariat to the passivity of the liberal bourgeoisie, a comparison suggested by the 'feeble reaction of the German bourgeoisie to socialism' on the one hand, and the 'universal disposition of the German proletariat for socialism' on the other.⁵ The theme is the same as that in the Jahrbücher essays (to which Marx makes explicit reference) but the category 'passive' is now absolutely reserved for the bourgeoisie. In answer to Ruge's contention that the weavers' uprising did not inspire the least terror in either the King or the authorities, Marx poses the question:

In a country [where not] a single soldier [is] required to crush the aspirations of the entire liberal bourgeoisie for freedom of its press and a constitution; in a country where passive obedience is the order of the day; in such a country would not the compulsory use of armed force against weak weavers be an event and a fearful event?⁶

The weavers' uprising moreover demonstrates that the 'submission and impotence [of the bourgeoisie] are enhanced by a strained and difficult relation to the proletariat'.⁷ This conclusion coincides with that of the 'Introduction', but again with a critical difference in respect to the role of theory:

As the impotence of the German bourgeoisie is the political impotence of Germany, the disposition of the German proletariat -- even apart from German theory -- is the social dis-

⁵WYMPS, p. 353.

⁶Ibid., p. 339.

⁷Ibid., p. 340. In this respect, see Marx's incipient theory of 'permanent revolution' in the 1843-44 Introduction, discussed above in Chapter Six.

position of Germany.⁸

According to Ruge, the uprising failed because the social problem, the question of labour's misery, was not illuminated or penetrated by the 'omnipresent political soul', a strictly Hegelian conception shared by Marx in his Rheinische Zeitung period but long since rejected. Contrary to Ruge, Marx explains the comparable failure of the first outbreak of the French proletariat on the basis of this very 'political soul', a 'political understanding' which -- with respect to the workers of Lyons -- 'clouded the roots of their social misery, distorted their insight into their actual aims, and deceived their social instinct!'.⁹ Thus does Marx, who here anticipates his theory of ideology, introduce another theme of his Jahrbücher essays: the superiority of the social revolution over the political revolution. Indeed, with reference to his historical studies, Marx argues the impossibility of a 'political' solution to the 'social' problem. While for Ruge, the uprising was but a local ('partial') event produced by the 'disastrous isolation of men from the community' Marx returns to the central theme of 'On the Jewish Question' -- the human, universal character of the social revolution as opposed to the partial, limited character of the political revolution -- to affirm:

However partial the industrial revolt may be, it conceals within itself a universal soul; no matter how universal a political revolt may be, it conceals a narrow-minded spirit.¹⁰

For Ruge, 'a social revolution without a political soul . . .

⁸Ibid., p. 353.

⁹Ibid., p. 355. The French labour movement may be said to have started with the revolt of Lyon silk weavers, the canuts, in 1831 and 1834.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 356.

is impossible', to which Marx responds:

It is paraphrastic or senseless to speak of a social revolution with a political soul, it is sensible to talk about a political revolution with a social soul. Revolution in general -- the overthrow of the existing ruling power and the dissolution of the old conditions -- is a political act. Without revolution, however, socialism cannot come about. It requires this political act so far as it needs overthrow and dissolution. But where its organising activity begins, where its own aim and spirit emerge, there socialism throws the political hull away.¹¹

Although Marx here operates within the framework of premises expounded in the Jahrbücher, it is nevertheless possible to identify the conditions of a new, although quite unannounced, theoretical position: the discovery that the 'unusual disposition of the German proletariat for socialism' is manifest in its praxis 'even apart from German theory'. In the 1843-44 Introduction Marx conceived of the proletariat as a 'passive element', the 'material basis' of philosophy -- the 'active element' of thought. The corollary: 'once the lightning of thought has deeply struck this unsophisticated soil of the people, the Germans will emancipate themselves to become men'.¹² In this emancipation, philosophy provides the 'active' element of thought, ie., theoretic understanding, while the proletariat provides its 'material basis'. By August 1844, in his 'Critical Notes' on Ruge's article, this is no longer the case. On the contrary, says Marx:

It must be granted that the German proletariat is the theorist of the European proletariat. . . . It must be admitted that Germany, though incapable of political revolution, has a classical summons to social revolution. . . . Only in socialism can a philosophic people find its adequate praxis, thus only in the proletariat can it find the active element of its emancipation.¹³

¹¹Ibid., p. 357.

¹²Ibid., pp. 263-64. Emphasis added.

¹³Ibid., p. 353. Emphasis added.

Marx here introduces three new points of interpretation in relation to the earlier Introduction:

(1) the 'people' and 'philosophy', earlier represented as separate terms, of which the second 'grips' the first, are now united in the expression 'philosophical people';

(2) socialism is no longer presented as pure theory, as an idea 'born in the brain of the philosopher', but as a praxis, a historic movement born of the social instinct, soul or active disposition of the proletariat conscious of itself as such;

(3) the proletariat, earlier conceived as the passive element of revolution, is converted into its active element.

These three points constitute the first steps towards a theory of proletarian self-emancipation which, anticipated by the concept of revolutionary praxis formulated in the Theses on Feuerbach (1845), is conditioned by a break with the schema through which Marx has thought the relation between philosophy and the world, theory and practice. Within the structure of this schema and its Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis, the formation of Marx's thought (from the Rheinische Zeitung to the Jahrbücher) has taken the form of a search by philosophy/critical theory for a 'body', the 'practical' condition for its self-realisation. Having found this practical condition or material basis in the proletariat, Marx discovers (within the limits of Feuerbach's schema) that the proletariat's social instinct, its disposition for socialism, is determined by a 'passive' relation to the world; ie., its action is determined by external necessity, which is to say, it is governed by the material circumstances of its life. Marx's experience of the Parisian working class, and his perception of the Silesi-

an weavers' uprising, led Marx to another discovery (beyond the limits of Feuerbach's schema), namely that the workers' movement has in itself ('apart from German theory') a 'theoretical and conscious character', which is to say, it becomes conscious of itself as the proletariat, and its actions bear the 'superior character' of this class-consciousness: 'The Silesian uprising begins precisely where the French and English labour revolts end, with the consciousness of the nature of the proletariat. The action itself bears this superior character'.¹⁴

Marx thus abandons the ideological schema of an active head/passive heart. In doing so, however, he does not move beyond the horizon of Feuerbach's theoretical humanism, nor escape its very problematic, as the conclusion of Marx's article makes clear enough. The theoretical and practical necessity for revolution (the necessity of which the proletariat becomes conscious as a condition for its action) is still commissioned by the problematic of Feuerbach's humanism: the separation of man from his social essence, of workers from their essential activity. Thus does Marx argue:

The community from which the worker is isolated is a community of a very different order and extent than the political community. This community, from which his own labour separates him, is life itself, physical and spiritual life, human morality, human activity, human enjoyment, human existence. Human existence is the real community of man.¹⁵

From the standpoint of this 'human existence' Marx criticises Ruge and recapitulates the thesis of his Jahrbucher writings, one that brings his thought into relation with French socialism, and to be precise, Hess' interpretation

¹⁴Ibid., p. 352. Emphasis added.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 356.

of Feuerbach -- 'true' socialism:

A social revolution involves the standpoint of the whole because it is a protest of man against de-humanised life even if it occurs in only one factory district, because it proceeds from the standpoint of the single actual individual, because the community against whose separation from himself the individual reacts is the true community of man, human existence.¹⁶

It is clear from Marx's conclusion that, despite the advance upon Feuerbach (retreat from ideology to reality) Marx's concept of social revolution is still subject to an underlying ambiguity. On the one hand, with reference to Feuerbach's humanism, the socio-historical mission of the proletariat is commissioned by a contradiction between its life-situation and its 'true' human essence. On the other hand, with reference to Hegel's historicism, it is commissioned by a historic dialectic of opposing forces. Within this ambiguity, the dialectical antagonism between the capitalist and the proletariat, capital and labour, is reflected in the self-alienation of Man the resolution of which is a function both of the objective development of private property, and of the proletariat's struggle for a human world.

The Holy Family:¹⁷ A New Concept of Revolutionary Praxis

As indicated by Marx himself in the prologue, the

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 356-57.

¹⁷After ten days of conversation in Paris early in September 1844, Marx and Engels recognised the fundamental agreement of their views, and began to collaborate on a critique of speculative idealism to be published in February 1845. In the foreword, Marx and Engels openly stated their debt to Feuerbach, and defined their position as 'real-humanism', which pits 'real individual man' against 'disguised theology' ('critical criticism'). All but sixteen pages were written by Marx. Our reference: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The Holy Family, trans. R. Dixon (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956); and WYMPS, pp. 62-98. The former hereinafter HF.

central argument of the Holy Family is the critique of speculative philosophy in which he resumes the analysis in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts. We can regard this critique of speculative philosophy as the true leitmotif of Marx's Early Works. Apart from the 1844 Manuscripts, where he gives it its most general formulation, it is the crux of the central argument both in the 1843 Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right and in the Holy Family. As such, it is the basis of a critique of ideology whose problematic underlies both the philosophic conception of history criticised both in the Holy Family and the German Ideology, and of the method of Political Economy criticised in the Poverty of Philosophy (1847).¹⁸ The basis of this critique is that speculative philosophy, whose highest expression is Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind, reduces reality into the phenomena of an Idea, and history into a dialectic of concepts.¹⁹

¹⁸The obvious relation between Marx's critique of speculative idealism and his theory of ideology formulated in The German Ideology will be treated below, Chapter Nine.

¹⁹We have, of course, traced conditions of this critique through the last three chapters as they originate with Feuerbach, and we deal with it below. The following statement in the Holy Family expresses in its most general form the conclusion that Marx derives from this critique: 'The Phenomenology of Mind is therefore quite logical when in the end it replaces human reality by "Absolute Knowledge" . . . no more disturbed by any objective world. Hegel makes man the man of self-consciousness instead of making the self-consciousness the self-consciousness of man, of real man, man living in a real objective world and determined by that world. He stands the world on its head and can therefore dissolve in the head all the limitations which naturally remain in existence . . . for real man. . . . The whole PM is intended to prove that self-consciousness is the only reality and all reality (HF, p. 254). We have here the key to Marx's 'extraction' of the 'rational kernel' of the dialectic mystified in Hegel, as formulated in the Afterword to the second edition of Capital, Vol. 1. More on this below, Chapter Nine.

After illustrating the central mechanism of the speculative method²⁰ -- the way it formulates its concepts -- Marx initiates a general critique of the 'critical criticism' of Bruno Bauer and co. as the ultimate and degenerate form of speculative idealism: the reduction of Hegel's Absolute Spirit, which, as the totality of the subject-object relation, develops itself in dialectical unity with the world, into a universal self-consciousness, a critical spirit which develops not in unity with the world, but in opposition to it. The object of Marx's critique is the leitmotif of Critical-Criticism's conception of history: the incessant opposition between 'spirit' and 'mass'. The origins of this conception go back to the failure of the liberal press, an event which was interpreted by the Hegelian Left as the failure of 'German reality' (the 'Mass') to measure up to 'German thought' ('spirit'). In respect to this event, three positions formed:

(1) that of 'Bruno Bauer and co.', the erstwhile Freien of Berlin, for whom the 'masses' constitute the 'enemy' of 'critical spirit';

(2) that of Ruge, for whom 'the education of the masses is the realisation of theory', and for whom it is necessary to activate the masses through theory -- a thesis reformulated by Marx in the 'Introduction';

(3) that of Marx as of 1845, based upon the dialectical reciprocity of socialist theory and the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat.

²⁰Cf. 'The Mystery of Speculative Construction' (WYMPS, pp. 369-74). Marx here analyses the way in which speculative idealism derives its concepts through a movement from the abstract to the real which appears to leave thought without ever abandoning it. We have referred to the speculative method at various points, but here Marx illustrates it with reference to the concept of 'fruit', and he does so with sarcastic humour.

In opposition to Marx's later position, the first two positions share a common thesis: the spirit is the 'active' element, which for Bauer operates above and outside the masses, and for Ruge -- and Marx until February 1844 -- has to 'grip' the masses so as to 'activate' its material praxis. Thus it is that in his Holy Family Marx directs his criticism not only against the thesis of Bauer's 'critical criticism', but against the very premise of a philosophy of (theoretical) praxis, which he himself shared early in the year.

According to Bauer, 'up to the present all great actions of history [by the critical spirit] failed at the outset . . . because they aroused the interest and enthusiasm of the Mass'.²¹ Marx shows, in the first place, that this ideology is but the 'critically caricatured fulfillment of Hegel's view of history'; that it 'presupposes an abstract or Absolute Spirit which develops in such a way that mankind is only a Mass, a conscious or unconscious vehicle for Spirit'.²² This conception, Marx adds, is but the 'speculative expression of the Christian-German dogma of the antithesis between Spirit and matter, God and world'.²³

Having thus struck the 'mystery' of Bauer's theory, Marx turns his criticism against its logical expression, the schema which was his own as recent as February:

On the one side stands "the Mass", as the passive, spiritless, unhistorical, material element of history. On the other, stands the Spirit, the Criticism, Herr Bruno and Co., as the active element from which emerges all historical action.²⁴

²¹Ibid., p. 377.

²²Ibid., p. 382.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 383.

The schema of this opposition is also expressed in another form: 'a few chosen, as active spirit, stand opposed to the rest of mankind as the spiritless "Mass", as Matter'.²⁵ The ideological structure of this schema is shared not only by Young Hegelians like Bauer, but also by 'French doctrinarians' (Guizot, Royer-Collard) who proclaim the 'sovereignty of reason' in opposition to the 'sovereignty of the people', a formula which leads Marx to the conclusion:

If the activity of actual mankind is only the activity of a Mass of human individuals, then abstract universality, reason, spirit, must have an abstract expression exhausted in a few individuals.²⁶

These observations clearly demonstrate that Marx's critique of Bauer entails an implicit critique of the very structure and schema of those political ideologies that oppose an enlightened minority to the ignorant masses. This point allows us to measure the distance not only between Marx's present and earlier thought, but also between Marx's thought and that of the various Jacobin-Babouvist tendencies of the time.

On the basis of this break with the ideological structure of a Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis, Marx goes to the opposite extreme to find the 'logical basis' of communism in the French Materialism of the eighteenth century:

No great acumen is required to see the necessary connection of materialism with communism and socialism from the doctrines of materialism concerning the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of man, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, the influence of external circumstances on man, the extreme importance of industry . . . etc.²⁷

²⁵Ibid., p. 382.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 394.

The logical connection:

If man is formed by circumstances, then his circumstances must be made human. If man is by nature social, then he develops his true nature only in society and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of the single individual but by the power of society.²⁸

To think through this connection between materialism and communism,²⁹ Marx outlines a historical schema in which Condillac (for whom 'the entire development of man . . . depends upon education and environment'); Helvetius (who grasped the application of materialism to social life, and recognised the 'omnipotence of education'); and in general all French materialists who take as their point of departure Locke's sensualism, lead directly into the communism of Fourier, Owen, Cabet, and above all, 'the more scientific French communists -- Dezamy, Gay, etc.' who developed the 'doctrine of materialism as a doctrine of real humanism, the logical basis of communism'.³⁰

What Marx's exposition makes clear is that the theoretic point of departure, the historic connection, the logical basis of communism, is found in the materialist theorem: 'If man is formed by circumstances, then his circumstances must be made human'. This theorem represents for Marx the convergence of 'humanism' and 'materialism', which leads

²⁸Ibid., pp. 394-95.

²⁹Cf. Marx's note: 'The connection of French materialism with Descartes and Locke and the antithesis between the philosophy of the eighteenth century and the metaphysics of the seventeenth are set forth in detail in most of the recent French histories of philosophy. Here as against Critical Criticism, we only have to repeat what is already known. But the connection of the materialism of the eighteenth century with English and French communism of the nineteenth still needs a detailed presentation' (ibid., p. 396).

³⁰Ibid., p. 395. The key idea -- if man is formed by

Marx not only to adhere to French and English socialism and communism, but to consider himself once more -- and for the last time -- as a Feuerbachian:

French and English socialism and communism represented this convergence of humanism and materialism in the practical sphere, just as Feuerbach represented it in the theoretical.³¹

We seem to have here the condition of an apparent paradox: both Marx's German idealism of February 1844, and his French materialism towards the end of 1844, are thought with reference to Feuerbach. As our interpretation makes clear, however, Feuerbach's theoretical humanism authorises both lines of interpretation, and, in fact, both Marx's presentation of humanism as the 'unifying truth' of idealism and materialism, and Marx's analysis of the logical connection between French materialism-sensualism and communism can be

circumstances, then his circumstances must be made human -- is not new: it is found in eighteenth century materialism, which explains not only Marx's defence of French materialism against attacks from Bauer and co., but also his thesis that one of two tendencies in French materialism -- the one deriving from Locke rather than Descartes -- 'flows directly into socialism and communism'. The interesting point about Marx's presentation of communism vis-à-vis eighteenth century materialism is that he brings into a common focus both utopian and 'more scientific' forms of communism.

³¹Cf. a letter from Marx to Feuerbach in August 1844, in which Marx recognises Feuerbach as having established the 'philosophic basis' of socialism and communism, with reference to: 'The unity of man with man . . . the concept of a human species drawn from the heaven of abstraction to the real earth (which can only be) the concept of society' (published in Probleme des Friedens und des Sozialismus, Berlin, 1958, fasc. 2, p. 9; translated in Cornu, op.cit., p. 607, n. 182, and McLellan, Marx and the Young Hegelians, p. 107).

traced back to Feuerbach himself.³² The problematic of Feuerbach's humanism is defined by Feuerbach's encounter with the opposed solutions of Kant and Hegel to the problem of securing a relation of unity between spirit and matter, thought and being, freedom and necessity. In Feuerbach's revision of Hegel's dialectic of Reason -- which restores an original identity in knowledge of the Absolute -- he reverts to the basic condition of Kant's solution: man, simultaneously a phenomenal being and a noumenal being, both free and subject to necessity, the substrate of thought and being. The condition of this solution is translated by Feuerbach into a theory of 'head' and 'heart' of a new philosophy, whose point of reference is a concept of Man; whose idealist metaphysic (humanism) unites the 'active' principle of idealism and the 'passive' principle of materialism; and whose form is an alliance of a German 'head' (metaphysics) and a French 'heart' (sensualism and materialism).³³

In relation to this humanism, Marx's conception of communism still remains trapped by the idealist metaphysic

³²Cf. Feuerbach, 'Theses': 'The essential tools . . . of philosophy are: the head, which is the source of activity, freedom, metaphysical infinity, and idealism; and the heart, which is the source of suffering, finiteness, needs and sensualism . . . theoretically expressed: thought and sense-perception. . . . The true philosopher must be of Franco-German parentage ('the ponderousness of German metaphysics with the . . . sanguine principle of French sensualism and materialism'). . . . Only where there is movement . . . and sensuousness is there also spirit . . . the esprit of a Leibniz, his sanguine materialistic-idealistic principle' (trans. Hanfi, pp. 164-65). Feuerbach derives one materialist tendency from Descartes and Leibniz, but the 'matter' in question is only regarded as an object of reason and not of the sense (cf. 'Principles . . .'; Hanfi, pp. 185-98). Feuerbach himself bases his humanism on the materialist principle established by sense-perception, from the sensualist tendency within materialism, which Marx correctly derived from Locke.

³³Cf. Feuerbach, 'Theses': FB, pp. 164-65

of its opposed principles. Although from the very beginning Marx, like Feuerbach, attempts to synthesize the 'truths' of idealism and materialism he sides with the idealist principle of the German 'head' in the Jahrbücher writings, whereas in the Holy Family he sides with the materialist principle of the French 'heart'. In the Introduction Marx translated the idealist metaphysic of Feuerbach's humanism into a unity established by an alliance of Philosophy, the theoretical affirmation of Man, and the proletariat, the practical negation of Man, and as such, the material basis of philosophy.³⁴ In the Holy Family, Marx retains the metaphysic of Feuerbach's concept of Man, but rejects the antithesis of theory and practice on which it is based: the proletariat is both the practical negation and the theoretical affirmation of Man, and as such, the identical subject-object of history; a class whose historic action is 'prescribed irrevocably' in 'its own situation in life' (the total loss of man) and by 'a compelling need (the practical expression of necessity) to revolt against it -- a 'historic task' of which it 'has won a theoretical awareness'.³⁵

We have here the basis of a new concept of revolutionary praxis -- proletarian self-emancipation -- the structure of which Marx formulates in his 'Critical Comment No. 2 on Proudhon'. The point of reference for this new concept, the condition of its structure, is the materialist theorem: if man is formed by his circumstances, then his circumstances must be made human. The relation between this theorem and the concept of praxis is conditioned, as

³⁴Cf. above, Chapter Six, pp. 268-77. The basis of Marx's formulation of the relation between philosophy and the proletariat is a principle established by Feuerbach: 'The heart makes revolutions, the head reforms; the head brings things into existence, the heart sets them in motion' ('Theses'; in FB, p. 165).

³⁵WYMPS, p. 368. Marx's parenthesis.

we have seen, on the one hand by Marx's experience of the working-class movement (with particular reference to the Weavers' revolt), and on the other hand, by an ethical discourse on alienated labour within a scientific analysis of the capitalist system of private property in the Paris Manuscripts of 1844. The first condition, based on an analysis of the working-class movement, is that the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat has both a 'passive' side (its action is prescribed in its own situation in life, ie., compelled by the external necessity of its material circumstances) and an 'active' side (its action has a 'theoretical and conscious character'). The second condition, based on an analysis of the objective development or 'real movement' of private property, is that under capitalist conditions of production (division of labour, exchange) the historic process of man's self-development takes the form of alienation. The framework for these two conditions, within which the concept of revolutionary praxis is structured, is constituted by two philosophic problematics based on an epistemology of the human essence, historicism and humanism. Within the ambiguity of this relation Marx combines the conditions of both a scientific discourse on the objective laws of capitalist development, and an ethical discourse on alienation. The object of this double-discourse is the formation of the capitalist system of private property based on the antithesis of labour and capital, whose antagonistic supports, the 'propertied class and the class of the proletariat' represent the same 'human self-alienation'.³⁶

Within the framework of Hegel's dialectic applied to real history, to the formation of the capitalist system, the proletariat and the propertied class are antithetical, and thus, reciprocal conditions of a whole ('the world of

³⁶Ibid., p. 367.

private property'), and as such, respectively constitute the negative and positive supports of the same contradiction:

Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to maintain its own existence and at the same time that of its antithesis, the proletariat. It is the positive side of the contradiction. . . . The proletariat as proletariat, on the other hand, is compelled to abolish itself and at the same time its conditional antithesis, private property, which makes it the proletariat. It is the negative side of the contradiction. . . . Within this antithesis the property owner is . . . the conservative party, and the proletarian is the destructive party. From the former arises action to maintain the antithesis, from the latter, action to destroy it.³⁷

The concept of this antithesis, the structure of its dialectic grasped as the condition of an objective development, the formation of the capitalist system, acquires a human as well as a historical meaning, as Marx elaborates:

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat represent the same human self-alienation. But the former feels comfortable and confirmed in this self-alienation, knowing that this alienation is its own power and possessing within it the semblance of a human existence. The latter feels ruined (negated) in this alienation and sees in it its impotence and the actuality of an inhuman existence. The proletariat, to use Hegel's words, is abased and indignant at its abasement -- a feeling to which it is necessarily driven by the contradiction between its human nature and its situation in life, a situation that is openly, decisively, and comprehensively the negation of that nature.³⁸

In the specific form through which Marx integrates the condition of a scientific analysis (private property as a system of relations governed by objective laws under specified conditions) and of an ethical discourse (private property as the basis of an inhuman existence) the alienation of the human essence involves both a rational process and an irrational condition. We touch here the key to Marx's con-

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

cept of revolutionary praxis. The conjuncture of this process (its rationality or historic necessity determined by the problematic of Hegel's dialectic) and this condition (its irrationality determined by the ethical problematic of Feuerbach's humanism) prescribes irrevocably the 'historic task' of the proletariat whose theoretic awareness of itself as the proletariat drives it to revolutionary action -- to the re-appropriation of the human essence:

Because the abstraction of all humanity . . . is practically complete in the fully developed proletariat, because its conditions of life bring all the conditions of present society into a most inhuman focus, because man is lost in the proletariat, but at the same time has won a theoretic awareness of that loss and is driven to revolt against this inhumanity by urgent . . . an absolutely compelling need (the practical expression of necessity) therefore the proletariat can and must emancipate itself.³⁹

In this concept of proletarian self-emancipation, Marx returns to the Feuerbachian problematic of his Jahr-bücher writings within which he develops the central theme of his Vorwärts article: the 'social instinct' of the proletariat, whose 'unusual disposition for socialism' and historic action is prescribed both by its objective life-situation, and by its theoretical self-conscientization, its 'spiritual capacity' -- a feature that attests to the 'human nobility' of its movement, and the 'superior character' of its action. We have here the two necessary conditions of Marx's concept of revolutionary praxis. On the one hand, the proletariat as proletariat is created by the economic movement of private property, whose objective development 'is brought about by the very nature of things'.⁴⁰

³⁹Ibid., p. 368. A brief glance back to the 1843-44 'Introduction' (WYMPS, p. 263) makes it absolutely clear that Marx's conception of the proletariat is still thought within a 'theory based on the essence of man'. The construction is parallel word for word.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 367.

In this connection, the praxis of the proletariat is compelled by practical necessity, ie., by its material circumstances:

It is not a question of what this or that proletarian or even the whole proletariat momentarily imagines to be the aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is and what it consequently is historically compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is prescribed, irrevocably and obviously, in its own situation in life as well as in the entire organisation of contemporary civil society.⁴¹

On the other hand, this necessary relation between the proletariat's life-situation and its revolutionary praxis is mediated, as it were, by its theoretical consciousness of this necessity. This is to say, while the action of the proletariat determines the 'practical' solution to the inner contradiction of the capitalist system (it overthrows not the Idea of private property, but the system itself, and the conditions which support it) this action must be 'conscious', guided by a theoretical awareness.

Within the framework of these two conditions, one objective, the other subjective, the economic movement of private property 'is driven towards its own dissolution, but only through a development which does not depend on it, of which it is unconscious, which takes place against its will, and which is brought about by the very nature of things'.⁴² The product of this objective development: 'the proletariat as proletariat', whose concept is derived through a formula which combines Hegel and Feuerbach: 'that spiritual and physical misery conscious of its misery, that dehumanisation conscious of its dehumanisation, and thus transcending itself.'⁴³

⁴¹Ibid., p. 368.

⁴²Ibid., p. 367.

⁴³Ibid.

The advance of this concept of revolutionary praxis upon Marx's earlier concept formulated in the Jahrbücher is that the theory of socialism, the theoretical consciousness of the necessity of revolution, is no longer supplied by Philosophy, ie., from outside the working-class movement, but is produced within the movement itself. It is indeed, the product of the English and French proletariat, which, Marx observes, 'is already conscious of its historic task and is continually working to develop that consciousness into complete clarity'.⁴⁴ This clarificatory role in which the people's consciousness is reformed through an objective understanding of their situation, and an interpretation of their struggle, was hitherto restricted to Philosophy, which, in its theoretic function constituted the 'active' element of the social revolution. In the Holy Family this is no longer the case. No longer does Marx define the role of intellectuals vis-à-vis the working-class movement as the 'active' element in relation to the 'passive' element. No longer does Marx think of this relation as a unity of opposed terms, an alliance of Philosophy as 'thinking mankind' and the proletariat as 'suffering mankind'. The proletariat unites within itself both conditions: it is both 'suffering' and 'thinking' mankind; it is both passive and active. The revolutionary praxis of the proletariat has to be understood both passively, in relation to the circumstances of its life-situation, and actively, in relation to the practical necessity of changing these circumstances and its theoretical awareness of this necessity. The proletariat is a class whose revolutionary praxis is informed and guided by its conscientization of its historic mission.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 368.

We have here in this concept of revolutionary praxis, of proletarian self-emancipation, the basis of a new conception of politics, which raises the question of the role of Philosophy, of intellectual critics such as Marx himself, vis-à-vis the proletariat. At this point Marx does not address this question, but on the basis of earlier and later statements we can nevertheless detect the presence of its unformulated concept. As far back as September 1843, in the Jahrbücher exchange of letters with Ruge, Marx's project for the philosophic critic was to 'merely show the world why it actually struggles' the awareness of which, Marx points out, 'is something the world must acquire even if it does not want to'.⁴⁵ The object of this project, the 'task of united forces': 'self-understanding of the age concerning its struggles and wishes'.⁴⁶ Marx formulates two conditions for this project: first, the critic has to '[take] sides in politics, hence, with actual struggles, and [identify] with them';⁴⁷ second, the critic has to 'develop true actuality (reason) out of forms inherent in existing actuality as its ought-to-be and goal'.⁴⁸ The role of the intellectual, in short, is to enlighten the proletariat by explaining to it the reason of its struggle, the necessity of which they are unconscious, but which Marx derives from a philosophic doctrine of 'real-humanism': 'that man is the highest being for man, hence . . . the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a de-humanised, degraded, enslaved . . . being'.⁴⁹ To clarify this reason or historic necessity of the proletariat's struggle,

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 214.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 214.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 213.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 257-58.

and to bring its 'dream [of freedom] to consciousness, and thus into actuality', the Jahrbücher, the organ of philosophic criticism, adopts as its slogan: 'Reform of consciousness . . . through analysis of the mystical consciousness that is unclear about itself'.⁵⁰

On the basis of his direct experience and reflection on the working-class movement, Marx levels a polemic first against Ruge, and then against Bauer and his associates, in which this theoretic function of a philosophic critic -- 'reform of . . . mystical consciousness' -- remains the same, but is invested with a different status (supportive, rather than active) and a different role (to contribute towards, rather than actively determine the proletariat's self-conscious praxis). Thus, says Marx:

The only task of a thoughtful and truth-loving mind in regard to the first outbreak of the Silesian labour revolt was not to play the role of schoolmaster to the event but rather to study its peculiar character for which some scientific insight and love of humanity is necessary.⁵¹

From the dual standpoint of this 'scientific insight' and this 'love of humanity, whose centres of reference are Hegel and Feuerbach, the role of the philosophic critic vis-a-vis the socio-practico activity of the proletariat is to critique (de-mystify) the ideology of the proletariat's 'political understanding' which threatens to 'cloud the roots of their social misery, distort their insight into

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 214. This immediate relation between consciousness and actuality, a reflection of Marx's idealist heritage, is authorised by a statement both in the exchange of letters with Ruge ('the world has long dreamed of something of which it has only to become conscious in order to possess it in actuality') and in the Holy Family a year later ('the proletariat . . . that dehumanisation conscious of its dehumanisation and thus transcending itself').

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 353-54.

their actual aims, . . . and deceive their social instinct'.⁵² We detect here the basis of an as-yet unformulated theory of ideology, two conditions of which bear comparison to the earlier reference in the Jahrbücher to an 'analysis of mystical consciousness unclear about itself'. On the one hand, the political ideology which determines this 'mystical' consciousness is defined by the problematic of an abstract-speculative humanism, of a humanism (that of Ruge) that reflects on 'the disastrous isolation of men from the . . . political community, the state'.⁵³ The inadequacy of this humanism (which Marx shared with Ruge in his Rheinische Zeitung period) is that it has as its object an abstract and unreal object -- an illusory community, the state -- instead of a concrete and real object, the 'true' community of man, human existence:

But the community from which the worker is isolated is a community of a very different order . . . than the political community. This community, from which his own labour separates him, is life itself, physical and spiritual life, human morality, human activity.⁵⁴ . . . human existence . . . the real community of man.⁵⁴

Marx's thought here intersects both with his 1843 Critique and his 1844 Manuscripts, but it does so with one point of difference -- a highly significant difference. A revolution with a 'political soul' (based on the standpoint of the 'state, an abstract whole') consists in a 'tendency of politically uninfluential classes to end their isolation from the state and from power'; and in effect, argues Marx with reference to the French Revolution, 'organises . . . a ruling group in society at the expense of society'.⁵⁵ This

⁵²Ibid., p. 355.

⁵³Ibid., p. 358.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 356.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 357.

is the reality -- the struggle by classes for political power -- disguised by the ideology of a 'political revolution' based on the 'narrow political standpoint' of an abstract whole, the state.⁵⁶ It is possible to trace the formation of this concept of the state and of its ideological function all the way back to Marx's articles on the Freedom of the Press for the Rheinische Zeitung in 1842 and his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right in 1843. There is a difference, however. In 1842 Marx observed that the 'narrow spirit' of the particular classes infected the state, which was thereupon corrupted from its true function as defined by its concept. In his 1843 Critique Marx subjected the resulting ir-rationality of the state to a philosophic (Feuerbachian) critique to produce a concept of the state as the alienated form or illusory representation of mankind, of his social essence. In his Vorwärts article Marx has not yet escaped the condition of this concept (alienation of the human essence) but, on the basis of his reading in French history, he moves towards a new concept of the state as an instrument of class domination, whose point of reference is not a concept of Man, but rather, that of a class struggle.

In The Holy Family Marx returns to this theme of political ideology (of the ideology underlying the theory of a political revolution) in a critique of Bauer's conception of the French Revolution, without as yet producing its

⁵⁶Ibid. This ideology of a 'narrow political standpoint' defines the relationship established by Ruge between social reform and political action: 'even radical and revolutionary politicians seek the cause of the evil not in the nature of the state but in a specific form of it which they want to replace with another form' (Ibid., p. 348). The state, however, 'cannot transcend the contradiction without transcending itself, as it is based on this contradiction' (Ibid.). The same applies to philosophy, communism, or the proletariat: to realise itself, it must transcend itself. Thus it is that philosophy realises-abolishes itself in communism, a 'self-transcending movement', the product of the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat.

concept. Ruge had attributed the failure of the Silesian Weavers' revolt to the 'separation of their thought from social principles', which is to say, the 'mass' in question did not govern its 'practical' interest by, or was isolated from, the political 'idea' of the state, the 'organising idea' of philosophy. For Bauer, the opposite was the case. The 'failure' of the French Revolution is attributed not to the separation of the 'Mass' from the political idea of the state, but on the contrary, to its aroused 'interest and enthusiasm' for this very idea. The 'failure' of the historic event in question is not secured by the unphilosophical character of the Mass's interest, by its separation from the philosophic Idea, but by Mass support for this idea which burdens it with the unphilosophical 'matter' of crude reality.⁵⁷

Although Marx does not produce the concept suggested by a comparison of his criticism of Ruge's interpretation of the Silesian Weavers' revolt and Bauer's interpretation of the French Revolution, both Ruge and Bauer can be seen to share the same ideology: to mystify the effective relation between the political Idea, the state, and the real 'interest' to which it relates, namely that of a particular class, the bourgeoisie. The political idea, the state, does not -- Marx comments -- express the 'life-principle' of the proletariat; it does not correspond to the 'real condition of [its] emancipation'.⁵⁸ Far from it: it serves rather to 'mystify' its consciousness -- to 'cloud the roots of their social misery, distort their insight into their actual aims, . . . and deceive their social instinct'.

This concept of a political ideology suggests a supportive role for the intellectual vis-à-vis the socio-practico activity of the proletariat, although Marx does not

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 375-80, esp. pp. 377-78.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 378.

address himself to this question. The critic, armed with 'some scientific insight and love of humanity', does not 'play the role of schoolmaster to the event [the Silesian Weavers' revolt] but rather . . . stud[ies] its peculiar character'. To play the 'schoolmaster' refers to a role long assumed by the Young Hegelians: to teach Germans reason; to submit the world to philosophic criticism; to measure social reality against the idea of philosophy, the concept of the state. In breaking with the philosophic standpoint of this idea, the concept of the state, Marx turns on his own past as well as on those like Ruge and Bauer, fated to preach it to the bitter end. In turning to the conditions of an 'actual struggle' Marx no longer approaches 'suffering mankind' by holding up to its social praxis a mirror in which its political reason is reflected. He approaches the socio-practico activity of the proletariat 'to study its peculiar character', to seek the reason of its struggle. The reason or historic necessity of this struggle is not transparent, however, nor is its consciousness spontaneous: it is beset by an ideology that tends to mystify the real conditions both of the proletariat's life-situation and of its emancipation; that serves to 'deceive their social instinct' by 'cloud[ing] the roots of their social misery [and] distort[ing] their insight into their actual aims'. This is clearly where the politically committed intellectual, the theoretical communist, comes in: to de-mystify the illusory conditions of the proletariat's struggle, and explain to the proletariat the real conditions of its struggle.⁵⁹

⁵⁹We touch upon a problem here that is central to Marxism but that we cannot treat at this point (the text offers no solution): the relation between the working-class movement and socialist intellectuals. The crux of this problem has to do with the concept of 'class-consciousness' -- of different levels of the proletariat's class-consciousness -- a problem of which Marx is conscious as witness the dis-

This must not be misunderstood. On the one hand, it is no longer philosophy that works 'to develop that consciousness into complete clarity' but the proletariat itself, which, because of what it is (the loss of man) becomes conscious of its dehumanisation, and thus of its historic mission -- to re-appropriate the human essence.⁶⁰ On the other hand, although the philosophic critic (now the theoretical communist) has the same function as attributed to him earlier -- 'to show the world why it actually struggles' -- it is divested of its 'active' status previously assigned to it by the Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis; ie., it does not actively determine the historic praxis of the proletariat. Although Marx does not address the question, his conception of a proletariat increasingly conscious of its historic mission forces the conclusion that the socio-practico activity of the proletariat is essentially self-determined, and that the theoretical understanding

tion he makes between class-consciousness in the psychological sense and in the sense of a rational, imputed class-consciousness compelled by its situation in life: 'It is not a question of what this or that proletariat momentarily imagines to be the aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is and what it consequently is historically compelled to do' (WYMPS, p. 368). This is the distinction on which Lukacs (History and Class-Consciousness) bases his concept of an imputed or rational consciousness, and, in fact, his chapter on Class-Consciousness is inspired by these observations by Marx. We will not discuss our fundamental disagreement with Lukacs' concept of class-consciousness, except to point out that the text of the Holy Family on which Lukacs bases his discussion easily supports Lukacs concept, but that it is a text in which Marx has not yet resolved the fundamental ambiguity of his thought based on the unresolved relation between an ethical discourse on the alienated human essence, and a scientific discourse on the formation of the capitalist system. More on this below.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 367: 'The proletariat as proletariat, that spiritual and physical misery conscious of its misery, that dehumanisation conscious of its dehumanisation and thus transcending itself'.

afforded by the critic is at best supportive, a contribution towards its self-understanding. It has to be said, nevertheless, that this conclusion to which Marx's text leads us begs rather than resolves several key questions, notably the question of class-consciousness: does the proletariat's life-situation within the capitalist system of private property lead it to a conscious awareness of the objective conditions and economic laws that support and govern that system, as well as of its own de-humanisation? Formulated differently: does the proletariat by itself come to a scientific understanding of its life-situation? Is its theoretic awareness of the necessity for its revolutionary praxis governed by a knowledge of an ir-rational condition (alienation), or of a rational process (capital formation)? What are the conditions of this theoretic awareness, and of its relation to political praxis?

These unsettled questions lead us to another short but illuminating text, eleven Theses of Feuerbach (1845), where the problem is posed and where Marx establishes the basis of a solution on the condition of a fundamental critique of Feuerbach.

The Theses on Feuerbach:⁶¹ At a Crossroad

Marx's initial discovery of the proletariat at the beginning of 1844 took place within the ideological schema of Feuerbach's humanism, but, with particular reference to the Silesian Weavers' revolt, Marx's increasing contacts

⁶¹After moving to Brussels, Marx jotted down around March 1845, a series of Theses for later elaboration. They were found by Engels in an old note-book of Marx's, forty years after they were written (Cf. Engels' Preface to Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy). They were not in a finished form, and Engels published a more polished version. We refer to the original Theses first published in 1932 in the Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe 1.5 as translated by Easton and Guddat, WYMPS, pp. 400-02.

the working-class movement broke through the ideology that had governed Marx's perception of its movement. With this intrusion of reality upon Marx's philosophical consciousness, Marx concludes that it is the proletariat, not philosophy, which is the 'active' element of the social revolution, of universal, human emancipation; and formulates a concept of a self-conscious, historically necessary, revolutionary praxis of the proletariat which, in emancipating itself from its conditions of life, emancipates men in general. The condition of this concept forced Marx's thought beyond the schema of Feuerbach's philosophy which recognises but two categories: the spiritual, theoretical activity of the 'head'; and the passive, crude praxis of the Jewish (egoist) 'heart'. As a result, Marx discovers in the revolutionary praxis the prototype of a human activity which is both theoretical and practical, neither purely 'active' nor purely 'passive' but 'objective', 'practical-critical';

Feuerbach wants sensuous objects different from thought-objects, but he does not comprehend human activity itself as objective. Hence in the Essence of Christianity he regards only the theoretical attitude as the truly human attitude, while praxis is understood only in its dirtily Jewish form of appearance. Consequently, he does not comprehend the significance of "revolutionary", of "practical-critical" activity. (Thesis one)

This revolutionary praxis has for Marx both the general significance of material productive activity (labour) in which man transforms the material circumstances of his life (his relation to nature), and more directly, a socio-political significance: the overthrow of a system of social relations through the action of the working class. Marx himself employs the expression 'revolutionare Praxis', the origin of which is 'political', but Engels, to make the double-sense of labour and revolution explicit, replaces it with the expression 'umwälzende (transformative) Praxis'. This praxis is 'objective' (gegenständlich) because contrary

to the suggestion of Feuerbach's position it objectifies human subjectivity in the real world; it is 'revolutionary' because it transforms both nature and society; and it is 'practical-critical' in three senses: as criticism directed by critical theory (socialism); as criticism directed towards praxis; and as praxis that acts against the existing state of affairs.

In this concept of revolutionary praxis, Marx does not only break with the schema of Feuerbach's philosophy. He also breaks with the schema of French Materialism, whose thesis of the 'omnipotence of education' suggests that the action of men is 'passive' -- formed by external circumstances:

The materialistic doctrine concerning the change of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by man and that the educator must himself be educated. Hence, this doctrine must divide society into two parts -- one of which towers above. . . . The coincidence of the change of circumstances and of human activity, or self-change [Selbstveränderung] can be comprehended and rationally understood only as revolutionary praxis (Thesis 11).

This critical relation to both Feuerbach and French Materialism in general suggests the following observations. First. In the concept of revolutionary praxis, which simultaneously transforms the object (material circumstances) and the subject (man himself) of action, Marx 'transcends' as it were the antithesis of eighteenth century materialism (change of circumstances) and Left-Hegelianism (reform of consciousness). Second. It likewise enables Marx to escape the dilemma of communism in the 1840's, divided between a 'Babouvist-materialist' tendency that assigns to an elite of wise and virtuous citizens the task of changing from above the circumstances of the proletariat's life, and a 'utopian' pacifist' tendency that proposes to change, through the power of persuasion, not the circumstances, but rather man himself. Third. The concept of revolutionary praxis -- 'the coinci-

dence of the change of circumstances and of . . . self-change' -- is the theoretical basis of a theory of proletarian self-emancipation formulated in The German Ideology on the basis of a scientific conception of history, but found in the third Thesis on Feuerbach in statu nascendi, within the framework of a philosophy of praxis. The relationship that we here adduce between a philosophy of praxis and a scientific theory of history raises a very significant, though quite unsettled, point of interpretation, which allows us to pose the problem of Marx's 'break' with philosophy (Feuerbach, Hegel), the condition of a new theoretical position based on a scientific approach to the study of history and politics.⁶²

According to Engels, the Theses constitute the 'first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of the new world outlook', and in this sense, together with The German Ideology, it can be regarded as the first 'Marxist' text, the text in which Marx announces a break with his 'philosophic conscience' -- the problematic of which has been the object of our study. In another sense, however, the Theses can be regarded as the last text of this philosophic past, the final attempt to solve a problem defined by the same philosophic problematic -- that of the human essence. The problem: to find the 'unifying truth' of idealism and materialism, thought and being, freedom and necessity. Within the problematic which governs the way this problem is posed, i.e., within the type-structure of a subject-object relation, the question is: does man determine the circumstances of his life, or is he determined by them? Is man essentially free, and thus an active subject of his own history, or is he subject to external necessity, and thus, the passive

⁶²Our point of reference: Louis Althusser's various essays collected in For Marx, especially 'Marxism and Humanism' (pp. 219-248); and in Reading Capital -- 'Marxism is not a Historicism' (pp. 119-44).

support or object, of this process?

Marx confronts this problem at the very beginning, in the first Thesis on Feuerbach, and he does so in the form in which the problem was posed by Kant and Hegel -- as a problem of knowledge:

The chief defect of all materialism (including Feuerbach's) is that the object [Gegenstand], actuality, sensuousness is conceived only in the form of the object [Objekt] or sense-perception [Anschauung], but not as sensuous human activity, praxis, not subjectively. Hence in opposition to materialism the active side was developed by idealism -- but only abstractly since idealism naturally does not know actual, sensuous activity as such.⁶³

Marx here returns to the original Kantian problematic: to establish a relation of knowledge between objects (Gegenstand, Objekt) of two distinct processes, and to reconcile two opposed conceptions of knowledge: idealism, knowledge of a self-positing world, the objectified essence of the subject; materialism, knowledge of a pre-given world, the passive reflection (sense-perception) of an objectivity that exists in itself, and not for the subject. Within the problematic of these opposed conceptions, Marx's simultaneous critique of traditional materialism and of speculative idealism is made with reference to the form in which they grasp the object -- defined by Marx through the distinction of Gegenstand and Objekt taken by Feuerbach from Kant. According to materialism, the Objekt is an object-in-itself, external to man and his activity; it is opposed to the subject as a pre-given, as 'an appearance', or to be exact, as a 'phenomenology', and as such not a product of human activity. The corresponding relation of knowledge: the passive contemplation (sense-perception) of a pre-given, sensuous object. Knowledge is the result of the object's action on

⁶³Cf. Marx's criticism of Feuerbach in The German Ideology: 'Feuerbach's "conception" of the sensuous world is confined to mere perception (Anschauung) of it on the one hand, and to mere sensation (Empfindung) on the other' (WYMP, p. 416). Cf. note 64 on the significance of this point.

the senses, or, as Kant puts it: 'the object alone must make the representation possible'.⁶⁴ The object, as Marx puts it, is grasped 'objectively': not as a product of 'human activity, praxis, not subjectively'. The theory which Marx attributes to traditional materialism -- and criticises -- is the theory of knowledge that develops the 'passive' side of the subject-object relation: receptivity and passive contemplation of a pre-given sensuous world.⁶⁵

In contradistinction to this conception of knowledge, idealism has developed -- albeit abstractly -- the 'active side: the object of knowledge is not pre-given, but is constituted by the subject, a product of its subjective activity. In this conception, inaugurated by Kant and transposed into a metaphysic by Hegel, the subject does not merely passively grasp a pre-given object, but actually forms it as the product of his activity. Marx recognises the merit of idealism in grasping the active role of the subject in the subject-object relation, but criticises its limitation (cf. Kant) or reduction (cf. Hegel) of this activity to an abstract process of thought. To be sure, Marx's critique of Kant is indirect (via Feuerbach) and unspoken, his critique of idealism explicitly directed against its Hegelian, speculative form (in the 1843 Critique, the

⁶⁴Critique of Pure Reason, p. 125. Cf. our discussion of Kant's solution to the problem of knowledge in Chapter Two.

⁶⁵Cf. further Thesis V: 'Feuerbach, not satisfied with abstract thinking, wants perception (Anschauung), but he does not comprehend sensuousness (Sinnlichkeit) as practical, human-sensuous activity'. To grasp Marx's point it is necessary to mind the double-meaning that the word 'Sinnlichkeit' had for Feuerbach and Marx. On the one hand, it refers to the 'sensible world', the primacy of matter; on the other hand, it refers to a faculty of knowledge, sensibility, or sense-intuition, which is to say, the relation (passive) between the senses and a pre-given world. See Althusser, translator's note to Feuerbach's Manifestes philosophiques (Paris: PUF, 1960), p. 6..

1844 Manuscripts, The Holy Family, German Ideology, and Poverty of Philosophy). The critique against Kant, which can be extended to Feuerbach, is nevertheless implicit in Marx's position: whereas Hegel absorbed the practical into the theoretical, both Kant and Feuerbach separated them. Feuerbach restricted the dialectic of the subject-object relation, the production of objects, praxis, to the sphere of consciousness; and conceived the relation of man to the world as passive, determined by the circumstances of his life.⁶⁶ Kant similarly limited the dialectic of the subject-object relation to the sphere of consciousness, as a condition of knowledge: the synthetic unity of a subjective activity, a theoretical practice or reason, whose conditions are abstractly isolated from the 'practical' question of man's relation to the real world. Hegel took Kant's condition of knowledge, the synthetic unity of subjective activity, as a condition of the real, as the essence of its phenomena. In doing so, he converted Kant's logic of subjectivity, based on the synthetic unity of thought, into a metaphysic: the production of the real world, real objects, is the 'phenomenology' of an inner essence, the subjectivity of a theoretical reason. The practical reason or real process of labour is eo ipso the phenomenal condition of an essential thought-process, the dialectic of the Idea.

In his simultaneous critique of materialism and idealism Marx suggests a conception of the objective world as a product of subjective activity, but not understood abstractly, as a product of thought, but as a product of 'practical, human sensuous activity'. While on the one hand, Feuerbach restricted the subject's 'active' relation

⁶⁶A different form of the very same criticism is given in The German Ideology: 'Insofar as Feuerbach is a materialist, there is no history in him, and insofar as he considers history, he is not a materialist' (WYMPS, p. 419).

to the object to a relation of knowledge, and as such, of thought; and, on the other hand, Hegel applied the subject-object relation to social life, to history, but transformed it into a thought-process, Marx sees it as both a relation of the real, constituted by an objective process of 'human praxis', and a relation of knowledge constituted by the 'comprehension of this praxis' (Thesis VIII). As a relation of the real, the subject-object relation is represented by the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat, the identical subject-object of history, or, which is the same thing, the reason of the historic dialectic ('the coincidence of the change of circumstances and of . . . self-change'). Idealism formulates two inadequate conceptions of this 'reason'. On the one hand, Hegel absorbs the real relation or historic dialectic of this praxis into a movement of thought, a relation of knowledge -- the Absoluted Idea. From the speculative standpoint of this Idea shared by Critical Criticism, the 'reason' of history is theoretical, a mode of interpretation, rather than practical, a mode of change (Thesis XI). On the other hand, idealism (with possible reference to Kant and Feuerbach, despite the latter's protestations of materialism) separates the question of theory from that of praxis, and by isolating thinking from practice converts the question of 'objective truth' (knowledge) into a 'purely scholastic question', ie., into an Idea to which the real object must correspond as a phenomenon to its essence (Thesis II).⁶⁷

⁶⁷The implication: the question of 'objective truth' is essentially a 'practical' question, a question proved in praxis, which suggests an epistemology of 'praxis', the theoretical basis of a 'philosophy of praxis'. And this is the basis of interpretations of Marx as diverse as Gramsci, Lenin and Mao.

We cannot discuss at this point the 'problems' involved in such an epistemology of praxis, except to point out that the condition of 'objective truth', praxis, is not to be understood in the pragmatist sense, but that it suggests,

Against the ideology of both conceptions -- of the isolation of theory from praxis, or the absorption of the latter into the former -- Marx insists that the revolutionary praxis of the proletariat, the embodiment of the historic reason, is 'practical-critical', ie., both practical and theoretical. Neither theory, oriented towards praxis, nor praxis, guided by theory, speaks for itself; both have to be grasped in their necessary relation: the 'secular basis' of the religious world 'must be understood in its contradiction and revolutionised in praxis' (Thesis IV). In the conjunction of this thesis with its two corollaries, Thesis II (praxis as the criterion of truth) and Thesis III (praxis as the coincidence of the change of circumstances and of man himself), Marx concludes: 'All social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human praxis and the comprehension of this praxis (Thesis VIII).

In the conjunction of these three Theses we have what has generally been interpreted as the theoretical basis of a new philosophy, one that inserts 'praxis' into relation of knowledge between the objects of two different yet related processes -- the subjective process of thought and the objective process of history; and, in which the relation between thought and being, subjectivity and objectivity, man and nature, is mediated by the practical reason of human activity rather than the theoretical (speculative) reason of a Critical or Absolute Spirit. We seem to have, in short, the basis of a new world outlook, a 'philosophy of praxis', whose theoretical principles are nevertheless derived from the traditional philosophic problematic of a subject-object relation, and that constitutes therein the 'unifying truth'

nevertheless, an empiricist conception of knowledge which, properly speaking, cannot be attributed to Marx . . .

of idealism and materialism.

Casting a long look over our exposition on the formation of Marx's thought, we also seem to have come full circle: the Theses on Feuerbach returns us to the original problem of Marx's doctoral dissertation -- to realise the demands of reason, of philosophy become practical -- and crowns it with its ultimate solution, the final triumph or last refuge of philosophic speculation which installs itself in the concept of praxis. But then again; Have we?

With reference to the new world outlook supported by this philosophy of praxis, the ninth and tenth Theses on Feuerbach speak of and contrast two forms of materialism, the 'old' materialism, whose standpoint ('the view of separate individuals and civil society') is based on a mode of interpretation that, like speculative idealism, functions as an ideological support of the status quo, of bourgeois society; and a 'new' materialism, whose standpoint ('human society or socialised humanity') points towards the revolutionary transformation of this society -- both of man himself and of his life circumstances. This formulation of two world-outlooks, one supportive of the status quo (mere interpretation) and the other destructive of it (its practical transformation), raises a serious problem of interpretation. On the one hand, Marx's 'new' materialism seems to be quite consistent with the 'real-humanism' of the 1844 Manuscripts and The Holy Family.⁶⁸ The theoretical

⁶⁸To recognise the consistency between the 1844 MSS and the 1845 Theses on Feuerbach suggests a similar conceptual content and theoretical function of the concepts 'alienation' and 'praxis'. On this basis, it has been possible to argue the thesis of a continuity between the 1843 Critique or the 1844 Manuscripts and works of Marx's maturity like Capital. We refer, of course, to the majority of current interpreters which relate to either the humanist or a historicist tradition. An interesting side-show within the debate and the structuralist interrogation of these inter-

basis of this 'real-humanism' is a concept of Man, the point reference of ideal image for 'civil society', in which 'egoism and self-interest' form the basis of social relations ('exchange and division of labour'), and in which man is dehumanised -- alienated from his social essence, the real community, 'true' human society. On the other hand, to think of the Theses as consistent with the Paris Manuscripts raises the question of an unresolved ambiguity which underlies the latter's concept of revolutionary praxis (the practical re-appropriation of the human essence) and of the proletariat (the missionary of this essence).

Marx's concept of the necessity of social revolution is as ambiguous as the concept of praxis. It is indeed this very ambiguity: to conceal two meanings behind a single word. On the one hand, the necessity of the social revolution arises from the very development of private property, appearing as a concrete, historical necessity. On the other hand, however, it arises from the contradiction between this historical reality and the 'true essence' of Man, which pro-

pretations occurs between J. T. Desanti ('Histoire et vérité, in Revue Internationale de Philosophie, 1958, no. 45-46) and M. Godelier (Rationality and Irrationality in Economics, esp. pp. 117-19). Desanti takes the 1844 MSS and the Theses together as showing the abolition of Marx's speculative philosophical consciousness. In Godelier's view, supported by Althusser, it was not in the MSS that this abolition was accomplished but in the Theses and The German Ideology (Godelier, p. 118 n. 18). Godelier's position, however, is ambiguous and unsatisfactory. On the one hand, he establishes the conditions of a break between the 1844 MSS and the Theses, contrary to Desanti who argues their common conception, but, on the other hand, he admits that 'Desanti's theoretical interpretation of this abolition seems to be the same as mine' (loc.cit.). Nevertheless, we will argue that to a point both Desanti and Godelier are correct: Marx does not abolish his speculative consciousness in the MSS, but these MSS and 'real-humanism' are seemingly consistent with points made in the Theses. The necessary conclusion: the Theses do not completely abolish Marx's speculative consciousness. More on this below, but suffice it to say that we construe the Theses as the critical text that looks both to Marx's theoretical

vides the basis for another contradiction, the first mentioned necessity, internal to private property. This second necessity, or, more precisely, the second aspect of the same necessity is abstract, even speculative -- based on an ideal image which serves as a norm for criticising bourgeois society and contrariwise, to deduce both the necessity of revolution and of the content of the rational society of the future, of socialism. Within this double-presentation, the necessity of the social revolution, the praxis of the proletariat, is not wholly internal to the historically determined conditions and concrete reality of the capitalist system of private property. This is to say, it does not emerge entirely from a real process under the historical conditions of a class struggle which are, as Marx puts it in The German Ideology, subject to 'empirical observation'. Rather, it emerges from a conflict between a historical reality and the true essence of Man -- the concept of truth, and as such, the basis of a theory of alienation which enables Marx to criticise the ideology of bourgeois society ('the view of . . . civil society'), but prevents him, we submit, from developing a scientific conception of capitalism.

The way out of this problem, posed by Marx himself in the sixth Thesis on Feuerbach, is made possible by the very concept which has governed Marx's thought for the past two years: the concept of 'real-humanism' which, with reference to Feuerbach, defines itself in opposition to an old humanism that is unreal, idealist, abstract, speculative and so on.⁶⁹ Through Feuerbach's critique of abstract thought

past and his future. They are, in short, a riddle, hurried notes without a clear position.

⁶⁹Cf. above pp. 193-200.

or speculative philosophy, a critique that appeals to the concrete-materialist against the abstract-speculative, 'real-humanism' presents itself as a humanism that has as its object not an unreal, abstract object, but a real object. The word 'real', as Althusser points out, plays a dual role: 'it shows up idealism and abstraction in old humanism (negative function of the concept of reality); and at the same time it designates the external reality . . . in which the new humanism will find its content (positive function of the concept of reality)'.⁷⁰ What, we may ask, is this real object, this 'reality', in reference? Is it the reality of humanism, that which corresponds adequately to an abstract essence, the concept of Man? Or, is it the actuality of social relations, society, which in no wise corresponds to this concept? The sixth thesis on Feuerbach suggests both Marx's consciousness of this problem, and the basis of an answer:

Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the essence of man is no abstraction inhering in each individual. In its actuality it is the ensemble of social relationships.

Feuerbach, who does not go into the criticism of this actual essence, is hence compelled (1) to abstract from the historical process and to . . . presuppose an abstract -- isolated -- human individual; (2) to view the essence of man merely as "species", as the inner, dumb generality which unites the many individuals naturally.

Louis Althusser, we believe, has well-recognised and rightly emphasised the theoretical implications of this thesis and its two complementary postulates: 'It means that to find the reality alluded to by seeking abstract man no longer but real man instead, it is necessary to turn to society, and to undertake an analysis of the ensemble of social relations!'.⁷¹

⁷⁰For Marx, p. 242.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 243. Further, for analysis of the condition of an 'epistemological break' in ibid., pp. 227ff, esp. p. 228.

Marx arrives here at a crossroad between as it were, the heaven of abstraction and the real earth, that constitutes at the same time the theoretic crisis of 'real-humanism'; the rejection of its concept of reference -- 'Man'. The meaning of this displacement of a concept emerges in a text to follow, The German Ideology, wherein Marx together with Engels works through its theoretical implications, but we can already anticipate that to come with reference to the well-known eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is, to change it!.

The sixth Thesis throws some light on the deceptive transparency of this thesis, and it does so by raising a question that takes us to the heart of the problem: does the eleventh thesis announce a new philosophy, one which is no longer an interpretation, but rather the transformation of the world, a philosophy of praxis? Or, something quite different: a break with 'philosophy' -- a return to the study of reality itself without presuppositions, which clears the ground not for a new philosophy, but for a new science, the science of history?⁷² Reformulated: is Marxism essentially a 'philosophy of praxis' or a science of history? Or again: is it both? If so, what are the theoretical conditions of this relationship between a philosophy of praxis and a science of history?

To pose the problem raised by this question takes us into The German Ideology, the work in which Marx 'settled' his 'philosophic conscience' and broke with his past, with the problematic of his Early Works.

⁷²Cf. the question as posed by Althusser in Lenin and Philosophy (1971), pp. 40ff.

CHAPTER NINE

MARX'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL BREAK: FROM PHILOSOPHY TO SCIENCE

In order to assess the theoretical significance of The German Ideology we need to retrace several steps in our interpretation of Marx's earlier thought. Our centre of reference for this reconstruction is the Economical & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 wherein Marx formulates a philosophic critique of the capitalist system as a society in which man lives his true essence (labour) in its alienation.

Marx's critique at the level of 1844 turns on the humanist-historicist conception of the human essence (free labour, species-life), the ultimate point of reference for an alienated existence. In this conception Marx defines 'Man' with reference to both the 'practical' character (objective condition) of his activity, and the 'social' character of his nature. The principle through which Marx thinks these two conditions is that the objective world, the objective being of man, is at the same time the existence of man for other men. Within the philosophic problematic of this principle 'Man' is the subject of a practical reason, of a historic dialectic formed by the self-alienation and the re-appropriation of the human essence; and communism, conceived as the self-mediated result (and thus the 'truth') of the historic dialectic, secures the positive resolution of the contradiction between man's true essence and his historic existence. As such, communism brings about the end of his-

tory, the realisation of its necessity which is commissioned, on the one hand, by the natural process of Hegel's dialectic ('a dynamic relationship moving to its resolution') and, on the other hand, by the ir-rational condition of Feuerbach's humanism (a need for a fully human society). In either case, history is the history of the human essence, first of its alienation, then of its re-appropriation. With this inclusion of history in the human essence, history moves irresistably towards a pre-ordained end, the identity of man's existence and his essence.

The ultimate point of reference for what is clearly a philosophical conception of history is an identity of opposites, a metaphysic satisfied by the concept of 'Man'. Up to the Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts Marx had thought this concept through the principle of a revolutionary alliance between the proletariat, the practical negation of the human essence, and philosophy, its theoretical affirmation. The principle of this revolutionary alliance was in turn governed by the ideological schema of an active 'head' and a passive 'heart'. In 1844 Marx broke away from this schema and its underlying ideology, an occurrence of which Marx himself makes no mention but that is of the utmost theoretical significance. Indeed, we submit that this unannounced break marks the basis of Marx's theoretical revolution, the first and decisive step towards a new world-view, towards a theoretical perspective based on a scientific conception of history. The precondition for this development -- for the break which precipitates it: the emergence and formation of a working-class movement which ir-rupts into Marx's philosophic consciousness through an encounter with Political Economy and the experience of the weavers' revolt in Silesia. In the first case, Marx discovers in the category of 'labour' a process of productive praxis in which man actively transforms the material circumstances that form him, and that, therefore, constitutes the medium of man's self-development

the embodiment of a historic rationality. Its theoretical implication: the productive, material praxis of the working-class has not only a passive side (determined by circumstances) but also an active side (self-determining); it unites within itself the reciprocal conditions of a historic dialectic (subject, object) and constitutes the principle of its 'unifying truth' (real-humanism). In the second case, Marx discovers in a specific historic event a different dimension of the same truth: the social revolution, in which the proletariat constitutes not only the passive element but also the active element, is compelled by the material circumstances of the proletariat's life, and mediated (self-determined) through its theoretical awareness of its historic mission. As a result of this two-fold discovery, Marx formulates a new concept of revolutionary praxis, whose sense encompasses the transformation both of man's relation to nature (labour) and of his relation to other men (revolution). This concept takes us from The Holy Family right up to the Theses on Feuerbach, and, at the same time, towards the brink of a momentous theoretical event: the formation of Historical Materialism, the scientific basis of a new revolutionary politics. The Theses, to be sure, constitute to some degree a riddle, the basis of a paradox. On the one hand, Thesis VI suggests the principle of an 'epistemological break' in which Marx resolves the ambiguity of his concept of revolutionary praxis by rejecting the philosophic problematic of a human essence within which its historic necessity has been thought; on the other hand, the Theses as a whole (I-IV) tends to suggest and points not towards a world to be opened up, the science of history, but to the world of Marx's theoretical past, a philosophy of praxis.

This ambiguity raises a critical problem of interpretation. First of all, it is clear that Marx's new concept of revolutionary praxis is conditioned by a break with the

ideological schema of a Left-Hegelian philosophy of praxis (critical theory) which, by the way of Feuerbach's humanism had governed hithertofore his conception of the relation theory-practice. The rejection of this schema, however, raises the question: does Marx abandon the philosophic problematic of theoretical humanism -- of a theory unified by the concept of Man, which is to say, based on the epistemology of a human essence?

Let us take a closer look at this question. The unifying concept, 'Man', has two conditions: an active force or idealist principle; a passive force of materialist principle. In 1842, at the level of the Rheinische Zeitung, the conditions of this concept were satisfied by the unity of philosophy and the people in the medium of the free press. In 1843, at the level of the Jahrbücher, these conditions of unity were satisfied by an alliance of philosophy and the proletariat in the medium of a more practical form of political struggle. By August 1844, at the level of The Holy Family, the proletariat unites within itself both conditions. The proletariat, accordingly, is not only the practical negation of Man, but also his theoretical affirmation, and as such, the identical subject-object of history, the 'reason' of its dialectic. We need hardly mention that we have here the theoretical basis of Marx's concept of revolutionary praxis formulated in the Third Thesis on Feuerbach, which leads us to conclude that, despite its variation, Marx's thought from 1843 to 1845 is unified by the same concept: the human essence lived in its alienation.

This conclusion is not as transparent as it may seem, however. It is, in fact, the basis of an ambiguity, and of a problem which Marx resolves in the Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach: 'But the essence of man is no abstraction inhering in each single individual. In its actuality it is the ensemble of social relationships'. This twofold conception of the human essence -- as an abstraction, and as

an ensemble of social relationships -- has a significance which takes us into The German Ideology. Hitherto, the 'essence of man' has always been lived in its alienation -- in the appearance of an alien, non-human essence: the historical reality of the capitalist system. The basis of this conception was a philosophic critique of Political Economy, which (a) established the 'true essence of man' as the basis of what is rational; (b) showed that the contradiction of society arose from the contradiction between man's essence and the historic conditions of his existence -- the capitalist system of private property based on the alienation of human labour, and so upon the de-humanisation of man; (c) demonstrated the practical necessity of the communist revolution which will abolish private property and reconcile man with his true essence by realising what is rational (human) and rationalising (humanising) the real. Within this critique the concept of 'Man' functions as the ultimate point of reference for a philosophical conception of history as the development of the human essence, first of its negation and then of its realisation. Here is the problem. This conception of history raises a question to which Marx speaks in the Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach: whence the concept of this human essence? Since man has always lived this essence, the species, in its negation, it could not have emerged from the real relations of man's practical activity, the ensemble of his social relationships. It necessarily emerges from a 'higher perception' or 'ideal compensation', the speculative abstraction from an existing reality -- the alien, non-human essence of the capitalist system. The implication of Marx's position, and the direction of the Sixth Thesis, is clear: to grasp the rationality of historic development, the necessity of revolutionary praxis, one must not abstract from the historic conditions of man's existence (the ensemble of his social relationships) by reference to a concept of Man. Rather, one must study the actual process of these very conditions. It is this directive, we submit, that leads Marx

and Engels to 'settle accounts' with their 'erstwhile philosophic consciousness' -- with 'German Ideology'.¹

From Ideology to Science: A New Conception of History

By his 'erstwhile philosophic consciousness' Marx refers to the speculative idealism of 'German Ideology' which Feuerbach had already driven from the study of nature, but which Marx now pursues into its last refuge: the Hegelian philosophy of history. The basis of this philosophy is the idealist conception of history as a process that works unconsciously but of necessity towards a pre-ordained end, the realisation of an inner rationality which anticipates the material process of its external formation. The theoretical concentrate of this historic process of development is the idealist dialectic which traces out the inner logic of this process, and grasps the principle of its 'truth': the essence of its phenomena -- the Idea.²

¹Cf. Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859), Preface, p. 22; The German Ideology, Part One, in WYMPS, pp. 404-408. Our discussion centres on the first and foundational part of The German Ideology, which despite the fact that it is unfinished, and, as Engels noted later, reveals the incompleteness of Marx and Engels' knowledge of economic history details not only a fundamental critique of Feuerbach viz. his dependence of Hegel, but also the basic premises of Historical Materialism which are outlined in the 1859 Preface, and which form the guiding principles of all of Marx's later studies, both economic and historical. In the second and third sections of The German Ideology one can find what Franz Mehring has called 'oases in the desert', but, particularly in the second section on Max Stirner, these 'oases' are quite rare, and literally swamped by 450 manuscript sheets of super-polemics. We have occasion, however, to refer to several points of discussion in the Third Section on 'True Socialism', for which we refer to the version edited by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1969).

²The meaning of this assertion has been sufficiently established through our discussion over the last three chapters, but for another point of reference see Engels, Anti-Dühring (esp. pp. 33-35) and Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy. As we have suggested, however, and as will become clear below, Engels' formulation of the rela-

This theme is by now quite familiar to us. We have here the speculative idealism which was submitted to a transformative critique first by Feuerbach, and then by Marx -- in the 1843 Critique, the 1844 Manuscripts, and the Holy Family. The basis of this transformative critique is that the idealist dialectic inverts the relation of truth (phenomena to essence) between the real and the ideal, between material life and spiritual life, between civil society and the state. As Marx will put it later, with Hegel the dialectic stands on its head, and it must be put right side up again. To do so is to place the study of history on its 'real basis'; to re-establish the true relation of ideal to real, which is to invert the dialectic, and approach it from the standpoint of materialism: 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness'.³

The materialist premise of this dialectic, the guiding principle of Marx's later studies, can be traced back to Marx's Feuerbachian critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1843), which led Marx to conclude that it is not the state which conditions and regulates bourgeois society, but bourgeois society which conditions and regulates the state, and consequently, that political and intellectual life is to be explained from the development of economic conditions, the contradiction of material life, and not vice versa.⁴ As Marx

tion between Hegel's philosophy of history and the dialectic is unfortunate in several respects, and indeed is trapped by the very problematic from which it seeks escape. More on this below.

³Marx, 1859 Preface, p. 21.

⁴In Marx's own reconstruction: 'My inquiry (in the Jahrbücher) led me to the conclusion that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended . . . on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel . . . embraces

puts it: 'civil society is the true focus and scene of all history'.⁵

It is possible to think of the materialist dialectic suggested by this conclusion with reference to a strict inversion of the Hegelian dialectic: civil society is the essence of the state, and thus its principle of explanation -- the condition of its 'truth'. To do so, however, raises the question: what is the basis of this essence, its point of reference? Is it the 'true essence' that men live in its negation -- the species -- and conceive of in abstraction from the historical conditions of their social existence? or is it the non-human, alien essence of these very conditions? Thesis VI already gives us the basis of an answer: 'the essence of man is no abstraction . . . in its actuality it is the ensemble of social relationships'. To gauge the significance of this thesis, and at the same time to grasp the basic argument of The German Ideology, we can compare two passages, one from the excerpt-notes of 1844, the other from The German Ideology. In the excerpt-notes, written some time in the early Summer of 1844, Marx states:

As human nature is the true social essence [Gemeinwesen] of man, man through the activation of their nature create and produce . . . a social essence which . . . is the essence or nature of every single individual, his own activity, his own life, his own spirit. . . . [This] true social essence arises not through reflection; rather it comes about . . . immediately through self-produced activity of their existence. It does not depend on man whether or not the social essence exists, but so long as man does not recognise himself

within the term 'civil society'; that the anatomy of this civil society . . . has to be sought in political economy . . . [the study of] the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. . . ' (1859 Preface, pp. 20-21).

⁵Marx, The German Ideology, in WYMPS, p. 428.

as man and does not organise the world humanly, this social essence appears in the form of alienation, because its subject, man, is a being alienated from itself. Men as actual, living, particular individuals . . . constitute this social essence. It is, therefore, what men are.⁶

'What men are' is here defined through an ideal negation of man's historic existence, which is to abstract from the real conditions of man's life. Although Marx, like Feuerbach, had long ago adopted the principle of materialism with respect to man's relation to nature, like Feuerbach he here relapses into idealism with respect to man's relation to social life, to history. In The German Ideology this is no longer the case:

As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production. . . . The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.⁷

To support this new materialist conception of history, Marx criticises Feuerbach for 'remain[ing] in the realm of theory and . . . not view[ing] men in their given social connections, not under their existing conditions of life which have made them what they are'.⁸ As a consequence, Marx adds:

{ Feuerbach } never arrives at the really existing active man but stops at the abstraction 'Man'. . . . When he sees, for example, a crowd of scrofulous, overworked and consumptive wretches instead of healthy men, he is compelled to take refuge in the 'higher perception' ['the true essence of things'] and 'ideal compensation in the species'.⁹

⁶Excerpt-notes, in WYMPS, pp. 271-72. Gemeinwesen translatable as 'social being', 'social essence', 'community', 'common life', etc. For consistency, we revise the received translation to read 'social essence'.

⁷The German Ideology, in WYMPS, p. 409.

⁸Ibid., p. 418.

⁹Ibid., pp.418-19.

Because Feuerbach refers the social relationships of men not to their material conditions of production, but to 'the concept of man, man as conceived, the essence of man, Man' he

relapses into idealism at the very point [in his conception of history] where the communistic materialist sees the necessity and at the same time the condition of transforming industry as well as the social structure.¹⁰

The study of history Marx makes clear has to be put on a new basis:

The sum of productive forces, capital funds and social forms of interaction which every individual and every generation finds existing is the real basis of what the philosophers have conceived as . . . [the] "essence of man".¹¹

On this new basis, history has to be studied without speculative presuppositions:

Where speculation ends, namely in real life, there real, positive science begins as the representation of the practical activity and practical process of the development of men.¹²

This new 'scientific' conception of history is based on the logic of actual experience (real life) rather than on the illusion of an immanent truth (speculation), which is to say, it proceeds not from the concept of 'Man' but from 'real premises':

individuals . . . as they really are, ie., as they work, produce materially and act under definite material limitations, presuppositions, and, conditions independent of their will . . . men, not in any fantastic isolation and fixation, but in their real, empirically perceptible process of development under certain conditions.¹³

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 432.

¹²Ibid., p. 415.

¹³Ibid., p. 414-15. Further: 'The premises from which we start are not arbitrary, they are no dogmas but

To explain historical development Marx no longer refers to a concept of 'Man', the 'essence of man' which is alienated under the historical conditions of man's material and social existence (division of labour and exchange), but he refers to 'real premises' based on these very same conditions, premises of 'human existence', and hence, of history:

(1) men must be able to live in order to be able 'to make history'. . . . The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself;

(2) once a need is satisfied, which requires the action of satisfying and the acquisition of the instrument for this purpose, new needs arise. The production of new needs is the first historical act;

(3) men who daily remake their own lives begin to make other men, begin to propagate: the relation between husband and wife, parents and children, the family . . . initially the only social relationship;

(4) The production of life, of one's own life in labour and of another in procreation . . . appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural relationship, on the other as a social one. . . . Consequently, a certain mode of production or industrial stage is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation or social stage (which) is itself a 'productive force';

(5) Having considered . . . four aspects of the primary historical relationships, we now find that man also possesses 'consciousness' [which, like language, its practical form] only arises from the needs and necessity of relationships with other men. . . . Consciousness is . . . from the very beginning a social product.¹⁴

rather real premises from which abstraction can be made only in imagination. They are the real individuals, their actions, and their material conditions of life. . . . These premises can be substantiated in a purely empirical way' (ibid., pp. 408-09). Immediately prior to this, but later crossed out by Marx from the MSS Marx specifies: 'We know only one science, the science of history' (ibid., p. 408).

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 419-22. Marx is absolutely clear about his point that the 'primary historical relationships' embraced by these premises 'must be treated and developed in accordance with the existing empirical data and not according

Deriving his principle of historical explanation from these conditions and not from the concept of Man, Marx no longer poses the question of an alienated human essence; rather, he poses the question of 'real individuals' who contract their material and social conditions of life as members of a 'class', supports of a structure of social relationships. Indeed, if one no longer reduces a structure of social relationships to its conceptual substratum, the concept of Man, and one no longer 'take[s] refuge in the higher perception and ideal compensation in the species', then it is no longer possible to conceive of a human essence alienated in existence. One has to abandon the very problematic of a philosophy of history based on the speculative illusion of an immanent truth -- of history as the development of the human essence, first of its alienation, then of its re-appropriation. The real possibility and necessity of historic development emerges within the framework of material production, with the need for men to produce and reproduce the conditions of their material and social existence. To explain the necessity of this historic development, Marx no longer speaks in terms of a simple contradiction between the true essence and the existence of men, but in terms of a contradiction between two complex structures:

In our view all collisions in history have their origin in the contradiction between the productive forces and the form of interaction [Verkehrsform].¹⁵

to the [corresponding] "concept . . ." as is customary in Germany' (*ibid.*, p. 420). This is, of course, the precise point of distinction between a 'philosophical' and a 'scientific' approach to the study of history, and it has to be re-emphasised because many of Marx's expositors with a philosophical bent persistently underplay Marx's emphasis on empirical validation and observation, and attempt to re-read back into Marx the principles of a philosophical conception of history despite the obvious attempt of Marx to abandon the terrain of philosophy.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 454. Verkehrsform (form of . . .), Verkehrsweise (mode of . . .), and Verkehrsverhältnisse

'Alienation' ('to use', as Marx puts it, 'a term which will be comprehensible to the philosophers') is no longer the principle with which Marx explains the formation of private property and other economic categories. No longer is it the 'cause' of private property, of the private appropriation of the means of production (division of labour takes on this function). To the degree that one can still use a term whose theoretical function is overthrown, and whose point of reference is abandoned, 'alienation' is the expression of a historic situation in which men have lost conscious control over the conditions of their existence:

The social power, ie., the multiplied force from the co-operation of different individuals determined by the division of labour, appears to these individuals not as their own united power but as a force alien and outside them because their co-operation is not voluntary but has come about naturally. They do not know the origin and the goal of this alien force, and they cannot control it. On the contrary, it passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and action of men, even directing their will.¹⁶

(relations of, conditions of . . .) can be translated as either a mode of form of interaction, co-operation or intercourse. These various terms were used to express the concept of 'relations of production' taking shape in Marx's mind.

¹⁶This passage requires three observations: first, the basis of this historic situation is no longer the alienation of man from his essence, but the division of labour: 'the division of labour offers us the first example for the fact that man's own act becomes an alien power opposed to him and enslaving him instead of being controlled by him' (ibid., p. 424); second, the 'empirical fact that separate individuals with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity have become more and more enslaved to a power alien to them' has been conceived by 'the philosophers' as chicanery on the part of the so-called World Spirit, etc.', but in simple fact turns out to be nothing more than the 'world market' (ibid., p. 429); third, the dialectic of this historic development entails a process without a subject, which is to say, it cannot be referred to a conscious intentionality. More on these observations below.

The Materialist Dialectic

In placing the study of history on a new basis -- on an empirical premise rather than a philosophical principle -- Marx necessarily breaks with the epistemology of a 'human essence', which is to say, with an analytic method that takes the concept of 'man' as its ultimate point of reference, its principle of explanation.¹⁷ In doing so he abandons the problematic which governs Hege's philosophy of history and Feuerbach's theoretical humanism, which raises the question of the method by which both Hegel and Feuerbach secure a relation of knowledge between their point of departure, a philosophical principle (Idea of God, concept of Man), and their point of arrival, a philosophy of history or a philosophy of man. The method is the time-honoured, much abused, and generally mis-understood dialectic, a method that constructs an internal solution -- the relation of an immanent truth -- to what appears to it as a contradiction. In this method, the contradiction appears as the outer manifestation of phenomena of an inner unity, an essence which emerges as the condition of its truth, its principle of explanation.

This theoretical relation of an essence to its phenomena, the dialectic of reason, establishes a relation of truth between the real and the ideal, between material

¹⁷We refer here to what Louis Althusser has termed Marx's 'epistemological break' (cf. For Marx, pp. 32ff). Cf. Marx, in one of his latest works: 'My analytical method does not start from man but from the economically given social period' (Marginal Notes on A. Wagner's Lehrbuch . . . ; trans. in Theoretical Practice 5, Spring 1972). Here, in 1879-80 Marx defines the method of a scientific discourse, on the condition of an epistemological break effected in 1845, at the level of The German Ideology. We cannot discuss the various requirements of Marx's scientific method, the materialist dialectic, but we will analyse below its necessary pre-conditions as established by Marx in The German Ideology, which, it will be appreciated, is by no means a treatise on method.

life and spiritual life, social existence and consciousness, civil society and the state. The invariant type-structure of this relation allows two opposed but inversely-related concepts of 'truth' produced through inverse applications of the dialectic -- from the standpoints of idealism and materialism. These two principles, idealism and materialism, are supported by the inversely-related problematics of Hegel's philosophy of history and Feuerbach's philosophy of man. In the case of Hegel, in the application of the dialectic from the standpoint of idealism, the ideal is the essence of the real, and consequently, the state, spiritual life, is the principle of explanation for civil society, material life. In Feuerbach's transformative critique of Hegel's 'system', Feuerbach inverts (and thus maintains) the terms and theoretical schemata of Hegel's dialectic, with the consequence that the relation of truth between the real and the ideal is reversed: material life, civil society, is the principle of explanation for spiritual life, the state.

This discussion on Hegel's method, the dialectic, and its revision by Feuerbach, raises the question of where Marx comes in. Does Marx adopt the dialectic as revised by Feuerbach, but as applied by Hegel? If so, how does a philosophical method become a tool for scientific analysis? Let us look closer at this question. First of all, with reference to both Hegel's philosophy of history and Feuerbach's philosophy of man, the dialectic as a method is characterised by a general operation -- a phenomenological reduction: to resolve a factual condition into its universal form, the conceptual substratum of observable social relationships, the essence of their phenomena. The point of reference for this 'essence' can change. For Hegel it is the Idea (of God); for Feuerbach, it is the Concept (of Man). In either case, however, it provides the principle of explanation for the phenomena of civil society. To approach the question of Marx's suggested relation to both

Hegel and Feuerbach's version of the dialectic, we note, first of all, that (a) Feuerbach's concept of Man is the conceptual image of a truly socialist society, and as such, the unifying concept of a humanist philosophy, its principle of explanation; (b) Hegel's Idea, the Absolute, is the conceptual image of the historic process, and as such, the unifying concept of a philosophy of history, its principle of explanation (the dialectic of the Idea). Secondly, we note that while Hegel applies the dialectic to history from an idealist standpoint, Feuerbach inverts this same dialectic to establish the principle of materialism, but in so doing restricts its application to the sphere of consciousness ('As far as Feuerbach is a materialist he does not deal with history, and as far as he deals with history he is not a materialist').¹⁸ In this application, the point of reference for the dialectic, its 'real basis', is no longer a process, history. Rather, it is 'Man', whose concept is produced by an abstract isolation of individuals from the historic conditions of their existence.¹⁹

In the light of our earlier discussion, what can we conclude from these two observations? Two things. First. Marx clearly accepts the materialist principle derived from Feuerbach's inversion of the Hegelian dialectic: the real is the basis of the ideal, which is to say, social existence determines consciousness, not vice versa. It is Marx's acceptance of this principle as the epistemological basis of a new method which is emphasised by theorists such as Della Volpe and Colletti, which leads them to locate the fundamental break between Marx and Hegel in 1843, but, at the same

¹⁸Marx, The German Ideology, in WYMPS, p. 419.

¹⁹Marx's criticism of Feuerbach's 'Man' as an abstraction from the historical development of industry and society is a central leitmotif of the first and foundational part of The German Ideology.

time, to confuse Marx with Feuerbach. Second, Marx breaks with the humanist problematic of Feuerbach's materialism, which is to say, he rejects its unifying concept, the point of reference for its principle of explanation -- the human essence. Insofar as this concept is applied to the principle of materialism, Feuerbach abstracts from and ultimately excludes history; and insofar as it is applied to history, Feuerbach relapses into idealism.

This conclusion allows us to settle a fundamental point of interpretation: Marx finally settles with the philosophic problematic of Feuerbach's humanism in 1845; in the eleven Theses where he announces the necessity for such a break, and in The German Ideology wherein he attempts to work through its theoretical implications. To seek the conditions of Marx's epistemological break with 'philosophy' (Hegel, Feuerbach) one must not turn to the 1843 Critique -- to a Feuerbachian revision of Hegel's dialectics -- nor to the 1844 Manuscripts -- to a Hegelian revision of Feuerbach's dialectics.

Nevertheless, this directive does not settle for us the question of Marx's dialectics vis-à-vis Hegel and Feuerbach. Our reading so far suggests that Marx adopts Feuerbach's materialist inversion of the Hegelian dialectic, but in its application goes back to Hegel, to the dialectic as a theory of historical development. This suggestion is supported by a point of interpretation established by Marx's closest intellectual collaborator, Frederick Engels. We refer to Engels' widely accepted interpretation of the following passage in which Marx himself reflects on this very problem:

In principle (der Grundlage nach) my dialectical method is not only distinct from Hegel's but its direct opposite. For Hegel, the process of thought, which he goes so far as to turn into an autonomous subject under the name of the Idea, is the demiurge of the real, which only represents (bildet) its external phenomenon. For me, on the contrary, the ideal

is nothing but the material transposed and translated in man's head. The mystificatory (mystifizierende) side of the Hegelian dialectic I criticised about thirty years ago. . . . The mystification the dialectic suffered at Hegel's hands does not remove him from his place as the first to expose (darstellen) consciously and in depth its general forms of movement. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.²⁰

Engels interprets Marx's relation to Hegel with reference to a distinction between Hegel's method and his system, which implies that the 'rational kernel' is the dialectic itself, while the 'mystical shell' is speculative philosophy, or its 'world outlook', its 'system', an element external to its method.²¹ The shell, the mystical wrapping (speculative philosophy) is tossed aside and the precious kernel, the dialectic, is retained. As soon as the dialectic is removed from its idealist shell, it is 'inverted', becoming the 'direct opposite' of the Hegelian dialectic. What does this mean, however? That the same method is applied not to Hegel's sublimated, inverted world, but applied to the real world? This is the sense in which Marx's relation to Hegel has been generally understood, and to be sure it is clearly supported by Engels' interpretation. Or, does it mean that it is the method itself, the dialectic, which is rejected? This is the sense in which Marx's relation to

²⁰Marx, Afterword to the second German edition of Capital (Jan. 24, 1873). The wording of this famous afterword is more metaphorical than conceptual, and has led to various problems of interpretation. It is interesting to note that in the French edition of Capital translated by Roy, the entire metaphor of a kernel and its shell has been spirited away. Since Marx inspected this translation in proof it is possible that Marx perhaps accepted here a less 'difficult', or even less ambiguous, text than his own (cf. Althusser's comments, For Marx, p. 89 n. 2).

²¹Cf. Althusser's discussion, For Marx, pp. 89-94; also, our discussion in Chapter Three, where the origins of Engels' distinction between a revolutionary method and a conservative system is clearly brought into focus, ie., with respect to its pedigree in Left-Hegelianism.

Hegel has been interpreted by Louis Althusser: Marx opposes the 'mystified form' of the dialectic with its 'rational form'. The 'mystical shell', in this interpretation, is nothing but the 'mystified form' of the dialectic itself.

Let us assume for the sake of argument the first interpretation which has the dialectics of Marx and Hegel identical at the level of principle, differing only in their bases (materialist, idealist), which affects their application but not their essential structure.

As a method, the dialectic secures an internal solution to the contradictions of the real world, and it does so by establishing a relation of truth between the real and the ideal: either the real is the 'essence' of the ideal, and thus its principle of explanation, or vice versa. From the speculative-idealist standpoint the ideal is the essence of the real, and thus its truth, its principle of explanation: spiritual life, the state, explains material life, civil society. But revising this dialectic from the materialist standpoint of humanism, this relation of an immanent truth (essence-phenomenon) is inverted (and thus maintained): the real is the essence of the ideal; material life, civil society, explains spiritual life, the state. What is the consequence of such an inversion of Hegel pure and simple? To begin with, to invert Hegel's dialectic (transform an essence into phenomenon, and phenomenon into an essence) is to maintain the principle of its internal solution: the tacit identity of the economic and the political -- the expressive relation of an immanent truth. In the mirror-image of an inverted dialectic Marx can be taken to substitute for the simple principle of an original essence, the Idea, another simple principle, the Economy. While Hegel explains material life, the concrete history of man, by the dialectic of consciousness (people's consciousness of itself: its ideology), Marx explains spiritual life (political-ideological), and its history, by the

dialectic of material life. No longer is it a question of deriving the successive moments of the historic dialectic from the Idea, but from the Economy, by virtue of the same internal contradiction. In either case, however, history unfolds as a process that works unconsciously but of an inner necessity towards a pre-ordained goal. From the inverse standpoints of idealism and materialism the reason of this historic dialectic is either embodied in the spiritual life of the state which prefigures the material process of its external formation; or, it is embodied in this material process which, in turn, prefigures its shadow-reflection in spiritual life.

Consistent with this latter interpretation, based on Marx's supposed inverse application of Hegel's dialectic, we have the historicist reading of Marx's thought which, in the form introduced by Georg Lukács, has held such sway within theoretical Marxism in the twentieth century, and that even now, despite and effective challenge launched from two angles, threatens to compromise Marxism with its Hegelian legacy.²² At the centre of this historicist interpretation

²²We speak, of course, mainly of the philosophical interpretation of Marx's thought formulated with considerable variation within the tradition of 'Critical Theory'. Besides the intellectually popular, theoretically tendentious, and politically dangerous readings of Marx's thought by the theorists of the so-called Frankfurt School, there are no end of attempts to construct a 'critical sociology' based on a Hegelianised reading of Marx. We need but refer to the group intellectuals writing for Telos, or mention a recent work such as Norman Birnbaum's Toward a Critical Sociology (1971) which attacks Marxist philosophy from a 'critical' or 'neo-Marxist' standpoint. The best point of reference both for the theoretical and political stakes involved, and for an effective challenge to the historicist ideology from the angle of a structuralist reading of Marx's thought, is Althusser's For Marx. Another critique of the Critical Theory variant of historicism, and of Hegelian Marxism in general, is provided within the tradition inaugurated by Della Volpe in Italy; of which Colletti is the most brilliant expositor.

of Marx's thought is the conception of the proletariat as the identical subject-object of history, or to put it differently, as the 'reason' of the historic dialectic, the embodiment of its immanent truth. In this conception the proletariat is a class-in-itself, in which its essence is tacit but unmanifest, but potentially a class-for-itself, in which it becomes conscious of its own truth, and acts, of necessity, to realise it. As the bearer of this truth, the identity of essence and existence, the proletariat provides in its praxis the internal solution to the problem posed by History. In this solution, the relation between civil society and the state, the real and the ideal, is guaranteed in advance, as is the end of history.

What conclusion can we draw from this conception of the historic dialectic, and of the proletariat, its subject -- a conception that interprets Marx's relation to Hegel with reference to an inverse application of the same method? First and foremost (and inescapably), it sees in Marx a philosophy of history, a theory based on the speculative presupposition of an immanent truth, rather than a science of history, a theory based on the laws of an objective development. The conclusion is unavoidable. The dialectic, as a philosophical method applied to history -- historicism -- secures an expressive relation between the real (economics) and the ideal (politics-ideology) which is ultimately reducible to the postulate of an identity of opposites, and thus, to a metaphysic which secures in advance (in the concept of a 'dialectic') an internal solution to the problem of history. Thus despite Marx's avowal to the contrary, the study of history is ultimately based not on an empirical premise, but on a philosophical principle, a metaphysic, which on the one hand establishes a tacit identity between the economic and the political, and, on the other hand (as its corollary) pre-determines the goal of the historic dialectic (which is, of course, derived not

from the Idea but from the Economy, but in any case, by virtue of the same internal contradiction).

This historicist interpretation of Marx's thought revives the spectre of idealism, and brings back a problem previously settled with respect to humanism. On the one hand, Marx purports to place the study of history on a new, ie., scientific, basis, which is to say, not on a philosophical principle, but on a real premise. On the other hand, the historicist interpretation reads into Marx a philosophy of history on the strength of a method which is given a materialist basis (an inverse application) but is still bound by the metaphysic of its first principle -- the identity of opposites. The problem can be posed in the form of a question: is Marx made to contradict himself, ie., forced into a philosophy of history by the retention (inverse application of a philosophic method, the dialectic? or, does the historicist interpretation read into Marx what is not there?

On the basis of what we have thus far assumed -- that Marx's materialist-inversion/rational-extraction of Hegel's method affects its application, but not its method -- the implacable logic of the historicist interpretation is inescapable: Marx's study of history, the conception of its necessity, is governed by the philosophy of a dialectic, the theoretic concentrate of a teleological conception of history. The only way to escape this conclusion is to reject the assumption on which it is based: to recognise in Marx the establishment of a new method -- the dialectic not in its 'mystical form' (as a philosophic method) but in its 'rational form' (as a scientific method). This brings us back to our point of departure. To settle this problem of interpretation let us confront the historicist assumption with the text in which Marx himself speaks to this problem. The essence of Hegel's philosophic dialectic, irrespective of its point of reference (man, history), or its base of

application (idealist, materialist), is the expressive relation of an immanent truth which it establishes between the economy on the one hand, and the state on the other. From the philosophic standpoint of this 'truth' either the state is the 'essence' of civil society, or vice versa. In either case, the nature of the relation does not come into question. It is, indeed, already pre-determined as a concept reflected in the very structure of the dialectic. The question arises: what does Marx himself say about this relation -- of the connection between the economic and the political? Upon a historical analysis of the various social formations (tribal, ancient communal, feudal) determined by stages of development in the division of labour, Marx concludes:

The fact is, then, that definite individuals who are productively active in a specific way enter into these definite social and political relations. In each particular instance, empirical observation must show empirically without any mystification or speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production.²³

Marx's meaning is clear enough. On the one hand, the connection between the economic and the political is thought with reference to the principle of materialism: the history of real individuals (ie., of 'definite social and political relations') has as its basis, and thus its general principle of explanation, in economic production. This much we have already established, and clearly so. On the other hand, the connection between the economic and the political is not one of an 'essence' to its 'phenomena', which is to say, the political does not stand in an immediately expressive relation to the economy as its immanent truth. On the contrary, the 'dialectic' between the economy and the state (politics-ideology) is a real relation of a complex process which cannot be invested with a speculative meaning (ie., pre-deter-

²³Marx, The German Ideology; in WYMPS, p. 413. Cf. Marx's insistence that the basic premises of Historical Materialism 'be substantiated in a purely empirical way' (ibid., p. 409).

mined in the illusion of an immanent truth) but has to be grasped empirically under the conditions of a 'real, positive science'. To put it bluntly, as Marx does: 'One has to "leave philosophy aside" . . . one has to leap out of it and devote oneself . . . to the study of reality'.²⁴ What Marx in fact does is establish the epistemological basis for a new method: from the expressive relation of a philosophic dialectic based on the speculative presupposition of an immanent truth (the identity of opposites) Marx turns to the 'description of reality' without recourse to philosophic speculation. Marx is quite clear about this:

With the description of reality, independent philosophy loses its medium of existence. . . . When we conceive things as they really are and happened, any profound philosophic problem is resolved quite simply into an empirical fact.²⁵

The historical method (philosophic dialectic) of a philosophy with which Marx here clearly breaks, and subjects to a systematic critique, is characterised by the following set of procedures: first, an 'empirical fact' (a state of social, political and intellectual relationships that correspond to a given economy of material production) is transposed into a concept, an Idea; second, this concept of Idea, abstracted from the historic development of industry and society, is construed as the 'essence' of observed 'phenomena', and as such, taken as their principle of explanation, the teleological origin of truth, the reason (self-determined necessity) of the historic process; third, a bearer is found to realise this concept, a force which is conceived (within the framework of a Hegelian dialectic) to be the 'subject' of history, the embodiment of its rationality (either as the representative of the Idea, or as the missionary of the human

²⁴Marx, The German Ideology (Part II), (ed.) C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1973), p. 103.

²⁵Ibid. (Part I), in WYMPS, pp. 415-17.

essence).²⁶

These three sets of procedures, which clearly establish the methodological framework of historicism, define a method by which philosophy transposes an 'empirical fact' into a 'philosophic problem'. At the heart of this transposi-

²⁶Cf. Marx's 'break' which 'philosophy' (ie., a dependence on Hegel): 'German criticism never left the realm of philosophy. Far from examining its general philosophic premises, all of its inquiries were based on one philosophic system, that of Hegel. There was mystification not only in the answers but even in the questions themselves' (*ibid.*, p. 406). Cf. the method of this philosophy with which Marx of necessity also breaks and from which we have generalised the above set of procedures: 'When ruling ideas are separated from the ruling individuals and above all from relationships resulting from a given level of production . . . it is easy to abstract from these various ideas "the ideas", the Idea, etc., as the dominant force in history, and thus understanding all these separate ideas and concepts as "self-determinations" of the Concept developing in history. It follows, of course, that all the relationships of men can be derived from the concept of man, man as conceived, the essence of man, Man. This has been done in speculative philosophy. . . . The whole trick of proving the hegemony . . . of Spirit in history is confined to the following three efforts: No. 1: One must separate the ideas of those ruling for empirical reasons, under empirical conditions, and as material individuals, from the actual rulers; one must recognise the rule of ideas or illusions in history. No. 2: One must put order into this rule of ideas, prove a mystical connection among [them], which is managed by seeing them as "self-determinations of the Concept". No. 3: To remove the mystical appearance of this "self-determining Concept" one changes it into a person -- "self-consciousness" -- or . . . into a series of persons who represent "the Concept" in history, into "the thinkers", "philosophers", "ideologists" . . . (*ibid.*, pp. 440-41). This critique of the speculative method, in which Marx re-focuses the leitmotif of his Early Works (the 1843 Critique, the Manuscripts of 1844, The Holy Family), forms the basis of a theory of ideology to which we refer below, but the systematic analysis of which falls beyond the scope of our present study. For a preliminary investigation of Marx's theory of ideology see Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy (1971), pp. 121ff., or the same summarised by this writer in 'Towards an assessment of the structuralist interrogation of Marx' (Science & Society, vol. 38, No. 4, Winter 1974-75).

tion we have a philosophic concept of a 'dialectic' (of an essence to its phenomena) which, when applied to the real relation between the state of society and the economy of material production, invests it with a speculative meaning (derives it from the concept of man, the human essence, or conversely, converts it into the Idea); and, when applied to history, pre-determines its process of development.²⁷

The empirical fact:

In history up to the present . . . separate individuals with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity have become more and more enslaved to a power alien to them . . . a power which has become increasingly great and finally turns out to be the world market.²⁸

Its speculative transposition: the contradiction of the subject and object, or which is the same thing, the alienation of man from his essence. Within the framework of this transposition, the historic development of society begins with the self-alienation of Spirit (self-consciousness) in a material form alien to its true nature, proceeds through a struggle between Spirit (the Subject of history, essence) and its alienated form (the object of history, phenomena), and ends with the reconciliation of the subject and the object in Absolute Knowledge (true socialism), the manifest form (mediated result) of an original identity. The 'dialectic' and idealist metaphysic of this historic process is transformed by the Young Hegelians (German Ideology) into the idea of the loss of man in modern society, the alienation of man from his true nature, his deprivation of a full life,

²⁷This speculative meaning is based on the reduction by philosophers of 'relationships' into 'ideas': 'Relationship for the philosophers = idea. They know only the relationship "of Man" to himself, and thus all actual relationships become ideas . . . ' (*ibid.*, p. 471; crossed out later by Marx from MSS).

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 429.

true justice, freedom, etc. Hegel's Absolute Spirit becomes the human essence, which is first of all alienated (the beginning of history) and then re-appropriated (the end of history).

It is clear enough that until 1845 Marx himself was by no means immune from this 'German ideology', and this despite the prior adoption of a materialist outlook. By the time of The German Ideology, however, Marx finally manages to extricate himself from this ideology of 'German Criticism' which others (the 'true socialists') are fated to preach to the bitter end.²⁹ To escape from the philosophic problematic of this ideology, and settle accounts with his 'philosophic consciousness', Man has to (and does) reject speculative philosophy in its method of historical analysis (the dialectic) as it is this very method which secures the idealist metaphysic of a philosophy on which the Young Hegelians one and all have remained dependent.³⁰ To drive (as he will) idealism from its last refuge, Marx has to adopt an entirely new method for the study of history, a method no longer based on a speculative principle (point of reference: the ideal of Man) but on an empirical premise (point of reference: the existing productive forces).³¹

To place the study of history and politics on a

²⁹Cf. Marx, The German Ideology (Part III), ed. Roy Pascal, (New York: International Publishers, 1969), p. 81.

³⁰Cf. Marx's prefatory and introductory discussion in The German Ideology; cf. WYMPS, pp. 404-08.

³¹Cf. Marx, The German Ideology (Part II), ed., C. J. Arthur, pp. 115-116: 'He (Stirner) imagines that people up to now have always formed a concept of man, and then won freedom for themselves to the extent that was necessary to realise this concept. . . . In reality, of course, what happened was that people won freedom for themselves each time to the extent that was dictated and permitted not by their ideal of man, but by the existing productive forces'.

scientific rather than a philosophic basis, Marx adopts the reverse of the speculative procedure: '(to conceive things as they really are and happened', which is to resolve 'any profound philosophical problem (eg. alienation) . . . quite simply into an empirical fact'.³² The philosophical standpoint of this 'empirical fact' is produced by the dialectic of reason (the expressive relation of an immanent truth) which speculation sets up between the state of society on the one hand, and the economy of material production on the other. The idealist metaphysic of this speculative method is compressed into its epistemology of a human essence, which Marx resolves into its 'real basis':

a material result at each historical stage, a sum of productive forces . . . capital funds, and conditions which on the one hand is modified by the new generation but on the other hand also prescribes its conditions of life . . . is the real basis of what the philosophers have conceived as . . . "essence of Man", what they have apotheosised and attacked . . . ³³

Rejecting the 'essence of man' as his theoretical basis (and thus breaking with all analytical methods that start from 'Man' as their point of reference) Marx establishes the epistemological basis for a new method, a new systematic way of asking questions of the world, a method which (a) 'does not look for a category (the bearer for an immanent truth) in every historical period (but) remains constantly on the real ground of history'; and (b) 'does not explain practice from the idea but explains the formation of ideas from material practice'.³⁴

³²Marx, The German Ideology, in WYMPS, p. 417.

³³Ibid., p. 432. In this 'real basis' Marx recapitulates the materialist theorem which he had formulated in the Third Theses on Feuerbach: 'It shows, therefore, that circumstances make man just as much as men make circumstances' (ibid.).

³⁴Ibid., p. 431.

Placing the study of history on its 'real basis' (viz. its materialist conception) Marx resolves the central problem of the Hegelian philosophy of history -- alienation -- into an 'empirical fact', and thus a scientific problem:

The division of labour offers us the first example for the fact that man's own act becomes an alien power opposed to him and enslaving him instead of being controlled by him. [As] long as man remains in . . . society [whose labour is naturally divided], as long as a split exists between the particular and the common interest, and as long as the activity is not voluntary . . . [the] fixation of social activity, this consolidation of our own products into an objective power above us, growing out of our control . . . is one of the chief factors in historical development so far . . . ³⁵

With reference to an extended historical analysis on the basis of the above-mentioned 'empirical premises', the concept of 'division of labour' clearly takes on the theoretical function previously assigned to the concept of 'alienation': as the 'basis' of historic development, the source of its conflicts. However, with reference no longer to the concept of 'Man' but to the necessary and actual conditions of historical existence we no longer have as the basis for all historic conflicts a contradiction between a human (ideal) essence and an inhuman (real) existence. We have, rather, a contradiction between 'productive forces and the forms of interaction'.³⁶ The difference is absolutely critical: in the one case, the contradiction in question opposes a historic condition given in reality with a speculative ideal not given in (contradicted by) reality. As a consequence, both the contradiction and the dialectic of its necessary development are internal not to history but to philosophy. In the other case, however, one 'remains constantly on the real ground of history': both aspects of the

³⁵Ibid., p. 425.

³⁶Ibid., p. 454.

contradiction (productive forces, and the state of society), and thus the dialectic of its development (the unity of a process grasped in its very contradiction) are given in reality under a historic condition (division of labour) which is subject to empirical observation, and thus scientific analysis.

The basic premise of this analysis: the material production of life as a natural and a social relationship ('a certain mode of production or industrial stage is always combined with a certain mode of interaction or social stage').

Observations and generalisations:

(a) with a division of labour between intellectual and material activity 'social relationships assume an independent existence'; and 'individuals find their conditions of life predestined, have their position in life and their personal development assigned . . . and determined by very definite class relationships';³⁷

³⁷Ibid., pp. 456-57. This observation is generalised from a specific historic analysis: 'Out of the many local corporations of burghers there gradually but very slowly arose the burgher class. The conditions of life of the individual burghers became conditions which were common to them all and independent of each individual because of their contradiction to the existing relationships and because of the mode of labour determined by these. The burghers had created these conditions insofar as they had freed themselves from feudal ties and had been created by them insofar as they were determined by their opposition to the existing feudal system. When the individual towns began to enter into associations, these common conditions developed into class conditions' (ibid., p. 456). There is no need to stress the theoretical significance of this passage with respect to the formation of Marx's concept of 'social class' in direct relation to production, nor of this concept as a tool of analysis. The characteristic structure of Marx's method of analysis has much more to do with this concept than the philosophical clap-trap about a 'dialectic' conceived in the mirror-image of Hegel's method, the concept of which has yet to be driven from Marxist theory.

(b) with the subsumption of individuals under a division of labour individual relationships are transformed into material powers, into conditions beyond the control of associated individuals who are then formed into (subsumed by the conditions of) various social classes, as determined by their position in (relation to) production;³⁸

(c) the division of labour functions on the one hand as a productive force, and on the other, as the basis for a class-division of social relations based on the formation of private property (the appropriation by one class of the means of production), and thus, the basis of a historic conflict between the class that appropriates these productive forces and the mass of society divested of the same;³⁹

(d) 'out of this very contradiction between the interest of the individual and that of the community the latter takes an independent form as the state separated from the real interests of individual and community . . . but always based on . . . real bonds . . . such as flesh and blood, language, division of labour . . . and particularly based . . . on the classes already determined by the division of labour, classes which form in any such mass of

³⁸Ibid., pp. 457-60. Cf. 'Personal, versus General, Interests', German Ideology (Part II), ed., C. J. Arthur, pp. 104.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 425-27: 'The only result we obtain . . . is that these three moments -- the force of production, the state of society, and consciousness -- can and must come into conflict with one another because the division of labour implies the possibility, indeed the necessity, that intellectual and material activity . . . are given to different individuals, and the only possibility of their not coming into conflict lies in again transcending the division of labour . . . in which all these conflicts are implicit . . .'.

people and of which one dominates all the others'.⁴⁰

On the basis of these observations, which form the basis for a theory of ideology, and thus, of the state, Marx draws two immediate conclusions ('it follows from this that'):

(a) 'all struggles within the state . . . are nothing but the illusory forms in which the real struggle of different are carried out';⁴¹

(b) 'every class striving to gain control . . . must first win political power in order to represent its interests in turn as the common interest'.⁴²

These conclusions are of the utmost significance in that they establish a new point of reference for the relation of the state to production, and thus the basis for a dialectic different from Hegel's both at the level of principle and at the level of structure. Beneath the description and sublimation of the attributes of the state, Marx finds a new concept, foreshadowed in the eighteenth century (Rousseau)

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 425. It is of some interest to note that this passage was placed alongside the passage on 'fixation of social activity . . .' (see note 37), a passage in which Marx defines what is usually taken to be the central image of 'alienation' in The German Ideology, but that, as we have seen, turns out to represent the fact that men have lost control over the conditions of their own lives, the ultimate form of which, as Marx points out, turns out to be the 'world market'.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 425. In parenthesis, Marx adds: 'The German theoreticians do not have the faintest inkling of this fact, although they have had sufficient information in the Deutsche-Französische Jahrbücher and the Holy Family'. This observation points to the fact that Marx first finds the concept of class hidden within Hegel's philosophy of the state . . . see note 45.

⁴²Ibid. These two conclusions become the basis for the two fundamental propositions of Marx and Engels stated in the Communist Manifesto, namely that (a) 'every class struggle is a political struggle', and (b) 'the class struggle is the driving force of history'.

and taken up even by Hegel (making it into a phenomenon of the Ruse of Reason), and used abundantly by the historians of the 1830's: the concept of social class in direct relation with and in terms of relations of production.⁴³ This new concept of 'social class' provides Marx with a new centre of reference for the state, which is no longer the 'reality of the Idea', nor its inverse, the illusory representation of the alienated human essence, but is rather the 'practico-idealistic expression' of class rule.⁴⁴ With reference to the 'practical' condition of this class rule, the modern state is nothing more than the 'form of organisation which the bourgeoisie by necessity adopts . . . as a mutual guarantee of their property and interests . . . the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common

⁴³Cf. the relation between the state and social class in Rousseau and Hegel, this writer has completed an extended study: 'The Problem of Bourgeois Civil Society: Hegel's Solution to the Problem of Freedom' (McMaster University, unpublished, 1973). See in particular, Hegel, Philosophy of Right, pp. 201ff. Also, Marx's discussion of the transcendence of private property and labour (as a 'power over individuals'), and the associated concept of 'community' (in WYMPS, pp. 457-61) reveals the persistent influence of Rousseau that we have observed as of his 1842 writings. It is clear, in fact, that Marx's vision of a class-less society (which, of course, does not function theoretically as a principle of explanation for Marx anymore) strongly suggests his reading of Rousseau, although Marx specifies in a direct reference that the combination of individuals into relations of division and unity is 'by no means an arbitrary one as expounded in the Contrat Social but a necessary one . . . ' (ibid., p. 461). In this respect, Marx accepts Hegel's critique of Rousseau viz. the 'necessity' of men's 'conditions of existence'.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 430: 'The conditions under which definite productive forces can be applied are the conditions of the rule of a definite class of society whose social power, deriving from its property, has its practical-idealistic expression in the form of the state . . . therefore every revolutionary struggle is directed against a class in power'. Here Marx formulates one of four general conclusions drawn from his Materialist conception of history (ibid., pp. 430-31).

interests'.⁴⁵ Differently put, the state gives 'political form' to the dominant material relationships, to the control of a dominant class over the means of material production. Representing 'the combination of one class against another' the political-legal apparatus of the state is an instrument of coercion in the service of the ruling class. With reference to the 'idealistic' condition of class rule

the class that is the ruling material power of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual power. The class having the means of material production has also control over the means of intellectual production, so that it also controls, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of intellectual production.⁴⁶

This control enables the ruling class to 'represent its interests as the common interest', and, in effect, to give the conditions of its rule an 'intellectual form', an 'ideal expression':

The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas, hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one and therefore the class of its domination.⁴⁷

What can we conclude from this theory of ideology? Above all that there is no question of a Hegelian dialectic here. The relation between the economic and the political is not secured in advance by the very concept of a dialectic; it is secured under the conditions of class-rule which do not reflect the metaphysic of an inner truth, but express the fact that a definite class has control over the means of intellectual production. With reference no longer to the concept of 'Man' but to a new concept of social class, Marx does not simply 'invert' Hegel's dialectic (preserving

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 470.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 438.

⁴⁷Ibid.

thus its basic structure); he entirely overthrows it: the state and the economy are end-links of a complex relationship which, Marx notes, 'cannot be reduced to an idea', which is to say, to the speculative illusion of an immanent truth, the 'essence of man'.⁴⁸ The state expresses neither the 'reality' of this truth, nor its inverse, its illusory representation. Rather, the state constitutes the conditions of

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 471. Cf. the Hegelian dialectic as the theoretic (epistemological, methodological) basis of a speculative conception of history see ibid., p. 428: 'History is nothing but the succession of separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, capital and productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations. . . . This can be speculatively distorted, so that later history is made the goal of earlier history. . . . History then obtains its own aims . . . while what is designated with the words "destiny", "goal", "germ", or "idea" of earlier history is nothing more than an abstraction formed from later history. . . .'; p. 430: '(The view that the natural form of the world-historical co-operation of individuals will be transformed by the communist revolution into the control and conscious governance of these powers) can be expressed again speculatively and idealistically . . . as "self-generation of the species" ("society as the subject"); p. 440 (see note 28); p. 457: 'If one considers this evolution of individuals philosophically (Marx's emphasis) in the common conditions of existence of estates and classes following one another and in the accompanying general conceptions forced on these individuals, it is certainly very easy to imagine that in these individuals the species of Man has evolved, or that they have evolved Man. In this way one can give history some very hard blows on the head. One can conceive these various estates and classes as specific terms of a general expression, as subordinate varieties of the species, as evolutionary phases of Man'; p. 468: 'Individuals who are no longer subjected to the division of labour have been conceived by the philosophers as an ideal under the name of "Man". They have grasped the whole process as the evolutionary process of "Man", so that at every historical stage "Man" was substituted for individuals and presented as the motive force of history. The whole process was seen as a process of the self-alienation of "Man", essentially because the average individual of the later stage was always foisted on the earlier stage and the consciousness of a later period on the individuals of an earlier ((self-alienation)) . . .'. These long quotes should persuade the most inveterate 'philosopher' (viz. the Left-Hegelians of the twentieth century: the ex-

the rule of a definite class which derives its social power from its property, ie., its relation to production. The conditions of this class rule (economic, and politico-ideological) can in no wise be thought of in terms of a Hegelian dialectic, whether upside down (idealist) or right side up (materialist). To think the 'relation of state and law to property' in terms of an inverted Hegelian dialectic is to grasp this relation as the expressive 'totality' of an immanent (self-mediating) truth, and as such, the phenomenal manifestation (contradictory appearance) of an inner universal, an original essence. The 'totality' of this relation has both a spatial and a temporal dimension, which is to say, it manifests itself both in a form of society and in its process of historical development. The essence can be grasped both in its outer manifestation and in its mediated result. To apply a Hegelian dialectic to the 'social totality' is to grasp the principle of its inner unity, a simple essence of which observable social relationships (of state and law to property) are but outward appearances. To apply a Hegelian dialectic to the 'history' in which the 'development' of this social totality is thought, is to grasp the unity of a process in its very contradiction -- an original essence in a process of self-realisation. As the teleological origin, and thus the immanent end, of this process of 'self-development' this 'essence' is the 'truth' of history, the synthetic unity (subject) of its dialectic (from essence to existence), the basis of its inherent rationality.

To simply invert Hegel's conception of the dialectic -- to give the 'essence' a 'real basis' (in material production) -- does not escape its historicist problematic of an

ponents of 'Critical Theory') of the gist of our argument. Marx's remarks against 'philosophy' are not isolated remarks that can be ignored or, eluded or down-played. They constitute the central leitmotif of Marx's argument.

immanent truth (whose ultimate point of reference is either the Idea, or conversely, the concept of 'Man'). In the first place, and above all, to invert the Hegelian dialectic forces one to seek for the historic process a 'subject', the bearer of its truth (the self-development of Man). In Hegel's philosophy it is the state which emerges as the truth of civil society, the essence (inner-unity) of its phenomena (class-division). What would result from a strict inversion of this dialectic? Civil society is the truth of the state, and in consequence, the historic dialectic (of an immanent truth) has its basis not in the state, but in the social relations of production, which is to say, in the class-division of society. As the real basis of the historic dialectic (and on the speculative presupposition of an immanent truth) these social relations of production are viewed philosophically as the manifest form of an expressive totality, an inner 'essence' whose point of reference, the concept of Man, is produced by resolving a structure of social relations into its universal form -- a universal class.⁴⁹ On the basis of this concept of 'Man', the ultimate point of reference for a philosophical conception of historic development, there arises but one essential problem: to discover or identify the social force (universal class) that embodies the 'essence' of the social formation (the self-development of Man), and that accordingly can be assigned the task of its historic realisation. We need hardly point out that in this historicist interpretation of Marx's thought the social force in question turns out to be the proletariat (although as the case of Marcuse has shown, this need not be so -- under

⁴⁹Hegel, of course, viewed the bureaucracy of the Prussian state as the 'universal class' -- with reference to the Idea (of State). With reference to the Concept of Man, the function in question is assigned to the proletariat, which is in the process idealised as the truth of history.

changed conditions it can turn out to be the lumpenproletariat, the peasantry, or even the students of our intellectual havens, the temples of reason). With an inversion of the Hegelian dialectic (and on the theoretical basis of the concept of Man) the proletariat is conceived within the problematic of a Hegelian philosophy of history based on the speculative presupposition of an immanent truth, the idealist metaphysic of an original identity. Within this problematic of an inverted Hegel: (a) the relation of state and law to property under the conditions of class rule (based on the division of labour, and thus, on the contradiction of economic interests) is resolved into a process of self-realisation, the philosophic dialectic of an immanent truth -- of an essence to its phenomena; (b) the contradiction of material life -- between forces and relations of production -- based on division of labour is resolved into the contradiction between a human essence and an inhuman existence based on alienation. The conditions of class rule (private appropriation by one class of the means of production) is resolved into an inhuman condition -- the alienation of man from his essence. The dialectic of a class struggle, a practical movement in history, is resolved into the dialectic of an immanent truth, a movement in thought projected onto history; (c) in the dialectic of this truth -- the self-mediated unity (Aufhebung) of a self-conscious revolutionary praxis -- the proletariat emerges as the subject of history, the bearer of its inherent rationality -- of an essence manifest in the process of its self-realisation. As the basis of an original essence, an identity lived in its alienation, the proletariat is driven to overcome its self-alienation -- to reappropriate its essence in the reconciliation (self-mediated unity) of the subject and object.

This threefold condition of an inverted Hegelian dialectic leads us to an inescapable conclusion, one faced

by Marx at the very outset of The German Ideology: it is necessarily governed by the problematic of a philosophic principle, the identity of opposites, which establishes the epistemological and methodological basis of a philosophy of history. To invert the Hegelian dialectic does not escape the problematic of this principle, and, as our study makes clear, neither the Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 nor The Holy Family manages to escape from an ultimate dependence on Hegel. It is just as clear, however, that Marx's critique of 'German Ideology' is based on precisely the need to abandon the 'realm of philosophy' (dependence on Hegel), and to approach the study of history and politics from an entirely new angle, on the basis of a new method.⁵⁰

In turning from 'philosophy' (alienation) to 'reality' (division of labour) -- the first condition of a science -- Marx rejects not only Hegel's idea of historic development, but of necessity the method by which 'philosophy' is installed into the study of history (ie., in which a teleological conception of history is reflected): the dialectic of reason (of negativity, of an immanent truth, of an essence to its phenomena). As a form of thought, the Hegelian dialectic is not a method of analysis, but quite the contrary, is a method of synthesis: the speculative extension of thought beyond sense-experience towards the 'totality' of the essential unity of its contradiction-in-appearance.⁵¹

⁵⁰Again, although our exposition makes this point clear beyond dispute, one need only refer to Marx's own explicit prefatory and introductory remarks in this respect.

⁵¹Cf. our introductory study on Kant and Hegel's respective solutions to the problem of knowledge viz. the concept of 'dialectic'. The basic structure of the Hegelian dialectic is expounded by Kant. Hegel takes up Kant's dialectic with the following difference: for Kant, the dialectic is a speculative method for extending thought beyond sense-experience towards the 'totality' of conditions (subject,

This unity-within-contradiction (reason in reality) is grasped in the self-mediated truth of its unifying concept (the idea of historic development, the concept of man) which is ultimately based on the metaphysic of an identity of opposites (reality is thought).⁵² In the metaphysic of this principle, logic (the way thought appropriates reality) is identified with history (the way reality itself develops), which is to say, the philosophic dialectic is a method of reasoning internal to its object (history). As the inner reflection of a process of historic development, the dialectic grasps history as an absolute subject that alienates itself and becomes its own phenomena in order to realise itself, or by substitution, it grasps the proletariat as the subject of a revolutionary praxis, and as such, the 'truth' of history. The Hegelian dialectic, in short, is the theoretic concentrate of a 'philosophy of history', and thus it is that in order to drive 'philosophy' from the study of history, to abandon the realm of philosophy, Marx cannot merely invert the Hegelian dialectic. He necessarily rejects it as such, in a thorough-going mutation both of its underlying problematic of a human essence and its invariant type-

object). As such, the dialectic establishes a focus imaginarius beyond experience -- the Idea. This Idea, however, is but an ideal without existence, and the dialectic as a method of thought is but a 'logic of illusion'. For Hegel, on the other hand, what is for Kant a condition of thought (the synthetic unity of reason) becomes a condition of the real, and as a consequence, the Idea is real, in fact, the reality, and the dialectic is a 'logic of truth', the methodological basis of a metaphysic.

⁵²We have here the basis for humanism (cf. the synthetic unity of the concept of 'Man'), of historicism (cf. the synthetic unity of the concept of 'history'), and most importantly, of a historicised humanism, which combines Hegel's idea of historic development and Feuerbach's concept of Man. These three forms of ideology encompass the various theoretic traditions which at present dominate the traditional forms of interpretation of Marx's thought.

structure of a subject-object relation.

First of all, by rejecting on the one hand, the speculative presupposition of an immanent truth (point of reference: the concept of Man), and asserting on the other hand, the empirical premises of historical explanation (point of reference: the ensemble of social relations), Marx places the study of history on a 'materialist' basis. In so doing, he resolves a philosophic problem (alienation) into an empirical fact (division of labour), and thus a scientific problem. As a result, Marx no longer finds the origin of history in alienation (of man from his essence), nor does he conceive of its development in terms of the simple dialectic of an immanent truth based on simple contradiction between essence and existence. Historic development is conceived, rather, in terms of a complex contradiction between two structures, forces and relations of production, which forms the economic basis not of a struggle between a subject and object (under the condition of alienation), but of a class struggle (under the condition of labour division).

Within this new framework of reference, that of a scientific conception of history, the relation of the economic to the political is no longer conceived of in terms of a Hegelian dialectic, the expressive relation and historic realisation of an immanent truth. Marx abandons the Hegelian relation of an essence to its phenomena in favour of a new conception of society and history based on the real conditions of class rule. In doing so, Marx necessarily transforms the structures of the Hegelian dialectic (negation of negation, identity of opposites, supersession, etc.) and necessarily breaks with its principle of explanation ('the truth of . . . '). Within his new framework of reference, that of a class struggle, the problem of historical development can no longer be reduced to the question of determining the 'subject' of its process, the basis of its

dialectic of negativity, its principle of truth. No longer is the 'motor' of historic development, its driving force, conceived to be a self-identical 'subject' driven towards self-realisation, towards the re-appropriation of his true essence. The driving force of historic development is, on the contrary, something quite different: the class struggle, 'a revolutionary struggle . . . directed against a class in power', a struggle based on the contradiction of material life.⁵³

It is possible, of course, to transpose the historic conditions of this class struggle into the structure of a Hegelian dialectic, and thereby into an object of philosophic synthesis rather than scientific analysis. This is, in fact, precisely what happens with the historicist tendency to push Marx back into Hegel -- or, which is the same thing, into his earlier works (via the thesis of 'continuity').⁵⁴ This tendency, of course, has serious theoretical and political implications, since it authorises in theory the various poli-

⁵³Cf. Marx, German Ideology, in WYMPS, pp. 430-32: '[The materialist conception of history] arrives at the conclusion that all forms of and production of consciousness cannot be dissolved by . . . criticism, by revolution into "self-consciousness" . . . but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relationships. . . . Not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history and also of religion, philosophy, and all other types of theory'; also, ibid., pp. 430, 435-37.

This thesis that the driving force of history is not a subject, but the revolutionary process of class struggle, is expressed in the structuralist thesis: history is a process without a subject (cf. Althusser, 'Reply to John Lewis (Self-Criticism)'. Marxism Today, October 1972).

⁵⁴'Historicist' explanation can take divergent forms: in a strict inversion of the Hegelian dialectic, the objective conditions of the Economy are invested with an immanent rationality (economic determinism). Within the framework of the Hegelian dialectic, a 'subject' is found as the basis of historic rationality (historicist humanism).

tical deviations which beset Marxist political practice. In order to defend Marxism from the theoretical and political positions that threaten to compromise it we need to clearly distinguish Marx from Hegel, to establish the specificity of Marx's 'dialectics' -- of his materialist conception of history -- as applied to the communist theory of social revolution.

The Hegelian Dialectic and Marx's Theory of Revolution

The dialectics of Hegel and Marx are not, we submit, identical at the level of principle (differing only in their basis which affects their application but not their structure). The first principle of the Hegelian dialectic is the postulate of an identity of opposites (to which an expressive relation between the real and the ideal can be reduced). As our exposition has made clear this principle is based on the speculative presupposition of an immanent truth, a metaphysic. Its object: to establish an internal solution to the problem of real life, of history, namely, a historic reason reflected in its philosophic consciousness. On the basis of this metaphysic (and with reference to the proletariat as the 'subject' of the dialectic) the problem in question is grasped as a simple contradiction between existence (summed up in the proletariat's life-situation) and essence (lived in its alienation). The internal solution of the philosophic dialectic: the self-mediated unity (Aufhebung) of a process grasped in its very contradiction, a historic reason (self-transcending movement) which, reflected in its philosophic consciousness, preserves the contradiction in its negation by sublimating its opposed conditions in the concept of an inner unity. Now, it has to be admitted that this internal solution (philosophic synthesis) of the Hegelian dialectic, governed by the metaphysic of its first principle, affects Marx's conception of the communist revolution in the Economic & Philosophic

Manuscripts of 1844, and it does so to the degree that 'necessity' is thought with reference to an inverted 'Idea' of historic development rather than the practical struggle of the proletariat. It is our thesis, however, that there is no solution of theoretic continuity between the 1844 Manuscripts and the German Ideology.

First and foremost, in the German Ideology Marx no longer attempts to either 'humanise' Hegel or 'historicise' Feuerbach, but he rejects the very basis of their inversely-related dialectics, reference to which secures for the problem of history an internal solution. In the 1844 Manuscripts Marx's theory of communism was conceived (with reference to a philosophic dialectic) as a self-transcending movement in which by substitution the proletariat negates its own negation, and in effect, plays the role of Hegel's Absoluted Idea (as the 'truth' of history, the self-mediated result of its process). In the German Ideology, despite some inevitable ambiguity of language,⁵⁵ this is no longer the case. At the level of principle Marx's 'solution' to the problem of history -- the communist theory of social revolution -- is no longer based on a metaphysic, a simple identity of opposites. It is based, rather, on a complex unity of opposites,

⁵⁵Cf. in particular Marx's continued use of the word 'transcendence' (Aufhebung) as the necessary condition of the communist revolution. The concept of 'transcendence' is the central construct of the Hegelian dialectic, and Marx's continued use of the term, though understandable (it serves a necessary theoretical function) is unfortunate. As with the concept of 'alienation' which Marx continues to use (not without sarcasm) the theoretical function of the concept of 'Aufhebung' is overthrown, and it is quite clear that Marx places these terms within a different (non-Hegelian) theoretical framework, and thus re-defines their meaning. Marx, in fact, less ambiguously, uses more and more the term 'practical overthrow' to express the idea sometimes referred to by 'Aufhebung'.

an ir-reducible (real) relation grasped not by philosophic synthesis but by empirical analysis of the class conditions of a historic process.⁵⁶

By referring the conditions of class struggle to the empirical premises of historical explanation rather than to the philosophic principle of a Hegelian dialectic, Marx opens up an entirely new problematic. First. Marx no longer con-

⁵⁶Cf. the conclusions which Marx draws from his materialist conception and empirical analysis of history, which forms the basis of his new theory of communism, see The German Ideology, in WYMPS, pp. 430-31.

Despite some 'positivist' overtones which express the immaturity of Marx's Enlightenment concept of science, the epistemology of his 'empirical analysis' is non-empiricist. On this see Althusser's structuralist interrogation of Marx's thought in For Marx (pp. 183-84, 190-91) and Reading Capital (pp. 35-43, 87, 117-18, 161, 183). Also, for similar considerations shaped by a different (ie., non-structuralist) perspective, see Colletti's 'Marxism as a Sociology' in From Rousseau to Lenin. Despite his different concept of science Colletti also emphasises the epistemological distinction between an 'identity' and a 'unity' of opposites in separating Marx's dialectic from that of Hegel. Within the framework of our study, this distinction is rooted in what we chosen to refer to, on the one hand, as a 'philosophical principle' based on an idealist metaphysic, and, on the other hand, as the 'principle of materialism', the epistemological basis of all empirical premises. The concept of this distinction similarly underlies our distinction of 'science' from 'philosophy'. This should not be misunderstood, which is to say, it should not be generalised beyond its framework of reference. Every science in breaking with the ideological field of certain philosophical presuppositions necessarily forms the basis of a new philosophy. We merely affirm the principle of materialism, viz. its reference to the empirical, as the minimum basis of science, and, as applied to the study of history, we merely reconstruct Marx's conscious break with the ideological field of a specific philosophy -- Hegel's. Although the concept of 'science' vis-à-vis 'philosophy' raises many problems in itself, their discussion is well-beyond the scope of our present study. For the purpose of this study we cannot treat the concept of science as problematical.

ceives of communism as the self-mediated result of a realised ideal (the teleological principle of an inverted idea) whose dialectic preserves a contradiction in its negation. For the 'theoretical communists' ('the only ones', Marx points out, 'who have time to devote to the study of history')

it is not a question of the Hegelian "negative unity" of two sides of a contradiction, but of the materially determined destruction of the preceding, materially determined mode of life of individuals, with the disappearance of which this contradiction together with its unity also disappears.⁵⁷

In this conception of communism, based not on the conditions of a Hegelian dialectic but on those of a practical struggle, Marx moves on different ground than his erstwhile colleagues in theory, the ideologues of 'true' socialism and 'philosophical' communism. These ideologues of social revolution, both 'materialist' (Feuerbach) and 'idealist' (Bauer, Stirner, Brun), treat communism as an abstract theory, a category, or a principle, in the light of which the world of existing relationships is subjected to a fundamental 'criticism'.⁵⁸ Against this Left-Hegelian tendency to

⁵⁷The German Ideology, ed. C. J. Arthur, p. 105.

⁵⁸Cf. Ibid., in WYMPS, pp. 407-08: 'In the Young Hegelians' fantasies the relationships of men, all their actions, their chains, and their limitations are products of their consciousness. Consequently they give men the moral postulate of exchanging their present consciousness for human, critical . . . consciousness to remove their limitations. This amounts to a demand to interpret what exists in a different way . . .'; ibid., ed. Pascal, p. 79: "'true socialists" . . . consider . . . communist literature not as the expression of the product of a real movement but merely as a set of theoretical writings . . . evolved, they imagine, by a process of "pure thought" . . . (rather than) from the practical needs, the whole conditions of a particular class'. Cf. further, Marx's entire argument against 'true socialism', which attacks directly ideologues such as Grun, and indirectly, Feuerbach himself 'to whom they defer'. Marx's devastating critique of the 'Cornerstones' of 'True Socialism' (ibid., pp. 104-79) reveals more than anything else the decisiveness with which

reduce communism to a mere mode of interpretation, Marx insists that 'for the practical materialist, ie., the communist, it is a question of revolutionising the world as it is, of practically tackling and changing existing things'.⁵⁹

Marx both settles with his own 'philosophic consciousness'. He dismantles piece by piece the entire theoretic structure which supports itself in the last analysis on Hegel's philosophy adapted to Feuerbach's humanism. Since Marx himself was until 1845 very much caught up by the same, this trenchant critique of 'true socialism' reveals the inner workings of Marx's 'self-clarification' achieved in the course of writing The German Ideology.

⁵⁹Marx, The German Ideology (Part I), in WYMPS, p. 416. Marx here clearly separates himself from Feuerbach vis-à-vis the political and theoretical positions of communism: 'It is . . . clear from this discussion how grossly Feuerbach deceives himself when he declares himself a communist . . . by virtue of the qualification "common man" converted into a predicate "of" Man, and thus he believes it possible to change the word communist, which actually means the follower of a definite revolutionary party, into a mere category. Feuerbach's whole deduction concerning the relation of men to one another goes only so far as to prove that men need . . . one another. Like other theorists, he wants to bring about a correct awareness of an existing fact . . . whereas the real communist aims to overthrow the existing state of things' (ibid., pp. 435-36). This is the first text in which Marx uses the term 'party' (communist), which directly anticipates his discussion in Part II of the Communist Manifesto. Although Marx does not take up in any way the question of the problems of organisation, his treatment of 'true socialism' clearly distinguishes between the pseudo-parties (literary, philosophical) of the Hegelian Left and the party of the working-class movement. On this, and on the close connection between Marx's conception of the communist revolution and the formation of a communist party as, in effect, the 'vanguard' of the working-class movement, see Chapter Three, of Michael Lowy, La Théorie de la Révolution chez le Jeune Marx (Paris: Maspero, 1970).

The leitmotif of this theme can be traced back to The Holy Family, and even earlier, but now it leads Marx to a clear political solution, expressed in the following formula:

Communism is for us not a state of affairs still to be established, not an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of affairs. The condition of this movement results from premises now in existence.⁶⁰

Secondly, Marx no longer conceives of the proletariat as the bearer of an ideal (communism) realised in the appropriation of man's alienated essence. He conceives of it, rather, as a revolutionary class driven to the practical overthrow of its class-conditions of existence. The necessity of the proletariat's revolutionary praxis, as well as its possibility, are prescribed not on the basis of a philosophic dialectic, but of 'premises now in existence', on a basis created by the class-conditions of capitalist society. On this basis, the necessity of its action derives not from 'a correct awareness of an existing fact' (consciousness of the human essence) but from 'the practical needs, the whole conditions of a particular class', which are 'only the productive forces and forms of interaction of the particular time'.⁶¹ Under the conditions of class rule (private property and division of labour) the forces of production, the basis of 'self-activity', are on the one hand, monopolised by a dominant class as the basis of its state-power, and on

⁶⁰Marx, The German Ideology, in WYMPS, p. 426. To appreciate the distance covered by Marx since 1842, one needs to recall his various observations on communism in the Rheinische Zeitung ('the true danger does not lie in the practical attempt to carry out communist ideas but in their theoretical development'), and in the Jahrbücher whose conception of communism is profoundly affected with a 'philosophic communism' in the style of Moses Hess, and even in the 1844 Manuscripts where communism relates more to a future society than the working-class movement.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 427-28.

the other hand, separated from the proletariat, which thus suffers a total loss of control over its means of existence. Thus deprived of any 'self-activity', and ultimately, of control over its means of existence, the proletarians of the present are by necessity driven towards the re-appropriation of the means of production.⁶² For this the proletariat is compelled to unite, to act as a class in revolutionary struggle:

Things have come to the point where individuals must appropriate the existing totality of productive forces not merely to achieve self-activity but to secure their very existence. This appropriation is determined by the object to be appropriated -- the productive forces developed to a totality and existing only within a universal interaction. . . . The appropriation is further determined by a union, universal because of the character of the proletariat itself, and through a revolution in which the power of the social organisation and of earlier modes of production and interaction is overthrown and the proletariat's universal character and energy for the act of appropriation is developed.⁶³

These remarks lead us to the heart of Marx's theory of the communist revolution which, despite an apparent continuity with earlier formulations, is thought through in a different way. The possibility of the proletariat's revolutionary praxis, necessarily directed against a class in power, derives from the conditions of unity, the basis for which is created by capitalism ('modern productive forces and world intercourse'), and the necessary conditions of which are developed by the revolutionary process itself. On the one hand, the universal and revolutionary character of the pro-

⁶²There seems to be a structural equivalence of terms between this formulation and that of The Holy Family: from 'loss of man' to 'loss of control'; from the re-appropriation of the 'human essence' to that of the 'means of production'. The corresponding 'dialectic', however, involves a thoroughgoing mutation at the level of principle and that of structure. More on this below.

⁶³Ibid, pp. 467-68.

letariat's praxis, the basis of its unity, derives from the material circumstances of its life-situation, ie., from its relation to production, the objective conditions of which determine (set limits on) the form of the class struggle.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the proletariat's 'objective' position within a capitalist system of production is not a sufficient condition for the communist revolution. As well as the objective conditions created by the capitalist system, the object of scientific analysis, the communist revolution requires a 'subjective' condition of unity. a revolutionary consciousness, produced in the process of class struggle itself. To focus theoretically this 'subjective' condition we can point towards two of Marx's observations which, we will argue, have the same point of reference. In the first place, the proletariat only fully constitutes itself a class in the revolutionary process of class struggle itself: 'various individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a joint battle against another class. Otherwise they are hostile, competing with each other'.⁶⁵ In the second place, the process of class struggle produces a 'consciousness of the necessity of fundamental revolution, communist revolution, which may, of course, also arise in the other classes perceiving the situation of this class'.⁶⁶ The point of reference for these two observations, the rela-

⁶⁴Since the relation between the structure of the economic base and the various elements of the 'superstructure' is no longer conceived within the framework of a Hegelian dialectic, the 'determinism' of the 'objective' conditions of material production has a different meaning than assigned by the concept of Hegelian dialectic. No longer does 'to determine' carry the meaning 'to prefigure' (in the immanence of its truth). To 'determine' is not to prefigure, but to set limits, to condition.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 456.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 430.

tion between proletarian praxis and revolutionary ideas, can be simply expressed: communist consciousness is the precise (and necessary) condition for the formation of the proletariat as a class. The relation between proletarian praxis and revolutionary ideas is conceived, however, in terms different than hitherto: 'The existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular epoch presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class'.⁶⁷ This proposition is, of course, quite consistent with the materialist premise of Marx's approach. It does raise, however, the question of a paradox: How can a communist consciousness both presuppose the existence of a revolutionary class -- the proletariat -- and be a necessary condition for its formation?⁶⁸

On the basis of Marx's text we can resolve the paradox in question by reference, on the one hand, to the objective, material conditions of class unity created by the capitalist system, and, on the other hand, to the subjective condition of revolutionary consciousness produced in the process of class struggle. The meaning of this double-reference, however, is not immediately apparent. Indeed, it brings us back to an unsettled problem of interpretation, viz. the two possible frameworks of reference supported by the Theses on Feuerbach -- a philosophy of praxis, and a science of history. The problem in question: What is the relationship between the objective conditions of the proletariat's revolu-

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 439. About the premises for such a class see ibid., pp. 427-28.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 431: 'For the production of this communist consciousness on a mass scale and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a large scale is required. This can only take place in a practical movement, in a revolution. A revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way but also because the class overthrowing it can succeed only by revolution in . . . becoming capable of establishing society anew'.

tionary praxis (as an object of scientific study) and the theoretical consciousness of its necessity (as the basis for a call to action)? How does Marx's theory of revolution, based on a scientific conception of history, relate to the working-class movement? What is the relationship between a scientific study of history and class-consciousness, between the scientific production of real knowledge and revolutionary ideology?⁶⁹

Let us look more closely at this question, and in so doing, conclude the argument for our thesis.

First of all, consider the following observations. Prior to The German Ideology Marx's concept of revolutionary praxis had two distinct formulations, one in the Jahrbücher, the other in The Holy Family. Despite their variation both concepts of revolution were formulated within the framework of a philosophy whose theoretical principles were derived from the same traditional problematic, that of the human essence. The invariant type-structure of this problematic, that of the subject-object relation, and its principle of explanation, that of an essence to its phenomena, constitutes the framework for a philosophy in which 'praxis' is the self-mediated unity of two conditions, one subjective, the other objective. At the level of the Jahrbücher the unity of these conditions is satisfied in the alliance of two forces, an active element (philosophy) and a passive element (the proletariat). As a condition of unity the necessity of revolution is commissioned by a consciousness of a human essence

⁶⁹The problem thus posed lies at the heart of the dispute between the historicism of Sartre, Lukács, Gramsci, etc., in which Marxism is reduced to a class ideology viz. its expressive relation to proletarian praxis, and the structuralism of Althusser, Godelier, etc. which defends the specificity of scientific knowledge in relation to this praxis. Cf. the definition of science and ideology, and the question of their relation, see this writer's article in Science & Society, vol. 38, no. 4 (Winter, 1974-75), pp. 397-404.

alienated in existence, and this consciousness, the driving force of history, is supplied by philosophy, the theoretical affirmation of man, to the proletariat, his practical negation. By August 1844, at the level of The Holy Family, the emergence of the working-class movement had forced upon Marx the conclusion that a communist consciousness emerges from within the working-class movement, and as a result of its praxis. Rather than 'activating' the proletariat's material praxis with a theoretic consciousness of its necessity, philosophy can take sides in an on-going class struggle, and at best choose to represent the political interests of the proletariat in theory. Marx here breaks with the ideology of a Left-Hegelian philosophy of (theoretical) praxis. He does not, however, escape the philosophic problematic of a human essence with its dialectic of an immanent truth. Its two conditions of unity, conceived within the framework of an inverted Hegelian dialectic, are satisfied in the proletariat itself.

In this application of an inverted dialectic to the proletariat the concept of revolutionary praxis is referred to the materialist theorem: if man is formed by his circumstances, then his circumstances must be made human. Within the philosophic problematic of this theorem, the concept of revolutionary praxis has as its ultimate point of reference a speculative principle -- the identity of opposites -- based on the concept of Man. On the one hand, by referring the necessity of revolutionary change to the ideology of real-humanism, the proletariat's praxis is directed towards the realisation of an immanent end, the re-appropriation of the alienated human essence. On the other hand, by conceiving the process of this re-appropriation with reference to an inverted Hegelian dialectic, praxis brings the objective condition of revolution (material circumstances) and its subjective condition (self-change) into a relation of self-mediated unity. With reference to the concept of Man, this

self-mediated unity of praxis restores the identity of an original essence, the teleological origin of truth. In its expressive relation to this praxis, communist consciousness reflects the existence of this truth, and it does so in the proletariat grasped in the framework of an inverted dialectic as the identical subject-object of history, the embodiment of its rationality. Armed with a philosophic insight into this truth, a philosophy of praxis, one needs only turn to history so as to interrogate of it, as it were, the workings of the dialectic, the necessary conditions of which are already reflected in the metaphysic of its first principle.

These observations make it clear that despite its advance upon his earlier concept of praxis, Marx's theory of the communist revolution is, at the level of The Holy Family, still based on a philosophy of praxis, and thus ultimately bound by the speculative principle of a Hegelian dialectic. Lukács' genial interpretation, as well as the historicist tradition that he inaugurates within Marxism, is supported by Marx himself -- at the level of The Holy Family. Our reading of The German Ideology, however, makes it just as clear that as of 1845 Marx makes a thorough-going break with the entire problematic of this philosophy. This is not to say that our supportive argument for this thesis is unassailable. Indeed, a formal comparison of The Holy Family and The German Ideology vis-à-vis Marx's theory of social revolution raises a problem that touches upon the most controversial point of our interpretation of Marx's relation to Hegel. The point at issue: Marx's theory of revolution, formulated in the one case with reference to the philosophical principles of Hegel's dialectic, and in the other case, with reference to the empirical premises of Historical Materialism, seems to have the same centre of reference, namely a conception of history as the product of human activity. On this basis, Marx's theory of historical development can indeed be conceived of in terms of a rational process, a

dialectic, and Marx clearly spoke of it as such, as did Lenin after him. At the same time, however, this admission suggests that which we would deny, namely a fundamental continuity between The German Ideology and The Holy Family, and indeed with the Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts wherein Marx worked out his theory of historical development in tandem with Hegel's dialectic.

Let us look more closely at this problem so as to settle the question at issue. In the first place, that history is the product of human activity is as true at the level of The German Ideology as it is in the Paris Manuscripts. To be sure, this is beyond dispute, and never at issue. Both the productive forces and their corresponding social relations, as well as their ideal expressions and revolutionary transformations, are produced by men who therein make their own history, albeit under given conditions.⁷⁰ In the light of this truth, one cannot conceive of society apart from the social relations contracted by men in production, or conceive of history apart from the practical activity of 'real, historical individuals'. To do so, to treat of history as a subject apart, is the height of abstraction.⁷¹ There is

⁷⁰This is clearly expressed in Marx's letter to P. V. Annenkov, December 28, 1846: 'What is society, whatever its form may be? The product of men's reciprocal action. Are men free to choose this or that form of society for themselves? By no means. . . . It is superfluous to add that men are not free to choose their productive forces -- which are the basis of all their history -- for every productive force is an acquired force, the product of former activity . . . the result of practical human energy . . . [which] is itself conditioned by the circumstances in which men find themselves . . . which they do not create. . . . [It] necessarily follows that the social history of men is never anything but the history of their individual development, whether they are conscious of it or not. Their material relations . . . the basis of all their relations . . . are only the necessary forms in which their material and individual activity is realised' (appendix to The Poverty of Philosophy).

⁷¹Cf. Marx's attacks against the first two 'Corner-

another side to this truth, however, which is that the men who make their own history cannot be understood apart from the given conditions of their socio-historical existence. The individual conceived apart from the objective structure of social relations in which he finds himself is also an abstraction.⁷² Indeed, only by taking as one's point of departure an ensemble of given social relations -- and not the individual abstracted from the class conditions of his existence, ie., 'man' in general -- can one grasp the objectivity of real concrete individuals, of men who make their own history not as they choose, but under given conditions, ie., as members of a specific social formation. Thus understood, relations between men, social relations of production, are not merely intersubjective human relations. The objectivity of these relations is independent of how they are lived or thought.⁷³ At the same time, however, men contract these

stones' of 'true socialism', viz. the tendency of these Left-Hegelians to abstract from history two absolute principles, the individual and the totality, and to set up a dialectic between them as the basis of historical development (German Ideology, III, especially pp. 109-112 of the Pascal edition).

⁷²Cf. Marx's criticisms of Feuerbach in particular in the sixth Thesis on Feuerbach and throughout the first and foundational part of The German Ideology; cf. above note 9. Under conditions of division of labour and private property the historically existing individual necessarily exists as a member of a social class, the support of an objective structure of productive relationships.

⁷³Cf. the general principle which, as enunciated in the Preface to A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy, Marx takes as the 'guiding principle of my studies': 'In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production'. To take social relations as intersubjective relations, ie., as merely conscious intentional patterns of behaviour, and as such, reducible to ideological relations, is characteristic of that form of sociology that bases its principle of explanation on the subjective factor, on the subjectivity of shared meaningful experience. As applied to

relations not as passive supports, as mere effects of a given social structure, but as concrete individuals endowed with thought and will, ie., with a capacity to reason.⁷⁴

We touch here upon a theme quite familiar to us by now, namely that human activity is subjective and objective at the same time, both dependent and independent of consciousness, both ideal and material. This organic unity of the subjective and the objective in the history of man is expressed

the study of historical development, such an approach falls prisoner of what can be called the 'subjectivist fallacy' which is to extract from an obvious truth and valid premise -- that there is no social development or historic praxis without the agency of men acting with consciousness and will -- the false conclusions that the laws which govern a process of historical development are supported by and dependent on the social definition of reality, and that they, by virtue of being known, lose their 'objectivity' ie., their independence from the will and consciousness of men. In this fallacy the rationality of a process is confused with knowledge of it.

⁷⁴Cf. the structuralist conception in which men only appear in theory in the form of supports (Träger) of a social structure, as determinate effects of this structure. This conception, if not understood within its framework of reference, falls victim of what Husserl has termed the 'objectivist fallacy' which is to deny the effectivity of subjectively meaningful action in history.

It is possible to avoid both an objectivist and a subjectivist conception of historic praxis by reference to Kant's recognition that man is both intelligible in the freedom of his action and sensible in the effects of this action. As we interpret it, this recognition is based on a distinction between a principle of action and a principle of explanation, which is to recognise that to act is not the same as to understand. Although Marx clearly rejects the formalism of Kant's distinction, and seeks to ground political action in scientific understanding, Marx recognises the difference in principle. No political action is self-explanatory: it is comprehended by and guided by theory. By the same token, to merely interpret is not (as the Left-Hegelians believed) an effective form of action -- of change. A theoretical practice must be translated into political practice, a task that involves an arduous ideological struggle.

in the double significance given by Marx to the concept of 'class': as factors or objective conditions of production (as certain historical phases of the division of labour); and as the political agents of the whole human social process. How is this unity of the subjective and the objective, the ideal and the material, to be understood, however? Subjectively, with reference to the conscious will of men who in the objective process of their action realises a subjective purpose and effect in the given reality a change of form? Or objectively, with reference not to the subjective intention and rational action of men but to the objective conditions and product of this action?⁷⁵ Is the objective process of historical development conceivable as a relation between an original essence, a subjective ideal, and its manifest expression, i.e., as the objectification of the human essence, the product of a purposive rational action? Marx's answer is unequivocal. Although the objective involves an ideal element, the objectification of a subjective purpose, it is not historically determinant. Indeed, as underlined by Marx as of The German Ideology, when one departs not from 'man' as such, the abstract individual, but from an

⁷⁵The model par excellence of a human social process understood subjectively, is the labour-process: '... what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will' (Capital, 1, p. 178). The labour-process as a paradigm of rational development can also be viewed 'objectively', i.e., with reference not to the subjective purpose of the labourer but to the product of his action, the sum of productive forces or objective conditions to which he must subordinate his will. From this viewpoint, it is recognised that man, in seeking to realise his individual ends under social conditions of production, produces unintended results, a process which (as Marx observes in his footnote to the above passage) Hegel explains by reference to a metaphysic -- the 'cunning of Reason'.

ensemble of social relations, the necessary form taken by the action of socially concrete individuals, the objectivity of historical developments cannot be understood with reference to any subjective purpose or conscious will, neither individual or collective. Although they involve the conscious, purposeful action of a great number of men acting both as individuals and as members of a social class, decisive developments such as the destruction of one social formation and the birth of another, are produced by men as unintended results of their action. Although these historical developments are clearly products of human activity their objectivity does not involve the ideal process of subjectively meaningful action, which is to say, it escapes the consciousness and will of the men actively involved in this process.⁷⁶

⁷⁶With their practical activity men have produced the objective conditions for the formation of diverse and successive social formations -- slave, feudal, capitalist -- but, although the men involved acted with consciousness and will, the end-results did not trace out the ideal process of rational, purposeful activity. Every socially concrete individual, acting under definite conditions, pursues ends of which he may or may not be conscious, but in the social form of his action contributes towards results which cannot be referred to any subjective intention. Take the case of a peasant in the sixteenth century who migrates to a town in search of work; neither he, nor the owner of the industrial plant wherein he ends up, nor any of the other individuals engaged in the social process of production, consciously seek to bring about and contribute towards the formation of a new social formation. This is clearly established by Marx and Engels as of The German Ideology and dealt with in detail by Engels in his letter to Bloch, September 21-22, 1890, and in Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy. What The German Ideology underlines is that the succession of social formations, the process of historic development, has a certain rationality, but not a rationality of subjective purpose. Rather, a rationality that operates objectively within the process of material conditions on the basis of a contradiction that develops between the forces of production and the social relations of production. 'This contradiction', it is emphasised by M. Godelier, 'appears without anyone having willed its appearance. It is thus unintentional. Though resulting from the actions of all the agents of the system and of the development of the system itself, it has

We have here the basis of a 'problem': if the process of historical development, the displacement of one social formation with another, escapes the consciousness and will of the men who bring it about, in what sense can it be regarded as rational? Whence its rationality?

Hegel's solution, we have seen, was to view men as unwitting instruments of an absolute reason, a transcendental subject that uses human activity as a means towards its own ends.⁷⁷ In this solution, Hegel grasps the rationality

never been anyone's conscious plan or the aim pursued by any individual' (Rationality and Irrationality in Economics, p. 79). Godelier adds, on the basis of a close reading of Capital, that Marx brings out the existence 'of aspects of reality that do not relate to any consciousness and are not explicable by consciousness. It is the mode of production itself . . . that produces this results "unconsciously"' (ibid.). Godelier's understanding of historic rationality, which, as we will show, is consistent with the principles of Historical Materialism enunciated by Marx contrasts strongly with that of Sartre, for whom 'the only concrete basis of the historic dialectic is the structure of the individual's action' (Critique de la raison dialectique, p. 279). Sartre recognises that the praxis of the individual fuses in a social praxis, but he insists that 'the dialectical rationality of a common praxis does not transcend the rationality of the individual praxis' (ibid., p. 532). The objective development of the historic process is intelligible only on the basis of the actions and reciprocal relations of the individual, as the totalisation of individual projects. Contrary to the thesis of Historical Materialism Sartre upholds the determinism not of objective conditions, of a mode of production whose relations cannot be reduced to mere intersubjective relations, but of the conscious projects and praxis of the individual. As we will see, when Marx talks of men making their own history, he has in mind something far removed from Sartre's historic individual.

⁷⁷Cf. Chapter Two, pp. 78 ff. In this solution Hegel does no more than adopt the approach of English Political Economy, which 'has the task of explaining mass-relationships and mass-movements in their complexity' so as to discover within civil society its hidden rationality, a rationality expressed in Mandeville's paradox, namely that the pursuit by individuals of their particular ends produces somehow the general interest (cf. Hegel's Philosophy of Right, par. 189 wherein he specifically refers to the works of Adam Smith,

of historic developments with reference not to the conscious, subjective will of man, the apparent subject of history, but with reference to the spirit of the whole process, the true subject. On the one hand, Hegel acknowledges that the rationality of historical development is 'objective', and as such, independent of man's conscious will. On the other hand, by conceiving of history in the totality of its conditions as a process oriented towards the realisation of an immanent end, Hegel grounds the objective rationality of the historic process in the telos of an absolute subject, the spirit of the whole. Thus does the problem in question disappear.

The problem also disappears if one adopts the position of the Enlightenment philosophes, namely that the rationality of the historic process only emerges at a determinate phase of its development, in a particular form of society wherein men consciously order their social relations in accordance with their rational essence. In this conception, reconstructed by the Young Hegelians influenced by Feuerbach -- and this includes the young Marx -- man is rational by nature, but has always lived his essence in its alienation. Until men become conscious of their true essence, and thereby become subjects of their own history, the history of man is irrational. The true history of man appears thus with the

Say and Ricardo). Whereas Adam Smith explained this paradox -- that men despite themselves realise as the unintended result of their individual actions a rational process -- by recourse to 'the hidden hand of Providence' Hegel transposed the same insight into a metaphysic of reason. Apart from this speculative projection of a metaphysical subject, the rationality of the historic process is taken (from the standpoint of science) as objective. In this sense, and since Marx had very early rejected Hegel's concept of the Absolute, Marx's concept of historical development, his dialectical theory of reason, is better understood with reference to English Political Economy rather than Hegel. After all, Hegel merely gave its solution (the rationality of the economic process) a speculative transposition, one that Marx never did accept.

history of man's reason, with the rationalisation (humanisation) of his life-circumstances. Whereas for Hegel the rationality of history is objective, and as such, independent of man's consciousness and will (men merely discover the laws inherent in the developmental process), for the Enlightenment philosophes and the Young Hegelians it is subjective, which is to say, expressive of laws consciously established by men themselves. In the one case, the rationality of history embraces each particular phase and the totality of its developmental process. Every society has its raison d'être, its inner spirit, which is to say, it contributes towards the realisation of the spirit of the whole. In the other case, the rationality of history only emerges at the end of a historic process in which the essence of man has become objectified and embodied in institutions that have acquired an autonomy of their own so as to stand against man as an alien force. The reason of the historic process emerges with the conscious re-appropriation of man's essence.

Where does Marx stand in relation to these two solutions if, as we have suggested, he breaks with their underlying problematic? If the process of historic development does not trace out the immanent end of an original essence, nor finally converges with a pre-existing human essence discovered by man's reason, and if it is yet rational, its rationality must be objective, and as such, understood with reference to the objective, material conditions of a social formation, rather than the subjective consciousness and ideal end of a historic subject. Even though every historical development is the result of human activity, intended or otherwise, and the subject is the necessary basis for any call to political action, and as such, is found at the centre of Marx's revolutionary ideology, its principle of scientific explanation is based not on the subject, on the subjectivity of meaningful action, but on the object, on the objectivity

of material conditions.⁷⁸ On this basis does Marx formulate a theory of historical development whose fundamental princi-

⁷⁸Although it is beyond the scope of this study to analyse the concept of science here adduced, and to defend it from the possible charge of 'positivism', we hold -- and we are here clearly supported by Marx's text -- that the principle of scientific explanation cannot be referred to the conscious will and subjective intention of historic subjects, but must be based on the objective results, the historic product, of human activity. Now, it is clear that although the objective conditions of an effective structure impose on historical praxis an unintentional character the rationality of which is subject to scientific explanation, ie., reducible to laws, this same praxis can have in specific historical junctures an intentional character. The objectivity of laws that govern the functioning of a social system and the development of a historic process only apply under specifiable conditions. When men become conscious of the conditions of their existence, ie., become class-conscious, and act as a class to change these conditions, ie., to bring about their revolutionary transformation, the laws in question no longer function. The reality of this subjective factor does not, however, effect the applicability of the materialist principle of explanation. In the first place, it is the maturing conditions of a contradiction between two objective structures, and not class consciousness, that determines both the conditions of social conflict and the possibility of an effective revolutionary praxis. In the second place, in conceptualising the subjective dimension of the class struggle is to shift one's focus from theory to ideological and political practice wherein the 'subject' is the central category (cf. this writer's article, op.cit., pp. 400-01). Again, we refer to the distinction between the principle of action which applies in an ideological discourse and a political practice, and the principle of explanation which applies in a scientific discourse (cf. a different, but corresponding, conception of the relation between these various practices, see Althusser, 'On the Materialist Dialectic', in For Marx). It is possible to say, theoretically speaking, that -- as Balibar puts it -- men appear as 'supports of the different practices articulated into the social structure'. In real practice men appear as they appear as supports of the structures implicated in this practice (cf. Balibar, 'The Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism', Reading Capital). To prevent possible misunderstanding on this point, and to indirectly refer to a methodological principle established earlier -- that, as Marx puts it, 'my analytic method does not begin with the concept of 'Man' -- note the precept of methodological procedure established by Marx for his analysis

ples Marx summarises some years later as follows:

- (1) In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independence of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production;
- (2) The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness;
- (3) The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life . . . ;
- (4) At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production . . . From a form of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters;
- (5) Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure;
- (6) No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have⁷⁹ matured within the framework of the old society.

of Capitalism: 'here individuals are dealt with only insofar as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests. My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them' (preface to first German edition of Capital, Vol. 1, p. 10).

⁷⁹Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859), pp. 20-21.

Together, these principles of Historical Materialism constitute the basis of all of Marx's later studies and forms the framework for a new theory of politics (the state and revolution). Neither at this point, nor in the future for that matter, does Marx give a systematic exposition of the principles of this new theory of politics, and it has to be said, it still awaits to be done today.⁸⁰ One thing is clear,

⁸⁰This may sound most surprising to many Marxist scholars, but the fact is that whenever Marxists have attempted to systematise the principles of Marx's theory of Politics (of revolution and the state) they have -- apart from Lenin -- tended to fall back on the philosophic tradition and ideologies from which Marx distanced himself. We think, in particular, of the principles of Hegel's dialectic, reference to which has established the traditional interpretation of Marx's theory of historical development. Exceptions to this highly generalised trend include Lenin and in at least one respect, Mao (viz. his theory of 'contradiction'). Both Lenin and Mao have thought through the theoretical principles of a Marxist theory of revolution quite outside the philosophical tradition to which theoretical Marxism has always returned for the elaboration of Marx's philosophy, namely Dialectical Materialism. It is in this context that the recent theoretical investigations of Louis Althusser and colleagues are of such critical importance. In the various essays collected in For Marx, Althusser explodes the theoretical inadequacy of the traditional interpretation of Marx's philosophy, viz. both its epistemological and methodological principles, which, in the last analysis is bound by both a humanist ideology and a historicist form of explanation that derives its ultimate principles from a Hegelian dialectic (inverted and de-mystified to be sure, but Hegelian in principle nonetheless). His attempt to re-think the fundamental principles of Marx's theoretical principles, more than anything else, has had the salutary effect of freeing Marxism from its philosophic legacy, and directing Marxists towards Marx's own works in order to derive from them Marx's philosophy properly speaking. Clearly one cannot derive the principles of this philosophy from the Early Works. One needs to turn to his various historical writings, political analyses such as the Gotha Programme, and above all to Capital. Another value of Althusser's reading, whatever the problems raised by his 'structuralism', has been to restore Lenin as a practitioner of Marxist philosophy (cf. Lenin and Philosophy). We have said that as yet Marx's theory of politics awaits its systematic treatise. Althusser's essays: 'Contradiction and Overdeter-

however. As a matter of principle (ie., within the framework of Historical Materialism) Marx's theory of politics is based on the scientific analysis of economic development, and not on appeals to a dialectic -- which is to say, to a universal concept of historical development. Consider, first of all, the general principle of explanation which Marx derives from his conception of Historical Materialism, and on which he bases his method of analysis:

One cannot judge . . . a period of transformation by its consciousness, but on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production.⁸¹

In the application of this explanatory principle, Marx carefully distinguishes between the 'natural transformation of the economic conditions of production', which Marx points out, 'can be determined with the precision of natural science', and 'the legal' political, religious, artistic or philosophic -- in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out'.⁸² In this

mination'; 'On the Materialist Dialectic' (For Marx); and 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (Lenin and Philosophy) go a long way towards a requisite preliminary investigation of Marx's theory of revolution. Also, a recent study by Nicos Poulantzas, who writes in the Althusserian tradition (Pouvoir politique et classes sociales de l'état capitaliste) has made a serious attempt to rigorously systematise Marx's theory of the state. Needless to say, Poulantzas' structuralist analysis of Marx's theory of the state has created as much controversy within Marxism (cf. in particular the debate within New Left Review with Milliband) as Althusser's own. This is theoretically to the good, since we now have a serious debate in the areas of Marx's theory of revolution and of the state that allows the possibility of finally settling with the ghost of Hegelianism which has for so long haunted Marxism, and this almost a hundred years after Marx's life-time!

⁸¹Preface, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, p. 21.

⁸²Ibid. This distinction of principle between the

distinction, Marx brings into relation the subjective and objective conditions of a social totality, which leads us to consider the traditional formula of a 'dialectic' based on the proposition of a determining 'base' (economic production) and a determined 'superstructure' (politics-ideology).⁸³ In the first place, with the relation in question referred not to its unifying truth (the concept of Man) but to empirical premises of historical explanation, there is no question of a Hegelian dialectic in which one term emerges as the inner truth (essence) of the other, and the relation between the science of history and revolutionary ideology is guaranteed by virtue of a metaphysic. On the one hand, although Marx's explanatory principle clearly supports a general proposition of a determining base and a determined superstructure, the 'determination' in question is not defined with reference to a Hegelian dialectic: the 'base' does not prefigure the elements of the 'superstructure' through the immanence of its truth, but imposes upon it certain limits, i.e., its material conditions of existence.⁸⁴ On the other

analysis of the objective conditions of material production and the various elements ranged in the superstructure is basic to Marx's method. The implication: none of the elements ranged in the superstructure are self-explanatory, but must be grasped in relation to the objective conditions of material production wherein their 'real history' takes place.

⁸³It is Althusser's contribution to have made the traditional formula of a base and superstructure an object of theoretical investigation which has allowed Marxists to take up questions of culture and politics vis-à-vis the economy in a new way more consistent with Marx than with an inverted Hegel, and that augurs well for an enrichment of Marxist theory (eg., R. Williams, 'Base and Superstructure' NLR 82, November-December 1973).

⁸⁴Cf. the basic premise of Historical Materialism: 'individuals . . . as they really are, i.e., as they work, produce materially and act under definite material limitations . . . and conditions independent of their will' (The German Ideology, in WYMPS, p. 414).

hand, although it is clear that all forms of ideology have their ultimate basis (and thus, their real history) in the process of material production, this 'basis', as the substratum of visible social relations, is determinant only in the last instance.⁸⁵ One cannot deduce from the relations of material production their corresponding ideological forms. The relation between 'base' and 'superstructure' cannot be preconceived but 'in each particular instance, empirical observation must show empirically . . . the connection of the social and political structure with production'.⁸⁶ The relation in question must be grasped under the conditions of a scientific analysis not of a philosophic synthesis. To pursue this point, the relation in question is not one of expression, a relation which is ultimately reducible to a metaphysic grasped in the philosophic reflection of its unifying concept. It is, rather, a relation of an irreducible correspondence, a relation neither invented nor pre-conceived, but discovered under the conditions of an analysis which is

⁸⁵Cf. Engels' letter to Bloch, September 21, 1890: 'According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure -- political forms of the class struggle and its results . . . (which include) the reflexes in the brains of these participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views . . . also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements in which . . . the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period would be easier than the solution of the simple equation of the first degree' (Selected Works, p. 682).

⁸⁶The German Ideology, in WYMPS, p. 413.

both structural and historical.⁸⁷

In structural terms, the relation in question is no longer referred to a concept of man: the object of analysis is an ensemble of social relations, the point of reference for an economic substructure and a politico-ideological superstructure which, as end-links of a complex chain of conditioned relationships, cannot be reduced to an identity of opposites, ie., treated as the manifestation of an inner truth, reference to which allows one to mediate any apparant contradiction. The relation between 'base' and 'superstructure' forms a structured whole, a complex of relations which must be analysed in concrete terms, ie., under the complex conditions of class rule -- and ultimately, of a class

⁸⁷It is beyond the scope of our present study to expound on our contention, namely that the rationality of the historic process as analysed by Marx is both objective and structural, and that it is grasped in laws that under specific conditions govern both the functioning of a social system and the process of its transformation. After all, The German Ideology presents us with 'indications' and not much more than a declaration of principle, supported by points of argument for a materialist conception of history. As centres of reference for our position we can point to the essays collected in Reading Capital; Maurice Godelier, Rationality and Irrationality in Economics; and Part 2, Chap. 5 of Adolfo Sanchez Vazquez, Filosofia de la Praxis (Mexico, D. F.: Grijalbo, 1967), which leans heavily on Russian structuralists such as Grushin. Aside from these references, however, it is clear that Marx's method centres on a process of scientific abstraction, of structural analysis, which is to 'explain' the reality of objective, material conditions by reference to concepts of underlying (not immediately visible) structures (eg., forces of production, relations of production, social class, the state, etc.). What is not so clear, however, is the adequacy of the 'structuralist' method of analysis for the study of history, viz. the explanation of the process of development and revolutionary transformation. For a discussion of this problem, and an argument for a method that combines the study of structure and history see this writer's article, op.cit., pp. 413-21.

struggle.⁸⁸

By analysing the conditions of class rule in structural terms, however, is to abstract from its historical process of genesis, development and transformation. By referring a social formation to its economic base we treat not of a state to which we can ascribe certain fixed properties for subsequent deduction to the variable processes of the superstructure. We treat, rather, of a dynamic process of development and transformation, the conditions of which -- Marx insists -- are subject to law, and thus to a scientific analysis. In historical terms the rationality in question is no longer referred to the dialectic of an immanent truth (the self-development of man). At the level of principle Marx totally rejects Hegel's conception of history as a teleological process, which is to treat of history speculatively as a process with a subject. As a scien-

⁸⁸ According to Althusser -- and we agree with him -- the basic difference between the Hegelian and the Marxian dialectic can be grasped via the principles of 'simplicity' and 'complexity' respectively (cf. 'On the Materialist Dialectic', For Marx; Reading Capital, chs. 4-5). According to Godelier this same difference can better be grasped via the principles of 'identity' and 'unity' (cf. Economic Rationality and Irrationality, pp. 86-92). Our exposition makes clear that Godelier's attempt to distinguish himself from Althusser on this point is meaningless, since the two principles reflect the same truth on a different level (epistemology and methodology). In the metaphysic of its first principle (the identity of opposites) Hegel's dialectic reflects in its structure the workings of a simple essence, an indivisible genetic totality which experiences self-division and self-opposition in order to be finally integrated with itself. Likewise, the structural relation of correspondence, and its epistemological principle of an irreducible unity, is reflected in the structure of Marx's dialectic via the principle of complexity. As emphasised by Althusser, in particular, the specificity of Marxian dialectics as a science is that it constructs as its object the concept of a complex process (cf. Althusser's conception of the invariance of a 'structure-in-dominance' within the complex variation of a social whole whose contradictions are 'over-determined').

tific doctrine Marxism essentially consists of the discovery of objective causal relationships, the object being to formulate a theory of laws that govern the development of human society. The principles of Historical Materialism formulated in The German Ideology and summarised in the 1859 Preface -- and not those of Hegel's dialectic, inverted or otherwise -- forms the framework of this scientific enterprise.⁸⁹

Marxism: Science or Revolution?

To speak of Marx's scientific vocation in tandem with his rejection of a Hegelian type of dialectic, brings our thought full circle, which is to say, it takes us back to the problem with which we began, and which has been the indirect

⁸⁹To appreciate this point it is necessary to be mindful of the fact that Hegel's dialectic reflects in its very structure the speculative principle of a teleology, and that this principle still governs the dialectic in its revised form (as applied by Marx in The Holy Family on the basis of a concept of 'Man'. The idealist problematic of this principle is reflected in a Hegelian conception of society as a simple totality composed of equivalent elements, and expressive of an essential idea. It is likewise reflected in Hegel's lineal conception of history, whose evolution is contained in the origin of the Concept -- the historic process identified with the self-realisation of the Idea. In the totality of this Idea, the specificity of societal relationships is reduced to the principle of a simple unity. History is a simple development the principle of which is a 'dialectical' movement from the Concept's essence to its existence. As suggested by our reading, and as demonstrated by Althusser, for Marx it is entirely a different matter. The principle of historical explanation is not referred to an ontological-universal concept of history but to a concept of the mode of production dominant in a given social formation. Within the framework of Historical Materialism Marx's concept of history has nothing to do with a simple linear development. Rather, the complex conditions of a historically specific social formation are reflected in a process of differential time and uneven development. However, we cannot pursue this point inasmuch as it takes us well beyond The German Ideology into the works of Marx's maturity, and thus beyond the scope of our present study.

object of our entire study. The problem: What is the nature of Marxist theory in relation to the working-class movement? There was at the beginning and there still is the following alternative: Marxism as revolution or Marxism as science? We cannot settle this problem within the scope of our present study, and indeed we have merely laid the groundwork for correctly posing the problem. First of all, let us take the first horn of the dilemma -- Marxism as a revolutionary ideology. The broad outlines of the argument as presented by Historicism might be somewhat as follows. Marxism is a theory of the historic destiny of the proletariat as the truth of history. As such it is the ideological expression of the proletariat's attempt to liberate itself, and thereby the whole of humanity. Properly speaking, Historical Materialism is not a science, since truth can 'only achieve an "objectivity" relative to the standpoint of the individual classes'.⁹⁰ In its identity with an 'ascribed' rational social consciousness of the proletariat, Marxism is defined not by 'the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation' but by 'the viewpoint of the totality'.⁹¹ This is to say, it reflects in theory the viewpoint of a revolutionary class conscious of itself as the identical subject-object of history -- as the reason of the historic dialectic.⁹²

⁹⁰Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness (hereafter HCC), p. 189. Lukács' point of reference for this position is Marx's theory of ideology, viz. that ideas are expressions of socially situated objective realities, which is the basis of the school of the Sociology of Knowledge associated in its origins with Scheler and Mannheim.

⁹¹HCC, p. 27.

⁹²As indicated by us in Chapter Two, the attempt to discover an 'identical subject-object' is foreshadowed in Kant's second and third Critiques, and in the attempts of Fichte and Schelling to overcome the dualism of subject and art through art, where contemplative reason is replaced by an intuitive understanding construed as 'practical'. Art is therefore seen as the resolution of the antinomy through its creation of a concrete totality. The condition of this

In its expressive relation to proletarian praxis, Marxism is not a scientific theory in the sense that it produces a socially neutral knowledge of the real. It is, rather, a theory that responds to the determinate circumstances and socio-practico interests of the most universal class in history, and as such, it is 'social reality . . . become fully conscious'.⁹³ In short, Marxism is not a science.

solution, however, required a mythology of creation and an 'aesthetication' of the world. The problem remains, and, according to Lukács, has its true solution in Hegel's concept of history: 'Only if the true were understood not only as substance but as subject, only if the subject (consciousness, thought) were both producer and product of the dialectical process, only if as a result the subject in a self-created world of which it is the conscious form and only if the world imposed itself upon it in full objectivity, only then can the problem of dialectics, and with it the abolition of the antithesis of subject and object, thought and existence, freedom and necessity, be held to be solved' (HCC, p. 142). According to Lukács, this solution is given formally by Hegel, and substantially by Marx; ie., Marx correctly identified the subject-object of history. It is of critical importance that Lukács' concept of 'totality' be understood in the specific sense of German idealism, ie., as concrete unity of subject and object, thought and existence (cf. chapter two).

⁹³HCC, p. 19. It is only with the appearance of the proletariat that social reality becomes fully conscious. Such an eventuality was impossible under feudalism because social relations were taken to be 'natural'. It was the bourgeoisie who had 'socialised' society, but it had done so unconsciously, ie., despite itself. Pursuing its immediate class interests, the bourgeois class left the rest to the ruse of reason. Its tragedy is that its class consciousness was incompatible with its class interest, as a result of which its thought remains trapped in the reified contemplative dualism of subject and object, which even Hegel was unable to transcend. The proletariat, on the other hand, must make history consciously. As the most alienated class in capitalist society, it must abolish itself in order to achieve its own liberation, and to liberate itself it must liberate the whole of humanity. To understand itself it must understand the whole, and to abolish itself, it must move from contemplation to praxis. 'Thus the unity of theory and practice is only the reverse side of the social and historical position of the proletariat, simultaneously

Strictly speaking, it is a class ideology.

There is, of course, the opposing viewpoint for which one need not return to the theorists of Second International 'positivism' but can most profitably turn to the position formulated by and associated with Louis Althusser.⁹⁴ By placing Marxism in a direct, expressive relation to proletarian practice -- a relation secured by reference to a dialectic, and thus, to an underlying metaphysic, the identity of the human essence -- the historicist view, in effect, conflates Historical Materialism into history, and science into class consciousness. As a result, we have a 'leftist' conception whose political effect is to legitimate spontaneity, and whose theoretical effect is to relate the content/history of science to class conflict as its criterion of explanation. In this way, scientific knowledge is located

subject and object of its own knowledge' (HCC, p. 20). The 'praxis' in question, however, is essentially theoretical. In referring Marxism to the 'ascribed' consciousness of the proletariat, Lukács cites the young Marx to the effect that 'it will then be seen that the world has long possessed a dream of things which it has only to possess in consciousness in order to possess them in reality' (HCC, p. 259). (Italics in original). Economic evolution can only provide the proletariat with the 'abstract possibility' of changing society. In the last resort: 'the strength of every society is . . . a spiritual strength. And from this we can only be liberated by knowledge' (HCC, p. 262). Hence, the fate of revolution depends upon consciousness, from which the status of Historical Materialism as 'self-knowledge of capitalist society' follows logically.

⁹⁴There is no dispute by Althusser or -- from an entirely different angle -- Colletti, with the critique levelled against the empiricist positivism of the Second International. However, in the reaction of Critical Theory to positivism, science as such is denied -- or, rather, confused with the reality it seeks to understand. As a result, the efforts of both Althusser and Colletti, and the traditions to which they relate, are directed against a romantic-idealist critique of science which denies the specific difference and relative autonomy of theoretical practice. Cf. Althusser's position on science, see note 98.

within the superstructure, to which Althusser responds by defending the specificity of theoretical practice, its irreducibility to politico-ideological practice, and its autonomy as science. To the conception of Marxism as the direct expression of the exigencies and interests of a social class, in the concrete circumstances that have engendered it and that historically justify its appearance, Althusser counters with a conception of Marxism as scientific theory, in the sense that it produces an objective knowledge of the real conditions of existence. Rather than being characterised by a 'relation of direct expression' Marxism is distinguished by its scientific character: as theory it is a product of thought that constructs concepts and categories to produce a knowledge of the real, rather than an expression of it.⁹⁵

⁹⁵Science, as knowledge of the real conditions of existence, the structural analysis of the system of its real relations, is established, according to Althusser, at the cost of a complete rupture with the ideological problematic which precedes it (FM, pp. 32-37, 167-68, 185, 192-93; RC, pp. 44-46, 90, 131, 133, 140, 146-57). Ideology, as a system of mass representations, is distinguished from science, by Althusser, in that in it 'the practico-social function is more important than the theoretical function (function as knowledge)'. Ideology 'is governed by "interests" beyond the necessity of knowledge alone . . . ' (FM, p. 231; RC, p. 141). This disjuncture between the function of socio-practico interests and that of reason, is expressed in the form of two theses. The central thesis of Althusser's thesis of science: history is a process without a subject versus that of his theory of ideology: 'Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects' (LP, p. 160). This is to say: the subject is absent from a scientific discourse, but central to a discourse. The category of the Subject is constitutive of all ideology, but abolished as a scientific category. On this concept of science and ideology, and on the structuralist thesis of history as a process without a subject (theoretically speaking!) NB Althusser's debate with John Lewis in Marxism Today (Jan., Feb., Oct. 1972) and Godelier's debate with Lucien Seve in La Pensée, which is translated in the Socialist Register (1967) and the International Journal of Sociology, vol. II, nos. 2-3 (Summer-Fall, 1972). Also see Althusser's formulation in Politics and History and even more to the point, his lecture on the Marx-Hegel relation in

Thus, our dilemma. Our thesis, it will be noted, clearly supports this second viewpoint, although not without qualifications. Let us be clear about the problem involved. In the first case, the relation between Marxist theory and proletarian practice -- and, within theory, between science and ideology -- is non-problematic. In the expressive relation of Marxism to the proletariat's essential truth, the solution to the problem is secured in advance. The framework for this theoretic guarantee, reflected in the subjectivist thesis of spontaneity, is a Hegelian dialectic -- inverted and de-mystified, but Hegelian nonetheless -- principles of which underlie Marx's Early Works and which have been resurrected in the twentieth century by Historicism. In the second case, the relation between Marxism and the working-class movement is problematic, which is to say, it has no theoretic guarantee. By rejecting a Hegelian dialectic as the framework of reference for the proletariat's revolutionary praxis (and thus, as the basis for his theory of revolution); by rejecting the concept of 'Man' as his theoretical basis, Marx breaks with the metaphysic of Hegel's principle of explanation ('the truth of . . . '), and as a result, with an idealised image of the proletariat as the missionary of the human essence, the subject of its historic realisation. With Marx's theory of historical development no longer referred back to the principle of an original identity, the conceptual substratum of a historic subject, but placed on a scientific basis, its relation to the revolutionary ideology and political practice of the proletariat can no longer be one of direct expression, ie., established by virtue of a presupposed metaphysic. The union of Marxist theory and proletarian practice cannot be secured in advance --

Hyppolite's seminar in 1968, cf. Hegel y el pensamiento Moderno, ed. J. d'Hondt and trans. R. Salvat (Mexico, D. F.: Siglo Veintiuno, 1973). See also our study op.cit.

by reference to a concept of dialectic -- but has to be constituted under conditions that require lengthy theoretical work and a protracted ideological and political struggle. Its framework of reference: Lenin's thesis, upheld by Althusser and supported by us, that Marxist theory is produced by a specific theoretical practice, in relation to but outside the working class, and that it must therefore be 'imported' into the working-class movement.

Let us draw out the implications of this position. With reference to Lenin's thesis the relation between theory and politics, objective conditions and class consciousness, science and revolution, is not based on a dialectic but is subject to the conditions of an ideological struggle, the object of which is to win over the minds of men towards a socially situated understanding of their conditions of existence. In this respect we can adduce a function of Marxism as ideology, which is to heighten the class-consciousness of the working-class, and direct its political action, by reference to its practical interest in a scientific knowledge of its real (ie., class) conditions of existence.⁹⁶ It

⁹⁶It is clear that the proletariat has a 'practical' interest in placing its politics on a scientific basis, and furthermore, as Colletti in particular has emphasised, scientific categories not only have a theoretical function as knowledge but they also have an interest-relevance, and are thus not value-free. Despite this important point, often obscured and apparently denied in the theoretical precisions of Althusser's structuralism, it is possible -- and necessary -- to distinguish between the theoretical function of scientific categories and their interest-relevance, viz., their ideological function. Theoretically speaking (within a scientific discourse) Althusser can speak of a problematic in which the 'subject' plays not the part it believes it is playing, but the part assigned to it by the mechanism of the process. Strictly speaking, from the viewpoint of science, history has no 'subject'. Its 'motor' of development: the revolutionary process of class struggle on the objective basis of material conditions.

is in this sense (of science and ideology as two distinct but related practices, and without reference to a Hegelian dialectic) that we, in fact, escape our dilemma: Marxism is both science and ideology. The historicist assimilation of social consciousness to praxis, of theory to history, and the structuralist exclusion of the same, are both inadequate. Opposed to both conceptions -- which accentuate the ideological or scientific character of Marxism at the expense of the other, which either reduces Marxism to a mere expression of the historical situation of a class or society or reduces it to a scientific theory that excludes its expressive character -- there is, we submit, the position of Marx and upheld by Lenin: Marxism as the scientific ideology of the proletariat. In this conception, Marxism is both productive of true knowledge and expressive of class consciousness. It is both knowledge and expression: theory that responds to and is guided by the determinate circumstances and social interests of a class without sacrifice of real knowledge -- ideology scientifically founded.

General Conclusion

To relate this general conclusion to the structure of our whole argument, it has to be remembered that in The German Ideology, beyond a process of intellectual self-clarification, Marx does no more than open up a new domain for scientific theory -- the 'History-Continent' as Althusser aptly puts it -- and indeed, as Engels recognises and Marx was the first to admit, at best it reveals how little they knew of economic matters at the time.⁹⁷ What can be said for

⁹⁷Cf. Marx, Preface (1859), p. 22: 'Engels . . . arrived by another road . . . at the same result as I, and when . . . we decided to set forth our conception (of Historical Materialism) as opposed to the ideological one of German philosophy. . . . We abandoned the MSS (The German Ideology) to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly since we had achieved our main purpose -- self-clarification'; cf. Engels, Foreword to Feuerbach . . . ,

certain, however, is that The German Ideology established the guiding principles for all of Marx's later research, and that the scientific framework for these principles, Historical Materialism, has nothing to do with a Hegelian dialectic, the structure of which reflects the simplicity of its principle of truth. Indeed, apart from the question of Marx's own later studies, Marxist investigators working in such avant-garde domains such as the theory of ideologies (law, ethics, religion, art, philosophy), the theory of the history of the sciences and their ideological pre-history, epistemology, etc.; those who pose themselves difficult problems in the central domain of scientific analysis (the domain of history); not to speak of those revolutionaries confronted by the political difficulties in radically new forms (developments in the Third World, transition to communism, etc.); if all these 'investigators' had only a Hegelian dialectic (demystified and inverted to be sure) to work with, they certainly would not get very far.⁹⁸ In its specific dif-

SW, p. 585: 'I have once again ferreted out and looked over the old MSS of 1845-46. The section dealing with Feuerbach is not complete. The finished portion consists of an exposition of the materialist conception of history which proves only how incomplete our knowledge of economic history still was at that time'.

⁹⁸Indeed, they would get no further than those Critical Theorists whose theoretical 'praxis' (dialectical thought) consists in the identification of the 'subject' of the historic dialectic -- its ideal repository -- and the evocation of an ideology of a 'historic vocation' (to be 'subject' of one's own history) that exhorts the subjectivity of voluntary, theoretical conscious action. Rather than providing the working-class with a scientific understanding of its conditions of life, ie., a theory of capitalism, concretised in each case with a specific class analysis, these Critical Theorists (or 'Creative Marxists') provide it with a concept of a historic dialectic which calls upon the proletariat to realise their 'revolutionary essence'. Need we say any more identify our protagonist, who indeed can be found most anywhere? Hardly! Even so, let us make one pointed reference: 'What HCC made clear was that living Marxism is inseparable from its idealist and Hegelian legacy

ference from the Hegelian dialectic Marx's new method of class analysis based on the principles of Historical Materialism grasps the conditions of existence and historic formation not of a simple truth (the expressive relation of an inner essence) but of a complex structure of diverse practices (the system of its real relations).⁹⁹ Based on a scientific analysis of its complex conditions of existence, the relation between the economic base and the political-ideological superstructure can be grasped not with reference to a philosophic dialectic, but with reference to the objective conditions of class rule -- and, ultimately, of a class struggle. The historic process of this struggle cannot be pre-determined. It has to be analysed on its own terms, ie., with reference to its conditions of existence. On this basis, one cannot explain politics or any other element ranged in the superstructure by simple reference to the economic production of material life. Although a Marxist theory of politics and of ideology in general has the economy as its ultimate point of reference (as the basis from which there is

. . . The Hegelian totality is (the) basis for the integral humanism of Marxist social science' (J. O'Neill, Telos 22, p. 167). No more need be said, as we are all too familiar with the many variations of this theme.

⁹⁹It is the great merit of Althusser not only to have made a cogent argument for this point, but to have theorised the concept of this methodological principle of complexity, viz. the invariance of a 'structure-in-dominance' within the complex variations of the social whole whose contradictions are 'overdetermined'. Althusser's concept, derived from a close reading of Marx's mature writings, is reflected in Marx's formulation of a new series of unprecedented concepts. Where previous philosophies of history spoke of man, economic subject, need, system of needs, civil society, alienation, theft, injustice, mind, freedom -- where they even spoke of 'society' -- Marx begins to speak of modes of production, productive forces, relations of production, social formation, infra-structure, ideologies, classes, class struggle, etc.

no escape, and which constitutes the centre of Marx's historical research) it is based on an empirical investigation and scientific analysis of the objective conditions of a class struggle. All of Marx's later research -- the basis for various histories (cf. the conjunctures of 1848, 1851, 1871) and for a general theory of the capitalist system -- espouse the principle of such an analysis, and, at the same time (indeed as a result) establish the basis for a new philosophy.¹⁰⁰

Although we have in this study opened up rather than settled the question of this philosophy, our general conclusion -- that in his scientific approach to the study of history (and despite Engels' avowals to the contrary) Marx does not drink at the same source as Hegel, namely the philosophic problematic of German Idealism -- at least tells us where to look (or, to be precise, where not to look): the search for Marx's philosophy, the system of its basic principles, should be directed not to his *Early Works*, but rather to his *Mature Works*.

¹⁰⁰Althusser has attempted to outline some of the basics of such a philosophy, which, after the tradition of Engels' interpretation, he still calls 'dialectical materialism' (cf. in particular, Althusser's revised concept in Lenin and Philosophy). Colletti has pointed out -- and we absolutely agree with him on this point -- that Althusser's retention of the traditional concept of Marxist philosophy is fraught with ambiguities and confusion (cf. Colletti's interview with NLR -- No. 86: July-August 1974). The problem, as Colletti points out, and as evidenced by the serious divergence and open debate within Marxism, is very much up in the air.

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