



KARL MARX'S

Theory of
Revolution

STATE AND BUREAUCRACY

HAL DRAPER

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VOLUME 1

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Hal Draper



AAKAR

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Volume 1: State and Bureaucracy
Hal Draper

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To
ANNE DRAPER
(1917–1973)

Trade union organizer,
champion of workingwomen's liberation,
and revolutionary Marxist

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book was originally published in two hardcover volumes. In order to make the work available in paperback at the lowest possible price, we have put the two volumes together for the paperback edition. The notes to Book I have been moved to the end of the combined text, leaving a gap in the pagination.

FOREWORD

It should be useful to begin with a statement of what this book attempts to do.

The goal has been a full and definitive treatment of Marx's political theory, policies, and practice. Needless to say, this goal is unattainable, but it has served to determine the form and contents, scope and limitations of the work.

1. POLITICS

The word *political* is one key. Its ambiguities are legion, even apart from its association with electoral activity in general and unscrupulous maneuvering ("dirty politics") in particular. The question of a "scientific" definition is touched on in Chapter 11; here let us make do with a process of elimination.

Of the making of books on Marx and Marxism there is no end if the books are on Marx's "philosophy," economics, or social-historical theory ("historical materialism"). This still leaves "everything else," which in fact constitutes the bulk of the forty-three volumes of the Marx-Engels *Werke*. True, this "everything else" is more miscellaneous than politics, but it will do as a first approximation. The scope, then, is the same as Pooh-Bah's, who after all comes on stage with one of the first essays on the role of the state bureaucracy to be found in the literature.

Marx's political ideas have not generally interested "marxology" (one of the most curious of industries) except as incidental appendages to the "grand theory." The exceptions are few if outstanding. To be

sure, a theory of the state usually has to be stated somewhere, and a reference to the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is dictated by custom. Beyond that, there are few treatments, even inadequate ones, of most of the questions in this area.

The "philosophic" side of Marx's development has been covered more copiously than any other aspect of Marx's activity or thought, from a multiplicity of viewpoints.¹ The imbalance is striking; even some books purporting to deal with his social and political thought are largely concerned with the philosophical concepts involved or read into it. The imbalance is also symbolic, for it represents a tendency to turn Marx into an abstract savant. Marx himself objected to such one-sided preoccupations even before he became a socialist: Feuerbach's weakness, he wrote a friend, was that "he refers too much to Nature and too little to politics," whereas philosophy had to be realized through politics.²

This lopsided situation is one of the difficulties here, for almost every heading represents an almost virgin field. The situation is curious because it is customary to quote Engels' overall appreciation of Marx as "before all else a revolutionist," yet to ignore the close attention he paid to a host of problems of revolution beyond the indispensable "grand theory." It is to bend the stick the other way that this work is titled *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution* rather than *Political Theory*, which might be interpreted too narrowly.

It is significant that, in the graveside speech on Marx alluded to above, Engels made a similar distinction between Marx "the man of science" and Marx the "revolutionist." Formally speaking, Marx was a revolutionary also in his scientific work; less formally speaking, by the "revolutionist" Engels meant Marx the political man.

But this [the man of science] was not even half the man. Science was for Marx a historically dynamic, revolutionary force. . . .

For Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which *he* was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity, and a success such as few could rival.³

Writing to an old friend, Marx had had occasion to express his contempt for the philistines who "consider people like you and me immature fools who all this time have not been cured of their revolutionary fantasies."⁴

It is this Marx, the political man, that is our subject.

Besides the limitation to the political field, there are other self-imposed limitations that affect the scope of the book. I have resisted frequent temptations to follow questions farther than Marx and Engels themselves, into the discussions and views of the subsequent Marxist movement, let alone bring them up to date. To do otherwise, even sketchily, would take far more space without being definitive. References to later ideas and developments have been made only where they throw some special light on the subject under discussion.

On the other hand, in an important respect the scope of this work is broader than the usual approach to Marx's theory of the state, which tends to concentrate on the developed capitalist state. Here the emphasis is on Marx's world-historical view of the state. More specific material relating to the bourgeois state will be found in subsequent volumes. This approach is of a piece with Marx's. One must remember that most of the states that Marx had occasion to discuss were *not* capitalist states—as yet—even in Europe, let alone throughout the rest of the world. From the standpoint of theory this is a good thing, since no phenomenon can be thoroughly understood if only one specimen or type is available for examination. The literature of Marxism and marxology is unfortunately full of statements about Marx's views which actually apply only to capitalism and the bourgeois era, and which require at least considerable qualification as soon as the focus is widened to include most of the world and world history. It is a form of ethnocentrism.

The general limitation of the subject matter to politics creates a practical dilemma. On the one hand, the assumption is that the reader is more or less acquainted with the main lines of the basic social and economic theory underlying Marx's political conceptions. On the other hand, it has been impossible to hold to this assumption where issues in social and economic theory are either less well known or more commonly misstated. In the latter cases, some discussion of the underlying theory has been included. For this reason Chapter 21 is entirely devoted to an aspect of Marx's social theory.

2. CLASS

The problem just stated becomes most acute in Chapter 20 and other sections dealing with the concept of *class*. After all, class dynamics is the foundation of all of Marx's politics. It is the "transmission belt" between his social-historical and political theory; or, to change the image, it constitutes the latter's drive shaft. Since the concept is vital from the beginning, and since it is generally misstated, a summary may be useful here even if we only have the space to be suggestive.

1. In popular usage, a class is merely any group of people sharing some common characteristic(s). A "social class" may be seen as sharing certain social characteristics—say, rank; an "economic class" may be deduced from income brackets; and so on. These are *classifications*, the result of classifying people according to some more or less relevant criterion. For many loose-jointed purposes there need be no reasonable objection to such a usage. Contrary to a widespread misapprehension, Marx himself not infrequently used class in similar loose or broad ways when convenient. The issue is not whether this common use is wrong in itself, but rather what it is used for, what it is considered relevant to.

2. This popular usage implicitly regards a class attribute as a *manifestation* of society's structure, a derivative of it. But what if there are classes of people who share the common characteristic of forming a *structural element* of the society itself? Such a structural class is certainly more basic. In any case, in the context of Marx's theory a socioeconomic class is a class of people playing a common role as a structural component of a given society.

3. How this is concretized flows from Marx's theory itself. Historically, in Marx's view, class differentiation begins only with the appearance—due to development of the forces of production—of a *surplus product*; that is, that which is produced over and above the reproduction needs of the direct producer. This is the key to the meaning of class in Marx. Classes define themselves not simply in terms of the process of production (which existed before the separation into classes and will exist after classes are done away with); they must be defined in relation to *surplus* production, and specifically in relation to *control over the appropriation of the surplus product*. *

* In this connection, see the passage from Marx cited in Chapter 22, pp. 570-571.

Look at any given society through this lens, and two basic classes appear. One is the class of direct producers—this being Marx's generic term for those who perform the actual productive labor, the working class of the particular society. The other is the class that controls the appropriation of the surplus product, the ruling class. It may accomplish this control through control of the means of production, but this latter relationship itself may need explaining in terms of the former. The two classes thus defined are the so-called *polar classes* of the society—"the extremes of a relation of production," as Marx put it speaking of the capitalist/worker relation in bourgeois society.⁵ It is the polar-class antithesis that forms the skeleton around which a given mode of production is socially structured. Around this central relationship the rest of the class structure takes shape, including elements left over from obsolete social forms.

4. The roster of classes in a particular society is determined by that society's mode of production, not vice versa. This is another way of saying that one cannot determine what social strata are *structural* components of the given society simply by an abstract consideration of the characteristics of the strata involved; it is a question of how they relate to the mode of production. In this connection we can repeat here a relevant passage in Chapter 20:

The way in which a given society divides up into classes is specific to its own social relations. Thus, there are warlord elements in many societies, but a warlord becomes a *feudal* lord or baron only when specific social relations become dominant. There is no rule-of-thumb definition which decides whether the chief of an armed band who resides in a stronghold and lives off the surplus labor of unfree producers, etc. is or is not a member of a *feudal* class. The point can be settled not by a glossary but only by a concrete examination of the overall social relations of the society. Similarly, merchants become a separate *class* not simply because they buy and sell, but only when buying and selling begins to play a certain role in a given society.⁶

5. Therefore, any formal definition of *class* is, at bottom, only a restatement in other words of Marx's basic method of sociohistorical analysis, not some special lexicographical formula. Many marxologists have reproached Marx for failing to give a dictionary definition of class which they can recognize as such, because they look for something which is alien to Marx's method—a sort of litmus-paper test for class

which can be applied on the basis of formal descriptive elements *abstracted from the specific societal relationships*.

As it happens, Marx made this methodological point in so many words, but since he was writing about the definition of property at the time, it has often been ignored:

In each historical epoch, property has developed differently and under a set of entirely different social relations. Thus to define bourgeois property is nothing else than to give an exposition of all the social relations of bourgeois production.

To try to give a definition of property as of an independent relation, a category apart, an abstract and eternal idea, can be nothing but an illusion of metaphysics or jurisprudence.⁷

If anything, this applies even more closely to class than to property.

6. It was stated in point 3 that classes cannot be defined simply in terms of the process of production. Still worse, methodologically, is a common pseudodefinition of class found in both Marxist and non-Marxist works. In the formulation of N. Bukharin, who may have invented it, it is "persons united by a common role in the production process."⁸ The force of these words is to limit classes to categories *in* the production process. This is a basic mistake, flatly incompatible with Marx's historical analysis of actual classes. Most obviously, for example, it would exclude the early class of merchant capitalists, which was notable precisely because it played no role *in* the production process; though the role it played, in relation *to* the production process, was so important in establishing control over the appropriation of the surplus product that these capitalists tended to extend their control into production itself, thereby ceasing to be merely a merchant class. The Bukharin-type formula would also decree that the petty-bourgeoisie—or a large sector of it, like shopkeepers—does not form a class, simply because it does not have the quality of a *polar* class. The wide latter-day acceptance of this error, even by establishment sociologists, is itself a sociological problem,⁹ but at any rate it owes nothing to Marx.

7. The fact that Marx himself had little inhibition about using *class* in the loose popular sense has been an added complication in the post-Marx history of the question. To be sure, a physicist ordinarily uses *work* in two different senses, a popular one and a scientific one, without confusion, depending on context; one has to approach Marx's usage with¹⁰ an equal amount of common sense, together with some

feeling for the vocabulary and verbal conventions of the mid-nineteenth century.

Thus, in various of Marx's writings—published economic works as well as popular articles and unpublished notes—one can read about the “ideological etc. classes,” or the “unproductive classes,” or the “serving [or servant] class” with or without quotation marks, or the “educated classes” with or without a prefixed “so-called,” or the class of “professional conspirators,” or the “servile class of lawyers,” or artificial “classes” fabricated in British India, or the confrontation between “two particular classes of capitalists” (moneyed and industrial).¹⁰ It all offers a splendid opportunity for pointless quotation-mongering through which a new “theory of class” can be discovered in Marx every week.

8. Another complication, which deserves more notice than is possible here, is how to deal with *classes in the process of being born*, as well as (conversely) classes or social estates, etc., which are in the process of dying out or decaying into something else—in short, classes taken in the process of becoming. In *The German Ideology*, speaking of the end of the eighteenth century with its still impotent German bourgeoisie, Marx comments: “One cannot speak here of estates or classes, but at most only of former estates and classes not yet born”; and he suggests the term *sphere of life* (*Lebenssphäre*) for these class-elements that are perceived in flux.¹¹ There are interesting discussions by Marx elsewhere of what might be called *anticipatory class-elements*.¹² Without a dynamic understanding of classlike formations outside the boundaries of stable situations, discussions of what is, is not, or cannot be a “class” are bound to be sterile.

In sum: while point 2 offered a formal definition of class, this is merely an “algebraic” formula, which takes on concrete meaning when it is fleshed out with the specific relationships of a specific social order. The rest of the foregoing propositions go beyond the obligation to provide a definition: they offer a guide to analysis.

3. MARX

Another key is the fact that the title specifies Marx, not Marxism.

What goes by the name of Marxism nowadays, like as not, has little to do with Marx's views, in general or on any particular subject. This is

a penalty for the "success" of Marxism—that is, its widespread appeal—in spite of the periodic announcements of its death, which are almost as frequent as of yore. This parasitic disease—cooptation by alien elements—attacks all world outlooks that encompass a whole era. Sweeping reorientations of consciousness, such as those denoted by the terms *democracy*, *science*, and so on, have all been victims of the same complaint. Thus a distinguished Frenchman wrote of the catchword *democracy*: "It is the sovereign, universal word. All parties invoke it and want to appropriate it as a talisman. . . . Such is the sway of the word *democracy* that no government or party dares to exist, or believes it can exist, without inscribing this word upon its banner. . . ." ¹³ This was not written yesterday but in the year 1849, by the historian-statesman Guizot.

It is easy for superficial pundits to conclude from this factionalization of meaning that *democracy*, *science*, and so on have no meaning whatsoever; but in fact their meanings have become pawns in a social and ideological struggle. The interpretation of *class struggle* becomes a weapon of class struggle, just as the meaning of *democracy* becomes an arena for the struggle to determine what democracy shall mean. Marx would have no trouble understanding why ideologues who hold conceptions he fought bitterly still insist on calling themselves Marxists. This corner of intellectual history is a function of social history, as usual. The response is also simple in principle if difficult in practice; the answer to pseudodemocracy is real democracy; the abuses of "scientism" can be countered only by a genuinely scientific attitude; and the obfuscations of various contemporary "Marxisms" can be understood only with the help of Marx's Marxism. "God protect me from my friends!" wrote the young Marx once; and a few years later he explained to the radical Democrats of 1850 why he had no compunction about attacking a certain prestigious "revolutionary":

We know in advance that we will evoke general indignation from the sentimental bunco-artists and Democratic elocutionists. . . . This makes no difference at all to us. Our task is ruthless criticism, even more of alleged friends than of open foes; and in affirming our position on this, we gladly forgo cheap Democratic popularity. ¹⁴

In any case, the subject of this work is not Marxism in some inclusive sense but the theory, conceptions, and views of Karl Marx. It goes without saying that everyone concerned must in some fashion consider how Marx's views apply to the contemporary world, and, extrapolating from Marx to the present, arrive at a modern adaptation, which then becomes a "Marxism." No doubt the marks of my own opinions on this score are visible. But the goal is nevertheless a faithful discovery of Marx's views—not as the end-all of a political inquiry but as a basis for it.

If no attempt has previously been made to reconstruct the whole picture of Marx's views on political theory and political struggle, it can scarcely be doubted that prejudicial interest has stood in the way. The "grand theory," precisely because it seems to soar above current struggles, can sometimes be discussed with an air of tranquillity. When the subject is the political realm of power, the knife cuts deeper. Politics in the broad sense is only one aspect of social revolution, but it is its cutting edge.

While objectivity (which is not the same as impartiality) is a scarce commodity, with a small exchange value, there is only one way to proceed in this case if there is to be any hope of attaining it. That is to go to Marx's own writings on political questions. But these are uncollectable in the kind of anthology or "selected writings" that do for some other aspects of Marx's theory, since they are too scattered. Yet no reliable conclusions in this field can be based on less than the totality of what Marx had to say. The usual pattern is to cull quotations as "examples" of what is supposed to be Marxism: this is a respectable enough method where there is some measure of consensus and the problem is concise and comprehensible presentation. Such is not the case here.

Another difficulty, which applies particularly to Marx's political ideas, is that the source material for a complete survey has not long been accessible. A collected edition of Marx's and Engels' writings has existed for some decades in only one language, Russian (with omissions); but for reasons which need not take space here, access to this material by Russian marxologists and Western Kremlinologists has not changed the picture but exemplified it.

The situation began to change with the publication, between 1961 and 1968, of the German edition of the Marx-Engels *Werke*. But experience has shown—in the case of the Paris manuscripts of 1844, for

example, or the *Grundrisse* notebooks—that access to an important new source of knowledge seldom changes the entrenched myths until ten or twenty years have passed. The present work could not have been written before the publication of the *Werke*, practically speaking. There was a similar pattern when the great Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe* was published in the 1920s, collecting the writings of the young Marx (later extended through 1848). Its eventual impact on the understanding of Marx's early development was revolutionizing—but limited, since it was not allowed to continue.

4. METHOD

The first work that attempted to tackle Marx's political thought in this way stated the problem clearly: "Now one has to engage in excavations, as it were, in order to bring undistorted Marxism to the knowledge of the mass of the people."¹⁵ And so Lenin's *State and Revolution* was, in form, an exercise in excavation. It was then, and still is, virtually unique in the literature—whether by Marxists or non-Marxists—in its method, leaving aside its conclusions. Its uniqueness consists in this: it does not state certain opinions about "what Marx really said" and illustrate them with selected quotations; rather, it sets about bringing together *everything* written on the subject by Marx and Engels, to the best of the writer's knowledge. As against the various claims and interpretations, it proposes the simple expedient of setting it all down and trying to work out an answer that is at least consistent with the assembled evidence.

It may be objected that finding out "what Marx really said" does not settle any question of politics. This is quite true: all it settles is the matter of "what Marx really said"—which happens to be the subject matter of a multitude of books, most of them collections of entrenched myths that have never even been examined.*

The "excavation" method has serious literary disadvantages, which Lenin stated at the beginning of his first chapter. After the well-known

* An example of the attention paid to "what Marx really said" is a book entitled *What Marx REALLY Said*, by H. B. Acton—a concise (141-page) compilation of vulgar marxology that refrains from mentioning that Marx had a theory of the state, let alone telling what it was.¹⁶ This tour de force is in great vogue in some circles.

introductory passage (when revolutionaries have died, “attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons . . .”) Lenin makes a promise and an apology:

In these circumstances, in view of the unprecedentedly widespread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to *re-establish* what Marx really taught on the subject of the state. This will necessitate a number of long quotations from the works of Marx and Engels themselves. Of course, long quotations will render the text cumbersome and not help at all to make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly dispense with them. All, or at any rate all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state, must by all means be quoted as fully as possible so that the reader may form an independent opinion of the totality of the views of the founders of scientific socialism, and of the evolution of those views, and so that their distortion by the “Kautskyism” [today, several other isms] now prevailing may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated.¹⁷

It is ironic that this method, so clearly demanded in the interest of simple scholarship, has never been used in any academic treatise in this field. (An apparent exception, Chang’s dissertation *The Marxian Theory of the State* literally proves the rule, for it was written in defense of Lenin’s interpretation.) The method, apparently so “academic,” is in fact directed to the possibility of objective verification, “so that the reader may form an independent opinion.”

Lenin’s insistence on long and full quotation of “Marx and Engels themselves” is pregnant with potentialities and problems, one no less than the other. It is the only real alternative to that quotation-mongering which leads to sterile results. Quotation-mongering is no recent phenomenon: it started while Engels was still around to comment on it. As it happens, the pace-setters came from the Russian émigré movements as early as the 1880s and 1890s. “If you have followed the Russian emigration literature of the last decade,” wrote Engels to a Russian correspondent, “you will yourself know how, for instance, passages from Marx’s writings and correspondence have been interpreted in the most contradictory ways, exactly as if they had been texts from the classics or from the New Testament, by various sections of Russian emigrants.”¹⁸ A Russian visitor later reminisced that “Engels wished that the Russians—and not only the Russians—would not pick quotations from Marx or from him, Engels, but would think as Marx

would have thought in their place, and that it was only in that sense that the word *Marxist* had any *raison d'être*. . . ." ¹⁹

Thinking "as Marx would have thought" is excellent advice in principle but somewhat difficult in practice. In any case, one way to prepare for it is to become acquainted with what *and how* Marx did think about various problems and how he set about analyzing them. This means reading Marx not in selected snippets but in some quantity. But in the political area this is usually not possible; the material must first be brought together. This is one of the goals of this book.

One more point on method is necessary. Too frequently, especially in brief expositions, Marx's theory of the state is treated simply as the statement of a *norm*: "the state is the executive committee of the ruling class" or some such formula. This is a possible starting point, and to some extent this is what is done in Chapters 11 to 13, following the developmental treatment in Part I. But the aim of theoretical understanding is to get *behind* norm statements, which are always approximate rule-of-thumb formulas, however useful for limited purposes. As a matter of fact, the very word *norm* is likely to be seriously misleading and is better eliminated. A summary statement of an alternative approach to the "normal" is given at the end of the last chapter.

In point of fact, in his historical and political writings there were no state "norms" for Marx to start with even had he been so minded. For one thing a "normal" state (whatever that is thought to be) must be as hard to find in reality as an "average" person; and no planet actually follows Kepler's Laws even though they are "true." For another, the states that Marx spent time discussing were all states distorted, or modified, from the "normal" by social stresses, national factors, obsolete hangovers, and so on. It was scientifically valid for Marx in *Capital* to posit a "pure" or "abstract" bourgeois economy for the purpose of analyzing its basic laws; this is a way to begin. But in the case of the theory of the state, there is a tendency to end with the beginning. This means freezing the theory into a static formula. It can make little sense of real political phenomena, which are usually seen in the process of becoming, of change and interaction. In the life course of states—arising, flourishing, and dying—more time is spent in the first and last stages than in the more "normal" middle: that is, the "normal" is one of the more abnormal conditions encountered. Even more important, historical attention, and especially Marx's, must tend to focus on problem situations, on critical periods of change and dislocation and

revolution, even more than on times of relative stasis. The static formula is a blunt, brittle tool, which breaks off at the first attack on reality. This reality is complex, but it is a complex of simplicities; and this makes it possible for people to understand and control their social destiny. So Marx thought, and implicit in these pages is the thesis that political theory today had best look back to Marx.

5. ENGELS

Back to Marx, then. But what about Engels? There is a persistent effort to put a wall between them, an effort that emanates from more than one school of thought. In a mild form, it involves the assertion that there were some differences of viewpoint which were basic, but which apparently neither was aware of; in a more virulent form, it involves the assertion—sometimes merely the assumption—that *nothing* written by Engels can be taken as reflecting Marx's opinion unless Marx's name is signed and notarized.

This position deserves a detailed treatment, but not here. At any rate, I must report that I can find no reasonable basis for it. Or rather, its basis lies not in evidence or argument, but in the advantages to certain viewpoints of eliminating Engels from the picture. This has a massively crippling effect on any attempt to understand Marx.

A fundamental background fact is the division of labor which the two collaborators consciously established and followed. It was by design and agreement, during Marx's lifetime, that Engels handled many popularized expositions, "party" problems, and certain subjects in which he was particularly interested or expert. There was much writing that Engels took off Marx's shoulders in order to give him undisturbed opportunity to complete his work.²⁰ Hence Engels' name was signed to many a production that was intended to represent the joint views of the "firm." More than once, Marx referred to the fact that "the two of us work together in accordance with a common plan and previous agreement."²¹ In important cases, preliminary discussions and consultations took place, and/or Marx read and criticized the manuscript before Engels published it.

Up until September 1870, when Engels moved from Manchester to London, such consultations took place partly by mail, partly during

visits. In the former case, therefore, we sometimes have a record in writing, such as Engels' composition of the important propaganda pamphlet "The Prussian Military Question and the German Workers' Party." Here we can see Marx proposing general and specific changes. The more important consultations were often held over for visits (by Marx to Manchester, for example). After Engels moved to a residence near Marx in London, their correspondence naturally fell to an intermittent trickle, but the two talked over issues and affairs virtually every day. Such intimate, almost symbiotic, collaboration over decades does not, of course, guarantee identity on every question; but it cannot be blithely ignored as if we were dealing with two ordinary political comrades. Another element in this relationship would have been clear even if Engels had not publicly asserted it, as he did. While Engels never gave the impression of lacking confidence in his own capacities and opinions, this same sometimes bumptious man looked on Marx as his intellectual mentor and superior.

For the period of their joint work, up to 1883, it is especially difficult to believe that Engels published any writing of significance that is basically different in viewpoint from Marx's. Such a claim also entails the subclaim that Marx could read such a piece without realizing that a substantial disagreement was involved, a phenomenon that at least calls for explanation.

The main cases at issue go further, for one of the chief objectives of the Engels-versus-Marx myth is to detach Engels' *Anti-Dühring* from Marx's seal of approval. This is a great convenience for a number of tendentious views, since *Anti-Dühring* was the only more or less systematic presentation of Marxism made by either of the two men, and therefore covers much that Marx never got around to treating under his own name. The bigger the vacuum that can be created in the Marx canon, the more easily can the empty spaces be filled in freehand and at will by anyone who cares to spin a fantasy of his own about Marxism.

It is a nuisance for the fantasists that *Anti-Dühring* came before Marx's death, and that their collaboration on the work is well documented, Marx even writing one chapter of the book. I am afraid that the mythologists are unaware that Marx wrote a blanket endorsement of the book for party publication.²² Even if this record did not exist, it would take an imaginative reconstruction of their relations to suppose that such a work, written under such circumstances, could have been published by Engels in the party press without Marx's detailed scrutiny.

By its nature the work was a polemical defense of *Marx* and the views associated with *his* name in the first place. It had to be a production of the “firm.” It is a measure of the propensity to concoct nonsense that ambitious essays “proving” that *Anti-Dühring* is basically anti-Marx can be written without even raising or mentioning (let alone discussing) the plain fact that all this anti-Marxism went by Marx’s anxious inspection without raising a murmur.²³ Obviously, Marx did not understand Marxism either; only the mythologists do.

All this, however, is only one side of the matter, for of course each claimed divergence must be considered on its own demerits. For the period after Marx’s death, the main front in the push to detach Engels from Marx has traditionally been located in the claim that age softened Engels into reformism, pacifism, and so on. I think the claim itself has been adequately refuted; in a subsequent volume I shall show that the allegation has even less basis than is commonly supposed.

It is customary to insert a wedge for the Engels-versus-Marx myth by making the reasonable assertion that Engels and Marx were not identical twins, that Engels had a mind of his own, and similar unanswerable propositions. One can go much further without getting into mythology. It is unlikely that Marx would have written any given sentence in the same way as Engels. There is plenty of latitude for differences in formulation, nuance, emphasis, and so on, that are not negligible. These differences certainly exist, and require attention depending on what is at issue—not merely because Marx and Engels were distinct individuals, but because they were very different indeed in features of personality and personal style of the sort that have a significant effect on formulation.

The single fact that Engels was a very facile and rapid writer sets him off from Marx, who sometimes seems to be wrenching formulations and concepts out of a depth by a convulsive effort. Engels’ literary facility was a great convenience; his penalty was a greater capacity for making mistakes, some of which I have noted in these pages and elsewhere. (Naturally, each case is a separate issue.) Another penalty was, frequently, the greater superficiality of his argumentation as compared with Marx’s. He was far less inhibited about making large generalizations, not all of them properly qualified; Marx, on the other hand, often seems to be happier giving the qualification without quite committing himself to the generalization. His temperament revolted against “finished” formulations: it is “my characteristic [he wrote a friend]

that, if I see something I finished writing four weeks ago, I find it inadequate and give it a total reworking." Engels complained, as Marx delayed completing *Capital*, "As long as you still have a book before you that you consider important, you do not get down to the writing."²⁴

In any case, there is a large common-sense area lying between the view that anything Engels writes on his own is basically anti-Marxist, and that every word ever written by Engels is guided by Marx's *mana*.

The practical conclusion of this discussion is this: because of the division of labor within the framework of close collaboration, it is impossible to give a thorough presentation of Marx's views without including Engels' contributions, with whatever critical screening of formulations one believes necessary. This holds doubly for the political field, where, during Marx's lifetime, Engels often did the writing for the "firm," and where so many problems did not become acute until after Marx's death, as the movement developed.

6. FORMAT

NOTES: A sharp distinction in content has been made between *reference notes*, segregated in the back of the book, and *footnotes*, which are intended to be read as part of the text. The reference notes, indicated by superscript numbers, mainly offer information on sources; sometimes, further references; seldom, remarks on technical problems like translation. *In no case does the content of a reference note affect the line of thought. The general reader is advised that they are best ignored.*

QUOTATIONS: All emphasis inside quoted passages is in the original, never added. All [brackets] inside quoted passages represent interpolations added by me—explanations, reconstructions, etc.

Much of Marx's very early writing suffers from an overabundance of emphasized words and phrases, often for reasons unclear to our contemporary eyes. But it is a mistake to adopt the course, which has lately become frequent, of omitting this emphasis, and it has been retained here. It may seem less puzzling if two things are borne in mind. First, the original German system of using letter spacing instead of *italics* was rather less wearing on the optic nerves, and second,

the letter spacing was often intended not to indicate emphasis in the usual sense but to draw attention to the coordinateness of thoughts, names, word-plays, and such, more like a pointed finger than a raised voice.

It has been useful, especially when Marx's unrevised English is in evidence, to signal the fact that certain quoted passages or words are in English in the original. The degree mark (°) has been used with this meaning. A double degree mark (°°) at the beginning of a quotation means the whole passage was originally written in English. Inside a quotation, words or phrases originally in English are marked off using the symbol like quotation marks, ° as here. ° This has been done *only* where there was reason to indicate the fact.

TRANSLATIONS: Extant translations have been used where possible; otherwise I am responsible for all translations or revisions of extant translations as noted. In general, the translations lean toward the literal within reasonable bounds: I have wanted to avoid the kind of literary editing in the guise of translation which in my opinion makes some translations unreliable. A remarkable number of new translations of Marx and Engels have appeared between the time this volume was substantially completed (about October 1973) and the time of publication; this explains why there is no use of the translations in the new Marx-Engels *Collected Works* in English (of which three volumes are out as this is written) or in the Martin Nicolaus translation of the *Grundrisse*, as well as some others of lesser note. However, these have been utilized as checks at some points.

Finally, it is my pleasure to acknowledge the important assistance rendered to this work by grants from the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation.

THE SCOPE OF FORTHCOMING VOLUMES

Following is a chapter outline of Volumes 2 and 3 as presently projected. Space and other considerations may cause minor changes.

VOLUME 2. CLASSES AND REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS.

Part I. The Proletariat and Proletarian Revolution.

1. Patterns of revolution. 2. The special class. 3. Anatomy of the prole-

tariat. 4. Trade unions and class. 5. Trade unions and politics. 6. The principle of class self-emancipation.

Part II. Social Classes in Struggle.

7. The bourgeoisie and bourgeois revolution. 8. Permanent revolution in 1848. 9. The last version of permanent revolution. 10. From bourgeois to proletarian revolution. 11. The petty-bourgeoisie in revolution. 12. The peasant question: social setting. 13. The peasant question: toward a revolutionary alliance. 14. The peasant question: program and policies. 15. The lumpen-class versus the proletariat.

Part III. Mixed-Class Elements and Movements.

16. Intellectual labor and laborers. 17. Intellectual elements: social role. 18. Intellectuals and the proletarian movement. 19. The women's rights movement. 20. Nationalism and revolution.

VOLUME 3. THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Part I. Marx versus Other Socialisms.

1. Utopian and nonclass socialism. 2. The anarchist mirage. 3. State socialism. 4. Reactionary anticapitalism. 5. Reform and revolution. 6. Reformism and parliamentarism.

Part II. The Road to Political Power.

7. The question of force and violence. 8. The question of putschism and terrorism. 9. The revolutionary act. 10. Movement, party, sect: the question of organization.

Part III. Theory of the Workers State.

11. Recasting the state machine. 12. Tasks of the workers state. 13. The Commune state. 14. Centralism and decentralization. 15. The "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Part IV. The Societal Revolution.

16. Revolution in economics: toward the abundant society. 17. In societal structure: toward the classless society. 18. In political structure: toward the stateless society. 19. In social life: toward communality. 20. In sexual relations: toward the emancipation of women. 21. In humankind: toward a new individualism.

I | THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUNG MARX

1 | THE DEMOCRATIC EXTREMIST

Marx entered active political life at the age of twenty-four as a liberal democratic journalist, the champion of political democracy. This period opens at the beginning of 1842, when he wrote his first published political article, and closes toward the latter part of the following year, when he became a communist. The development in between, which transformed him from a radical-democratic liberal into a revolutionary-democratic communist, is centered around his work for the *Rheinische Zeitung* (RZ) of Cologne, of which he became the editor in October 1842.

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At the beginning of this period Marx's main interest lay in and around the field of philosophy; by its end he had reoriented toward social and political issues. That is, he began it as a radical philosopher and ended it as a social revolutionary.

The transition was not primarily a philosophical process, nor one made through philosophical lucubrations. This young Marx is often portrayed as having come to a revolutionary understanding of society *through* a critique of Hegel's texts on the state and society. The biographical fact, however, is that he came *to* the content of his critique of the Hegelian view of the state *through* a year and a half of rubbing his nose against the social and political facts of life, which he encountered as the crusading editor of the most extreme leftist democratic newspaper in pre-1848 Germany, as well as in reading contemporary political literature.

1. STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN HEGELESE

During this *RZ* period and for some time after, Marx shared a stock of conceptions about the state with the Young Hegelian milieu in which he had matured, within a framework of ideas that remained basically Hegelian even while departing from Hegel in important conclusions. For our purposes it is especially vital to understand the Hegelian distinction between *state* and *civil society*, a way of thinking we will encounter often in the next few chapters.

The difficulty for the modern reader is not simply terminological, a matter of learning the Hegelian tag for phenomena which go by some other label in plain English or German. One reason Hegelian terminology remains puzzling even after a formal explanation is that it reflects a different way of ordering social phenomena in one's mind; it dissects social reality along different lines.

To begin with: the "rational" state, involving a just and ethical relationship of harmony among the elements of society, is an *ideal* against which existing states are to be measured. The extent to which it "really" is a state depends on its closeness to the ideal.¹ The essence of the state is eternal, not historical. For Hegel, its aim is the "realization of rational freedom"; as "an association of free men mutually educating each other," it is the "great organism in which juridical, ethical, and political freedom has to achieve realization." (These phrases are, as a matter of fact, from an article by Marx in the *RZ*.)² The frame of reference, then, is not necessarily anything that actually exists, but rather what *should* exist.

Next, the word *state* does not refer merely to the political institutions of society, but to all of public affairs and life in a certain broad sense. It embraces the totality or collectivity of humanity's *communal* concerns; it is the institutionalization of communality in society, not of political organization in our narrower sense. The "political state" is only one aspect of this.

If the state is the communal sphere of society, in contrast civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) embraces the private world of individual strivings and interests. Hence it especially comprises the economic strivings of individuals. In modern times, bourgeois economic

activity, with its emphasis on privatized dog-eat-dog relations, is pre-eminently in the realm of civil society.*

But the term becomes ambiguous as its meaning shifts from the civil society of the old regime to the civil society of modern times; the medieval *Bürger* becomes the modern *bourgeois*. In German, *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* can mean either "civil society" or "bourgeois society," depending on its context and the user's intention. When the context is modern times, and therefore the bourgeois society of modern times, it inevitably tends to connote bourgeois society even when it is properly translated "civil society." The term operates on a sliding scale of meaning. In translations a conscious choice must be made, but the German usage did not necessarily involve a consciousness of the alternatives.

This caution is interestingly confirmed by the fact that Marx first showed awareness of the slipperiness of the term in *The German Ideology*, the work in which he first thoroughly emancipated himself from the Hegelian framework in social thought. Here he uses *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* explicitly to mean the *economic* sphere of society, which determines the state as its political superstructure: "It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given [historical] stage. . . ." He now sees the ambiguity of the term from outside Hegelianism, and feels called on to explain:

The term *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* emerged in the eighteenth century, when property relationships had already extricated themselves from the ancient and medieval communal society. *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft* as such only develops with the bourgeoisie; the social organization evolving directly out of production and commerce, which in all ages forms the basis of the state and of the rest of the ideological superstructure, has however always been designated by the same name.^{6**}

* This distinction in Hegel resembled, and was partly derived from, the classical Greek distinction between the *polis* (the communality, not "politics") and the privatized concerns of individuals.³ Also see the point made in Chapter 11 regarding Marx's impact on the "difference between state and society, an idea virtually unheard of before his time."⁴ But actually it was more a matter of different ways of drawing the line between *state* and *society*. It is exaggeration to believe that Hegel, or the young Marx, usually *equated* the state with (all) society,⁵ for what the state concept excluded was precisely civil society.

** Further on, Marx notes that Stirner was able to perpetrate confusions with

In full maturity, in one of his most important summary statements, Marx traced his developed theory of the state back to his first critique of Hegel's conception of state and civil society:

My investigation led to the result that legal relations as well as forms of the state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life, the sum total of which Hegel, following the example of the Englishmen and Frenchmen of the eighteenth century, combines under the name of "civil society"; that, however, the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy.⁸

That is: Marx's investigation led him to believe that Hegel's views on the *relation* between state and civil society had to be changed. Nevertheless, it is useful to remember that his central starting point was the problem so posed.

The broad use of *state* in Hegel's presents translation problems. Marx's early formulations, in the Hegelian spirit, often come close to *counterposing* the state concept (the ideal state) against what we would now understand by the term. What we would call the state he might label the political state or the *Beamtenstaat*—the bureaucracy's state apparatus, or just the bureaucracy. Thus, in one article Marx wrote that the "*bureaucracy* is still too powerful, that not so much the whole state as part of the state, the 'government,' carries on a real political life [*Staatsleben*]." In the present chapter, *Staat* in one context is translated the "body politic," in the hope of suggesting a wider sphere of public affairs than is presently connoted by *state*. In another context *Staatgeist* is translated "public spirit," for today "state spirit" would suggest almost the very opposite of what Marx was trying to say in 1842.

2. THE WINDS OF FREEDOM

The arena of Marx's political debut was the Rhineland, which differed from the rest of Germany in significant respects.

the "assistance of the German word *Bürger*, which he can interpret at will as 'citoyen' or as 'bourgeois' or as the German 'good burgher.'" But this is the sort of shifting word play on which Hegelianism thrived, not simply Stirner.

1. When Marx was born his native Rhineland was only three years away from having been part of revolutionary France. In 1795 it had been taken over by Napoleon's armies and socially remolded. Only in 1815 was it annexed by Prussia: *annexed*, but far from completely Prussianized even by the 1840s. Even the legal system remained gallicized. As Heine put it, the Rhinelander was thus made into "a Prussian by the power of conquest." Engels echoed this in the midst of revolution in Cologne in 1849: "It was only by *force* that we [Rhinelanders] became *subjects* to Prussia and remained so. *We were never Prussians.*" He adds: "But now, when we are marched against Hungary, when Prussian territory is trodden by Russian robber bands—now we feel like Prussians, yes indeed, *we feel what a disgrace it is to bear the name of Prussian!*"¹⁰

2. The Rhineland was the most industrialized and economically developed section of Germany, with the most conscious liberal bourgeoisie. Top leaders of the 1848 revolutionary government were going to be Rhenish—indeed, were to be men who had been sponsors of the *Rheinische Zeitung*.^{*} The Prussian bureaucratic system, wrote a modern historian, "harmonized but poorly with the free industrial communities of the Rhenish provinces, where Prussian bureaucrats were perpetually at daggers' points with the native population."¹³ Further, the peasantry of the Rhineland was advanced and modern as compared with that of Prussia.¹⁴

3. In consequence of these facts, the intellectual and social climate of the region retained some of the heat generated by the revolutionary furor on the other side of the Rhine. "French" ideas—constitutionalism, representative democracy, Liberty-Equality-Fraternity, etc.—were not so foreign.

Have we forgotten [wrote Engels in 1888] that the whole left bank of the Rhine . . . was pro-French-minded when the Germans moved into it again in 1814, and remained pro-French-minded till 1848 when the revolution rehabilitated the Germans in the Rhinelanders' eyes? that Heine's pro-French enthusiasm and even his Bonapartism were nothing but the echo of general public feeling west of the Rhine?¹⁵

* Prominent among these was the same L. Camphausen who was going to be the head of the first bourgeois government in 1848 and the target of Marx's revolutionary opposition.¹¹ As editor of the *RZ*, Marx defended Camphausen's election as deputy to the provincial Diet against criticism from the right.¹²

Even French socialist ideas had penetrated, especially in the form most appealing to a modernizing, industrializing new class: Saint-Simonism. These new notions were denounced from the pulpit by the archbishop in Trier, Marx's birthplace; Marx's future father-in-law talked them up at home; and his law professor did the same at the University of Berlin.¹⁶ The first German socialist propagandist, Ludwig Gall, had recently used Trier as his center of operation. Marx's mind, long before it turned to social issues, was formed on the front where French ideas met German cultural patterns.

The winds from France, and the breezes wafted up from the Rhenish liberal bourgeoisie, bore the word *liberté/Freiheit* to the ears of those interested in widening political participation in decision-making by the people. A specific freedom was the occasion for Marx's debut as a political activist.

The new king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, whose accession to the throne in 1840 had been eagerly awaited by the liberals, had made noises about broadening the freedom of the press, and in December 1841 he promulgated new regulations ("instructions") on the censorship. Liberals and even Young Hegelians hailed the step enthusiastically; indeed, so did the *Rheinische Zeitung* at first.¹⁷ In two articles Marx set out to dissect the pseudoliberalism of the new regulations and counterpose his own conception of freedom—that is, political democracy.

We must stress that under the existing circumstances the issue of free press and censorship was not just one of many liberal issues. The liberal democrats considered it, along with the constitution, the key to political change.¹⁸

3. THE "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS" ARTICLES

We shall consider Marx's two articles together. One, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instructions," was the first article he ever wrote, but although it was written in January 1842, it was not published till the following year, in Switzerland. The other, dealing with the debates on freedom of the press in the Rhenish Diet, was his first article to see print, in the *RZ*.

The *RZ* article first takes up the speakers who opposed freedom of the press, analyzing the arguments used by deputies of three of the

social estates (*Stände*)* represented in the Diet: the princes, the landed gentry, and the "cities" (the urban bourgeoisie). It then discusses the arguments used by supporters of freedom of the press, from the cities and from the fourth estate (the peasantry).

At this point Marx is writing within the framework of a bourgeois-democratic view of society, in the sense that he does not question private property in production, especially in land. Similarly, his operative social theory is that of his intellectual milieu: to defend freedom, he writes, "I must grasp it in its essential character, not in external relations"¹⁹—a characteristically idealist formulation. But the important thing about these first two articles is how far he goes in a direction which is incompatible with the framework, and becomes ready to burst through it. For while theory ("philosophy") tells him he must grasp the subject in some way other than "in external relations," it is precisely the social relations that he keeps running into in the course of his RZ career.

Freedom of the press and censorship provided only the peg for Marx's analysis of the problem of freedom (democracy) in these articles. The passages concerned only with the press are of minor importance. For example: the opponents of freedom of the press do not face up to the real relationship that exists between censorship and intellectual development; the government-approved press "lies without cease; it must give up even the consciousness of lying, and lose all shame."²⁰ The first duty of a truth-seeker is "to make directly for the truth without looking right or left"—"Won't I forget the heart of the matter if it is more important that I speak it in the prescribed form?" The censorship closes the possibility of frank discussion on the press.²¹

But the real subject is not simply the specific issue of the new regulations. The subject is democratic rights across the board. And the main target is not the apologists for the old absolutism, but the liberal defenders of freedom themselves.

Here is a summary of the themes in Marx's first political articles.

* The German *Stand* (French *état*; English *estate*, *social estate*, as in "Third Estate") does not mean exactly the same as "class." A *Stand* is a class or social stratum organized in a juridical relationship to the state; it also means an assembly based on *Stand* representation. Here it is often translated "class"; "estate" is used when it is advisable to call attention to the difference.

4. THE SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN GENERAL

The *liberal opposition* shows us the high point of a political assembly, just as opposition in general shows the high point of a society. . . . The liberal opposition shows us what the liberal position is, it shows us to what extent freedom has been incarnated.²²

The debate on this question best shows the character of the Diet, Marx continues:

It is in the opposition to *freedom in general* that the spirit of a particular sphere of people, the individual interest of a specific class [*Stand*], the natural one-sidedness of its character, manifests itself most crudely and harshly, and shows its teeth, so to speak.

When the speakers for the princes, landed gentry, and cities attacked freedom of the press,

it was not the individual but the class that polemized. What mirror, therefore, could more faithfully reflect the inner character of the Diet?²³

Freedom of the press is only one particular question; it will not solve everything. "It is not a perfect thing itself" and will not bring perfection; it is not the "all-in-all" of the matter.²⁴ What the right wing "argues against in *freedom of the press* is *human freedom*. . . ."²⁵ For no democratic right can be rejected without impugning every democratic right: this, in fact, is the climactic point of the RZ article:

. . . with the lack of freedom of the press, all other freedoms become illusory. Every form of freedom conditions the others, just as every bodily member affects every other. Every time one form of freedom is rejected, it is freedom that is rejected and deprived of any semblance of life; after that, pure chance will decide just what will be the butt of unfreedom's overweening power. Unfreedom then becomes the rule, and freedom an exception to chance and arbitrariness. Thus there is nothing more topsy-turvy than to believe, when it is a question of a *special* existence-form of freedom, that this is a *special question*. It is the general question within a special sphere. Freedom remains freedom, whether it expresses itself in printer's ink or land or con-

science or a political assembly. . . . Thus the Sixth Rhenish Diet condemned itself in uttering its condemnation of freedom of the press.²⁶

5. MARX REJECTS THE LIBERAL OPPOSITION

We said that Marx began as a liberal democrat, but from the beginning he was not only on the extreme left wing of the tendency but publicly attacking it.

His first article (in January 1842) is already critical of the liberals' basic approach. It will not do, he argues, to reform the censorship procedures or personnel, for "in the essence of censorship lies a basic defect which no law can correct." It is a mistake to attack the individuals, the censors, rather than the system of censorship: "It is this kind of *pseudo-liberalism* from which concessions are squeezed, to sacrifice individual persons, the tools, but maintain the heart of the matter, the institution."²⁷ Rather: "The real *radical cure of the censorship* would be its *abolition*; for the institution is bad, and institutions are mightier than men."²⁸

His May RZ article leads off its discussion of the Diet debates with a caustic characterization of the liberal defenders of freedom. The opponents, he writes, had the advantage of arguing with a "passionate bias" which gave them a real position on the press, whereas the defenders

have *no real relationship* to what they are defending. They have never felt the *need* for freedom of the press. For them it is an intellectual thing, in which the heart has no place. For them it is an "exotic" plant, which they are concerned with simply as "hobbyists."²⁹

They do not really have a deep attachment to freedom of the press, and hence are not really able to defend it.³¹

One of the urban speakers gave a blunt businessman's line of argument, which we will take up in the next section. In this connection Marx contrasts this speaker's down-to-earth concreteness with the vague abstractions of the liberal ideologues:

. . . we must recognize the unconditional advantage he has over the rambling and shambling argumentation lacking any standpoint which is put forward by those German liberals who think

they are honoring freedom when they transport it into the starry heaven of the imagination instead of the solid ground of reality. It is to these theoreticians of the imagination, these sentimental enthusiasts, who shun any contact between their ideal and vulgar reality as a profanation, that we Germans partly owe the fact that freedom has up to now remained a thing of the imagination and sentimentalism.

The Germans are in general inclined to sentimentalities and extravagances; they have a fondness for music out of the blue. It is gladdening, therefore, if the big question of the idea is demonstrated to them from a blunt, realistic standpoint derived from the immediate background. The Germans are by nature most deferential, submissive, and respectful. Out of pure respect for ideas, they do not put them into practice. They devote a cult of worship to them, but they do not cultivate them. The speaker's method, therefore, seems to be a suitable one to *familiarize* the German with his ideas, to show him that involved here are not remote matters but his immediate interests, to translate the language of gods into the language of men.³²

Toward the close of the article, Marx goes almost all the way in repudiating the liberal opposition:

Going by the usual *normal type*, the *defenders of freedom of the press* in the Sixth Rhenish Diet, therefore, differed from its *opponents* not in substance but rather in tendency. . . . Some want the privilege for the government alone, others want to divide it among several individuals; some want a complete censorship, others only a half censorship; some want three-eighths of freedom of the press, others none at all. God protect me from my friends!³³

After a short reference to some exceptions,* Marx summarizes the debates as having produced an overpowering impression of "dreariness

* The better speeches noted by Marx were made by one liberal and some representatives of the peasant estate. Marx quotes general statements from these deputies which at least seem to oppose censorship as such.³⁴ Later in 1842 he called his own viewpoint "real liberalism" as distinct from the self-styled liberalism of the existing liberal opposition, which (he says) could be considered liberal only as against the ideas of 1819. This "real liberalism . . . has to strive for a completely new, deeper, more thoroughly developed, and *freer* political form corresponding to the consciousness of the people."³⁵

and malaise," fluctuating "between the willful callousness of privilege and the natural impotence of a half-liberalism. . . ." ³⁶

6. MARX REJECTS THE BOURGEOIS APPROACH TO DEMOCRACY

While it is true that Marx's thinking began within the basic framework of bourgeois-democratic ideology, it is also true that this bourgeois-democrat began his career by publicly blasting the specifically bourgeois approach to democracy on the free press issue. This came up in his *RZ* article in connection with his discussion of three speakers, in ascending importance.

The speaker from the landed gentry had made critical remarks about the consequences of freedom of the press in France. In reply, Marx points to the French system whereby a publisher must deposit security money (*caution*) as a bond that will be forfeited if the government cracks down:

The French press is not too free; it is not free enough. It is not under an intellectual censorship, to be sure, but is under a material censorship, the system of heavy security-money deposits. This has a material effect precisely because it is drawn out of its true sphere into the sphere of large-scale commercial speculation. In addition, large-scale commercial speculation goes along with big cities. Therefore the French press is concentrated in a few places; and if material power concentrated in few places has a diabolical effect, how can it be otherwise with intellectual power? ³⁷

Tying the exercise of a freedom, then, to possession of enough money to operate it is a form of censorship too, and not to be borne. (This, and more of the same, is written by a man who is still under the impression he is analyzing freedom in its "essential" character and "not in external relations"!)

The speaker who represents the urban bourgeoisie (the cities) as a social estate gets the shortest shrift of all in Marx's article. "We have before us the opposition of the *bourgeois*, not of the *citoyen*." He is treated with contempt: "The speaker from the cities thinks he is linking himself with Sieyès when he makes this bourgeois remark: 'Freedom of

the press is a *fine thing* as long as *bad people* don't meddle in it.'"³⁸ Marx derides this, and cites some other philistine generalities by this bourgeois. One of them points ahead to the role of the bourgeoisie in the 1848 revolution. The following passage by Marx begins with his quotation from the speaker:

"Sympathies in favor of a constitution and freedom of the press must necessarily be weakened when one sees how in every country" (meaning France) "they are linked with endless changeableness in conditions and a disquieting uncertainty about the future."

When the cosmological discovery was first made that the earth is a *mobile perpetuum*, many a staid German put his hands on his nightcap and groaned over the endless changeableness of conditions in the motherland, and a disquieting uncertainty over the future dismayed him about a house that stood on its head every minute.³⁹

But most important is Marx's attack on the main motion proposed by the *defenders* of freedom of the press. Here is "the real characteristic viewpoint of this report":

The proposer wants the *freedom of the press-business* not to be excluded from the *general freedom of business*. . . "The labors of arms and legs are free, but those of the head are put under tutelage. . ."

What strikes one first of all is to see that *freedom of the press* is subsumed under *freedom of business*. . . Rembrandt painted the mother of God as a Dutch peasant: why shouldn't our speaker depict freedom in a form with which he is familiar and feels at home?⁴⁰

But, argues Marx, to put freedom of the press under freedom of business is like "compelling a giant to live in the house of a pygmy." Every freedom (of press, courts, religion, business, etc.) is a freedom in its own right while at the same time part of a system of freedom.

To put freedom of the press in a class under freedom of business is to defend it while killing it in the course of the defense; for do I not abolish the freedom of a character when I demand that it be free in the same way another character is? Your freedom is not my freedom, cries the press to business. I will obey the laws of my sphere as you do the laws of yours. To be free in your way is

to me identical with unfreedom, just as the cabinetmaker would hardly feel pleased if he demanded freedom to carry on his trade and was given freedom to philosophize as an equivalent.

... is the press true to its character, does it act in accordance with the nobility of its nature, *is the press free*, if it degrades itself to a *business*? To be sure, the writer must make money in order to be able to exist and write, but on no account must he exist and write in order to make money.⁴¹

The argument is that the democratic freedoms must not be "degraded" into a mere instrument for advancing the interests of the bourgeoisie.

7. AGAINST BUREAUCRATIC (STATE) CONTROL OF THE MIND

At this stage in the development of democratic institutions, the demand for the rule of law meant a struggle against the rule of an arbitrary state and its bureaucrats. This is also an integral part of the program embodied in Marx's first articles.

Censorship is "a preventive measure of the police against freedom." A good press law would step in only against abuses defined in the law; it "considers freedom to be the *normal* condition of the press." In fact, freedom needs laws, not arbitrary power. "A press law is therefore the *legal recognition of freedom of the press*."⁴² Freedom means the freedom to disagree.* From this position, common enough in liberalism up to this point, Marx goes over to a sweeping opposition to any and every control over opinions, as distinct from acts. The transition is made in this passage:

What a difference between a judge and a censor!

The censor has no law except his master. The judge has no

* Here is how Marx worked out this basic notion: "Since a legal development is not possible without the development of laws; since a development of laws is impossible without a criticism of laws; since every criticism of laws sets the citizens' heads, hence also hearts, at variance with the existing laws; since this variance is perceived as dissatisfaction: then a loyal participation by the press in the development of the state is impossible if it must not stir up dissatisfaction with the existing legal conditions."⁴³ It is interesting that this line of argument proves not merely the permissibility but the necessity of opposition, its indispensability even from the point of view of good government.

master except the law. But the judge has the duty of interpreting the law in order to apply it to individual cases as *he understands* it after painstaking scrutiny; the censor has the duty of understanding the law as it is *officially interpreted* for him in the individual case. The independent judge belongs neither to me nor to the government. . . . If I am haled before a court, I am charged with contravening an existing law, and for a law to be violated it must first exist. Where no press law exists, none can be violated. The censorship does not charge me with violating an existing law. It condemns my opinion because it is not the opinion of the censor and his master. My public act, which stands before the world and its judgment, before the state and its law, is judged by a hidden and merely negative power which cannot constitute itself as law, shuns the light of day, and is not linked to any general principle.

A censorship law is an impossibility because it would punish not offenses but opinions, because it cannot be anything but a *formularized censor*. . . .⁴⁴

To the Diet speaker it is all one whether action is taken on the basis of a bureaucrat's arbitrary decision or a court decision based on law. "Certainly our speaker, whose eyes are fixed on heaven, sees the earth far beneath him as a contemptible dust-heap, and so all he can say about flowers is that they are dust-covered." But such distinctions are basic to freedom: "Freedom involves not only *what* but just as much *how* I live, not only that I perform a free act but that I perform it freely."⁴⁵ The alternative is encouraging anarchy: "As the people must look on free writings as lawless, they get used to thinking that what is lawless is free, that freedom is lawless, and that what is legal is unfree. Thus censorship kills public spirit."⁴⁶

Above all, the offense of censorship is that it regiments the mind; it exercises tutelage over the highest interest of the citizens, *their minds* . . . [it] regulates the behavior of the public mind, which is more than the Roman censors did. . . .

You marvel at the delightful diversity, the inexhaustible riches of nature. You do not ask the rose to smell like the violet; but the richest of all, the mind, is supposed to exist in only a *single* manner? I am humorous, but the law orders people to write seriously. I am bold, but the law commands my style to be restrained. *Gray on gray* is the sole color of freedom, the authorized one.⁴⁷

The last remark is a reference to the regulations' allowance only of "serious and restrained pursuit of truth." Marx objects to any limitation. The regulations also demand that writings be "well-intentioned in tendency." Marx replies:

The writer is thus subjected to the *most frightful terrorism*, the *jurisdiction of suspicion*. *Tendentious* laws, laws that do not provide objective norms, are laws of terrorism such as were conceived by the state's extremities under Robespierre and the state's rottenness under the Roman emperors. Laws that make their main criterion not the *act as such*, but what is in the mind of the person acting, are nothing but *positive sanctions of lawlessness*. . . .

Only insofar as I *express* myself by entering the sphere of the actual do I enter the sphere of the legislator. In the eyes of the law I have no existence, I am not its object, except in *my acts*. They are the only things the law has to hold me to. . . . However, a tendentious law punishes not only what I do but what I think *apart* from any act. . . . The law punishes me not for the wrong I do but for the wrong I do not do.⁴⁸

Twice more in this article Marx repeats with emphasis: "*All objective norms are abolished*."⁴⁹ One trouble with such bureaucratic regulations is the "indefinite scope" of the qualifications: "We are at the mercy of the *temperament* of the censor."⁵⁰ Prescriptions like "serious and restrained" cannot be objectively defined: "Is the truth to be understood so simply, that *that is truth which the government so decrees* . . . ?"⁵¹

And how is a law of this kind to be carried out? Through means more revolting than the law itself, through *spies*, or through agreement in advance to consider whole literary tendencies suspect, in which case indeed it remains to ferret out to what tendency an individual belongs.⁵²

But this puts unrestrained power in the hands of civil servants:

You place so much trust in your state institutions that you think they will make a saint out of a weak mortal, the government official, and make it possible for him to do the impossible. But you distrust your state organism so much that you fear the isolated opinion of a private person. . . . The Instruction asks unlimited trust in the officialdom, but it flows from unlimited

distrust of all nonofficials. Why shouldn't we pay back in the same coin? Why shouldn't this very officialdom be suspect in our eyes?⁵³

Which leads to another sweeping conclusion:

So the essence of censorship is in general based on the arrogant delusion of the police state about its officials. Even the simplest thing is considered beyond the understanding and good will of the public; but even the impossible is supposed to be possible for the officials.

This basic defect permeates all our institutions.⁵⁴

8. FREEDOM MEANS DEMOCRATIC CONTROL FROM BELOW

It is not only the state bureaucracy that considers itself above all control from the people. The elected representatives sitting in the Diet hold a similar attitude. But the representatives must express the will of the people.*

The speaker for the landed-gentry estate warns the Diet against being swayed by "outside influences" rather than "inner conviction." The amazing thing, comments Marx, is that by "outside influences" he means the people the Diet is supposed to represent. Marx goes on to polemicize against this elitist and fetishistic conception of representative democracy.

To be sure, the [people of the] province have the right, under prescribed conditions, to adopt these gods [their representatives] as their own, but right after this act of creation they must, like fetish-worshippers, forget that these are gods they have made with their own hands.⁵⁶

The deputies object to publishing Diet proceedings regularly because they regard the Diet as their own privilege and not as the right of the people to representation. "What the province demands, rather, is that

* Cf. Marx later in the RZ: the state is in a healthy condition only "if law is the conscious expression of the will of the people, and therefore is made with the will of the people and by it."⁵⁵

the words of the deputies be transformed into the publicly heard voice of the country." This representation of the people

is therefore pure nonsense if its specific character does not consist precisely in the fact that action is not taken here on behalf of the province but rather that it takes action itself; that it is not represented here but rather represents itself. A representation which is secluded from the consciousness of its constituents is no representation at all.

That way, you get the "senseless contradiction that my own self-activity is to be an act by someone else, of which I myself am unaware."⁵⁷

The mere existence of a representative assembly (for which the liberal bourgeoisie would gladly settle) is declared to be unacceptable—in the organ of these very liberals, by Marx's pen. He already feels it will be necessary to go much further:

To be sure, we have long been of the opinion that *parliamentary freedom* [that is, freedom through representative democracy] stands only at the beginning of its beginning; and the very speech under discussion has convinced us anew that the rudiments in the study of political affairs have still not been worked out.

What has to be worked out? Marx offers early warning against a representative system that gives deputies freedom to isolate themselves from the people:

Certainly the development of *parliamentary freedom* in the old French sense,** independence in respect to public opinion, stagnation of the caste spirit, may develop most completely through isolation; but it is precisely against this development that one cannot warn too early. A truly political assembly blossoms out only under the great protectorate of the *public spirit*, just as living things do only under the protectorate of the *open air* [*freien Luft*].⁵⁹

It is this issue, the meaningfulness of representative forms, which leads into one of the most important passages. The Diet speaker had

* In another RZ article Marx similarly attacks a legislator who "replaces self-determination by determination from above. . . ." ⁵⁸

** The (pre-1789) "old French" *parlement* was a high court, made up of the administrative nobility; it increasingly became political in function, but it was not an assembly of representatives.

said (as quoted by Marx) that "*Man . . . is by nature imperfect and immature and needs education for the whole duration of his development, which ceases only with his death.*" (It is the old argument, still lively today, that this-or-that people is not "ready" for democracy.) Marx's demolition of this "principled stand" (as he calls it) has not been surpassed. To begin with:

To fight *freedom of the press*, one must maintain the thesis of the *permanent immaturity* of the human race. . . .

If the immaturity of the human race is the mystical ground for opposing freedom of the press, then certainly censorship is a most reasonable means of hindering the human race from coming of age.⁶⁰

That is the first point: the people can never become "mature" enough to govern themselves as long as they are deprived of democratic rights on the ground that they are not mature enough. As Marx had pointed out some pages before, the Twelfth Rhenish Diet could continue giving the same answers as the Sixth, and so on indefinitely.⁶¹

Next: how does one mature?

For him [the speaker] true education consists in keeping a person swaddled in a cradle all his life, for as soon as he learns to walk he also learns to fall, and it is only through falling that he learns to walk. But if we all remain children in swaddling-clothes, who is to swaddle us? If we all lie in a cradle, who is to cradle us? If we are all in jail, who is to be the jail warden?⁶²

This extension of *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* is already the basic answer to all arguments, old and new, for "educational" dictatorships. It already implies that democratic freedom is not a diploma of maturity passed out at a graduation ceremony, but is acquired only in a process of struggle by people *who are not yet "ready" for freedom*, but who grow up to it only by engaging in the struggle themselves, before anyone certifies them mature.*

* Compare this position of Marx's with that taken seventeen years later by the eminent apostle of bourgeois democratic libertarianism, John Stuart Mill, in his classic *On Liberty*:

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that this doctrine is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children. . . . For the same reason we may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may

Later on in the article, Marx dramatizes this thought with a little charade, apropos of various proposals for limiting freedom of the press:

All these efforts recall the gym teacher who proposed, as the best way to teach jumping, to bring the pupil to a big pit and show him by some threads how far he was to jump *over* the pit. Of course the pupil first had to exercise jumping and was not to clear the whole pit the first day; but from time to time the thread was to be moved farther away. Unfortunately, at the first lesson the pupil fell into the pit, and lies there to this day. The teacher was a German, and the pupil's name was: "Freedom."⁶⁶

Further, these people not only fail to develop, but are in danger of demoralization:

The government hears only *its own voice*, it knows it hears only its own voice, and yet hangs on to the illusion that it hears the voice of the people; and it demands that the people likewise hang on to this illusion. On its part, therefore, the people sink partly into political superstition, partly into political skepticism, or, withdrawn from political life, they become a *privatized rabble* [*Privatpöbel*].⁶⁷

be considered as in its nonage. The early difficulties in the way of spontaneous progress are so great that there is seldom any choice of means for overcoming them; and a ruler full of the spirit of improvement is warranted in the use of any expedients that will attain an end perhaps otherwise unattainable. Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion. Until then, there is nothing for them but implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne, if they are so fortunate as to find one.⁶³

Thus the acme of English bourgeois liberalism knew of no case to be made in favor of democracy for any but a small slice of the world, his own. After 1859 Mill found additional criteria for excepting the lesser breeds from his liberalism, such as illiteracy. Indeed, in 1836—four years before a liberal movement arose in Prussia, let alone won anything—Mill had written in a major article that Prussia enjoyed a "substantially democratic though formally absolute government."⁶⁴ Yet in the preceding century Kant had already given the general argument against the conception that a people is not ripe for freedom (on the last pages of his last major work): "According to such a presupposition, freedom will never arrive, since we cannot *ripen* to this freedom if we are not first of all placed therein (we must be free in order to be able to make purposive use of our powers in freedom)." For "we never ripen with respect to reason except through *our own* efforts (which we can make only when we are free)."⁶⁵

The speaker's argument that man is imperfect certainly cannot be denied:

Man is by nature imperfect, individually or in mass. . . . What follows from this? Our speaker's arguments are imperfect, governments are imperfect, Diets are imperfect, freedom of the press is imperfect, every sphere of human existence is imperfect. Hence if any one of these spheres is not to exist on account of this imperfection, then none of them has a right to exist. . . .

The imperfect needs education. Is not education also human, hence imperfect? Does not education [itself] also need education?⁶⁸

This last thought was to be elaborated three years later in the third of Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach," which represents the gateway to Marx's own maturity.*

Who is mature or perfect enough in his wisdom to decide when their rights are to be handed down to the people? Perhaps (ruminates Marx) the speaker or the government think they are inspired by God? Then they have to be refuted—by a head-doctor. There is also another way: "But *English history* has demonstrated well enough how the assertion of divine inspiration from above evokes the counterassertion of divine inspiration from below, and Charles I mounted the scaffold by virtue of divine inspiration from below."⁶⁹

The people will never be made "good" through being drilled into goodness by a despot:

Censorship places us all in subjection, just as under despotism we are all equal . . . that kind of freedom of the press acts to introduce oligarchy into questions of the spirit. . . . That [kind of] freedom of the press pushes presumptuousness to the point of forestalling world history, substituting itself for the voice of the people. . . .⁷⁰

Whatever is evil in general remains evil, no matter which individual is the bearer of this evil, whether a private critic or one appointed by the government; only, in the latter case the evil is authorized and is regarded as a necessity from above, in order to bring about goodness from below.⁷¹

In this connection, Marx makes a passing thrust at the pen-pushers

* The Third Thesis is discussed in Chapter 10.

who believe in "progress by command."⁷² The solution to the problem posed by the imperfection of the individual is not to be found in entrusting command to allegedly superior individuals; the answer lies elsewhere:

These people are dubious about mankind in general, but they canonize certain men. They paint a repulsive picture of human nature but at the same time ask us to fall on our knees before the holy image of certain privileged people. We know the individual is weak but at the same time we know that the aggregate is strong.⁷³

In view of the "democratic extremism" which this line of argument represents—repudiation of the right of "superior" people to exercise despotism over the allegedly immature—it is important that Marx repeated it in an article published two months later. The subject was again freedom of the press, and the target was the editor C. H. Hermes. Hermes, charged Marx, regards the state as an "infants' home," a nursery institution for the care of children (its citizens), only a big institution instead of a small one, and one which expands its "care" to a broader scope. Instead of "an association of freemen," the state becomes "a bunch of grownups who are ordained to be educated from above and to pass from the 'narrow' schoolroom to the 'broader' one." And as for the liberals: "the liberals of the recent past . . . know only the dilemma posed by Vidocq [the French police chief], 'prisoner or jail warden?'"⁷⁴

In still another article Marx argued that a free press is a necessity even when a people is still politically underdeveloped, precisely in order to bring it to political maturity. If the government carries on a struggle against the free press, this struggle itself is the "first form" in which the reality and power of the free press is recognized: "And only the struggle can convince the government as well as the people and the press itself of the real and necessary justification of the press."⁷⁵ This is an important note: to stretch Marx's point a bit, it is through the *struggle* for democratic rights that the question of maturity resolves itself.

Moreover, Marx makes it clear that he would also object to banning rightist newspapers on the same basis:

. . . it goes without saying we would have made objections no less earnestly against banning the *Elberfelder Zeitung*, the *Hamburger Correspondent*, and the *Coblentz Rhein- und Moselzeitung*, for the *juridical position* is not altered by the moral character of the individual case, let alone its political and religious views.

The press is shorn of rights "as soon as its *existence* is made dependent on its *opinions*. To this day there exists no code of opinions and no law-court of opinions."⁷⁶ When another paper distorted these passages, Marx reiterated them: "We counterpose the *fact of bad opinions*, for which there is no *law-court*, to the fact of *bad actions* which, if they are *illegal*, do have their *law-court* and their penal *law*."⁷⁷

9. THE DIALECTICS OF ENDS AND MEANS

As Mill's sorry apologia for despotism shows, the problem is intimately related to the argument from immaturity. That is: unfreedom—authoritarian, absolutist, or despotic government, or, more generally, control from above—is justified as the necessary means to a good end, the end being naturally described in terms of the long-run interests of the people, who are to be "done good."

Marx met this head-on. In the *RZ* article, he returned to the theory of human imperfection to take up the consequences of censorship considered precisely as a means, confronting the allegedly philosophical formulation of the approach.

In his first (January) article, he had stated the fundamental fallacy of the vulgar interpretation of "the end justifies the means," the one implanted by Jesuitry. The argument in favor of censorship takes as its starting point "a completely topsy-turvy and abstract view of *truth* itself." The nature of the subject affects the inquiry, and "not only the result, but also the way to it, belongs to the truth. The inquiry into truth must itself be true. . . ."⁷⁸ Or, in Hegelian terms, ends and means must be considered in their interpenetration.

This is elaborated in the *RZ* article. To begin with:

Machiavelli maintains that evil has better consequences than good from the viewpoint of princes. Hence if we do not want to validate the old *Jesuit* maxim that a good end (and we doubt even the goodness of the end) sanctifies a bad means, then we must above all inquire whether censorship is by nature a *good* means.⁷⁹

This inquiry into the "nature" of the censorship does not turn into a philosophical one: Marx proceeds to some of the political arguments we have already summarized. He shows that censorship assumes not that

the society is healthy but that the press is diseased. In particular he attacks the justification of censorship as a preventive measure.* Then:

But the censorship itself admits that it is not an end in itself, that it is not a good in and of itself, that it is therefore based on the principle that "the end sanctifies the means." But an end that needs unholy means is not a holy end.⁸¹

Besides, Marx argues, the maxim always works both ways as a justification: if the censorship can plead the goodness of its ends as justification for what it does, then so can the (antigovernmental) press.

One other idea is needed to round out the argument; Marx makes it not aphoristically but by implication. The censorship is not only a police measure, "but it is even a *bad police measure*, for it does not achieve what it wants and does not want what it achieves." It succeeds only in adding the allure of martyrdom and mystery to the victims of censorship.⁸² In other words, the justification of the means must be sought not simply in the end proclaimed (even sincerely), but in the actual consequences; not in the end conceived merely as subjective intent, but in the end conceived as objective result.**

Marx had argued that censorship enforces arbitrary power. He now adds that, as a preventive measure, it is worse than anything it prevents:

There is no danger it can prevent which is greater than it itself. For every living thing the main danger consists in losing itself. Unfreedom is therefore the real deadly peril for men. Leaving

* This ends with an analogy:

You consider it wrong to catch birds. Isn't a cage a preventive measure against birds of prey, bullets, and storms? You consider it barbaric to blind nightingales, but you don't think it a piece of barbarism to jab out the eyes of the press with the sharp pens of the censorship? You consider it despotic to cut a free man's hair against his will, but the censorship daily carves the flesh of thinking people, and only puts the stamp of approval on the health of bodies without a heart, bodies that do not react, bodies that are respectfully submissive!⁸⁰

** One more specification is perhaps already implied in the proposition that "Not only the result, but also the way to it, belongs to the truth." This is the consideration that an "unholy" means, consistently pursued, not only leads to "unholy" ends-as-consequences but also tends to transform (assimilate to itself) the end-as-intent. But this, after all, is only another way of pointing out that, in the long run, ideology tends to be brought into line with realities. On the reciprocal interrelation of ends and means, see Marx's comment on the process of exchange in the *Grundrisse*.⁸³

aside the ethical consequences for the moment, keep in mind that you could not enjoy the advantages of a free press without tolerating its inconveniences. You could not pluck the rose without its thorns! And what do you lose in losing a free press?

A free press is the omnipresent open eye of the popular spirit, the embodiment of the trust a people has in itself, the eloquent bond that links the individual with the body politic and the world, the incarnation of civilization that transfigures material struggles into struggles of the mind and idealizes their crude physical forms.⁸⁴ It is the merciless confessional that a people makes to itself, and it is well known that confession has the power to redeem. It is the intellectual mirror in which a people beholds itself, and self-examination is the first condition of wisdom. It is the public spirit which can be spread to every cottage more cheaply than can material gas. It is universal, omnipresent, omniscient. It is the ideal world which springs unceasingly out of the actual world and then, ever enriched in spirit, flows back into it, to animate it anew.⁸⁵

This, if we overlook the dithyrambic quality, performs the function of reformulating the end, not simply in immediate political terms, but in terms of the long-run development (enrichment) of the human spirit.

It may be remarked that one of the mysteries of marxology is the not uncommon ascription to Marx of the Jesuit doctrine that "the end justifies the means" *tout court*. No such vulgarity is to be found in Marx. In *The Holy Family*, for example, part of his slashing attack on the morality and politics of Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of Paris* includes the point that the hero Rudolph easily convinces Chourineur "that a foul trick is not foul when it is done for 'good, moral' motives."⁸⁶ Or there is his remark in 1852 that A. Ruge thinks "he has the right to allow himself every kind of base action because he knows that his baseness springs from honest motives."⁸⁷

10. NOT ONLY WITH LANCES . . .

The Diet speaker, says Marx, denies that freedom is "a positive good" and argues in effect that "Freedom involves the possibility of evil. Therefore freedom is evil." Marx replies that this position is untenable even from the speaker's viewpoint. For there *always* is freedom

of the press in a sense—if only for the privileged few, for the government. The censor enjoys “freedom of the press,” does he not? So it cannot be evil in itself. In fact, it is so precious that these people want it for themselves alone!

No man opposes freedom; at the most he opposes the freedom of others. Every kind of freedom has therefore always existed, only sometimes as special privilege, at other times as a general right.

... The question is not whether freedom of the press should exist, for it always exists. The question is whether freedom of the press is the privilege of a few people or the privilege of the human mind. The question is whether one side's wrongs should be the other's rights. The question is whether “*freedom of the mind*” has more rights than “*freedom against the mind*.”⁸⁸

The speaker wants freedom for the “good” press, not for the “bad.” But which is which—the free press or the censored press? Marx then argues that a censored press is always a bad press even when it produces something good. On the other hand,

A free press remains good even if it produces bad products, for these products are traitors to the nature of the free press. A eunuch remains a poor sort of man even if he has a good voice. Nature remains good even if it brings forth monstrosities.

The soul of a free press is the staunch, rational, ethical soul of freedom. The nature of a censored press is the shapeless black soul of unfreedom; it is a civilized horror, a perfumed monstrosity.

This is cast in absolute idealist terms. In addition it is a question of short-range and long-range consequences (products); and one has to ask “Good or bad for whom?” A step forward is taken as Marx continues the argument: “Doesn't it go without saying that outside restrictions imposed on intellectual life do not go with the inner character of this life, that they negate this life instead of affirming it?”⁸⁹

The argument returns to the socially concrete as it offers its alternative preventive measure against that of control from above:

The true censorship, rooted in the nature of freedom of the press itself, is *criticism*.^{*} This is the tribunal it creates out of itself.

* The German *Kritik* translates as either “criticism” or “critique”; this should be borne in mind for later chapters also. *Kritik* was used virtually as a technical

Censorship is criticism as a government monopoly; but does not criticism lose its rational character if it is not open but secret, . . . if it operates not with the sharp knife of reason but with the dull shears of arbitrary power, if it wants only to make criticisms but not take them, . . . if it finally becomes so uncritical as to mistake an individual for universal wisdom, the verdict of force for the verdict of reason, inkspots for sunspots, the censor's crooked blue-penciling for mathematical constructions, and the striking of blows for striking arguments?⁹¹

Here then was the democratic answer to the bogey that a free press entailed dangers that had to be prevented in the egg. In general, the authoritarian attitude was that freedoms had to be doled out to subjects like day passes to soldiers in camp: not too many at once, always revocable from above, and under strict control at all times. Marx objected to the conception:

In general we do not love that "freedom" which holds good *only* in the plural. England is a lifesize historical proof of how dangerous for "freedom" is the limited scope of "freedoms." Voltaire says: "This word *liberties*, *privileges*, presupposes subjection. Liberties are *exemptions* from *general servitude*."⁹²

It is clear, then, that he is pushing adherence to democratic rights ("freedom") to its extreme limits. He derides limitations: "Write as you speak and speak as you write—so we were taught as early as elementary school. Later they tell you: Speak as you are told and write what you parrot."⁹³ He closed his January article with a similar line from Tacitus: "Oh, the rare happiness of times when you can think what you wish and say what you think."⁹⁴ The RZ article likewise ended with a quotation from the classics, but with a harder edge. If, he wrote, the bureaucrats tell us that a mild censorship is preferable to a harsh freedom of the press:

We will give them the answer that the Spartans Sperthias and Bulis gave the Persian satrap Hydarnes: "Hydarnes, the advice

term in the Young Hegelian vocabulary. (Compare the tag "Critical Criticism," the philosophical label used by the Bauers, which is derided in *The Holy Family*; see Chapter 10.) The word connoted the process of analytical thought in arriving at truth through counterposition of views, and by extension, theoretical analysis in general. As Marx moved to the left, he gave it a more militant content—"It is not a surgical knife, it is a weapon"—by 1843.⁹⁰

you give us is not equally balanced on both sides. For you have tried one of the alternatives on which you advise; but the other remains untried by you. That is, you know what it means to be a slave; but you have never yet tasted freedom, to see if it is sweet or not. For had you tasted it, you would advise us to fight for it not only with lances but with axes."⁹⁵

11. THROUGH BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY— AND BEYOND

It should be clear that Marx irrupted into the German political liberal movement of the day, in its most advanced center, as an uncompromising democratic extremist. Or, as a Prussian official wrote when he resigned as editor, he was a man "whose ultrademocratic attitudes stand in utter contradiction to the principle of the Prussian state."⁹⁶ This young man, who proposes to fight "not only with lances but with axes," takes so extreme a position on what to fight for that he will either have to retreat to the "realistic and practical" stance of the bourgeois-democratic movement as it is, or else burst through the limits of bourgeois-democratic actuality.

It is only half enlightening, though true, to state that Marx began as a bourgeois-democrat; the other half of the picture is that, without at first questioning the social premises, he launched himself in the direction of a fight for complete, consistent democracy regardless of its compatibility with any class interest, and specifically regardless of its compatibility with bourgeois interests.

Marx appreciated the drawbacks of this extremist approach. Even before becoming editor, he wrote to an associate:

... in any case we tread on the toes of many, indeed most, progressive-minded practical men who have undertaken the onerous role of fighting for freedom step by step within constitutional limits while we demonstrate their contradictions to them from our armchair of abstraction.⁹⁷

His immediate solution, in order not to break with these "progressive-minded" permeators of the system, was to suggest a division of labor: "all general theoretical discussions on political constitutions" should go

into "purely scientific" journals, not into the newspaper, which should tackle the thing from the side of concrete problems: "Real theory must be clarified and developed within the framework of concrete conditions and existing relationships."⁹⁸

But, while justified in itself, this division of labor did not take the curse off the basic discoveries in political reality that he was to make in 1842-1843. These were:

1. By driving the political logic of democratic demands to its very end, regardless of consequences, you come into conflict not only with the regime, but with the bourgeois-democratic movement and bourgeois democracy itself.

2. If "freedom" means democratic control from below, this has consequences not only in political life but for civil society, that is, in the socioeconomic life of the people. Democracy does not easily stay within the bounds of a merely political conception.

3. If you start with a concept that sees the state as an ideal entity, you do not immediately abandon this concept when you find particular group interests corrupting the ideal. At first, the external relations seem to be something which *distort* the ethical-rational state. Then you discover that the state is mostly characterized precisely by these "distortions." It is like peeling an onion's layers away to find what lies at its heart; when you have peeled away all the layers, you find there is nothing at its heart, that the onion *consists* of the peeled layers. So also, you now find that the state consists of the "distortions" themselves, and not of some ideal substance which is being distorted. You started out to grasp freedom "in its essential character, *not* in external relations"; but what you discover is that its real essence can be grasped only in terms of its external (social) relations. Then you grasp its essential character *by* grasping its relationship to society. The philosophical principle about essence and external relations has been stood on its head, but not via philosophical ratiocination. That comes later.

In another article of this period Marx wrote, to the same point: "world history decides whether a state is so much at variance from the idea of a state that it does not deserve to exist any longer. . . ." ⁹⁹ But suppose it continues to exist nevertheless: how does world history get rid of it? The question will suggest that it is not enough to philosophize about the world, "the point is to change it."

The important next step for Marx was the infusion of his democratic extremism with a socioeconomic content. This infusion took place by

means of a fusion. A socioeconomic critique of the existing society had been developed by the pre-Marx socialist theoreticians: the Saint-Simonians, Fourier, Owen, Cabet, Proudhon, Weitling, Dezamy, Gay, and others whom Marx was going to read, or read about, in the next few years. Without any exception then known, these first socialist ideologists were proponents of a socialism from above, the installation of the new order by a more or less benevolent élite who would "do good" for the masses despite the latter's immaturity. Marx was the first socialist figure to come to an acceptance of the socialist idea *through* the battle for the consistent extension of democratic control from below. He was the first figure in the socialist movement who, in a personal sense, came through the bourgeois-democratic movement: *through* it to its farthest bounds, and then out by its farthest end.¹⁰⁰ In this sense, he was the first to fuse the struggle for consistent political democracy with the struggle for a socialist transformation.

But, it may be asked, wasn't it the case that, in his course from bourgeois democracy to communism, Marx relinquished his early naive notions about political democracy?

Not in Marx's view. There is a special way to document this, as it happens. If we consider the decade following the articles we have discussed, by the end of this decade virtually all of the basic revolutionary ideas associated with Marx's name were already developed. After writing the *Communist Manifesto*, after going through the revolutions of 1848-1849, after developing the social theory (historical materialism) which put political ideas in their real context, after writing about the dictatorship of the proletariat and the permanent revolution—after all this, Marx worked on a project for the publication of his *Collected Essays*. Planned in late 1850, the first volume was actually published in 1851; no more were published because of the Prussian government's persecution.*

This volume contained Marx's two 1842 articles on freedom of the press, presented to the public in 1851 without qualification or apology. There can hardly be greater evidence of Marx's consciousness of the continuity between his democratic views of 1842 and the revolutionary communism of his mature years.

* The volumes were to be published in Cologne by Hermann Becker. He was arrested (by order of Marx's brother-in-law, Minister of Interior Ferdinand von Westphalen, as Marx noted ironically more than once) as part of the harassment which led to the Cologne Communist Trial of 1852. Becker had already issued a prospectus, dated April 15, 1851, about the time the first volume appeared.¹⁰¹

2 | THE POLITICAL APPRENTICE

During the *Rheinische Zeitung* period, Marx's constant concern with freedom of the press was not due only to the importance of this freedom. The censorship was not merely a topical issue; it was a daily threat. In January 1843 the authorities finally decreed the paper's suppression as of April 1. Some months before, Marx had written a friend:

. . . from morn to night we now have to endure the most frightful harassment by the censorship, missives from the ministry, difficulties with the provincial governor, complaints by the Diet, screams from the shareholders, etc., and I remain at the post only because I consider it my duty to do what I can to prevent the authorities from carrying out their designs. . . .¹

The government cracked down both because the political content of the paper was dangerous and because it was reaching people. When Marx became editor there were only 800 to 900 subscriptions; in a month the figure was up to 1,820; in another month and a half to 3,400.² Actual readership must have been a multiple of these figures. The government issued its decree before circulation mounted again.

Marx's former Young Hegelian friends were still at the campus in Berlin, arguing the fine points of Hegel and Feuerbach, concentrating on the battle against religion, and enjoying a bohemian lifestyle in a corner of that city's bureaucratic wasteland, for which reasons they dubbed themselves "The Free." Marx wanted to have nothing to do with them. As Heine put it around the same time:

Oh, leave Berlin, its dust and grit and sand,
And watery tea, and overclever crew
Who use Hegelian phrases to construe
Anything they do not understand.³

In contrast, Marx was operating in the thick of the most advanced political and economic milieu in Germany, flanked on the one hand by the practical men of the government's watchdog agencies, and on the other by the practical businessmen who were shareholders and sponsors of the *RZ*. Between the harassment of the one and the screams of the other, he was taking a quick course in some of the socioeconomic problems of the day.

1. THE SHIFT IN ORIENTATION

From January to October 1842, none of Marx's contributions to the paper dealt with social and economic problems as such. The first article in which he took up an issue outside politics and philosophy was written on the day he became editor. Leaving aside such social issues as divorce (which we will consider elsewhere), he published four important articles dealing with the economic world between mid-October 1842 and the following January, when the death sentence was imposed on the paper. Here is a summary.

1. *Communism*. One of the leading dailies in Germany, the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, had attacked the *RZ* for flirting with communism because it had published an article by Wilhelm Weitling. Marx's first job as editor was to write the reply. There are two aspects to his article that deserve notice.

While neither the *RZ* nor Marx accepted communist ideas, and said so, Marx concentrated on the necessity of dealing with the questions raised by this new movement. Even if communism "wears dirty linen and does not smell of rose water," it "possesses *European significance*" and is "a question of the day of the greatest seriousness for France and England."⁴

The *Rheinische Zeitung*, which cannot concede even *theoretical reality* to communist ideas in their present form, much less wish their *practical realization* or even consider them possible, will submit these ideas to a thoroughgoing criticism. . . . but writings like those of Leroux, Considérant, and above all Proudhon's perspicacious work cannot be criticized with the first superficial notions that occur to you, but only after long-sustained and deep-searching study.⁵

As a matter of fact, Marx, along with other writers for the *RZ*, was already involved in a study group on these ideas, but he had not jumped to embrace them. Indeed, he never did accept "communist ideas in their present form."

The short article is chock-full of references to the socioeconomic problems besetting the country. Weitling's original article had been about housing conditions. Marx addresses the rival paper thus:

... in connection with communism you give us to understand that Germany is now poor in people making an independent living, that nine-tenths of the educated youth beg the state for tomorrow's bread, that our rivers are neglected and our shipping in decline, that our once burgeoning commercial cities have lost the old bloom, that aspirations for free institutions are only now slowly underway in Prussia, that our surplus population helplessly wander off and melt away as Germans into foreign nationalities ...⁶

Mentioned also is the problem of a crisis and the starving condition of thousands of workers, as well as parcellization of land. As for Weitling's statement that "today the class [*Stand*] which owns nothing demands to share in the wealth of the middle class, which is now in control": this demand, says Marx, is simply a fact, and it is not refuted by silence or by indignation at bringing it out. The Weitling article had likewise suggested that the middle class is in a position analogous to that of the nobility in 1789. There are even intimations, writes Marx (unaware that he is seeing Lassalle and Bismarckian state-socialism in the crystal ball), that the monarchy may take up socialist-communist ideas. It is reactionaries, he stresses, who talk about setting up laborers (*Handwerker*) as a corporate body, to form "a state within a state." But if the laborers' social estate (*Stand*) is to be his state, and if in the modern conception the state is a sphere shared in common with all one's fellow-citizens, then "how will you synthesize both thoughts in any way except in a *laborers' state* [*Handwerkerstaat*]?"⁷

Now, Marx's main point in this article is that he has no ready solution for these problems; he is arguing only for the need to discuss them openly. One must remember that it was only in this same year, 1842, that the words socialism and communism appeared in German for the first time.⁸

2. *The Wood Theft Law*. Later that same month, Marx started writing another article on the debates in the Rhenish Diet. The subject may strike the modern reader as a tenth-rate problem compared with those already mentioned, yet this article is easily the most important that Marx wrote as editor, and we will come back to it shortly. For now it must suffice to explain that the subject of the article was the proposal, on behalf of the owners of forested land, of a harsher law to stop the gathering of dead wood. Wood gathering had been a traditional right of the peasants, but now when times were hard for them, the state was cracking down on it. Even dead wood was needed for commercial enterprises. As a result of this collision between the needs of mass poverty and the needs of property and business, prosecutions for wood theft had climbed dramatically during the preceding decade, especially in the agricultural district around Trier (Marx's hometown) and Coblenz. For example, around Trier, wood thefts formed an amazing 97 percent of all thefts in the period 1830-1836 (for which there are figures); in all Prussia in 1836, offenses in forest, hunting, and pasture lands (probably mostly wood thefts and poaching) formed almost 77 percent of all prosecutions. This situation continued until the 1848 revolution.⁹

3. *Protective Tariff*. Marx had to take up this question too, in an editorial note, though conscious of his lack of knowledge of the subject. In his short comment he raises the question: Do protective tariffs really protect trade and business?

Rather, we regard such a system as the *organization of a state of war* in peacetime, a state of war which, while at first directed against foreign countries, necessarily turns against its own country when put into effect.¹⁰

But this, he adds, can be settled only by an international congress of peoples, not by an individual government.

4. *The Plight of the Moselle Peasants*. Another case of economic distress which had been going on since the 1830s was that of the wine-growing peasants of the Moselle. The *RZ* had published articles on the situation which stirred the provincial governor to such guilty wrath that he publicly threatened suppressive action unless the allegations were documented. Marx had to step in to do the job for the correspondent who had first reported the situation. For the first time he devoted himself to a systematic factual documentation of a social and

economic problem, aided by the fact that he was dealing with a situation familiar to anyone brought up in Trier.*

Marx was able to publish only two parts of his planned article; a third, on the "basic evils afflicting the Moselle region," was suppressed by the censor and its text is not extant. After that there was no point in writing the last two, which were to cover the role of usury ("the vampires") and proposals for remedy.

Although the two published parts constituted an important attack on the government in action and were of great significance contemporaneously, they do not open any new theoretical front from the standpoint of our present interest in tracing Marx's political development. We should note, however, that this is the second time—the first being the wood-theft article—we see Marx caught up in a passionate identification with the poor and oppressed, vividly feeling the misery and want he has investigated and trying to cry out to the comfortable burghers: *Look, here are human beings suffering—something has to be done!*

Whoever hears directly and repeatedly the *grim* voice of distress in the neighboring population easily loses the esthetic delicacy which can express itself in refined and reserved images, and perhaps even considers it his *political* duty to publicly use, for a moment, the popular language of distress which at home he had no occasion to forget.¹²

We should note too that this dispute with the government was, in a way, a continuation of the free-press issue, for the authorities were trying to stifle the *RZ*'s exposé. Marx's article was considerably concerned with the free-press angle. But then, every honest word became a free-press issue under Prussian conditions. Freedom of the press might be an abstract political and philosophical problem from the point of view of the academy, but in the real world of political struggle it had to

* The Rhenish historian H. Stein wrote in this connection: "Karl Marx's articles on the Moselle and wood theft questions, from the contemporaneous viewpoint, had the task of drawing public attention to the distressed economic situation and to the defects of the administrative bureaucracy, both of which were little known or not at all known among broader circles due to the pressure of the pre-1848 press censorship. But even today these essays still deserve the attention of scientific research. They are contributions to an important sector of Rhenish economic and social history. . . ." ¹¹

do with the way people lived rather than merely the way they ratiocinated. The practice—not merely the theory—of freedom of expression built a bridge of struggle between the two spheres which were too well separated in Hegelian theory: the sphere of the state and the sphere of civil society, which included everyday economic life.

This very thought is stated in a blurred way, as if seen through a still cloudy glass, in a passage in which Marx tries to explain why a free press would be a positive aid in remedying the Moselle situation. He sees the need for a social element which is neither a tool of the state nor of private economic interests:

Therefore, to resolve the difficulty, the administration and the people administered both equally need a *third* element, which is *political* without being official and hence does not proceed from bureaucratic premises, an element which is likewise *civil* without being directly involved in private interests and their needs. This supplementary element which bears *the mind of a citizen concerned with the state and the heart of one concerned with civil society* is the free press.¹³

Obviously this entails the still liberal assumption that the interests of the state and of the peasants are reconcilable, as well as the naive assumption that a big newspaper is not itself a big private interest; but its positive side in Marx's development is that it emphasizes the importance of solving deep-seated economic problems through instrumentalities other than state action.

And finally, one should take special note of a passage bearing on the relationship of the state to civil society, the sphere of private interests:

But if the government official upbraids the private citizen for elevating his private affairs to the level of state interests, the private citizen likewise upbraids the official for demeaning the state interests into his private affair, into interests from which all others are excluded as laymen, so that even the crystal-clearlest reality seems illusory to him as against the reality embodied in the documents under his nose—which is therefore the official reality, the state reality . . . so that only the domain of governmental authority seems to him to be the state, as against the world which lies outside this domain of authority and plays the role of object for the state. . . .¹⁴

A little later we are going to see a sharper formulation of the idea that the state bureaucracy comes to look on the state as its own private property.

In addition to the articles on the Moselle peasants, mention should be made of an article Marx published in March 1843. In the form of a reply to another paper's criticism, this article contained an inconclusive discussion of the role played by economic interests and issues in the elections to the Rhenish Diet.¹⁵

2. WOOD THEFT AND THE STATE

We see, then, that Marx's interest was starting to turn toward socio-economic questions and away from exclusive concentration on the philosophy of politics and the politics of philosophy. But that is not all. Concern with the "social question" was not only not new, it was the special characteristic of the pioneer socialists and communists whose ranks Marx was still unwilling to join. What was characteristic of these early radicals was that they mostly dissociated the "social question" from the "political question" (gaining freedom in the state). Reacting sharply against the bourgeois-democratic aspirations for liberalization in the state structure, which they saw one-sidedly as the selfish strivings of new would-be oppressors, they would usually have nothing to do with politics, which they understood to be the democratic political tasks that stood on the order of the day. It was precisely Marx's contribution to develop a communism that *integrated* into one consistent perspective both the battle for political democracy and the struggle on the "social question."

The basis for this too was laid during the *RZ* period, but only the basis. To complete this development, it was necessary for Marx to develop a concept of the state that did not involve the Hegelian type of dichotomy between state and civil society, but, on the contrary, showed the integral dependence of the state on the socioeconomic sphere. The need was for forging the theoretical links between politics and economics. The unmet task was not simply to realize the importance of the "social question," but to utilize this new understanding in order to shed a backlight on the old "political question" and see *it* too in a new way, without rejecting it.

There are already some anticipations of this in the material we have reviewed so far, but it is in Marx's article on the wood-theft law that its beginnings can be seen most clearly. Here elements of later Marxist theory exist in the form of discrete insights, germinal ideas that are not yet connected.

Marx gives a reason for taking up the subject of the Diet debates on the tightening of laws and penalties against wood theft: it was an example of the role of the Diet "as *supplementary legislative power* alongside the state's legislative power." Hence the debate was really on the Diet's "function in the legislative process" relative to the state apparatus.¹⁶ In other words: Does the Diet have any real power vis-à-vis the absolutist state? But in reality the article does not take shape around this question: the answer was too obvious to need much argumentation.

There are two themes developed in the article that are of primary interest.

The rights of property versus the rights of people

Typically, Marx—still the philosopher by training—approaches the question from the abstract side in the intellectual fashion of the time.

The law subordinates the rights of men to the rights of trees—their right not to have branches broken off, and so on. In view of the penalties against picking up dead wood, either human beings or trees are going to be mistreated: which shall it be?¹⁷

Marx proceeds to argue inside the framework of the rights of property, which are not questioned as such. He raises questions about the relationship among three rights: the rights of property, the rights of the state, and the rights of individual people as against both.

First comes a "philosophic" argument that picking up dead wood is not stealing property because nature already took this property away from the tree when the dead wood dropped off. This device preserves him from coming into collision with the rights of property as such. But it leads in an interesting direction:

If every violation of property, without distinction or closer determination, is theft, then would not all private property be theft? By my private property, do I not exclude every other person from this property? Do I not therefore violate this right of property?¹⁸

To be sure, the phrase that "property is theft" had two years previously acquired a *succès de scandale* with the publication of Proudhon's *What Is Property?* It had made such a rapid tour of Europe that to this day some writers still believe that Proudhon meant what it said and others that he originated it. But certainly in 1842 it sounded very radical and was associated with subversive doctrines. Here Marx's way of putting it is juridical rather than social, but it fulfills the function of questioning the sacredness of the rights of property.

Marx next looks for a consideration within his own ken to counterpose to the bourgeois right of property, and finds it in the same place that others did before and after him: in *precapitalist* rights of the people. He takes up the idea of "customary right"—the old rights antedating the rise of bourgeois property relations.* He uses these as a juridical means of supporting the rights of the poor against those of property owners:

But we impractical people [he writes sarcastically] put forward as a demand, for the poor multitude dispossessed politically and socially, what the erudite and docile lackeydom of the so-called historians have found to be the true philosopher's stone to transmute every impure claim into pure juridical gold. We vindicate the *customary right* of poverty [that is, the poor] . . . in all countries. We go even further and maintain that customary right in accordance with its nature can be *only* the right of this lowest, elementary mass which owns nothing.²⁰

With this thesis he tries to turn the tables on the erudite and docile historians who use the concept of customary right to justify the rights of property owners. The argument on which he embarks bears the germ

* In his 1882 essay "The Mark," written as an appendix to *Socialism Utopian and Scientific* in order to deal with the old German village community, Engels refers back to the process whereby rising capitalism eliminated the last remnants of common property in land: "The chief use of the common Mark was in pasturage for the cattle and feeding of pigs on acorns. Besides that, the forest yielded timber and firewood, litter for the animals, berries and mushrooms. . . . The common woodlands that are still met with here and there are the remnants of these ancient unpartitioned marks. Another relic, at all events in West and South Germany, is the idea, deeply rooted in the popular consciousness, that the forest should be common property, wherein everyone may gather flowers, berries, mushrooms, beechnuts, and the like, and generally so long as he does no mischief, act and do as he will. But this also Bismarck remedies, and with his famous berry legislation brings down the Western provinces to the level of the old Prussian squirearchy."¹⁹

of a conception of the relation between law and socioeconomic inequality. Man, he says, has been divided into two groups "whose relationship is not equality but rather inequality—an inequality fixed by laws. The world condition of unfreedom requires laws of unfreedom. . . ." ²¹ How has law entrenched inequality? And how does Marx pull off the trick of proving that customary rights, as distinct from statutory rights, should redound *only* to the poor?

He argues that the privileged classes have long ago turned *their* customary rights (even the unreasonable ones) into statutory laws. *They* no longer have to appeal to the concept of customary laws, for this very reason. It is only the unprivileged whose customary rights have remained without the buttress of law; hence only in their case does such an appeal make sense. ²²

Moreover, while the customary rights of the propertied were being hardened into law, the historical pattern was that the customary rights of the poor were being abolished by simply being ignored. For example, there was the case of the secularization of church property:

The monasteries were abolished, their property was secularized, and it was right that this was done. But the incidental help the poor used to get from the monasteries was in no way replaced by any other positive source of benefits for them. While the monastic property was made private property and the monasteries were perhaps even compensated, the poor who lived off the monasteries were not compensated. Rather, a new restricting limitation was drawn about them, and an old right was cut off. This took place in the case of all transformations from privileges into rights. ²³

The dominance of Roman law over old German law favored private property rights, and at the same time the masses of the poor also lost their political leverage. Law concentrated its concern more and more upon private property rights. ²⁴ Thus Marx attempts to describe the bourgeoisification of law not as a plot but as the outcome of historical changes.

From another side, Marx uses the Diet debates to show how the customary rights of the poor get destroyed. Take the question of berrying: it had been carried on by the children of the poor since time immemorial, with the forest owners' toleration. But in the Diet a deputy explained why it could not be tolerated now: in his district these fruits had become an article of commerce, shipped out by the

barrel. In other words, a customary right had to be made illegal because it collided with a new commercial interest—because it had been made into a “monopoly,” says Marx, a monopoly of the rich.²⁵

The state and the property owner

The Diet had decided that a landowner's forest warden, on catching a wood thief, might levy the fine on the spot, fixing the sum himself. Marx pointed out this made him simultaneously gendarme, indictor, judge, and assessor. It was “inquisitorial,” a “basic violation of our institutions.” These contradictory roles could not be played objectively by “a man whose official duty is brutality.”²⁶

But there was a dispute in the Diet on another question concerning the forest police: are the wardens to be appointed for life or not? This represented a difference of interest between large and small landowners, for the small ones could not afford such a permanent forest warden. Marx pointed out that the Diet was concerned not about equality between the forest owner and the poor man who is caught as a wood thief, but about equality between large and small forest owners.

In the one case [large versus small owner] the law is to be of the most fastidious equality, while in the other [owners versus people] inequality is taken for granted. Why does the small forest owner demand the same protection as the big one? Because both are forest owners. The forest owners and the wood thieves—are they not both citizens? If a small forest owner and a large one have the same right to the protection of the state, doesn't this apply even more to a little citizen than a big citizen?

But no, the relation between the state and the poor human being is changed and distorted “by the paltry economics of a private person, the forest owner.”²⁷

Earlier in the article Marx had indicated a suspicion that the property owners controlled the legislators: a discussion on one point was choked off because “the forest owners imposed silence on the legislators, for walls have ears.”²⁸

This arrogant presumption of Private Interest, whose shabby soul has never been moved or enlightened by a single thought of the state, is a serious and profound lesson for the state. If the state lowers itself, if only on a single point, so far as to carry on its

activity in the manner of private property instead of in its own way, it follows immediately that it must accommodate itself to the limits of private property, in the form of its means. Private Interest is cunning enough to push this consequence to the point where it makes itself, in its most limited and shabby form, into the limit and rule of the state's action. . . . But if it clearly appears here that Private Interest wishes to and must prostitute the state to the means of Private Interest, would it not follow that a *representative of Private Interest*, the estates, want to and must prostitute the state to the thinking of Private Interests?²⁹

One must not suppose that this already means to Marx that the state is the instrument of Private Interest, that is, of class power. It has merely been "prostituted," distorted. Such a case shows "how little it [the actual state] corresponds to its concept [the ideal of a state]."³⁰

But as his argument proceeds, Marx gets closer. As he explores the further arguments of the Diet deputies, and shows how they are consistently motivated by class interest ("Private Interest") as against social welfare and the good of the state, he recalls the French maxim, "Nothing is more terrible than logic in absurdity," and reformulates it: "Nothing is more terrible than the logic of self-interest."

This logic, which transforms the servitor of the forest owner [the forest warden] into a state authority, *transforms the state authority into a servitor of the forest owner*. The state structure, the designation of particular administrative authorities, everything must get out of kilter so that everything is degraded to instruments of the forest owner, and his interests appear as the determining soul of the whole mechanism. All organs of the state become ears, eyes, arms, and legs with which the interests of the forest owners hear, evaluate, detect, protect, grab, and run.³¹

Using more material from the debates, Marx shows over and over that the self-interest of the property owners determines for them what is moral: "the whole debate shows that moral and humane motives find shelter here only as empty phrases." Self-interest invents the necessary phrases, it becomes eloquent as needed, in order "to turn the wood thief into current coin."³²

Private Interest considers itself the end-aim of the world. Therefore, if the law does not realize this end-aim, it is unsuitable law. Law which is *disadvantageous to Private Interest* is therefore law with disadvantageous consequences.³³

Finally, another question arises: is the wood thief to be punished for an offense against the property owner or against the law (the state)? The fact that the owner has been given authority to enforce the law himself suggests this thought:

Before the wood theft took place, was the forest owner the state? No, he becomes the state after the wood theft. The wood, as soon it is stolen, has the remarkable property of conferring state qualities on its owner that he did not have before. Yet, the forest owner can get back only what was taken away from him. If the state is given back to him—and it is given back to him when he gets state's rights over the thief in addition to private rights—then the state too must have been stolen from him; then the state must have been his private property.³⁴

The reasoning leaves something to be desired, but the idea is clear. Marx gets back to it by another direction. The fines levied by the owner stay in his pocket and do not go to the state, even in addition to what is collected as damages; and if the thief cannot pay, the owner is empowered to extract forced labor from him, to subject him to a "temporary serfdom."^{*} This, concludes Marx, proves that the forest owner really "puts himself in place of the state," that he "now triumphantly admits that through the fines he has transformed the public right into his private property."³⁶ The Diet's basic principle is seen to be "that the interests of the forest owner be ensured even if the world of right and freedom perish."³⁷ *Non fiat justitia, ruat coelum.*

Our whole presentation has shown that the Diet debases the executive power, the administrative authorities, the existence of the accused, the state idea, the crime itself, and the punishment, into *material instruments of private interest*.³⁸

* The article has an earlier section on crime and punishment which we have not yet noted. It is directed against the practice of draconic penalties for wood theft. Marx attacks the idea of treating these acts as *crimes*, even if they are infractions of the law: "The punishment ought not to inspire more abhorrence than the offense; the disgracefulness of the crime ought not to be transformed into the disgracefulness of the law; the groundwork of the state is undermined if misfortune turns into crime or crime into misfortune." But the Diet is far from this point of view: "The petty, wooden, mindless, and selfish soul of [Self-] Interest sees only one point, the point where it has been damaged . . ." In this way the law is regarded by the powers above simply as a rat-catcher, an instrument for dealing with vermin. But the "lawbreakers" here are human beings, citizens of the state—it is wrong for the state to make "criminals" out of them. So goes Marx's line of thought.³⁵

It has been shown that "private interest has overruled right." Of course, the Diet should act in the interest of the whole province, not of special interests, "but it goes without saying that Special Interest knows no fatherland just as it knows no province; it knows no general spirit just as it knows no homeland spirit."³⁹

3. THROUGH SOCIAL REALITY TO THEORY

The article on the wood-theft law, then, contains some of the ingredients out of which Marx is going to shape a distinctive theory of the state. From our hindsight it would be easy to exaggerate the theoretical level that Marx reaches in this article, for some of its most advanced formulations emerge out of the concreteness of the discussion, without being generalized. Hence they are not repeated in a different concrete case.

The lack of generalization, as yet, can be seen in an article that Marx published the following month.* It deals with the proposal, intended to undercut the demand for a real representative assembly, to set up estates committees out of the provincial diets, with a permanent committee of representatives of estates acting in an advisory capacity to the king.

Once again, as in the wood-theft article, the most interesting idea is the dominance of property interests in the governmental setup, observed as a fact and counterposed to the ideal of the state. But this time the spotlight is on the question of popular representation. Should the people be represented by social estates (classes) or by ownership of land? Of course, neither is satisfactory to Marx.⁴¹ He directs particular attention to the play of competing class differences in politics, and formulates his objections within the framework of the Hegelian concept of the state. That is: the ideal-rational state should represent the people's interests as a communal collectivity, rather than the narrow selfish interests of *parts* of society; class differences *distort* the state.⁴² The important thing is not the extent to which Marx still discusses in

* However, allowance must also be made for the inhibitory effect of the increasing pressure of the censorship, which put the paper's fate in jeopardy if Marx gave free rein to his pen. Indeed, Cornu discusses this article as an example of a pulled punch.⁴⁰

terms of what should be, but the extent to which he brings out social reality: the clash of class interests within society as reflected in the state.

He senses, and expresses in language still philosophical, that there is an antagonism between the narrow interests of property holders, who are overwhelmingly represented in the estates committees, and the interests of the state or communality as a whole:

Everything that is particular, like landed property, is limited in itself. Therefore it must be dealt with as something limited, that is, by a general power standing above it, but it cannot deal with this general power in accordance with its own needs.

Through their peculiar composition, the diets are nothing but a society of special interests that have the privilege of asserting their *particular limitations* as against the state, and thus are a self-constituted legitimization of non-state elements within the state. Therefore, in *essence* they are *hostilely* disposed to the state; for in isolated activity the particular is always an enemy of the whole. . . .⁴³

The people should not *be* represented (in the passive voice) like a dependent:

Representation must not be conceived as representation of something that is not the people itself but only as its *self-representation*, as a political action which is not a single exceptional political action but distinguishes itself from the other expressions of its political life only by the generalness of its content. . . . In a true state there is no landed property, no industry, no crude element of this sort that can make a deal with the state; there are only *intellectual [geistige] powers*, and only through their resurrection in the state, in their political rebirth, are natural powers enfranchised in the state.⁴⁴

Which means that the power of property is an "unnatural" power; and in fact Marx proceeds to portray the true state as informing "all nature" the way the nervous system permeates the body.

There is not much point in simply repeating again that Marx's thinking is still imprisoned within the Hegelian conception of the "true state," that is, the one that does not exist in reality. What is happening during Marx's RZ period is that, within the womb of this abstraction, a realistic appraisal of the real forces and dynamic lines of power in

society is in gestation. It will be born later, not as the result of some sudden intellectual act of creation at a particular moment, but because it was already roughly formed before it emerged from the philosophical-speculative matrix in which it incubated.

Marx's political apprenticeship on the *RZ* was ended by the state: not by the "true state" or ideal-rational state that hovered in the Hegelian empyrean, but by the all-too-real state of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, manifesting itself not through unnatural powers but through the natural person of the provincial governor of the Rhineland, whose immanent capacity to suppress the paper was proved by the existence of jails, judges, and gendarmes.

About sixteen years later, Marx summed up this period in introducing himself to the public in the preface to his *Critique of Political Economy* (1859). After reporting that at the university he had concerned himself mainly with philosophy and history while formally majoring in law, he goes on:

In the years 1842-1843, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* I experienced for the first time the embarrassment of having to take part in discussions on so-called material interests. The proceedings of the Rhenish Diet on wood thefts and parcellation of landed property, the official polemic which Herr von Schaper, then governor of the Rhine province, opened against the *Rheinische Zeitung* on the conditions of the Moselle peasantry, and finally debates on free trade and protective tariffs provided the first occasions for occupying myself with economic questions.⁴⁵

The place given here to the tariff question, which hardly corresponds in importance with Marx's extant writings of the time, may indicate that he spent more time studying the issue than we know about. But the reference to the wood-theft and Moselle articles properly gives them pride of place as the first steps on the road to *Capital*. As Engels wrote in his last year, these articles were also among Marx's first steps toward conversion to socialism:

I heard Marx say again and again that it was precisely through concerning himself with the wood-theft law and with the situation of the Moselle peasants that he was shunted from pure politics over to economic conditions, and thus came to socialism.⁴⁶

In his 1859 preface to the *Critique*, Marx next mentions the effect of having to write his article on communism in reply to the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, and adds:

I eagerly seized on the illusion of the managers of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, who thought that by a weaker attitude on the part of the paper they could secure a remission of the death sentence passed upon it, to withdraw from the public stage into the study.⁴⁷

At the time, Marx was most conscious of his relief at no longer having to write with one eye on the censorship and another on the shareholders. After the government issued its death sentence on the paper in January, he wrote a friend:

I see in the suppression of the *RZ* a *step forward* in political consciousness and am therefore resigned to it. Besides, the atmosphere became so stifling to me. It's bad to work like a very slave for freedom and fight with needles instead of clubs. I have become weary of hypocrisy, stupidity, the crudity of authority, and of our bowing and scraping, backing and filling, and hairsplitting. So the government has given me back my freedom.⁴⁸

And just before resigning: "As for the *RZ*, I would not remain *under any conditions*; it is impossible for me to write under Prussian censorship or live in Prussian air."⁴⁹

Marx then took time out to think.

3 | EMANCIPATION FROM HEGEL

When Marx withdrew “from the public stage into the study,” it was to settle accounts with the political philosophy of Hegel, which blanketed all of the Young Hegelians’ thinking even while they revolted against his political conclusions. “The first work which I undertook for a solution of the doubts which assailed me,” said Marx’s 1859 account, “was a critical review of the Hegelian philosophy of right. . . .”¹ This review was performed in a notebook into which Marx copied paragraphs from Hegel’s *Rechtsphilosophie*.* and then dissected each one more or less at length.

1. INVERTING HEGEL

The difficulty offered by these notes is partly due to the fact that Marx deliberately situated himself *inside* the Hegelian universe of concepts and terminology—in order to tunnel his way out of it as he went along. He set out to hoist Hegel with his own petard, that is, to show how Hegel’s inconsistencies and contradictions *on the basis of his own method* pointed outside Hegelianism. While this approach was called for from the Young Hegelian standpoint, it did not entirely reflect the level Marx had already attained by the spring of 1843; for in the *Rheinische Zeitung* he had already put forward ideas, and argued for conclusions, which he was now to laboriously “deduce” by another process. Or put another way: he was going to show that political ideas he had arrived at

* *Recht* (“right”) included the field of law, jurisprudence, state concepts, and even (political) justice at large.

in the course of the real struggle were also validated by "philosophical" analysis.

Indeed, in some respects this manuscript, "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," does not go as far as he had already gone in the *RZ*; but then, it was never completed. Marx had been thinking of doing this sort of thing at least since March 1842,² and may possibly even have got started on it in that year, although in accordance with Marx's 1859 account the extant manuscript is usually regarded as dating from the summer of 1843, after the *RZ*.

As before, we shall avoid the philosophical side of this long and discursive work as much as possible, but one characteristic is basic. Throughout, following the lead already given in philosophy by Feuerbach, Marx is intent on *inverting* Hegel, turning him upside down, in a sense which he later described in a preface to *Capital*: in 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."³ In the 1843 "Critique," this process is seen in terms of the relationship of "subject" to "predicate"—of What Is (the existing reality) to the *idea* of What Is. *Which engenders which?* Shouldn't the real point of departure be the actual state, the one that really exists, rather than a philosophical concept (idea) of a state which does not exist anywhere but in the philosophizing head? In 1843 Marx already put it in terms similar to those to be used in the *Capital* preface thirty years later, referring to Hegel:

The true method is stood on its head. What is simplest is most complicated, and what is most complicated is most simple. What should be the point of departure becomes the mystical result, and what should be the rational result becomes the mystical point of departure.⁴

More important is this passage:

Hegel is not to be blamed because he describes the essence of the modern state as it is, but rather because he presents What Is as the *essence of the state*. Whether the rational is real [actual, existent] is manifested precisely in the *contradiction* of the *irrational reality* which everywhere is the opposite of what it predicates and predicates the opposite of what it is.⁵

And more of the same.* In terms of political ideas, this was eventually to push Marx toward the realization that it is not the state that shapes society, but society that shapes the state.

The following summary is more systematically arranged than Marx's notes, since his own procedure was a paragraph-by-paragraph analysis.

2. THE STATE AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

As in the *RZ* articles, one of the main problems was the relationship between the power of private property and the state, which translates philosophically first of all into the relationship between private property as a "particular" interest and the state as the "universal" element of society. In Hegel Marx mainly had to deal with the role of landed property, the private property of the landowning ruling class, in the form of Hegel's views on primogeniture.

Marx, as had already been indicated in the *RZ*, was strongly opposed to primogeniture, which, by reserving the whole inheritance to the eldest, preserved landed property in big blocks, thereby preserving the concentration of the class power behind it. The rising bourgeoisie was likewise strongly opposed to primogeniture and to any laws which prevented landholders (peasants included) from selling parcels of land. Such restrictions made it more difficult for the bourgeoisie to permeate the countryside with its own property relations, which furthered the bourgeoisification of agriculture. The government sought to prevent parcellization of land and preserve the structure of landed property, which formed its own class foundation, while the bourgeoisie took the opposite side. Marx's position, then, was entirely in line with the position of bourgeois liberalism, which identified "freedom" with freedom for the unfettered sale of land—to anyone who could afford to buy; by the same token, his position was in line with the needs of economic progress.

* Like: "He [Hegel] does not allow himself to measure the idea by what exists; he must measure what exists by the idea." And for him, "The philosophical task is not the embodiment of thought in determinate political realities but the evaporation of these realities in abstract thought."⁶

The long discussion on primogeniture, then, reflects an important front of the struggle between the new and the old propertied classes, and the former's resentment of the stifling hold of the aristocracy on the society. "Landownership is . . . *true private property*," whereas "the wealth of the 'universal class' [the bureaucracy] and of the 'business class' is not *true private property*," writes Marx, with the vague explanation that the property of the latter two groups is in some sense "universal" and "social," that is, not simply a "particular" interest. When he writes further that "The political constitution at its highest summit is, then, the *constitution of private property*. The highest *political opinion* is the *opinion of private property*,"⁷ he is referring mainly to the big landowners' class: But the relationship formulated here between *this* private property and the state is similar to that expounded later with reference to bourgeois private property.

It is in this connection that he speaks of "the power of *abstract private property over the political state*," as against Hegel's illusion that the institution of primogeniture represents the power of the political state over private property.⁸

What then is the power of the political state over private property? *Private property's own power*, its essence brought into existence. What is left to the political state as against this essence? The *illusion* that it is the determining element when [in fact] it is the determined element.⁹

This, Marx argues further, makes private property (meaning landed property) the basic source of "political independence" (political self-determination) among the members of the state.

The meaning that *private property* has in the political state is its *essential*, its *true* meaning; the meaning that *class distinction* has in the political state is the *essential meaning* of class distinction. . . . "Independent private property" or "real private property" is then not only the "support of the constitution" but the "*constitution itself*."¹⁰

The same conclusion is approached and repeated from various angles over several pages:

He [Hegel] has done nothing but work out the morality of the modern state and modern private juridical rights. . . . *private property* is the guarantee of the political constitution. . . . The constitution, therefore, is here the *constitution of private prop-*

erty. . . . Private property is the universal category, the universal bond of the state.¹¹

Here are some germinal formulations of the typically Marxist theory of the state.

3. THE STATE AND THE BUREAUCRACY

We saw that, alongside the "true" private property of the landowning classes, Marx ranged the private property not only of the "business class" but of the state bureaucracy. In Hegel, the bureaucracy is the "universal class" *par excellence*, for it supposedly represents the generalized, communal interest of all. What is the "property" of the bureaucracy?

First of all, Marx establishes early that the state is not some incorporeal ideal—it is *people*, certain individuals, involved in a particular social relationship.

The affairs and operations of the state are bound up with individuals (the state operates only through individuals) . . . with the *state-related quality* of the individual. . . . [Hegel forgets] that the state affairs and operations are human functions . . . that the state affairs etc. are nothing but modes of existence and operation of the social qualities of human beings.¹²

Marx comes back to the bureaucracy in much more detail later. His prime target is precisely the Hegelian view of the bureaucracy as the "universal" element in society. No, contends Marx, the bureaucracy is just another "particular," one that identifies its own particular interests with those of the state, and vice-versa. "The bureaucracy passes itself off as the final end of the state," but it comes into conflict with what the real aims of the state should be.

The aims of the state are transformed into aims of bureaus, or the aims of bureaus into the aims of the state. . . . The bureaucracy has the essence of the state, the spiritual essence of society, in its possession; it is its *private property*.¹³

Hegel had raised something like this question himself—whether state sovereignty is the "private property" of the royal family—in order to

deny it categorically. (Not in his *Philosophy of Right* but in the somewhat later *Philosophy of History*.¹⁴) Turning Hegel around on this offered a useful way of rooting state theory in the real society.*

Since the bureaucracy, in its own (particular) interest, uses the state as its private property, it makes the state into a secret or mystery of its own, "safeguarded internally through hierarchy and externally as a closed corporation."

Authority is therefore the principle of its knowledge, and the deification of authority is its *mentality*. But inside the bureaucracy itself *spiritualism* becomes a *crass materialism*, a materialism of passive obedience, faith in authority, *mechanization* of a fixed and formal behavior, fixed principles, views, and traditions. As far as the individual bureaucrat is concerned, the state's ends become his private ends, namely, *chasing after higher posts and carving out a career*. . . . The state continues to exist only as various bureau mentalities connected by relations of subordination and passive obedience. . . . The bureaucrat therefore must deal with the actual state Jesuitically, be this Jesuitism conscious or unconscious.¹⁶

It is important to note that Marx does not give up the aim of finding some way of *really* identifying particular interest and universal interest, fusing them into a genuine unity. Later this will be his first approach to the proletariat; here, it is all stated very abstractly, "philosophically":

In the bureaucracy the identity of the state interest and the particular private aim is established in such a way that the *state interest* becomes a *particular* private aim opposed to the other private aims.

The abolition of the bureaucracy can mean only that the universal interest becomes the particular interest *in reality*, and not, as with Hegel, simply in thought, in *abstraction*; and this is possible only if the *particular* interest really becomes *universal*. . . .

In a true state it is not a question of the possibility of every citizen devoting himself to the universal class as a particular class,

* Twenty-eight years later Marx again used this figure of the state power as a sort of "private property." In a contrast between the Commune and the bourgeois state, he remarked that under the Commune, "The public functions would cease to be a private property bestowed by a central government upon its tools."¹⁵

but of the capacity of the universal class to be really universal, that is, to be the class of every citizen. But Hegel proceeds on the premise of the pseudo-universal, illusorily universal class, the universality of a particular class.¹⁷

In short, the trouble is that the bureaucracy, which is put forward by Hegel as the universal class, is not really universal in its interests at all; this is an illusion. It is really just another class with particular interests like the others, peculiar only in that its particular interest base is the state. It too is based on a sort of "property," but *its* private property consists of "the essence of the state" itself—the political power. It is this peculiarity, to be sure, that creates the illusion of universality. But it is all based on a lie—"the lie . . . that the *state* is the *people's interest* or that the *people* is the *interest of the state*."¹⁸

How is this problem of universality to be solved in a "true state"? Of course, Marx does not yet know, but he points in a general direction. The problem cannot be solved by trying to figure out how *every* last citizen can actually function as part of a universality through a particular class, since this would seem to be impossible. The solution lies in the direction of making the universal class "the class of every citizen." This still cloudy idea is going to point to the necessity of abolishing all class distinctions; from a longer-range hindsight, the solution also points to "every cook a statesman," but the distance to go is vast.

There is another question of interest about the state bureaucracy which Marx takes up—again, because Hegel has raised it. How is the state, as well as the people under it, to be safeguarded from the abuse of power by governmental authorities and officials? One answer given by Hegel is *hierarchy*—the hierarchical structure of government means that abuses by a lower official can be redressed by a higher official. Marx interjects the following scornful refutation, between parentheses:

. . . as if the hierarchy itself were not the *chief abuse*, and as if the few personal offenses of the officials were at all comparable with its *necessary* hierarchical offense; the hierarchy punishes the official insofar as he commits an offense against the hierarchy, or commits an offense which is needless from the hierarchy's standpoint; but it takes him under protection whenever the hierarchy itself commits an offense through him; besides, it is hard to convince the hierarchy of an offense committed by its own agents. . . .¹⁹

Another solution, according to Hegel, is the countervailing restraint exercised by communities and corporative bodies, which allegedly supplement hierarchical control from above with control from below. Regarding this, Marx interjects: "as if this control does not take place from the viewpoint of the bureaucracy hierarchy itself. . . ."

Marx argues further that the hierarchical structure of the bureaucracy is no safeguard against bureaucratic abuse because

the oppositionist is himself tied hand and foot. . . . So where is the protection against the "hierarchy"? To be sure, the lesser evil [bureaucratic abuse] is abolished by the greater [hierarchy] insofar as it disappears to make way for it.²⁰

Finally, he derides the idea that any safeguard can be made to depend on the human (personal) qualities of the officials themselves. ("The human being in the official will protect the official against himself! But what a unity that is!") The section ends with the thought: "The governmental power* is the hardest to develop. To an even greater degree than the legislative power it belongs to the whole people."²² That is, it *should* belong to the whole people. We will see that later Marx will devote considerable attention to the problem of an executive power separated from popular control.

4. POLITICAL LEXICON: *DEMOCRACY*

We get Marx's first discussion of the word *democracy* when it appears in one of the passages cited from Hegel. None of this can be understood without a preliminary explanation of what that word meant in 1843.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, almost all political terms were in a transitional period of turbulence and change, coming into

* Note that here *government* and *governmental power* denote the executive as distinct from the legislative department. The executive is indeed the entire meaningful government when the legislative assembly is mostly window-dressing and the judiciary bodies are mere appendages. This terminological restriction of *government* to the executive appears again prominently in the drafts for *The Civil War in France*, especially the second draft, but (interestingly enough) this usage is clearly eliminated from the corresponding passage of the final version.²¹ However, it keeps cropping up because it is the common political language of the time.

being or taking on new meanings and connotations. It cannot be assumed that any given term meant the same thing then as it does to us now, or that it had one uniform meaning even then.²³

No word was in a greater state of flux and chaos than *democracy*. It was not yet common parlance on the Continent (that came with the 1848 revolutions) and, as we have seen, it was *not* yet the term that would naturally occur to anyone discussing such political issues as freedom of speech and the press, or the right to vote, representative government, constitutionalism, or most of the complex of questions nowadays associated with the word. What then did it convey?

Like certain other terms with a classical past,²⁴ it was heavily conditioned by the history of, and opinions about, what had been called democracy in ancient Greece. The core idea was its etymological meaning of rule (domination, authority) of the people (*demos*). But who or what were the people, and what did it mean for the people to exercise authority? The interpretation varied from person to person, time to time, ideology to ideology. Since the most fateful issues of social change were involved, it was not simply an intellectual question but became a plaything of ideology, a victim of tendentiousness. With the etymology as nucleus, the word became amoebic, extending pseudopods in the direction of various political meanings.

Especially on the radical end of the political spectrum, the word had a marked tendency to overlay its political content with a social one. While its Greek past hardly allowed one to forget that it suggested a kind of *government*, and hence was a political term, it was widely used not so much for particular forms or procedures of government as for the *social content* of a regime: the extent to which the regime had a base in the people, regardless of how its procedures reflected that base. The people, the *demos*, might directly participate in the regime or might merely have great weight in it in some sense (including a demagogic sense) without reference to forms of participation. Also, *people* might mean the commoners below the aristocracy (often, the bourgeois strata) or the masses of poor below *them*, depending on the politics of the user.

As an indicator of social content, *democracy* could be used almost as the equivalent of social equality, or equalitarianism in general, as it was in Tocqueville, without losing its tendency to blur back and forth between such social meanings and the governmental forms presumed to implement them. From this side too—among the English Chartists, for

example—*the Democracy* came to refer not to government at all but to the movement of the people, or to the People, the Masses. (In fact, *the Democracy* took on something of the red bogymen character that *the Masses* had in a more recent era.) This last meaning will become very important when we take up the problems of the bourgeois revolution. A “democrat” was one who sympathized with the Cause of the People; perhaps the first published use of the word *communist* was Cabet’s 1840 article, “*Le démocrate devenu communiste, malgré lui.*”

We will see that Marx, over the next few years, used *democracy* like everyone else, that is, variably, sometimes with a social and sometimes with a purely political reference, often with an amalgam of the two.

To increase the difficulties, Hegel—who wrote his own dictionary as he went along—suffused this protean term *democracy* with a special content of his own, integrated into his philosophic system. And unfortunately it is the Hegelese *democracy* that we meet first in Marx’s critique. It takes off from the social aspect of the term, and gives a Hegelian version of a sort of union of the state with the people. It connotes a society in which the separation between the social and the political is transcended, in which the universal and the particular are no longer counterposed, in which the state is no longer alienated from civil society and, on its own side, civil society is no longer merely the sphere of individual interest.²⁵ The monarchist Hegel himself did not think that such a state of affairs, “beautiful” though it might be or once had been in Greece, was possible in modern society; but the problem which this conception raises is going to remain with Marx long after it is divorced from the terminology.

It is this Hegelese connotation of *democracy* that is uppermost in a section of the critique of Hegel where Marx discusses the peculiarity of medieval society. The overt *fusion* of political and economic power under feudalism—so different from the apparent divorce of economic power from political rule in the era of the rising bourgeoisie—appears here as a case precisely of absence of alienation of political (state) life from the spheres of private life; the universal was not counterposed to the particular. Yet, far from being beautiful, it meant a state of unfreedom.

In the Middle Ages the political constitution is the constitution of private property, but only because the constitution of private property is a political constitution. In the Middle Ages the life of the people and the life of the state are identical. Man is the real

principle of the state, but it is *unfree* man. It is therefore the *democracy of unfreedom*, alienation carried through to the end.²⁶

This fusion of political and economic life which, if it was democracy in Hegelese, was the "democracy of unfreedom," produced an alienation even more thoroughgoing than at present, Marx said, and furthermore created an antagonism in society, a dualism that was real as compared with the abstract one of the present day.

With this background, let us now return to Marx's critique of Hegel's political philosophy.

5. THE STATE AND DEMOCRACY

There is a long section, which we pass over, in which Marx polemizes against Hegel's monarchism. In addition to a refutation of hereditary rule in general, a large part of it is devoted to argumentation against concentrating the will of the state in one man.²⁷ Marx is arguing against any form of monarchy, including the constitutional monarchy advocated by Hegel. (Indeed, the aim of writing an "essay against Hegel's doctrines on the constitutional monarchy" had been in Marx's mind since early 1842—the "crux" of the essay was to be an "attack on *constitutional monarchy* as a hybrid thing which is thoroughly self-contradictory and self-abrogating.")²⁸

Next is a section in which Marx takes the "sovereignty of the people" as central to politics. He attacks Hegel for counterposing the sovereignty of the *state* to the sovereignty of the people. Even a monarch is sovereign only

insofar as he represents the people's unity; he himself, then, is only a representative, a symbol of the sovereignty of the people. The sovereignty of the people does not exist through him but, just the contrary, he exists through it.

And again: "As though the people were not the real state. The state is an abstraction. The people alone is what is concrete."

Marx quotes a passage from Hegel stating that "the sovereignty of the people is one of the confused notions based on the wild idea of the people." Marx retorts: "The 'confused notions' and the '*wild* idea' are to be found here only on Hegel's part. . . . The question is just this:

Isn't sovereignty as embodied in the monarch an illusion? Sovereignty of the monarch or sovereignty of the people, that is the question. . . ." And these, he adds, are "two *completely opposed concepts of sovereignty*."²⁹

It is at this point that democracy enters, brought up by a remark in Hegel. Hegel (as cited by Marx) had dismissed the notion of sovereignty of the people, "if by sovereignty of the people is understood the form of a republic, and, even more specifically, of a democracy." Now, although we have duly explained the special connotation which Hegel gave to *democracy*, it is clear that in this passage the word is being used *also* for a particular governmental form. In reply, Marx embarks on a defense of democracy against Hegel's aspersion.

The meaning of Marx's line of argument here can best be understood by keeping in mind the capacity of *democracy* to embrace both the political and social aspects of sovereignty, sway or paramountcy of the people. The thought that runs through it is that in *all* constitutions the state must rest on the mass of people in the last analysis, that the people always form the determining power in society (that is, "exercise authority" in that sense) even if what they determine is to suffer a monarch to rule over them. This is the sense of such a statement as "Democracy is the *resolved* mystery of all constitutions." When Marx writes that "Democracy is the truth of [that is, the reality behind] monarchy, monarchy is not the truth of democracy," the thought is that behind the rule of the monarch is the (passive, unused) power of the people, whereas the reverse does not make sense.* Under a monarchy, the constitution is still a product of the people as they are,

* At about this time Marx was making notes and excerpts on his historical readings. One of his excerpts from a work by L. Ranke is summarized this way by the editors of the Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA): "Out of fear of the revolutionary demands of the people was born quasi-legitimism, the union of popular sovereignty and divine right."³⁰ Here too the thought is that popular sovereignty lay behind the absolutism of the monarchy, in the specific sense that the Crown leaned on the determining power of the people in order to subordinate the aristocracy. The same thought was expressed by Engels in an article the following year—quite independently, for the common source was Hegel (as Engels' context showed on the very next page). Explaining why the English system is not as democratic as commonly supposed, he wrote: "England is indeed a democracy, but in the way Russia is a democracy; for, without being aware of it, the people rule everywhere, and in all states the government is only a different expression for the people's level of education."³¹

indirectly, for the people (remember) are always "the real state," even if this does not appear to be so; whereas under a democracy, "The constitution appears as what it is, the free product of men."³²

Marx, who seeks to turn Hegelese against Hegel, therefore argues that, after all, democracy—the power of the people to determine government in the last analysis—is implicit, if hidden, in *all* states, just as the essence of religion is implicit in all religions although overlaid in most.

Hegel takes the state as his starting point, and makes man into a subjective thing of the state; democracy takes man as starting-point, and makes the state into an objectification of man. Just as religion does not create man but man creates religion, so likewise it is not the constitution that creates the people but the people that create the constitution.³³

Religion suggests an analogy, based on the standard Young Hegelian conception of Christianity as the last and most advanced form of religion because it is the essence of all religion as such; that is, it is religion boiled down to essentials, whereas other religions embody this essence in an overlaid, contradictory way that has to be exhumed by critical analysis. "In a certain respect," writes Marx, carrying through this analogy, "democracy is related to all other forms of the state as Christianity is related to all other religions." In democracy, the determining power of the people at last comes out into the open, freed of superimposed repressions: "So likewise democracy is the *essence of every state constitution*, it is socialized man in the form of a *particular* state constitution. . . ." The real relationship between man and the state can emerge: "Man does not exist for the law, but the law exists for man; it [democracy] is *human existence*, while in other state forms man has *legal existence*. This is the basic difference of democracy."³⁴

Only now does Marx proceed to tie up democracy as a kind of government form with the special Hegelian meaning. All other (non-democratic) state forms are *particular* state forms; but the democratic form of the state is more than merely a form: it is the "*material principle*" of the state made manifest. That is, it manifests openly the determining power of the people. Then Marx writes: "Therefore it is, for the first time, the true unity of the universal and the particular."³⁵

Q.E.D.—What Marx has thus done is to build a bridge of argumentation, wholly inside the Hegelian system, between democracy as a form

of government embodying the open sovereignty of the people, and democracy as the unity of the universal and the particular.

Over this bridge Marx goes on to the next point. In monarchy and other nondemocracies, man in his political aspect (as a citizen of the state) "has his particular existence alongside the unpolitical, private man." Or more concretely: at present a man has his existence on the one side as a citizen of the state, presumably devoted to the universal interests of the community, and at the same time he also has his private interests and relationships—for example, as a bourgeois, trying to get rich regardless of the community interest. At present these two aspects of the same man are not fused, they are separate and in contradiction. The (Hegelian) monarchy, which, as the state, claims to be the universal element, does not do away with this contradiction; it merely asserts its right to subordinate the particular to the universal, that is, to subordinate everything else to itself.

In contrast is democracy, where "the political state . . . is itself only a *particular* content, like a particular *form of existence* of the people." The monarchy is a particular which *claims* to be the universal element ruling over and determining all particulars, whereas democracy knows it is only a particular. *Democracy does not presume to lord it over all the particulars*; that is, it is not a form of state which presumes to permeate all of social life, as does absolutism.

The modern French have the following conception of it: that in true democracy the *political state disappears*. This is correct insofar as the political state as such, the constitution, no longer is equivalent to the whole.³⁶

The first sentence is plainly an acknowledgment of the ideas about "an-archy" (no state) emanating from Proudhon and others. But the second sentence refuses to go that route. In "true democracy" the state will *not* entirely disappear but will only dwindle to its proper sphere; it will no longer claim to run the whole but only to take care of one particular social task among other particulars, just as Marx had explained before. It has a limited, not an unlimited, place in society.

Hegel mentioned the form of the republic without clearly differentiating it from the idea of a democracy, a blurring of terms that was very common. Marx proceeds to explain quite clearly that while "the abstract state-form of democracy is the republic," a state-form which is *merely* republican in political constitution is not a real democracy if

democracy does not permeate the social as well as the political complex. Going right to the point, he gives the example of the American republic:

Property, etc., in short the whole content of law and the state is, with few modifications, the same in North America as in Prussia. There, consequently, the *republic* is a mere state-form just as the monarchy is here. The content of the state lies outside these constitutions.³⁷

It is clear that, as before, Marx thinks of the content of the state as constituting more than merely the political state in that it comprises also its system of property relations. It follows for him that in a true democracy *property* too must be held democratically, and that it is not so held in the republican United States any more than in monarchist Prussia.

6. DEMOCRACY AND REVOLUTION

For a state to get a really new constitution (state form), Marx maintains, "an outright revolution was always needed." He quotes Hegel's contention that "improvement in conditions is apparently tranquil and imperceptible," taking place over a long period, and he disagrees: "The category of *gradual* transition is, first of all, historically false, and secondly, it explains nothing." He emphasizes that what is necessary is *conscious* change, and to that end

it is necessary that the movement of the constitution and *progress* be made *the principle of the constitution*, therefore that the real bulwark of the constitution, the people, be made the principle of the constitution. * Progress itself is then the constitution.³⁹

Hegel's idea, of course, was that the gradual change was to be brought about by the government (the executive) from above. Marx argues:

* Marx made this same point in passing earlier in the notebook: the state needs a constitution "that has within itself the character and principle of advancing along with advances in consciousness, advancing along with man as he is in actuality, which is possible only when 'man' has become the principle of the constitution."³⁸

It was the legislative power that made the French Revolution; in general, that is what made the great organic, universal revolutions, when it came out in its specific character as the ruling element.

This was so "precisely because the legislative power was the representative of the people," whereas the governments could make only counter-revolutions. Indeed, the phrase "legislative power" should be understood to refer to representative assemblies as distinct from the governments under which they arose.

If the question is correctly posed, it means only this: Do the people have the right to give themselves a new constitution? To this the answer must be an unconditional yes, for the constitution becomes an illusion as soon as it ceases to be the real expression of the will of the people.⁴⁰

Naturally he supports the idea of a representative assembly as against an estates assembly (assembling deputies by estates): "The representative constitution is a great step forward, because it is the *open, unfalsified, consistent* expression of the *situation of the modern state*. It is the *undisguised contradiction*." That is, it does not disguise the existing contradiction between state and civil society, but rather expresses it.⁴¹ This is spelled out a little later:

The legislative power is indeed for the first time the organized, *total* political state, but it is precisely in it that there also appears the unveiled contradiction of the *political state* with itself, because it has reached its highest point of development.⁴²

It is interesting to note that he thinks the legislative power, the representative assembly, is (that is, should be) the total political state because he is thinking of it as itself giving rise to its own executive power, on the model of the Convention in the French Revolution. He was to realize later that this model was characteristic of a revolutionary situation, and not of bourgeois parliamentarism.

But, says Hegel, the direct participation of everyone in deliberations and decisions on general affairs of state injects "the *democratic* element *lacking all rational form* into the organism of the state."⁴³ Marx argues the opposite view, at some length: all *should* participate, for "general affairs of state" are by nature the concern of all.⁴⁴

The striving of *civil society* to transform itself into political society, or to make political society the *actual* society, manifests

itself as a striving for the most fully possible *universal* participation in *legislative power*.⁴⁵

This also means the widest possible suffrage, universal suffrage:

The opposition within the representative power is the principal *political* existence of the representative power. . . . It is not a question here whether civil society should exercise legislative power through deputies or through all as individuals, but rather it is a question of the *extension* and greatest possible *universalization* of *voting*, of *active* as well as *passive* voting rights. This is the real point at issue in *political reform*, in France as well as in England.

. . . The *vote* is the *actual relationship* of *actual civil society* to the *civil society* of the *legislative power*, to the *representative element*. . . . It therefore goes without saying that the *vote* constitutes the principal political interest of actual civil society. In *unrestricted suffrage*, active as well as passive, civil society for the first time has really elevated itself . . . to *political* existence as its true universal, essential existence. . . . By actually establishing its *political existence* as its *true* one, civil society has at the same time established that its civil existence, as distinct from its political, is *inessential*; . . . the *reform of the suffrage* is, therefore, within the *abstract political state*, the demand for its *dissolution*, but likewise for the *dissolution of civil society*.⁴⁶

As before, this reference to the "dissolution of the political state" is not an echo but, more accurately, a correction of the newly fashionable talk about no-state. This is quite clear here since the dissolution of "the abstract political state" is linked with "the dissolution of civil society" too; that is, both are to be abolished *as contradictories*, as mutually antagonistic particularities, because the truly democratic state establishes a unity between politics and economics.*

* The notebook contains still another reference to the abolition of the "political state," when Marx discusses a situation where "on the one side stands the political state (government and sovereign) and, on the other, civil society as distinct from the political state (with its various estates). Thereupon, then, the political state is abolished as a *totality*."⁴⁷ The last word, emphasized by Marx, makes doubly clear that what is to be abolished is the claim of the political state—that is, the absolutist regime (government and sovereign)—to constitute the *totality* of society.

7. THE BREAK WITH HEGEL

It is in these pages that we find the record of a kind of break with Hegel that cannot exactly be called an ideological, theoretical, or philosophical break. It involves something more than merely a rejection of Hegel's views to this or that extent. As far as views were concerned, Marx had begun sloughing off Hegelianism long before this (if indeed he ever was an "orthodox" Hegelian), and he was far from finished with this process (if indeed he ever completed it).

This break is manifested most obviously by the *tone* of the manuscript. If we keep in mind that it was written over a period of months at least, if not as much as two years, there is a striking change which builds up at the end. At the beginning, the tone is that of ordinary disagreement: the master is unfortunately wrong about this and that. It is only later that we start getting expressions implying positive disrespect, a note of impatience if not asperity, plus more sweeping judgments. Finally, quite near the end, there is the most visible change of all.

It comes out after Marx has proved to himself how thoroughly authoritarian and bureaucratic Hegel's thinking is. He quotes a passage in which Hegel makes clear that he is afraid of, and wants to build bulwarks against, the free action of deputies from civil society in the estates assembly. As far as the upper-class deputies are concerned, says Hegel, the guarantee is their independent wealth. But the lower-class (mainly bourgeois) section of deputies is drawn from the "fluctuating and changeable element of civil society," which he fears is weak in its *obrigkeitlichen Sinn*, its sense of hierarchical authority, and other necessary state attributes.⁴⁸

This means, Marx charges, that Hegel would really like to pack the lower chamber with "*pensioned* government officials." Hegel demands not only that the deputies have a "sense of the state" but also a predilection for hierarchical and bureaucratic authority. He has (Marx demonstrates by further quotation) a deep distrust of what he calls "the so-called people" and their deputies, who are likely to be irresponsible. In reply, we do not get much of an argumentative refutation from Marx, but rather this: "Here Hegel's unthinking inconsistency and '*hierarchical*' sense become really *disgusting*."⁴⁹ In another few lines, Marx bursts out again:

Here Hegel goes almost to the point of servility. One sees he is infected through and through with the miserable arrogance of the *Prussian* world of officialdom, which, from the patrician heights of its bureaucratic narrowmindedness, looks down on the "self-reliance" of the "people's subjective opinion about itself." Here the "state" is everywhere identical for Hegel with the "government."⁵⁰

There is another page or so, dotted with dismissals of Hegel's argument as "thoughtless," or hopelessly contradictory, or "simply playing around with formulas."⁵¹ Another passage from Hegel is copied down for refutation, but instead of refuting it Marx curtly dismisses it as "worth no special discussion." Another passage: and this time, instead of any comment at all, there is only this: "O Jerum!" (The word is a minced form of *Jesus*, and the exclamation is the equivalent of rolling one's eyes up in disgust and crying "Oh *Lordie!*") Finally, another passage from Hegel is set down, and this time there is nothing at all: *this is where the manuscript breaks off.*⁵²

Here is the picture: at the beginning of the notebook, Hegel and Marx are, as it were, two philosophers looking at the state and society, and disagreeing. What happens at the end is that Marx sees Hegel in an entirely different context, apart from the extent of philosophical disagreement. Hegel is no longer simply in error: he is (to use a later expression) on the other side of the barricades. He is not simply voicing mistakes about the state; he is a voice of the state. He is not simply wrong about the problem; he is a part of the problem.

4 | THE NEW DIRECTION

During the same months that Marx was settling accounts with Hegel in his private notebook, he was also trying to think out a political perspective for himself. Was he a socialist (communist), and if so, which of the dozen socialisms or half-dozen communisms was he for? If he did not like any of the existing isms, should he concoct one of his own? What else *could* one do?

This was one of the important issues that emerged from the work done by Marx for the next periodical of which he became an editor. It was a journal with the ambitious, and unrealized, aim of becoming a political center for international collaboration, combining French and German radicals, and hence named the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (DFJ). Coeditor and moneyman of the project was Arnold Ruge, a young Hegelian radical who then seemed to be evolving in the same general direction as Marx. Only one issue (a double number) was destined to be published, in February 1844. Meanwhile Marx married Jenny von Westphalen in June 1843 and in October moved to Paris where the magazine was to be edited.

The DFJ had no formal programmatic article or editorial statement of political intent; this was replaced by eight letters, dated 1843, which discussed the magazine's orientation. Three of the letters were by Marx (dated March, May, and September), including the first and last in the exchange, thereby setting the tone.*

The exchange of letters discussed contemporary socialism and communism, among other things. Before we can profitably continue, another lexicographical digression is necessary.

* Since it is quite possible that all the letters were revised for publication, these letters are best regarded as reflecting Marx's views as of the beginning of 1844, even though the thinking that produced them took place during 1843.

1. POLITICAL LEXICON: SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

These two words were very new then; they conceal boobytraps for the modern reader. One of the best-known explanations, made by Engels in an 1888 preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, is true enough as far as it goes but requires supplementation. Engels' explanation refers to 1847 but most of it applies to the 1843-1844 period we are now concerned with:

By Socialists, in 1847, were understood, on the one hand, the adherents of the various Utopian systems: Owenites in England, Fourierists in France . . . on the other hand, the most multifarious social quacks, who, by all manners of tinkering, professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances, in both cases men outside the working-class movement, and looking rather to the "educated" classes for support. Whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, that portion then called itself Communist. It was a crude, rough-hewn, purely instinctive sort of Communism; still, it touched the cardinal point and was powerful enough amongst the working class to produce the Utopian Communism, in France, of Cabet, and in Germany, of Weitling. Thus, Socialism was, in 1847, a middle-class movement, Communism a working-class movement.¹

The central notion around which the term *socialism* and its derivatives and cognates developed was not so much any particular proposal regarding property or ownership. The central notion was *concern with the "social question"* as distinct from concern merely with political liberalism, freedom, philosophic and religious radicalism, and such. The "social question" was the plight of the masses of people in the new society of growing industry and bourgeoisification, and the need to do something about it. The new term literally meant *social-ism*; and it could be applied, and was abundantly applied, to any ideas and proposals about reforms directed to the "social question," whether or not any changes in the system of property ownership were involved, whether or not any government action was sought—in short, whether or not there was anything socialistic about them in a more definite

modern sense. From another side, *social*-ism was conceived as the opposite of *individual*-ism, that is, hostile to the new bourgeois dog-eat-dog ethic.

The broadness or amorphousness of the term is, for example, clearly visible in an early 1844 article by the pre-Marxist Engels. Referring to England after 1760, when rule passed from the Whigs to the Tories, he writes:

From then on it was the social movement that absorbed the energies of the nation and pushed political interest into the background, even did away with it, since all domestic politics from then on were concealed socialism, the form which social questions assumed in order to assert themselves on a universal, nationwide scale.²

It is important to understand this usage,* for, above all, "socialism" did not necessarily imply the abolition of private property in production. Neither Fourier nor Saint-Simon countenanced the abolition of private property, nor did Proudhon. Abolition of private property implied community of goods—or "community" for short—and provided the core distinction for the differentiation of communism from the broader penumbra of socialism. Of the prominent French isms, only Cabet and his followers ("Icarians") called themselves communists, for only they advocated complete communal ownership (in fact, state ownership) of the means of production. Before Cabet, the term had arisen among the revolutionary Jacobin secret societies and Parisian workers' clubs stemming from the tradition of Babeuf (as transmitted particularly by

* This general use of *socialism* can be found in other writings by Engels around this time: for example, his account in December 1844 of the spread of "Social ideas"^o which are equated with socialist ideas, and in *The Holy Family*, where concern with pauperism is taken to be socialistic.³ This was the prevalent usage. Laveleye reports that when Proudhon was tried in 1848 the magistrate asked him whether he was socialist:

"Certainly." "Well, but what, then, is Socialism?" "It is," replied Proudhon, "every aspiration towards the improvement of society." "But in that case," very justly remarked the magistrate, "we are all socialists." "That is precisely what I think," rejoined Proudhon.⁴

In 1850, during the trial of a group of socialists arrested for organizing a Union of Workers Associations, the defense attorney (a Maître Laissac) retorted to a prosecutor's jibe with these words: "Socialist—yes; that's understood. We are all socialists, you as well as I, sir; only, we are so from different points of view." The day before, a defendant had been rallied by the judge for using "these new words [like *socialism*], which crop up only in time of revolutions." The defendant answered (with a shrug, I imagine): "They're plays on words, if you wish; for

Buonarroti's book), whose best-known leaders were Blanqui and Barbès. But writers and publicists like Dezamy (whom Marx had already read, or read about, in Germany) collaborated in the clubs as "communists." The German artisan Wilhelm Weitling, learning the new ideas in Paris, worked out his own version of "communism."

It was in general true that the communist currents, in this French radical melting-pot, were the ones with a greater appeal to working-class elements—which meant at the time mainly artisanal workers.⁸ Even Cabet, who made quite clear that he expected his utopia to be ushered in only after the upper classes had been persuaded to adopt it, aimed at and probably gained a greater working-class clientele than his utopian competitors. Above all, in reputation—in the fears of the upper classes—it was communism that was far more closely associated with the stirrings of the dark masses, as reported in the books and periodicals read by the educated classes.

But there was a complication that specially concerned Marx in 1843–1844. The only "communist" Marx yet knew *personally* did not fit the above picture at all. This was Moses Hess, one of Marx's leading associates on the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the moving force in the Cologne study group on socialism-communism in which Marx had been participating, and the man who had converted the young Engels to something he called "communism" at about this time. Hess's whole career was a straw in the wind. At this time his "communism" was a personal stew of German philosophy (left Hegelianism plus Fichte) and Proudhonist anarchism, with croutons from other French socialist schools, but antagonistic to the working-class nuance of French communism even in theory. Although Marx's written references to communism, before his removal to Paris, mention Cabet, Dezamy, and Weitling, it is possible to wonder to what extent his remarks may have been influenced by his acquaintance with Hess.

everything is socialism, even the railway companies."⁵ It is clear here that *socialism* implies anything collective rather than individual, and it was all long before the Tory Harcourt gained immortality with the remark that "We are all socialists now." However, it was only when socialism was popular that types like Proudhon used the term for himself; likewise with more opportunistic social reformers of various kinds. In a prerevolutionary year like 1847 it was true that (as Engels wrote later) "it is well known that there was, in the latter end of 1847, hardly a single prominent political character among the bourgeoisie who did not proclaim himself a 'Socialist,' in order to insure to himself the sympathy of the proletarian class."⁶ To a lesser extent the same was true of the term *socialism* from the beginning. We pass over the fact that, especially in the early 1840s, there were other terms competing with *socialism* and *communism* to express similar ideas.⁷

2. HOW TO DEVELOP A MOVEMENT PROGRAM

In his notebook on Hegel Marx had already made it clear that he believed political democracy and a republic were not sufficient—property must be democratized too—but there was no direct discussion of socialism or communism.*

His first letter in the *DFJ* exchange, dated March 1843, reflects more or less the same frame of mind. His viewpoint is already socialistic (in the modern sense) in a general way. The goal of the revolution, which is “freedom,” means to “make society again into a community of men for their highest aim, a democratic state.”¹⁰ But we should keep in mind, from the notebook, that a truly democratic state also means democracy in civil society, economic democracy. Hence, when Marx calls for “going on to the human world of democracy,”¹¹ it is not only political forms that are involved. This is made more specific in the same letter:

The system of money-making and commerce, of property and exploitation of people, however, leads much faster than the increase in population to a rupture within present-day society, a rupture which the old system is powerless to heal, because it does not heal or create at all but only exists and enjoys.¹²

The letter ends with recognition of the need to give a “positive” form to the new world that still has to be created. But it is precisely the question of this positive form that creates the predicament with which we began this chapter. It is dealt with in Marx’s third letter, which is also the last in the exchange. First the problem is stated:

The internal difficulties almost seem to be even greater than the external obstacles. For even though there is no doubt about the

* In these notes Marx made only a passing reference to the communist idea, with a tenuously favorable implication:

The atomization into which civil society sinks in its *political act* necessarily arises from the fact that the communality, the communistic mode of being [*kommunistische Wesen*], in which the individual exists, is a civil society that has been separated from the state or a *political state that is an abstraction* of civil society.⁹

The context demanded only a phrase like “the *communal* mode of being in which the individual exists.” By substituting the brand-new word *communistic*, with its current implications, Marx was suggesting an equation between the innate communality of man and his “communistic” essence. (The word *Wesen* also means “essence” or “essential nature.”)

question "Where from?" confusion reigns all the more about the question "Where to?" Not only has a general anarchy broken out among the reformers, but everyone will have to admit to himself that he has no exact notion of what is to be.¹³

In this letter Marx suggests a new approach, one that he may not have had in mind when he made the remark in the first letter about giving the future a positive form.

So far, almost all of the new sect leaders *had* taken pains to satisfy the natural demand: "What is your new world going to look like?"* Answering in more or less detail, each had wound up with his own system, or blueprint, for the new order: all different, all in conflict, and all unsatisfactory to any but a band of convinced followers.

While admiring many of the specific contributions of this or that theorist, Marx could not accept any one of them as *the* final solution to the question of what is to be, as *the* correct depiction of the future. He proposes, not to try to invent still a new "gospel of the new life," but to take a different tack altogether, bypassing all existing system-mongers. The following explanation continues after the statement that no one has an exact notion of what is to be:

However, that is precisely the advantage of the new direction: that we do not dogmatically anticipate the world but rather want to find the new world only through criticism of the old. Until now the philosophers had the solution to all riddles lying on their desks, and the stupid outside world had only to open its mouth wide for the roasted pigeons of absolute knowledge to fly into it. . . . If constructing the future and settling the matter for all

* The notable exception was Blanqui, who criticized the system-makers for quarreling about the future reconstruction of society. His famous formulation of this criticism was directed at Cabet and Proudhon, whose followers (he said) stood on a riverbank disputing what is on the other side. "Let us cross and see," he advised. That is, first make the revolution, and then worry about how to constitute the new society. This was an assertion that conceptions about socialist society were unnecessary; as we explain below, this is quite different from Marx's idea, which bears on how such conceptions are to be developed eventually. Moreover, in the Blanquist movement this "let us cross and see" attitude was part of its general antitheoretical, anti-ideological bias. Another statement by Blanqui is closer to Marx's spirit. "One of our most grotesque presumptions," he wrote, "is that we barbarians, we ignoramuses, pose as legislators for future generations."¹⁴ This bears most obviously on the detail in which the system-makers envisioned their future social order, as against the general lines and conditioned presuppositions of a socialist society that emerge from Marx's approach.

time is not our job, yet what we have to accomplish at the present time is all the more certain—I mean *the ruthless criticism of everything that exists*, ruthless in the sense that the criticism is not afraid of its results and just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be.¹⁵

The positive form of the new world, therefore, will eventually be found, but from a new direction. It will not be found by anticipation or by fiat, but by the road of criticism of the existing system.

We have already mentioned the central importance of criticism—analysis through critique—in the thinking of the Young Hegelian tendency, and here Marx is employing it to help chart a new course. Its own dissolution is already immanent within everything that is: this was familiar to anyone who had gone through the Hegelian school. Its inner contradictions assert themselves through the dialectic of history; it is the job of criticism to unveil these contradictions and to make the process of dissolution a *conscious* one, therefore a human one, for this time (so went the general persuasion) a society was possible in which human consciousness could flower.

Here is one of the important nodal points where a conception nurtured in the sociophilosophical matrix of left Hegelianism was transformed into a fundamental idea of politics, indeed into a solution to a fundamental problem of politics. It is a keystone of Marx's politics.

Marx's letter then states flatly: "I am therefore not in favor of raising a dogmatic banner; just the opposite. We must try to help the dogmatists clarify their own tenets to themselves."¹⁶

Dogmatic, to be sure, is a dirty word, and is usually used to assert that one's own dogmas are better than the other person's. It easily lends itself to pejorative conjugation: "*I* am principled; *you* are dogmatic; *he* is fanatical." As such, it is only a literary device. But in the case now in question Marx's use of the word reflects a more objective difference—the difference between views to be reached through critical examination of reality and tenets laid down by fiat (like the architecture and clothing in Cabot's regimented utopia of Icaria).

The new direction is again summarized toward the end of the letter:

In that way we do not confront the world in doctrinaire fashion with a new principle: "Here is the truth, here fall on your knees!" We develop new principles for the world out of the principles of the world itself. We do not tell the world: "Desist from your

struggles, they are stupid stuff; we wish to yell the true slogan of the struggle at you." We merely show the world why it is actually struggling; and consciousness is a thing it *must* acquire even if it does not want to.

The reform of consciousness consists *only* in the fact that one makes the world become aware of its own consciousness, that one awakens it from its dream about itself, that one *explains* its own actions to it.

Our motto must be, then: Reform of consciousness not through dogmas but through analyses of the mystical consciousness that is unclear to itself, whether it appears in religious or political guise. It will then be demonstrated that the world has long possessed in dream a thing of which it need only possess the consciousness in order to possess it in reality. It will be demonstrated that it is not a question of a big hiatus in thinking between past and future but of *carrying out* the thinking of the past. Finally it will be demonstrated that humanity does not begin *new* work but accomplishes its old work in a conscious way.

We can therefore express the tendency of our journal in a *single* phrase: the epoch's self-understanding (critical philosophy) of its own struggles and aspirations. This is a job for the world and for us.¹⁷

The objection to doctrinaire and dogmatic principles applies directly to blueprinted plans for the new society, not to political principles in general; but even the latter are subject to the general method. All socialist ideas are to be sought through a critical examination of the real struggles going on, in order to draw out of them the meaning that is struggling to emerge to consciousness. This is not an injunction against adopting principles but a strategy on how to work them out.

3. TOWARD THE POLITICALIZATION OF SOCIALISM

It is in this context that we get a very important statement of where Marx stands at this point on socialism and communism. It must be kept in mind that his references are to the specific socialisms and communisms of 1843. The following passage takes off from the thought that one must help the dogmatists clarify their own tenets:

Thus, *communism* in particular is a dogmatic abstraction, but by this I have in mind not any imaginable or possible communism but the communism that actually exists, as taught by Cabet, Dezamy, Weitling, and so on. This communism is itself only a special phenomenal form of the humanist principle when it is infected by its opposite, privatism [*Privatwesen*].* Abolition of private property and communism are therefore by no means identical, and it was not by accident but by necessity that communism saw the development of other socialist doctrines distinct from it, such as those of Fourier, Proudhon, etc., because it is itself only a particular, one-sided realization of the socialist principle.¹⁹

The communism which Marx does *not* have in mind is that of the secret societies (Blanquist and others) and the Parisian workers' clubs, with which he did not become acquainted until he came to Paris. The Cabetist form of communism was easily one of the most dogmatic abstractions in the field, involving a most detailed blueprint of a society by fiat. Weitling's communist utopia was no less dogmatic, indeed messianic, if less lucid than the Frenchman's. It is clear that in a general way Marx accepts abolition of private property but not the particular communist doctrines presently embodying that general idea. These communisms are too narrow, and they represent only one side of the "humanist principle" (the realization of human freedom). A broader vision of communism is necessary.

Communism (abolition of private property) itself is only one facet of the socialist principle (solution of the "social question"), and

... the whole socialist principle is, in turn, only one side bearing on the *reality* of true human nature. We have to concern ourselves just as well with the other side, the theoretical life of man, and therefore make religion, science, and so on an object of our criticism.²⁰

The socialist principle is too limited because it does not deal with the whole scope of the "humanist principle"—man's complete emancipation, including his emancipation from the old conceptions of theory, hence the reference to religion and science. But it turns out as we read on that this does not mean Marx is thinking back to the old

* The thought of this sentence will be elaborated in the chapter on private property and communism in Marx's Paris manuscripts of 1844.¹⁸

philosophical preoccupations. Rather, the broader agenda is necessary because

we want to have an effect on our contemporaries, and in particular on our German contemporaries. The question is how to go about it. Two facts are undeniable. The subjects constituting the chief interests of Germany today are religion, for one, and politics, for another. It is necessary to tie into these interests even as they are, and not counterpose to them, readymade, any particular system like, say, the *Voyage en Icarie* [by Cabet].²¹

The German public must be reached through what it is interested in, religious and political questions. Of the two, Marx makes clear as he goes on, it is the political questions that are most important.

Why is this a broader agenda than the socialist principle? Because all the existing socialisms counterposed the social to the political, and more or less ignored the real political arena. In this respect Owen was as one-sided as his Continental competitors, the Saint-Simonians, Fourierists, Cabetists, Weitlingites, *e tutti quanti*, as well as the communist club movement. Having discovered the "social question," they counterposed it to the political questions of the day, which stemmed from the struggle for democratization of society. These political struggles were condemned as merely liberal concerns; there was no conception of integrating their social goals with a political struggle.* At that time the connotation of the label "socialist" was *nonpolitical*.

Marx has put his finger on the self-sterilizing characteristic of the isms of the day. He argues that the rational kernel of the questions raised by politics can be shown to point to socialism—that a connection can and must be made:

Reason has always existed, only not always in rational form. The critic can therefore tie into all forms of theoretical and practical consciousness, and develop, out of *its* own forms of the existing reality, the true reality in terms of what it should be and aim at. Now as far as real life is concerned, it is exactly the *political state*, even where it is not yet consciously imbued with socialist demands, that comprises the demands of reason in all its *modern* forms. And it does not stop there. Everywhere it implies

* The main exception was constituted by the left-wing Chartists of England, with whom Marx was not yet familiar. The coming alliance with left Chartism was one of Engels' important contributions.

that reason is being realized. But also everywhere it gets into a contradiction between its ideal goal and its real presuppositions.

Out of this conflict of the political state with itself, therefore, the social truth can everywhere develop.²²

Here we get a statement of the view, destined to become one of the building blocks of Marxism, that the forces which will produce the new socialist society first take shape within the womb of the present society.* There is, to be sure, still a speculative-philosophical cast to such expressions as "reason is being realized"; and there is an ambiguity, in hindsight, in the conception of the "political state . . . imbued with socialist demands." These are not finished formulations of the later Marx. The important thing is the gulf that lies between this approach and that of a Cabet dreaming up the details of the uniforms of the future.

If the future reality is to develop out of contradictions in existing reality, if the "social truth" will develop out of conflicts within the existing political framework, then certainly the latter cannot be ignored as the socialists had been doing. The new direction, Marx argues, means that a connection must be made with the real politics of the day, with what people are really concerned about. And it can be done, he insists, without impugning our principles.

Just as *religion* is the table of contents of the theoretical struggles of humanity, so the *political state* is that of its practical struggles. The political state is therefore the expression, inside its own form *sub specie rei publicae*, of all social struggles, needs, and realities. It is, therefore, by no means a violation of high principle to make very specific political questions a subject of criticism—for example, the difference between the estates system and the representative system. For this question expresses—only, in a *political* way—the difference between rule by humanity and rule by private property. The critic, therefore, not only can but must take up these political questions (which in the view of the crass socialists are beneath notice).

* The "womb" metaphor had already occurred in the last sentence of Marx's second letter in this exchange: "The more the course of events gives thinking humanity time to reflect and suffering humanity time to gather themselves together, the more finished a product when it is brought into the world will be that which the present bears in its womb."²³

The example that Marx gives—advocacy of a system based on representation of voters as against an assembly representing the social estates [*Stände*] as such—was about the most immediate issue of political democracy that existed.* Against the “crass socialists,” Marx’s argument in favor of getting into this question goes from the practical to the strategic:

By developing the advantages of the representative system over the estates system, he gets a large party *interested in a practical way*. By elevating the representative system from the category of a [mere] political form to that of a universal form, and bringing out the real meaning that underlies it, he at the same time forces this party to go beyond itself, for when it wins it also loses at the same time.

Here is stated the germinal idea of a “transitional” type of demand which, by the very fact of being achieved, points on to a higher level of demands. To begin with, it is the bourgeois liberals who are mainly interested in a representative assembly versus an estates assembly; but when they win, they thereby bring about a new situation, a new relation of forces and a new agenda of social problems, in which they are bound to lose as the immediate issue moves further left. Marx concludes:

Nothing prevents us, therefore, from tying up our criticism with a criticism of politics, with participation in politics, hence with *real* struggles, and identifying ourselves with these struggles.²⁵

In sum, the new direction involves these ideas: (1) Instead of creating a new sect alongside the several existing sects, let us develop our program out of a critical analysis of what is going on now, out of the real struggles and the real movement rather than sheer ratiocination. (2) Instead of counterposing the “social question” to the vital political issues of the day, let us identify ourselves with the struggle for these political objectives, in order to tie them in with our more basic social goal.

While this approach was new to most contemporary socialisms, it was not new to Marx. It was a continuation of the approach to politics

* For example, in January 1841 Engels, still merely a radical democrat, had formulated this slogan in an important article for the Young Germany movement: “No estates system but rather a single big nation of citizens with equal rights!”²⁴

that he had held and put into writing even before assuming the editorship of the *Rheinische Zeitung*:

A question of the day shares a common lot with any other question justified by its content and hence rational: namely, that not the *answer* but the *question* itself constitutes the chief difficulty. True criticism therefore analyzes not the answers but the questions. Just as the solution of an algebraic equation is given as soon as the problem is posed under its purest and sharpest conditions, so every question is answered as soon as it has become an *actual* question. World history itself has no other method than answering and disposing of old questions by posing new questions. It is therefore easy to find the riddle words of each period. They are the questions of the day. And while a given individual's interests and insights play a big role in the answers and it takes a practised eye to separate what is due to the individual and what to the period, on the other hand the *questions* are the open, relentless voices of a period, overriding any single individuality; they are its signposts; they are the most *practical* proclamations of its own frame of mind.²⁶

"Genuine theory," Marx wrote to a friend a little later the same year, "must be clarified and developed within the framework of concrete circumstances and under existing conditions."²⁷

This approach turned Marx toward one of the then important "signposts" of the 1840s in Germany, a question of the day that spotlighted one of the riddle words of advancing bourgeoisification.

5 | IMPLEMENTING THE NEW DIRECTION

Marx applied the new direction, or supplied a practical example of it, in the first article he wrote for publication after leaving the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, the article dealt with a currently controversial political issue of the hour, with a “real struggle” going on in the political field. It identified itself with the progressive side in the struggle in order to direct the question toward the solution of the basic “social question.”

The issue was religious freedom, or rather, political freedom regardless of religion: the political emancipation of the Jews. Should Jews have the same civic, legal rights as Christians?

1. THE JEWISH EMANCIPATION QUESTION

The French Revolution had provided the first example in Europe of the complete legal emancipation of the Jews, and in this as in other respects, had had a great impact on those parts of Germany where Napoleon’s armies smashed the old regime. With the reaction after 1815, gains made by the German Jews went into decline, but by the beginning of the 1840s the issue had been raised again and the debate was raging, especially in the commercial centers such as the Hanseatic towns and the Rhineland.¹ In fact, in 1843 the Rhenish Diet by a large majority voted for legal emancipation, but it was quashed by the king. It was not until 1847 that Jewish political emancipation would be won partially, in 1848 completely (though temporarily), in Prussia.

In the Rhineland [relates the historian Elbogen], where industrial development was already far advanced and where the Jewish upper stratum of owners already played an integrating role in the economy, the liberals were seized at the beginning of the 1840s by a general enthusiasm for religious tolerance and for the idea of the brotherhood of man.²

The conservatives generally resisted enlightenment, but the lines were not neat. There were prominent conservatives who supported it—especially Catholics, who had their own axe to grind; and there were *soi-disant* leftists who opposed it. Prominent in the last category was Bruno Bauer, the Young Hegelian leader, who in 1842 published a much-discussed essay, “The Jewish Question,” issued in somewhat expanded form as a brochure in 1843.

Bauer’s brochure was in no sense a general disquisition on the Jewish question but rather a concentrated polemic against granting equal political rights to Jews. It was openly cast as a contribution to current controversy. “The popular interest in the Jewish problem,” wrote Bauer on the first page, is due to the fact that “the public feels that the emancipation of the Jews is connected with the development of our general conditions.” Further on: “The demand for emancipation from the side of the Jews and the support it has found from the Christians are signs that both sides are beginning to break through the barrier which until now has separated them.” And: “The problem of emancipation is a general problem, it is *the* problem of our age. Not only the Jews, but we, also, want to be emancipated.”³ Bauer’s polemic evoked a number of replies, in books and articles, of which Marx’s essay was only one.

2. MARX ON JEWISH EMANCIPATION

Marx had originally intended to write an article on the subject of Jewish emancipation back in August 1842, shortly before he became editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* (which had been publishing articles on the subject every month since March).⁴ His target was going to be the same C. H. Hermes, editor of the Catholic *Kölnische Zeitung*, whom he had attacked the previous month on the free-press issue.⁵ In the latter article the third installment had been devoted entirely to the right of

the press to discuss freely the relationship between religion and the state, and the necessity for the separation of church and state. It went on to argue against any religious criteria for the individual's relation to the state.⁶ The argument thus already implicitly embraced the Jewish-emancipation question, although this was not its subject.

But, as it happened, right after Marx finished the article and while it was appearing in the *RZ*, Hermes specifically went after the Jewish-emancipation issue from his usual conservative viewpoint, advocating a sort of apartheid system for Jews.⁷ After Hermes' third article on the subject had been published in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, Marx wrote to his friend Oppenheim to send him "Hermes' collected essays *against Jewry*."⁸

I will then send you [for the *RZ*] as soon as possible an essay which, even if it will not bring the latter question to an end, will at any rate direct it into another path.⁸

But by this time the *RZ* had already published two replies to Hermes and, shortly after, another article on the question.⁹ And about a month later Marx was thrown into the turmoil of becoming editor of the paper and moving to Cologne. The essay that was going to reorient the discussion over Jewish emancipation did not get written while Marx was absorbed with the tribulations of editing the paper.

Near the end of his editorial tenure, Marx (as we learn in passing from one of his letters) did get involved in the petition movement for Jewish rights.

The head of the Israelites here [Cologne, according to the date-line on the letter] just came to me and solicited me for a petition to the Diet for the Jews; and I will do it. However repugnant the Israelite faith is to me, Bauer's viewpoint seems to me too abstract. It is a matter of punching as many holes as possible in the Christian state and of smuggling the rational thing in, as much as we can. That is what one must try to do, at least—and the *embitterment* grows with every petition that is rejected with a protest.¹⁰

The petition which was presented from Cologne in May 1843 called for "equality before the law" for Jews, as "the fundamental principle of

* *Judentum* may mean either Jewry or Judaism; this should be kept in mind in connection with all the ensuing quotations.

civil liberty." Of course we do not know whether Marx actually did draft a petition or whether any draft he may have written was used for the text circulated. But the petition movement was a serious and important affair, and in fact the Rhenish Diet was carried, as we have mentioned previously.* Aside from Marx, the *Rheinische Zeitung's* writers and sponsors were prominently involved in this "real struggle" on the political field. Several days after Marx wrote the above-cited letter, a *Rheinische Zeitung* article explained that the Jewish question was "one of those thermometers . . . by which a progressive or retrogressive step by a state is to be recognized."¹² This was the paper's militant policy.

Marx went back to the project of an essay on Jewish emancipation when the editorial burden was behind him. Instead of writing it for the *RZ*, he wrote it for the coming *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*; and instead of directing it polemically against the conservative Catholic, he made it an attack on the leading opponent of Jewish emancipation *on the left*, Bruno Bauer. Marx's essay "On the Jewish Question" was divided into two parts, the first a review of Bauer's brochure *The Jewish Question*, the second a review of a subsequent article by Bauer entitled "The Capacity of Present-Day Jews and Christians to Become Free."

It cannot be overemphasized that Bauer's brochure was not only a polemic against Jewish emancipation by a "leftist," but that it was written "from the left"—that is, pitched in such terms. Since Bauer has gone down in history books as a Young Hegelian, it is seldom recalled that his leftist period was only a short episode: in 1839 he was regarded as a Hegelian reactionary; he was shortly to become a conservative admirer of Bismarck and Russian czarism and an early exponent of the racial type of anti-Semitism.¹³ Hindsight makes it easy to see Bauer as the type whose essentially reactionary approach does not change when it is temporarily clothed in leftist catchwords. But in 1843 he appeared to be a leading personage of what was called the left.

The crux of Bauer's position was that the German condition could not be solved primarily via political steps—like giving Jews equal political rights with Christians—but only by emancipating all Germans from

* In June a petition for Jewish rights was presented from Trier, Marx's home town, and some think that perhaps Marx's letter actually referred to this city, being wrongly datelined. The Trier petition was more interesting than Cologne's.¹¹

religion as such, Christian religion as well as Jewish. For Bauer it was the question of religion—the destruction of religion—that was the key to social and political change, not the reverse. “Religious prejudice is the basis of civil and political prejudice. . . . As soon as the belief in the religious sanction of civil and political prejudice is shaken, the political prejudice loses its self-assurance.” He thinks he is being very radical, very “extreme,” in counterposing basic change to a mere partial reform, hence coming on the question from the “left.” As far as this goes, his stance is that of the classic sectarian: “All reforms will be palliatives only” until the one and only remedy is effected—though it is something of an anticlimax to find that this sure cure is merely “complete disbelief in servitude, belief in freedom and humanity.” He attacks “this faintheartedness and cowardice which fights one sort of oppression without considering the general lack of freedom under which humanity still suffers. . . .”¹⁴

Everybody is unfree [argues Bauer] in an absolute monarchy. The Jew is only unfree in a particular manner. The hope and wish of the Jew should be not for the removal of his special misery but for the downfall of a principle.¹⁵

But in the course of urging this wooden sectarianism, he makes the full circle from left to right, again in classic fashion. He expresses agreement with, and quotes, utterly reactionary political arguments against Jewish emancipation, in addition to praising Hermes’ position.¹⁶

The rationale goes this way: If you *really* believe in Christianity or Judaism, then it is logical, justifiable, and inevitable that you hate and persecute the rival religionist. Once it is granted that the majority will continue to be Christian despite the Higher Criticism, then their sincerity justifies the worst possible treatment of Jews. Of course, Bauer is for religious tolerance, as the people would be too, if they became atheists; but meanwhile his brochure devotes its bulk to convincing the good Christian people *not* to grant equal political rights to the Jews. It is no exaggeration to say that this line of argument would justify the worst excesses of the Inquisition—for believing Christians only, of course. Consistency demands that the Jews be shipped out to “the land of Canaan,” so that they can be good Jews there, by themselves: one of the early examples of the reciprocity of anti-Jewish reaction and gentile Zionism, following the example of Fichte and Fourier.¹⁷

3. POLITICAL EMANCIPATION AS A STAGE

Marx begins his reply (after a summary of Bauer's views) with a criticism of Bauer's "one-sided" concern with political emancipation in the abstract:

It was by no means enough to inquire: who is to emancipate? who is to be emancipated? Criticism . . . had to ask: *what kind of emancipation* is involved? What preconditions are rooted in the very nature of the emancipation that is demanded? Only a criticism of *political emancipation* itself was the definitive criticism of the Jewish question and its true resolution into the "*general question of the age*." ¹⁸

Bauer errs in that he criticizes the Christian state (a state formally espousing Christianity) rather than the state in general; but in some of the United States, we see examples of a state which is purely secular, hence purely political, juridically detached from all religions. Only here

can the relation of the Jew, of the religious person in general, to the political state—hence the relation of religion to the state—emerge in its characteristic and pure form. . . . Criticism then turns into *criticism of the political state*. ¹⁹

For we find that religious feeling flourishes in the United States, despite the abolition of any political imposition of religion, despite "complete political emancipation" from religion. The reason for this "defect" must be sought, therefore, only in the nature of the state itself, not in the nature of the Christian state.

We do not transform secular questions into theological ones. We transform theological questions into secular. While history has long enough been resolved into superstition, now we resolve superstition into history. The question of the *relation of political emancipation to religion* becomes for us the question of the *relation of political emancipation to human emancipation*. ²⁰

The *state* can be emancipated from religion without the people being emancipated from religion. Marx makes the following comparison: When the property qualification for voting is abolished, the state is abstractly (that is, only juridically) separated from private property.

"Yet, with the political annulment of private property [in this way], private property is not only not abolished, but rather it is even presupposed." Everyone is then "an *equal* participant in the sovereignty of the people" in the political form, but private property (and other features of the present system) continue to exert their practical effect in their own way. "Far from abolishing these *factual* differences (differences in private property, etc.), it [the state] exists, rather, only on the basis of presupposing them. . . ." ²¹ Thus—

Where the political state has attained its true development, man leads a double life, a heavenly and an earthly one, not only in thought and consciousness but in reality, in *life*: one life in the *political community* where he considers himself a *communal being*, and one life in *civil society* where he functions as a *private person*, regards other people as a means, degrades himself to a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers. The political state is spiritually related to civil society in the same way as heaven is to earth. ²²

Contrast this with Bauer, who had argued mechanically as if every believing Christian or Jew automatically had to act out all the "logical" consequences of his religiosity within the structure of the state. In contrast, Marx emphasizes the "split" (his word) in consciousness within the same person, as he leads this "double life."

There are two aspects to this split consciousness: (1) on the one hand, the *citoyen*, the member of the state, the communal being; on the other, the *bourgeois*, the member of civil society; (2) on the one hand, the *citoyen*, etc.; on the other, the believing Christian or Jew. To be sure, this split leads to "sophistry" all around, Marx agrees (for Bauer had made a to-do over the hypocrisy of Jews as they adapt themselves to living in present Christian society and states), "but this sophistry is not personal. It is the *sophistry of the political state* itself." ²³

This secular conflict to which the Jewish question is reduced in the end—the relation of the political state to its presuppositions whether these be material elements like private property etc. or intellectual ones like education and religion, the conflict between *general* and *private interests*, the split between the *political state* and *civil society*—these secular antitheses Bauer allows to keep on existing while he polemizes against their *religious* expression. ²⁴

Marx, on the contrary, wants to downgrade the religious form in which political conflicts manifest themselves, and instead go behind the political conflicts to the social import of the question. That does not mean that the political conflicts should be ignored:

Political emancipation is, to be sure, a great step forward; it is not the final form of human emancipation in general, certainly, but it is the final form of human emancipation *within* the present world order. It should be understood we are speaking here of real, practical emancipation.²⁵

Political emancipation, then, is a stage to be passed through. "Man emancipates himself *politically* from religion by banishing it from the public to the private sphere of legal relations." That is the great step forward, but it is not the end of the struggle.

Therefore we do not tell the Jews, with Bauer: you could not be emancipated politically without emancipating yourselves radically from Judaism. Rather, we tell them: since you could be emancipated politically without cutting loose from Judaism fully and consistently, it follows that *political emancipation* by itself is not *human* emancipation.²⁶

The democratic state is counterposed to the Christian state: "The democratic state, the real state,* does not need religion for its political fulfillment."²⁷ Rather—here Marx echoes Feuerbachian humanism—the democratic state expresses the human foundation or human background of Christianity, that is, the humanist values which Christianity expresses in a veiled and distorted way. The foundation of the democratic state "is not Christianity, but the *human foundation* of Christianity. . . . Political democracy is Christian in that man—not merely one man [the king] but every man—counts in it as a *sovereign* being, supreme being." In Christianity the "sovereignty of man" is a fantasy; in democracy it is real.²⁸

* The meaning behind calling the democratic state a "real" state will be explained in Chapter 8.

4. "HUMAN EMANCIPATION" AS THE END

Marx then makes a frontal assault on Bauer's position that a Jew, as long as he does not give up religion, has no claim to the rights of man. Marx replies, referring to these rights:

They fall under the category of *political freedom*, under the category of *civic rights*, which by no means presuppose the consistent and positive abolition of religion, hence likewise of Judaism, as we have seen. It remains to consider the other part of human rights, the *droits de l'homme* insofar as they are different from the *droits du citoyen*.

Among these is freedom of conscience, the right to practice any religion you want. The *privilege of holding a faith* is expressly recognized either as a *right of man* or as a consequence of a right of man, freedom.²⁹

He quotes from the Declarations of the Rights of Man of 1791 and 1793 and from the constitutions of Pennsylvania and New Hampshire in order to prove that, far from religion being incompatible with the rights of man (as Bauer claimed), "the *right to be religious*, to be religious in any way one chooses, to practice one's particular religion, is, rather, expressly counted among the rights of man. The *privilege of holding a faith* is one of the *universal rights of man*."³⁰

These rights of man represent political emancipation but not yet human emancipation (*social revolution* in Marx's later vocabulary). They express the conditions of *bourgeois* society as against the old order: "The practical application of the human right of freedom is the human right of *private property*." Likewise, the other rights, such as equality, security, are really concepts of civil society with its self-interest and egoism. Indeed, Marx points out, none of the so-called rights of man go beyond the egoism of civil society.* "The only bond that holds them [the people in civil society] together is natural necessity, need, and private interest, the preservation of their property and egoistic person."³¹

* Remember that this term *civil society* stands for *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, which can also be translated "bourgeois society," and that the meaning shifts from one to the other in this period, depending on context, as explained in Chapter 1.

Marx brings up the "puzzling" fact that the French Revolution, in the name of freedom, proclaimed "the justification of the egoistic man, isolated from fellow men and the community," instead of overcoming egoism and exalting community.

This fact becomes even more puzzling when we see that citizenship, the *political community*, is even demeaned by the political emancipators to a mere *means* for preserving these so-called rights of man; that thus the *citoyen* is declared to be the servitor of the egoistic *homme*; the sphere in which man behaves as a communal being is degraded below the sphere in which he behaves as a fragmented being; and finally, it is not man as *citoyen* but man as *bourgeois* that is taken to be the *real* and *true* man.³²

But "the puzzle is easily solved." The answer starts with an analysis of feudalism which deserves to be better known (it was already set forth in the notebook on Hegel).

Its starting point is the fusion of politics and economics under feudalism, as distinct from the relationship under capitalism; that is, the landowning aristocracy (the propertied ruling class) is also the political ruling class *automatically*, by virtue of its ownership, not through some indirect mechanism. The baron *is* the state, for all in his demesne; the state is not some juridically independent executive committee which acts on his behalf. *L'état c'est lui*. Economic power *is* political power directly.

These, we hasten to add, are not the words in which Marx explains the idea in the essay before us. He puts it in terms of the *politicalization* of all aspects of civil society under feudalism:

The old civil society had a *political* character in a *direct* sense; that is, the elements of civil life, such as ownership or the family or the kind and mode of labor, for example, were elevated into elements in the life of the state, in the form of the manorial system, social estates, and corporations. In this form they determined the relation of the single individual to the *state as a whole*, that is, his *political* relationship, that is, his relationship of separation and exclusion from the other components of society. . . . Thus the vital functions and vital conditions of civil society always remained political, even though they were political in the feudalistic sense. . . .³³

The French revolution

abolished the political character of civil society. It shattered civil society into its simple components. . . . It unchained the political spirit . . . it freed it from its union with civil life and constituted it as the sphere of communality. . . . A *particular* activity in life and a particular life situation sank to a merely individual significance.³⁴

But the idealism of this new political setup was accompanied by the materialism of civil society. Under feudalism, the egoistic spirit of civil society had been restrained by the political power; now no longer.

Political emancipation was at the same time the emancipation of civil society from politics, from even the *appearance* of having a universal content.

Feudal society was dissolved into its foundation, into *man*. But into man as he actually was its foundation—into *egoistic* men.

This *man*, the member of civil society, is now the basis, the presupposition of the *political* state.³⁵

This then, concludes Marx, is the real meaning of political emancipation (from the old feudal relations)—the emancipation of the realm of private interests *from* politics, that is, from the political restraints imposed by feudalism. In one paragraph Marx gives the related meanings of political freedom, economic freedom, and religious freedom, in this context:

Man, therefore, was not freed from religion; he obtained freedom of religion. He was not freed from property; he obtained freedom of property. He was not freed from the egoism of business; he obtained freedom of business.³⁶

Thus Marx has now put religious emancipation—the political emancipation of the Jews—into the same category as political emancipation in general. Of course, everybody on the left was for political emancipation—Bauer too, naturally, only he had *counterposed* it to emancipation of Jews only. But while Jewish emancipation is now bracketed with political emancipation in general (after the pattern of the French Revolution), the very same line of argument has also shown why it was necessary to push beyond any merely political emancipation, on to *social* reconstruction.

What Marx distinguishes from political emancipation is human emancipation (social emancipation in later terms). This is defined in terms of the reintegration of political and social power:

Only when the real, individual man . . . has recognized and organized his "*forces propres*" [his own power] as *social* power, and hence social power is no longer divided within itself in the form of *political* power, only then is human emancipation consummated.³⁷

Thus Part I of Marx's essay ends, with the aim accomplished: it has been shown that an immediate, hence partial, political demand of progress can be supported, *and at the same time linked organically with the further aim of social change.*

5. BAUER: ROUND TWO

Part II of the essay takes up Bauer's follow-up article, "The Capacity of Present-Day Jews and Christians to Become Free." The main characteristic of Bauer's article—already present in the brochure, to be sure, but not so massively—is the emphasis on denouncing Judaism *as a religion* in comparison with Christianity.* By itself this is not so contradictory as it may appear to be for an atheist who advocates destroying both Christianity and Judaism and all religion in general. Feuerbach had given the lead on this: the role of Christianity in history was to reduce religion to its clearest essentials, to the point where the real humanistic content which is concealed in the best aspects of religion is most plainly brought to the fore, and thus the way is prepared for the supernatural integument to be discarded, leaving only the humanist content. It is this Feuerbachian distinction between Christianity and all previous religions, generally accepted by the Young Hegelians, that Bauer takes as his point of departure.

In his brochure the main emphasis had not been on differentiating between Christianity and Judaism, but rather on arguing against *partial* emancipation on basically sectarian grounds: *What? Only a miserable*

* This aspect is proportionately less prominent in the brochure, but it should be understood that there is no change in views involved. Near the very beginning of the brochure Bauer protests: "There is an outcry as if it were treason against humanity if a critic starts to investigate the particular character of the Jew. The very same people who look on with pleasure when criticism is aimed at Christianity . . . are ready to condemn the man who subjects Judaism too to criticism."³⁸ One trouble with this protest is that Bauer's criticism of Judaism is aimed at keeping a minority deprived of political rights.

partial emancipation, of only a few people, when we others need total emancipation—religious emancipation? This line had been demolished from various sides, including articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, as we have seen; and it fades into the background in his 1843 follow-up essay. After all, even if we grant that all religion is reactionary, still—pending the happy day when it is all rooted out—why *shouldn't* Jews have the same legal rights as Christians? And if it is no great issue, why go to the lengths of writing and publishing a whole brochure to convince people to *oppose* this measure? Even woodenheaded sectarianism does not quite seem an adequate explanation.

Bauer's follow-up article, then, does not take its main stand on the heights above the Christian-Jewish antithesis, but rather launches a full-blooded polemic to prove that Judaism as a religion is so bad that Jews do not have the *capacity* to be free men, merely by virtue of being Jews; and that they do not *deserve* to be free men—a proposition which goes beyond the title of the article. His case against the Jews *en bloc* makes the following four points.

1. Christianity is a religion which already implies freedom and human progress; Judaism is a religion that is coarse and inferior. In much of Bauer's argumentation, antimodern and contemporarily irrational features of Jewish religious orthodoxy are set against a Feuerbachian-laundered version of an idealized Christianity. The very new trend of Reform Judaism is ignored. The following is typical of these specious contrasts:

When the Jewish casuist, the rabbi, asks if it is permitted to eat an egg laid by a hen on the Sabbath, this is simply foolishness and an outrageous consequence of religious prepossession.

On the other hand, when the scholastics asked if, as God became man in the Virgin's womb, he could just as well have become, say, a pumpkin; when Lutherans and Reformed Churchmen disputed over whether the body of the God-Man could be present in all places at the same time, this is comical, to be sure, but only because it was a dispute over pantheism in religious and clerical form.³⁹

2. Jews have never done anything creative in the fight for human emancipation.

3. Specifically, Jews have played no role in the struggle against religion, that is, the philosophic criticism of Christianity; they merely felt malicious joy at the exposure of Christianity. They are servitors of

the religious illusion; not a single Jew has done anything important to combat it.

4. Jews are so nationalistic that they form a nation within the nation, a state within the state. This accusation, a favorite of the philosopher Fichte, had more than a kernel of truth in orthodox Judaism and the history of Jewry. But especially at this time, the trend was the other way—above all, in Germany, which had seen one of the highest rates of Jewish assimilation. Moses Hess and others later took this charge, turned it inside out, and invented Zionism.

Since all this is ascribed to Judaism's unfortunate characteristics as a religion, Marx, as could be expected, pitches into the fact that "Bauer here transforms the question of Jewish emancipation into a purely religious question."⁴⁰ As before, he wants to direct it into the path of social critique.

We try to break down the theological formulation of the question. For us the question about the capacity of the Jews for emancipation transforms into the question: which particular *social* element is to be overcome in order to transcend Judaism? For the capacity of the present-day Jew for emancipation is the relationship of Judaism to the emancipation of the present-day world. This relationship arises necessarily out of the specific position of Judaism in the present-day enslaved world.

He immediately adds, apropos of Bauer's thrice-repeated sarcasms about the Sabbath observance of religious Jews: "Let us consider the actual secular Jew, not the *Sabbath Jew*, as Bauer does, but the *everyday Jew*."⁴¹

This is the special theme of the second part of Marx's essay: not the religious Jew but the *economic Jew*; not the role of religion in Jewry but the role of Jewry in the socioeconomic world.

The economic everyday meaning of *Judentum* was not a controversial subject in 1843, not for the right or the left, for conservatives or liberals, for intellectuals or illiterates, and, to a considerable extent at least, not even for the Jews. It had been built into the very language, let alone the popular stereotyped image of the Jew, since before Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice*. Behind this process was the skewed economic structure into which the Jewish people had been cramped by medieval restrictions: the "economic Jew" had been created by the Christian state. Overwhelmingly *Judentum* and *Jude*

were inextricably associated, not only in thought but in language, with the underside of the economic world: with usury (as in Bauer's brochure, for example); with huckstering (*Schacher*); in general, with money-making.

6. DISSOLVING THE JEW-CHRISTIAN ANTITHESIS

This is the route by which Marx turns the question away from religion and toward an examination of the whole social system. The everyday Jew is linked with practical need and self-interest or egoism—the distinguishing features of civil society in general; with the chase after money and money power, symbolized by the bill of exchange; the economic Jew is *par excellence* “the merchant, the moneyman in general.”⁴² (The best-known part of the stereotype, usury, is not mentioned.) All this is merely “what everybody knows,” but from this starting point Marx steers toward a new interpretation of what everybody knows, to exhibit it in a different light. The economic Jew must be seen as basically the prototype of the *bourgeois*.*

The first aim is to see the question in a historical light. Jewry has this “general *contemporary antisocial* element which by a historical development, in which the Jews zealously collaborated in this bad respect, was brought to its present height—at which point it must necessarily dissolve away.”⁴³

Secondly, Marx sets out to erase the antithesis between Jews and Christians, which was the main content of Bauer's article. He argues for the opposite proposition: today there is no difference between Jewry and Christendom with respect to these “Jewish” economic patterns. Today “*money* has become a world power and the practical spirit of the Jews has become the practical spirit of the Christian peoples.”** The

* The quoted phrases in this paragraph constitute the case for a massive marxological literature devoted to exhibiting the “anti-Semitism” of Marx's essay. This is discussed in Special Note A.

** The eminent Jewish sociologist Arthur Ruppin has made the same point in the following words:

Judged by medieval standards, his [the Jew's] business outlook was immoral. . . . the business methods of the Jews were rehabilitated by being universally adopted—the pursuit of profit and free competition became the guiding principle of the capitalist system.⁴⁴

Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews."⁴⁵

He takes as example the United States, quoting Thomas Hamilton on "the pious and politically free inhabitants of New England: Mammon is their idol. . . . In their eyes the world is nothing but a Stock Exchange. . . . Their one relaxation consists in bartering objects. . . ." And so on. Hamilton's stereotype of America is similar to that of the Jews in Germany—both are flavored with a scorn of money-making as a human preoccupation. (This scorn is prebourgeois in its roots, to be sure, but does not disappear even under highly developed capitalism.) Marx further quotes a French work on America: even the very preaching of the Christian gospel has become a money-making business over there, "an article of commerce." In fact, "the practical-Jewish spirit" not only permeates Christianity but "has even attained its highest development."⁴⁶

Judaism reaches its high point with the completion of civil society; but civil society is first brought to completion in the *Christian* world. Only under the sway of Christianity, which makes *all* national, natural, ethical, and theoretical relationships *external* to man, could civil society detach itself completely from the life of the state; sever all the species-bonds of man; substitute egoism, self-interested need, in place of these species-bonds; dissolve the human world into a world of atomized individuals confronting each other hostilely.⁴⁷

This theme is repeated, the changes on it rung in several ways, and again summarized:

In its finished practice, the Christian egoism of bliss necessarily turns into the Jews' egoism of the body, heavenly need into earthly need, subjectivism into self-interest. We explain the tenacity of the Jew not by his religion but rather by the human foundation of his religion, practical need, egoism.⁴⁸

And it is exactly this same "practical need, egoism" which is the spirit of the modern commercial civil society of the Christian world, the new socioeconomic system: so goes Marx's argument.

It must be understood that, like the rest of the socialists in this period before Marxism, Marx himself has only the usual superficial notion of what this new commercial society really is. Like everyone else, his emphasis as yet is on the role of money and the spirit of money-making, not on the system of production, class exploitation,

and so on. What is uppermost is "the contradiction between politics and money power. While the first is ideally superior to the second, it has in fact become its serf."⁴⁹ So, while it is thus incidentally recognized that the state as it is has become the tool of a new economic power, this new master is seen only as the money power.*

It is therefore the organization of society itself that has to be changed, not man's religiosity, as Bauer would have it. We need "an organization of society that will abolish the presupposition of huckstering"—that is the way this modern economic Judaism will become impossible. As for the economic Jew, the Christian or the Jewish Jew, "His religious consciousness would dissolve like a thin miasma in the real-life air of society."⁵²

7. THIRD ROUND WITH BAUER

Bruno Bauer replied to his critics on the Jewish-emancipation question in three articles published between December 1843 and July 1844,⁵³ marked by his developing élitism and bitter rancor against the "masses." Marx took this up in three sections of *The Holy Family*. This work is considered in Chapter 10, but a word on the Jewish-question aspect of the book can be disposed of here, since there is little new to be noted. In good part, Marx overtly refers to and repeats the content of his article "On the Jewish Question" in order to show that Bauer has not dealt with the issues.⁵⁴ There is a good deal of reemphasis of the relationship among political questions, social questions, and religious questions, entirely along the line we have already seen.⁵⁵ In fact, any dubiousness about the proper interpretation of Marx's approach in the essay is cleared up by the material in *The Holy Family*.

* Here is a key paragraph in which Marx's essay eloquently denounces money as the very devil:

Money is the jealous god of Israel before whom no other god may exist. Money degrades all the gods of mankind—and transforms them into commodities. Money is the universal, self-constituted *value* of all things. It has therefore robbed the whole world, the human world as well as nature, of its distinctive value. Money is the essence of man's labor and existence that has been alienated from him; and this alien essence dominates him, and he worships it.⁵⁰

Compare this with the section entitled "The Power of Money in Bourgeois Society" in Marx's Paris manuscripts of 1844, with its long passage from Shakespeare on "yellow, glittering, precious gold."⁵¹

Also repeated, but in somewhat more developed form, is the conception that Jewish emancipation, or more generally complete political emancipation, is necessary but not sufficient. Marx insists again on the difference between political and human emancipation, and that "the states which are not yet able to emancipate the Jews *politically* are to be judged, once again, as against fully evolved political states and rated as undeveloped."⁵⁶ The "fully developed modern state" is only "the *democratic representative state*," which is equated with complete political emancipation of the individual citizens. But at the same time this fully developed state of political democracy lays bare most clearly "not only the relative but the absolute *defects* constituting its very essence."⁵⁷

The antithesis between the *democratic representative state* and *civil society* is the full development of the *classical* antithesis between the public *community* and *slavedom*. In the modern world everyone is *simultaneously* a member of slavedom and of the community. It is precisely the *slavedom of civil society* that is the greatest *freedom in appearance*, because it is apparently the fully developed *independence* of the individual—who equates his *own* freedom with the uncontrolled movement of the elements alienated from his life (such as property, industry, religion, etc.) kept together no longer by universal bonds or by men; whereas it is rather his fully developed serfdom and inhumanity.⁵⁸

Noteworthy in these sections of *The Holy Family* is Marx's lengthy defense of the leading Jewish spokesmen for the emancipation movement, whom Bauer has attacked, especially Gabriel Riesser. This is all the more interesting since the political basis upon which Riesser and his like advocated Jewish emancipation could not but be repugnant to any radical, let alone Marx. As a good bourgeois liberal, Riesser energetically protested his allegiance to the monarchist state and the social order; since Judaism was merely another religious confession like any other in the state (a proposition repudiated by many Orthodox Jewish leaders as well as by people like Bauer), a Jew could be, and would be, a loyal subject.⁵⁹ In *The Holy Family* Marx is content to remark only that Bauer's arguments fail to dispose of "even these poor opponents." He then defends the Jewish spokesmen on a number of points:

1. Philippson was right in pointing out that Bauer's case has to do with his "philosophical ideal of a state," not with the existing state.⁶⁰ (Philippson, incidentally, had previously had the honor of being the

Jewish spokesman attacked by name in Bauer's brochure *The Jewish Question*, for an article published in the *Rheinische Zeitung*.)⁶¹

2. Rabbi Hirsch was right in showing that Bauer himself tacitly assumed the historicity of the Jews, while trying to deny it. The Jews were not some strange excrescence on history, as Bauer argued, but an integral part of "the making of modern times." Jewry is a *historical* product, not an aberration.⁶²

3. Riesser was right in maintaining that Bauer's "Critical state" (his ideal state embodying the principles of "Critical" philosophy) must exclude both Jews and Christians.

Herr Riesser is in the right. Since Herr Bauer confuses *political* emancipation with *human* emancipation; since the state knows no other way of reacting to opposition elements—and Christianity and Judaism are called treasonable elements in [Bauer's] *Jewish Question*—except forcible exclusion of the *persons* representing them (just as terrorism, for example, wished to cut out speculative hoarding by cutting off the offender's head), so too Herr Bauer had to have Jews and Christians hanged in his "Critical state."⁶³

4. But Bauer argued that it was not the state which excluded recalcitrant religionists, but rather these people excluded themselves from society by their attitude. Marx's comment on this bears on the fact of social (nongovernmental) anti-Jewish pressure: "Society behaves just as exclusively as the state, only in a more polite form: it does not throw you out, but it makes it so uncomfortable for you that you go out of your own will."⁶⁴

5. Still, the domain of legal rights is important of itself. Riesser was right in demanding that Bauer make a distinction between "what belongs to the domain of law" and "what is beyond its domain."⁶⁵ The right to practice religion in any way one wants is beyond the law's domain for both Riesser and Marx. Further:

Herr *Riesser* correctly expressed the meaning of the Jews' desire for recognition of their free humanity when he demanded, among other things, the freedom of movement, sojourn, travel, earning one's living, etc. These manifestations of "*free humanity*" are explicitly recognized as such in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. The Jew has all the more right to the recognition of his "*free humanity*" as "*free civil society*" is thoroughly commercial and Jewish and the Jew is a necessary link in it.⁶⁶

6. In general Marx emphasizes in various ways the validity of the argument that religious freedom is a necessary part of political emancipation. In this connection he comments on the latest book published by Bauer:

In his last political work, *Staat, Religion, und Partei*, the most secret wish of the Critic [Bauer] inflated to the size of a state is finally expressed. *Religion is sacrificed to the state-system*, or, rather, the state-system is only the *means* by which the opponent of *Criticism*, un-Critical religion and theology, is done to death.⁶⁷

History teaches us that Hébert's party, the left Jacobins in the French Revolution, "was defeated mainly on the grounds that it attacked the rights of man in attacking *freedom of religion*; similarly the rights of man were invoked later when freedom of worship was restored."⁶⁸

Herr Bauer was shown that it is by no means contrary to political emancipation to *divide* man into the nonreligious *citizen* and the religious *private individual*. He was shown that as the state emancipates itself from religion by emancipating itself from *state religion* and leaving religion to itself within civil society, so the individual emancipates himself *politically* from religion when his attitude to it is no longer as to a *public* but as to a *private matter*. Finally, it was shown that the *terroristic* attitude of the French *Revolution to religion*, far from refuting this conception, bears it out.⁶⁹

The point of the Jewish question in 1843, then, was to get away from controversy over religion in general or the Jews in particular, and to establish that religion was a private matter with relation to the state, thereby emancipating the state from the religious question. The political emancipation of the Jews was a means to general political emancipation.

6 | ORIENTATION TOWARD THE PROLETARIAT

In the editorial exchange of letters in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, a good deal of space was taken up by a problem that need not detain us long: the perennial one of revolutionary confidence in the future (revolutionary optimism) versus despair and defeatism.

The first letter, by Marx, makes clear that the editors are for a revolution of some kind; the second letter, a reply by Ruge, is a ululating elegy or funeral dirge (as Marx calls it) on the impossibility of revolution in the fast-frozen political wasteland of Germany. Ruge's letter is a classic cry of hopelessness and despondency over the fact that no revolutionary or serious reform movement is in sight—published only four years before the outbreak of the most massive revolutionary upheaval the world had yet seen.*

Marx, to be sure, does not claim that the current picture is anything but dim: on the contrary, "the air in this country makes one a serf and I see no room for free activity anywhere in Germany."² In his first letter his optimism is based on very general, indeed vague, grounds. The Germans must become *ashamed* of their political backwardness: "Shame is already a revolution . . . Shame is a kind of anger that is directed against oneself. And if a whole nation were really ashamed of

* The opening threnody of Ruge's letter goes like this: "Your letter is an illusion. Your courage discourages me even more.—We are going to live to see a political revolution? *We*, the contemporaries of these Germans? My friend, you believe what you want to believe. Oh, I know! it is very sweet to hope, and very bitter to put aside all illusions. Despair takes more courage than hope. But it is the courage of reason, and we have reached the point where we may no longer delude ourselves."—And so on to paint the gloomy picture of the present: all are sheep; man was not born to be free; the German soul is a base thing; there is no future for the German people: "Oh this German future! Where is its seed sown?"¹

itself, it would be a lion that falls back in order to spring.”* The revolution is coming even though no one believes in it: “One could perhaps let a ship full of fools run before the wind for a good while; but it would run into its destiny for the very reason that the fools do not believe it. This destiny is the revolution that looms before us.”⁴

But if the ship is full of nothing but fools, what can be expected when it runs into its destiny? Who is aboard who can head into the wind when the storm breaks? Besides the questions “where from?” and “where to?” there was also the question “who?”

The existence of the question itself was not yet clearly recognized in the socialisms of the time, and the *DFJ* letters make the usual assumptions in this respect. One would gather that the great change will be brought about by “enemies of philistinism, in short all people who think and who suffer.” For “the existence of a suffering humanity that thinks and of a thinking humanity that is oppressed” must necessarily become intolerable to the world of the philistines.⁵ Does this imply that it is, then, the philistines themselves who will eventually remedy the situation? That, after all, was the view of the “communist” Cabet. Marx’s third and last letter declares that “a new rallying-point for the really thinking and independent minds must be sought.”⁶ That is, the *Jahrbücher’s* role is to act as a political center for the revolutionary opposition—the independent thinkers. On this, Marx has not yet gone beyond his contemporaries.

Nevertheless, it is between the covers of the same double number of the *DFJ*, in his third and last-written article, that Marx first poses the question and gives his answer: the “who” of the revolution is a class, and this class is the proletariat.

Before we discuss what this opinion meant to Marx, we must fill in some background. What did *proletariat*, and an orientation toward the proletariat, mean at this time?

* A similar invocation of the power of shame occurs again in Marx’s introduction to the critique of Hegel, which is discussed later in this chapter.³

1. POLITICAL LEXICON: PROLETARIAT

Proletariat had begun assuming its modern meaning mainly in the decade or so before Marx wrote down his new perspective, but at the same time it retained its old meaning—with the usual consequences in imprecision and confusion. By the first quarter of the century books on social topics had begun to refer to wage-workers as an identifiable social group—people who worked for an *employeur* (who uses people), for an *Arbeitgeber* (who gives work), for capital. The overwhelming mass of working people did not perform their labor within this social framework.

From at least the second century A.D.* until the nineteenth century, *proletarians* were simply the lowest stratum of poor and propertyless freemen; the term often meant living in pauperism. It embraced all kinds of workers simply because they were all poor, but it did not necessarily imply a working status of any kind, let alone the wage-working status; nor did it necessarily distinguish between urban and rural poor.⁷ Thus *proletariat* began as a broader label than *workers*, though it was to end up as a narrower one.

The early socialists spoke, at most, in the name of the People, in the style of the French Revolution. This was characteristic of the Jacobin left from Babeuf to Blanqui even when they used the term *proletarian*. For example, Blanqui, asked his occupation by the court, replied "Proletarian," and explained this as "one of the 30 million Frenchmen who live by their labor." This figure referred to about eight-ninths of the entire population, which included very few proletarians in the modern sense. The *people* or *proletarians* meant virtually everyone except the small number of aristocrats and exploiting bourgeois, all who worked for a living by the sweat of their brow. The term was being used in this way by the Saint-Simonian lecturers by the end of the 1820s.⁸

But on the way to the mid-nineteenth century, the people were visibly differentiating: the lines obscured by feudal institutions and habits were being clarified as capitalist relations developed. In this

* The original—and overquoted—meaning of the Latin *proletarius* goes back to the sixth century B.C. as a census term: one who contributes nothing to the state except offspring; but this technical meaning was obsolete by the second century A.D.

period of change—in society and in the words required to talk about it—the term *proletariat* began to assume its new meaning, not only after an identifiable class of wage-workers arose with the development of capitalism, but particularly after this class began to be conscious of a novelty in its position. This can roughly be placed after the revolution of 1830.

A book by Sismondi⁹ in 1837 has been commonly pointed to as the first to use the word in its modern sense. Sismondi, however, does not appear to be introducing the term, but only welcoming it; in any case it could not have been his little-noticed book that spread it.¹⁰ In 1842 an influential book by Lorenz von Stein on the current socialist and communist tendencies in France connected the new meaning of *proletariat* with the burgeoning of socialist ideas and proletarian movements. It was in Paris that von Stein gathered the material and ideas for his book, which even implies in places that the workers' movement had adopted the term in a spirit of class-consciousness.¹¹ It is highly probable, then, that the new usage was not invented between book covers but rather emerged out of the workers' clubs and circles, most particularly in Paris, which in the 1830s was the very hearth of the new radical thought and radical workers' organization.

In England the Chartists were using the term by this time, or even perhaps earlier, and when Engels published his *Condition of the Working Class in England* in the spring of 1845, after a spell in Manchester and collaboration with the Owenites and Chartists, *proletariat* figured in the work in a fully modern sense.*

It should be plain, then, that a reference to the proletariat in 1844 is far from being immediately self-explanatory; the old, broad meaning was not only very much alive but still dominant.¹³ It will be necessary to see what Marx had in mind when he used it.

* Note that in his preface Engels thought it necessary to explain to his German readers that "I have continually used the expressions *workingmen* (*Arbeiter*) and *proletarians*, and *working class*, *propertyless class*, and *proletariat* as synonymous." The work makes clear from the first page that it is a question of a new and modern class.¹²

2. THE AMBIGUITY OF POINTING

In addition to the ambiguity of the term itself, the mere expression of a special concern for, or interest in, the proletariat or the workers was not itself distinctive in the socialist spectrum even at this early time. Some sort of orientation toward workers had already taken several forms among socialist ideologues and movements. Without putting too fine an edge on it, the following distinct, though interpenetrating, conceptions can be observed.

1. Some saw the working class as a special object of compassion, a visible proof of the defects of society. "Only from the point of view of being the most suffering class does the proletariat exist for them"—this was the way the *Communist Manifesto* put it later, in its section on the Utopians.¹⁴ This approach had been reflected in Marx's letter in the *DFJ*.

2. Some looked on the working class as a useful source of pressure on the real powers, the powers that could really change society. This had appeared most plainly in Saint-Simon's last work, *The New Christianity*, in which the workers were urged to submit respectful petitions to their economic masters, soliciting them to do their duty of installing the New Order.

3. Some looked on the working class as an especially fruitful recruiting ground. This was true of Cabet's Icarian communist movement, for example, as well as some of the secret societies. But the movement was still conceived mainly as a pressure upon the top levels of society, as in Cabet's case; and even if it was predominantly drawn *from* the working class, it was not conceived as the movement *of* the working class.

4. Some looked on the workers as useful in providing a revolutionary threat, or disrupting the status quo with revolutionary disturbances, thus helping to create the conditions for a takeover by the revolutionary conspiracy. This was part of the Babouvist-Jacobin tradition, newly represented by the Blanquists, later by Bakunin.

5. Some advocated the self-organization of the working class—the workers as a whole rather than merely an advanced tip—on a corporative basis, that is, to further their corporate interests *within* the society, along the lines of Buchez's cooperatives or Flora Tristan's *Union Ouvrière*.

Marx's conception of the relationship between socialism and the proletariat would be basically different from any of these. It did not appear full-blown in a sudden article but developed in a number of steps during 1843 and 1844.

3. THE ROAD TO THE NEW ORIENTATION

There certainly was no impulse to a proletarian orientation during the *Rheinische Zeitung* period: not in the Young Hegelian milieu, nor in the thinking of the house communist Moses Hess; not in the regional problems, for the more industrialized section of the Rhineland was north of the Cologne-Trier area that Marx had been living in, and the economic issues that had caught Marx's attention in connection with the wood-theft law and the Moselle winegrowers were problems of the poor countryfolk, the peasantry.

Only in his retort to the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* about communism, in October 1842, had Marx been led to write about the workers (albeit the *Handwerker*) as a social group, since this had come up in the article by Wilhelm Weitling that had touched off the exchange in the first place. Indeed, the idea had even been broached there that the middle class was facing its 1789—which implied that the workers were the revolutionary class of today.¹⁵

Weitling was not the only one writing about the new concern with the workers even then. In autumn of the same year Lorenz von Stein's important book on the socialist and communist tendencies in France was published to the accompaniment of great public interest. It emphasized the new role of the proletariat, as we have already mentioned. But Marx was only just becoming interested in such new social questions; he was not yet a socialist, and it was unlikely that he was wondering who was going to make a revolution he was not yet in favor of. If Marx read von Stein at the time (as is possible but unrecorded), its effect might well have been only latent.¹⁶ Perhaps more important was the discussion of von Stein's book in the form of a review by Moses Hess, which appeared in July 1843 in a collection of essays by various hands,¹⁷ including two other articles by Hess and one by Hess's new disciple Engels. A year later Marx was going to give due credit to the influence on his thinking exercised by Hess's essays in this book, without specify-

ing among them.¹⁸ True, in the case of this article it could not have been Hess's viewpoint—which *objected* to von Stein's emphasis on the proletariat and on class—that influenced Marx, but its publication was one of the events that at least raised the question at a point when Marx was preparing material for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*.

During that same summer of 1843, before moving to Paris in October, Marx's readings of historical works naturally suggested class-struggle patterns in history (for example, sans-culottes versus bourgeoisie in the French Revolution; Münzer's common people during the Reformation), but the most specific reference to the working class to be found in his excerpt notebook comes from the book by Thomas Hamilton on America—a book he cited more than once during these years.* In this case there can be little doubt about the *latent* effect of Hamilton's book.

Marx's lucubrations over Hegel's philosophy of right, in the notebook of this summer, contained not a hint of an orientation toward the proletariat. Indeed, this manuscript critique offers as yet no clear idea of the role of class divisions in bourgeois society (civil society). The discussion is carried on in terms of the *Stände*, the social estates, which are seen implicitly as social ranks rather than classes in the modern sense—no doubt because Marx is following in the tracks of Hegel's thought. It is in this context that Marx makes a reference to workers in a passing remark that "the *estate of direct labor*, of concrete labor, forms not so much an estate of civil society as the ground on which its spheres rest and move."²¹ This whole discussion is in terms of a past social structure.

* The excerpts in Marx's reading notebooks are summarized in *MEGA*. Of some interest in this connection is the summary of W. Wachsmuth's history of the French Revolution and L. Ranke's history of the German Reformation period.¹⁹ The summary of Marx's excerpts from Hamilton shows much emphasis on the rule of wealth and the deprivation of the lower classes from power—for example: "... the Federalists against right to vote by the propertyless. Position of the Negro, formally free, yet treated as pariahs; the fight against the whites' prejudices against them is necessary. Arrogance of the rich, in spite of legal equality of all citizens. Mammon and huckstering the idols of the Americans. . . . In New York civil society has split into two parts—working people and those who do not have to work. Aims of the combinations among the manual workers: equal education of all citizens, abolition of the educational monopoly; but in part also equal division of property: the agrarian law. Danger of the overturn of the state by a simple vote, under complete democracy; this does not yet exist at present in America, for its citizens are mostly property owners. Influence of the money aristocracy in America. . . ." ²⁰

There is likewise no indication of a special interest in the proletariat either in the editorial exchange of letters in the *DFJ* or in the essay "On the Jewish Question."

The change occurs in Marx's third contribution to the *DFJ*. This essay was published as the introduction to a still unwritten "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right"—Marx's planned revision of his notebook analysis. Yet it is certainly not meaningful as an introduction to the notebook critique as it was written during the summer; that is, to the manuscript as we have it now. He had plainly developed beyond it. The introduction presents not only new views but a quite different orientation, looking toward different problems.

Marx put it this way when, in the preface to his so-called *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* he explained why he had decided not to publish the promised critique of Hegel:

In the course of working it up for publication, it became clear that intermingling criticism directed only against [Hegelian] speculative theory with criticism of the various problems themselves was altogether unsuitable, hindering the development of thought and interfering with comprehension. Moreover, the wealth and diversity of the subjects to be treated could have been compressed into a *single* work only in a very aphoristic manner, while such an aphoristic presentation would have produced the *appearance* of arbitrary systematizing.²²

What this reflects, no doubt, is that Marx's need to settle accounts with Hegel had diminished, while his need to grapple with "the various problems themselves" had rapidly increased.

4. THE IMPACT OF PARIS

What had happened before the writing of the introduction was very simple: *Marx had moved to Paris*. The change from the relative placidity of Cologne, not to speak of the honeymoon felicity of Kreuznach, cannot be overemphasized. Cologne, though the center of new politics in Germany, was a village backwater compared with the political maelstrom that was Paris.

In Cologne there was something of a circumspect and mild bourgeois liberal tendency; but for anyone interested in politics, Paris pulsed with

all the political and social movements from liberal reform to revolutionary communism. In Cologne, as in most of Germany, there was virtually no proletariat as yet, outside of the pages of certain books; Paris stood at the peak of the Continent's industrial development. In addition to the variety of workers' clubs, associations, sects, and movements of the French workers, Paris was also one of the main concentration points of *German* workers, who formed their own organizations. There were about 100,000 Germans in Paris, most of them artisans, working abroad for a period.²³ The League of the Just (which later became the Communist League) had incubated in Paris. All in all, it was as if an aspiring young actor moved from the high school dramatic club of Dubuque to the midst of Broadway.

The immense impact of the Paris workers' movement on the émigré from the Rhineland is beyond doubt. Marx wrote about it with an air of wonderment three times in the course of 1844-1845:

When communist *artisans* assemble [he wrote in his Paris manuscripts of 1844], educationals, propaganda, etc. are above all their end. But at the same time they thereby acquire a new need, the need for fellowship, and what appears as a means has become an end. This practical movement can be observed with its most brilliant results whenever French socialist workers are seen assembled. Smoking, drinking, eating, etc. no longer serve [merely] as a means of association or as an associative means. Fellowship, association, entertainment which in turn has fellowship as its end—these are enough for them; the brotherhood of man is not an empty phrase with them but a reality, and the nobility of man shines out to us from their work-hardened figures.²⁴

You [he wrote to Feuerbach] would have had to attend one of the meetings of the French *ouvriers* [workers] to be able to believe the virgin freshness, the nobility, that flashes forth among these work-weary people. The English proletarian is also making gigantic progress, but he lacks the cultivated character of the French. I should, however, not forget to emphasize the theoretical merits of the German artisans [*Handwerker*] in Switzerland, London, and Paris. Only, the German artisan is still too much an artisan.

But in any case it is among these "barbarians" of our civilized society that history is making ready the practical element for the emancipation of man.²⁵

One must be acquainted [he wrote in *The Holy Family*] with the studiousness, the craving for knowledge, the moral energy and the unceasing urge for development of the French and English *ouvriers* [workers] to be able to form an idea of the *human* nobility of that movement.²⁶

"During my first stay in Paris," Marx related much later, "I maintained personal relations with the leaders of the League [of the Just] there, as well as with the leaders of most of the French secret workers' societies, without however joining any of these societies."²⁷ In addition, he threw himself into a furious whirl of reading, attacking a number of problems in various directions, planning and dropping subjects for several books.*

The introduction was written in the first few months of this Paris period, hence under the impact of the new milieu but before Paris had fully taken its effect. It is to be noted that the discussion of the proletariat occurs in the last half of this essay; the first half scarcely prefigures the turn that it is going to take. It gives us a snapshot of Marx in transition to a new view of society, still half-baked, still in process. He still has read little or nothing about the new economic world that has given birth to all these phenomena; it is right afterward that he undertakes his economic studies.

He knows that the criticism of religion—the rut in which Bauer is stuck—is a preoccupation of backwardness, that one must go on from there to an analysis of the society; and he devotes the first page and a half of the essay to saying so. But what he proposes to go on to is the analysis of politics and the state,²⁹ and from there to revolutionary action on elementary humanist grounds: "The criticism of religion ends with the precept that *man is the supreme being for man*, hence with the *categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions* in which man is a degraded, enslaved, forlorn, despicable creature. . . ."³⁰

* Ruge, now on the outs with Marx, wrote in one letter: "He [Marx] reads very much; he works with extraordinary intensity . . . but he finishes nothing, breaks off every time and plunges all over again into an endless sea of books." He might thus stay up three or four nights running. Ruge, in another letter: "He always wants to write about whatever he read last, but then continues to read on, making excerpts anew." Among the books Marx contemplated: the critique of Hegel; a history of the Convention of 1792–1795; a criticism of the socialists; a work on politics.²⁸

5. "PRACTICALS" AND PHILOSOPHERS

The economic question—"the relationship of industry, of the world of wealth in general, to the political world"—occurs to him later only as an example of "a major problem of modern times" which illustrates the backwardness of Germany.³¹ This theme, the backwardness of Germany, is the main subject of the first half of the essay. But, much as he recognizes this fact, he himself is still tied to this backwardness in terms of the framework of his thinking. What is still completely German about Marx in this introduction is the continued assumption—still accepted even while it is consciously set forth for criticism—that the road to understanding society lies *through philosophy*. (He will shortly come to the conclusion that this too must be stood on its head: the road to understanding philosophy lies through social theory.)

The big advance in this part of the essay is precisely Marx's consciousness of the assumption. He understands fully now, and explains, that for this backward Germany, philosophy is the "ideal" (ideological) form in which the modern world manifested itself;³² but what he is still unable to add is: manifested itself *to us, the philosophers*. This lies behind the polemic in which Marx tries to take a third position against both the "practical political party in Germany," on the one hand, and "the theoretical political party, which originated in philosophy," on the other.

The unnamed "practical party" must be the movement of the German communist workers, whose most prominent theoretician is Weitling. Marx now admires Weitling's writings, and will continue to express his admiration—until he, in turn, goes beyond Weitling and sees the latter's backwardness. Right now, he realizes that this practical party is far advanced, in its social critique, beyond the theoretic-philosophic party, that is, the radical trend stemming from the Young Hegelians and including his old self. Yet this practical party had not made its way via philosophy. Which was the right way, that taken by the communist workers or that taken by the radical intellectuals?

Marx does not take the line of defending the "philosophical" party, but rather maintains that both have been one-sided. On the one hand, he lectures the practicals: You cannot get rid of philosophy simply by turning your back on it and refusing to acknowledge it as a part of the German reality. "You demand starting from actual germs of life, but

you forget that the German people's actual life-germ has up to now flourished only in its *cranium*."³³ In order to abolish or transcend (*aufheben*) philosophy, he tells them, you must first make it real for the first time: "*You cannot abolish philosophy without actualizing it.*" Then he turns to the others, the party from which he himself is emerging, and tells them that they have committed the bisymmetrical error of seeing *only* the philosophical struggle, of turning even critical social insights into philosophical formulations, of failing to see that "philosophy as philosophy" was a dead end. "Its basic defect," Marx sums up with the same bisymmetry, "may be reduced to this: *it believed it could actualize philosophy without abolishing [transcending] it.*"³⁴

The difficulty with this bisymmetrical criticism is best seen in the key charge against the practicals: "you forget that the German people's actual life-germ has up to now flourished only in its *cranium*." This was obviously not so: the very existence of the German workers' movement disproved the *only*. Even the artisan communism of Weitling was arising out of the new economic conditions, regardless of the new philosophizing. A very few months after the publication of the introduction, the revolt of the Silesian weavers made clear to all that the new germs of life were not arising only out of the cranial portion of the German social anatomy.

Likewise with the first sentence of the introduction: the aphorism that "the critique of religion is the premise of every critique" did not apply to the working class, nor indeed to social critique in general, but was specific to the intellectual current which was Marx's origin. It was an autobiographical truth, one which could be made by anyone out of Marx's former milieu, but no more than that.

This is the overwhelming characteristic of the whole section which leads up to the introduction of the proletariat. In perfect accord with the Young Hegelian tradition and with all the assumptions of the school in which he had been intellectually raised, the emphasis is on the role of the *philosopher* as the source of revolutionary ferment. "Theory"—that is, perfected philosophy—has to "seize the masses." The same accounts also for the past: "Germany's *revolutionary* past is, indeed, theoretical: it is the *Reformation*. Just as at that time it was the *monk*, now it is the *philosopher* in whose brain the revolution begins."³⁵

This was the standard Young Hegelian attitude—squarely at odds with what was going to be Marx's developed conception of class forces

in history. Within the year he was going to start his first polemic against this very attitude in *The Holy Family*, after he had moved in the opposite direction and after Bauer had moved to push this Young Hegelian intellectual élitism to its extreme.

But in this essay, Marx thinks that the Peasant War "failed because of theology," just as he thinks that the Reformation began in Martin Luther's brain. As for the future, the German status quo "will smash up on philosophy." It is the "philosophical transformation" of the Germans that "will emancipate the *people*."³⁶ The only modern activity in Germany has been "the abstract activity of thought"; Germany has not taken "an active part in the actual struggles of this [modern] development."³⁷ Obviously Marx sees the Young Hegelians' "abstract activity of thought" blown up big as a factor in modern German history because it is still close to him, and he sees the actual struggles of workers in the practical party as nonexistent because he is still far from them. It is precisely this attitude, part of the old baggage of Young Hegelianism which Marx had brought over with him from Germany, that will get rocked in June of that year by the explosion of the Silesian weavers' revolt.

6. NEW CONCEPT OF THE UNIVERSAL CLASS

All this is part of Marx's past. But this essay, which stands tiptoe on a boundary peering into new country, starts a new train of thought with a *however*. There is an interesting symbol of the fact that Marx's direction of development here is toward the new. In that apparently evenhanded rejection of both parties as equally one-sided, there is a significant difference in the way Marx addresses himself to each. The criticism of the practical party adopts the second-person form of address: "You forget . . ." The criticism of the unreconstructed philosophers retains the third person. In the case of the first, he turns to talk *to* them; in the case of the other, he is merely talking *about* them.

The *however* introduces "a major difficulty" that appears to stand in the way of revolution:

Revolutions require a *passive* element, a *material* basis. Theory will always be actualized in a people only insofar as it is the

actualization of their needs. Now will the enormous gap between the demands of German thought and the answers of German actuality correspond to the same gap between civil society and the state and within civil society itself? Will theoretical needs be immediately practical needs? It is not enough that thought should strive toward actualization; actuality must itself strive toward thought.³⁸

The “passive element,” the material basis of the revolution is the “practical needs” of the people, that is, what he would later call their class interests.* Later these interests will be seen as the drive; for now, as before, theory is the active principle. But it is already an advance to pose the dynamics of the revolution as an interaction of the two. (In fact, this notion of the dynamic interaction of theory with material interests will be retained by Marx, only with a different relationship between the components.)

The practical needs are in the first place the economic needs of the people; but at this point Marx has little theoretical conception of the economic life of society, and even his interest in the subject is only on the verge of being aroused. The practical needs are those of a “suffering” people—it is in the suffering that the needs exist; no wonder they appear as a passive element. This view is precisely one of the basic defects of all the socialisms and communisms of the day. The greatest theoretical result of Marx’s economic studies—right up to and including *Capital*—is going to be the transformation of the economic question from merely a lament or indictment of suffering (passive) into the driving mechanism of class struggle (active).

To be sure, it follows that if practical needs (class interests) are viewed as a passive element, the suffering people may also be viewed as a passive element. This remains implicit in the essay, though Marx does not go so far as to say so. It might have been difficult for him to make this conclusion explicit on the heels of his intensive reading about the French Revolution.

One of the difficulties stemming from his philosophic past that Marx had to overcome was the basic idea that the selfish (or particular) interests of *any* one sector of society could not and should not be

* It has been claimed that by the *passive element* Marx here means the proletariat. Obviously not; the paragraph spells out its reference perfectly plainly. The proletariat has not even been mentioned up to this point and for some pages still to come.

promoted as against the general interests of society as a whole (which in Hegel means those of the state). Thus the particular aspirations of the bourgeoisie were, by definition, antisocial, as were similarly limited practical needs of any other social group. Only the bureaucracy, for Hegel, represented the social whole, and hence only the bureaucracy was the universal class, a class which represented not the interest of a part but the general interest. As we have seen, Marx's notebook critique of Hegel's theory sought to refute precisely this conception of the bureaucracy: he sought to show that the bureaucracy too had its own interests separate from and opposed to the best interests of the social whole. But if the bureaucracy could not be considered the universal class because it acted for its own practical needs, could there be any universal class at all?

In the introduction, Marx meets this problem by working out a basically changed conception of a universal class. It is no longer Hegel's, which was devised to account for the *stability* of the status quo, but rather a universal class which functions toward a revolutionary overthrow of the status quo.

The first model in which he presents this is the pattern of the French Revolution, which is seen here (wrongly) as "a partial, merely political revolution"—because it was merely the emancipation of the bourgeoisie from the aristocracy and not of all society from private property rule. The French bourgeoisie "emancipates the whole society, but only on the condition that the whole society shares the situation of this class—hence, for example, that it has money and education or can obtain them at will." This condition is not true, of course; but it was accepted as the assumption of the French Revolution.

No class of civil society can play this role unless it arouses an impulse of enthusiasm in itself and in the masses; an impulse in which it fraternizes and coalesces with society in general, identifies with it, and is felt and recognized to be its *general representative*; an impulse in which its demands and rights are truly the rights and demands of society itself and in which it is really the head and heart of society. Only in the name of the universal rights of society can a particular class lay claim to universal dominance. To capture this position as emancipator and thereby gain political exploitation of all spheres of society in the interest of its own sphere, revolutionary energy and intellectual self-confidence alone are not sufficient.³⁹

Just as this class appears as the embodiment of all society's interests, so another class must embody the "notorious crime of the whole society," must have the role of the oppressor class.

Thus Hegel's conception of the universal class is revised from the unrealistic view that some class can embody society's universal interest in a permanent, never-changing way. Marx's version is: in a particular historical context, the context of revolution, the universal significance of a given class may coincide with its particular role; its selfish interests may, at this conjuncture, coincide with the interests of the masses and "the universal rights of society."

In France in 1789, that class was the bourgeoisie. Is there such a class in the Germany of the 1840s? asks Marx. This is the major difficulty he had referred to. "Every particular class in Germany, however . . . lacks the consistency, the acuteness, the courage and the ruthlessness which could stamp it as the negative representative of society." There is no villain in the cast (an opinion, we must point out in anticipation, which he will modify). Is there a hero class to fit the pattern in Germany?

Likewise every class lacks that breadth of soul which identifies itself, if only momentarily, with the soul of the people; that genius which inspires material force to political power; that revolutionary boldness which hurls at its adversary the defiant words: *I am nothing and I should be everything*.⁴⁰

There is no revolutionary universal class ready for the job in Germany, not as yet.

7. THE PROLETARIAT AS "UNIVERSAL CLASS"

What about the bourgeoisie? Not this German bourgeoisie, says Marx; its opportunity has passed it by. No sooner does any class begin a struggle against the class above than it is in turn involved in struggle with the class below: "the proletariat is already beginning to engage in struggle against the bourgeoisie." (This is the first time the proletariat comes in for mention.) Conclusion: in Germany "no class of civil society has the need and the capacity for universal emancipation until it

is forced to it by its *immediate* situation, by *material* necessity, by its *very chains*.⁴¹

"Until it is forced to it": the injection of this qualification is by no means prepared by the preceding argumentation. For one thing, it narrows the gulf between the French and German conditions which Marx had been emphasizing, for was not the French bourgeoisie also forced to it eventually? As we will see in a later part, there is a problem here that will not be cleared up for several years. In any case, Marx is saying that he does not think the German bourgeoisie will ever be forced to it. He turns to the next candidate, the class below it.

Where, then, is the *positive* possibility of German emancipation?

Answer: In the formation of a class with *radical chains* . . .

That is, a class whose oppression stems from the very *roots* of society, its private property relations—not simply any oppressed class.

. . . a class of civil [*bürgerlich*] society that is not a class of *bürgerlich* society . . .

This is a play on the shifting meaning of *bürgerlich*: from civil society to the kind of civil society characteristic of the modern scene, *bourgeois* society. The proletariat is a nonbourgeois class in civil society; it is in bourgeois society but not of it.

. . . an estate [*Stand*] which is the dissolution of all estates . . .

This is a less happy formulation; taken literally, it is better said of the bourgeoisie, whose dominance means the dissolution of the estate system, though not of class society. Therefore the translation may be bent: "a class which is the dissolution of all classes."

. . . a social sphere which has a universal character because of its universal suffering, and lays claim to no *particular right* because no *particular wrong*, only wrong in general, is committed against it; . . .

Here again it is the passive aspect of the proletariat—its suffering and wrongs, as previously its chains—that is urged as its claim, not its potentialities for active struggle.

. . . a sphere which can no longer invoke a *historical* title but only a *human* one; which does not stand in one-sided opposition to the consequences, but in all-around opposition to the premises of

the German political system; a sphere, finally, which cannot emancipate itself at all without emancipating itself from all other social spheres, thereby emancipating all those other social spheres; a sphere, in short, which is the *complete loss* of the human being, and hence only by *fully regaining the human being* can it gain itself. This dissolution of society in the form of a particular class [*Stand*] is the *proletariat*.⁴²

The strong side of this statement, which will remain with Marx and only be developed further, is that it does not, after all, propose a hero class against a villain class. It does not glorify its nominee for the revolutionary class; if anything, it falls over in the opposite direction, in seeming to equate alienation with complete dehumanization. It does not propose the proletariat merely *because of* the proletariat's own practical needs, however philanthropic one may feel about them, but because the proletariat's needs coincide at this historical juncture with the universal needs of society.

Its weak side, from the standpoint of developed Marxism, we have already pointed out sufficiently: it does not yet bring to the fore the *active* potentiality of the proletariat's place in society. This weakness is entirely bound up with its underlying vice: it has no economic underpinning. There is yet no understanding of economic exploitation as the root of the social position of the proletariat, as the root also of many of the assertions which appear only as insights. Hence a general view of the class struggle is missing, and with it the solution to (among other things) the dehumanizing effect of the new bourgeois society. It is only later that Marx comes to stress that struggle has the social function not merely of (eventually) overthrowing the ruling class but also, in the first place, of making the proletariat fit to rule.

Marx here points to the proletariat with the knowledge, plainly stated, that "the proletariat is only beginning to appear in Germany as a result of the industrial development taking place." It is the class of the future, only barely visible in the present. For one thing, this certifies that he is using the term in the new sense, for he has found it in the same place that von Stein reported it from: the Paris cauldron of revolutionary ideas.

But even in Paris—let alone France, a geographical entity sometimes forgotten by Paris residents—the new class was still far from embracing a majority of the people, or even of the working people. Yet earlier in this essay Marx had written that, as distinct from backward Germany,

"in France and England it is a question of abolishing monopoly, which has progressed to its final consequences . . .!" This may be taken as a warning against brashly announcing "final" stages, but of course Marx knows little about economic development as yet. Even so, it is worth noting that not only does he make no claim about the *size* of the proletariat in France or England, but his whole mode of approach eliminates this as a pivotal question. In the present essay, the decisive thing about the proletariat is that it can play the role of the general representative of society; later it will be added that it can *lead* the general majority of society.

In any case, it should not be supposed that by this time Marx already has a clear conception of the proletariat as a socioeconomic entity; the word is still elastic enough to mean *the workers* in a general way. The more definite later meaning should not be read back into the 1843 manuscript.*

8. PHILOSOPHY AND THE PROLETARIAT

If we have sufficiently emphasized the transitional character of this essay, then it should be clear why the final summary paragraphs are more ambiguous than could have been understood at the time. In this first announcement of the special role of the proletariat, Marx is still moving in a twilight zone between the élitism taken for granted by Young Hegelianism and a revolutionary principle which has not yet been developed.

Just as philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *intellectual* weapons in philosophy; and as soon as the lightning of thought has struck deep into this unspoiled soil of the people the emancipation of the *Germans* into *men* will be carried out.

Let us summarize the result:

The only *practically* possible emancipation of Germany is emancipation based on *the* theory which declares that man is the

* Even as late as 1847 Marx could refer to "the proletariat of feudal times," that is, the serf class; he does this twice in his book *The Poverty of Philosophy*. On presenting the book to a friend in 1876, he corrected the phrase in the margin to the "working class" of feudalism.⁴³

supreme being for man. . . . The *head* of this emancipation is *philosophy*, its *heart* is the *proletariat*. Philosophy cannot be actualized without the abolition [*Aufhebung*] of the proletariat; the proletariat cannot be abolished without the actualization of philosophy.⁴⁴

Any good Young Hegelian would have no doubt about how to read the repeated references to philosophy: *Philosophy* means *us*, the philosophers. Bauer was insisting on this point that very year in his own writings—writings that Marx was going to set out to demolish before the year was up. The young Engels, whose course of development will come up in another chapter, had no doubt about how to read it. As late as March 1845 he referred, in the English Owenite paper, to the prediction by Marx “a year ago” of the union of “the German philosophers” and the German workers, a union now “all but accomplished.” He added: “With the philosophers to think, and the working men to fight for us, will any earthly power be strong enough to resist our progress?”⁴⁵

This conception of the division of labor was not only standard Young Hegelian, it was also, in less candid form, equally the conception of the allegedly proletarian communist Weitling and the anarchist Proudhon, of the philanthropic Owen or the hierarchic Saint-Simon—in fact, of all the extant socialisms and communisms except those that had no use for any kind of thinking at all. But Marx was on another road.

Every indication of context is that *philosophy* is to be read at its face value, meaning theory. If “the proletariat finds its intellectual weapons in philosophy,” it is not because philosophers become their weapons; rather “the lightning of thought”—*theory* as the necessary complement to the practical party—has to electrify the popular soil so that the Germans finally are made “men.” The statement that the abolition or transcendence of the proletariat (the abolition of the wage system) is necessary in order to actualize “philosophy” makes good sense if it is a question of actualizing theory; it makes no sense if it is a question of actualizing (realizing, making real) the philosophers themselves.

But as yet this ambiguity cannot be resolved any farther. The important thing is not to prove the obvious proposition that Marx did not leap from darkness to dazzling light in a day, but rather to see the direction in which he was moving out of the inevitable twilight zone. And how rapidly: during the year 1844 his steps on the road to Marxism have to be dated by the month. The question we have just mooted will be completely resolved within a year.

7 | TOWARD A THEORY OF THE PROLETARIAT

The same double number of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* that carried Marx's three contributions also included two articles by a young man with whom Marx was only slightly acquainted, Friedrich Engels. This is the point where Engels' road first meets Marx's, though without converging as yet.

Engels' contributions had a characteristic more important than anything they actually said: they brought England into the picture. All of Marx's articles had been centered on Germany despite other allusions; that is what he knew about.* He was just discovering a second country, France, as it could not be got out of books; and the concept of the magazine itself had already attempted to link these two countries, to fuse the left wing of German philosophical radicalism with the left wing of French politics.

Now the third component was brought forward: English political economy on the background of English social conditions. It was this third component that transformed Marx's theory of the proletariat in the course of the following year and gave it a firm foundation.

* England's social situation had also been *terra incognita* for Lorenz von Stein, whose book on France had first introduced French socialism and communism to the German public less than two years before. In *The Holy Family* Marx was conscious of the importance of this advance beyond von Stein: he rallies Bauer about his ignorance of the English movement, explaining that it is due to the fact that Bauer found nothing about it in von Stein's book.¹

1. ENGELS' CONTRIBUTION

The innovation came naturally to Engels. Like Marx he was a Rhinelander by birth, but he came from the more industrialized section to the north. His father was a well-to-do textile manufacturer in the Wupper valley: Barmen, where he was born, and Elberfeld, where he went to school, are today part of the industrial city named Wuppertal. He grew up with the Industrial Revolution, amidst (though not of) a working class such as did not exist around Trier or Cologne. His mind was not formed in a university milieu. He had been pulled out of high school before the age of seventeen to learn the family business, mainly as a commercial apprentice in Bremen; and only for about a year, while doing military service in Berlin, did he sit in on university lectures and get acquainted with the Young Hegelian circle in the capital, arriving some months after Marx had left.

Intellectually he went through three main stages during this time: (1) religious emancipation—from the narrowminded, Calvinistic, and stultifying Pietism of his family and hometown friends; (2) enthusiasm for the liberal democratic radicalism of the Young Germany movement, and especially for the democratic-oppositionist writer and journalist Ludwig Börne; and (3) Young Hegelian leftism and atheism, merging under Moses Hess's influence into what Hess called communism. He had published articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung* under a pseudonym before Marx became editor.

Then his father shipped him off to the family business branch in Manchester, the capital of industrial England, in the latter part of November 1842. (On the way he stopped off in Cologne to see the *Rheinische Zeitung* people, and thus he met editor Marx for the first time; there were no sparks.)

Barely settled in England, he began writing a series of articles for the *RZ* on the social situation in the country. Soon (exact time unknown) he formed a liaison with Mary Burns, an Irish workingwoman, who was to be his companion till her death. This link was no doubt important in giving him access to the life of the working class and its movements, for Mary Burns was a militant revolutionist of the plebeian Irish nationalist type which, under English industrial conditions, was one of the greatest leavens of the proletarian and socialist milieu of the time. Engels has been accused of seeing England through her "prejudiced"

eyes; but at the same time he was surrounded in his business life by the choicest representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie. It was a double life, making possible a double vision which could hardly have been enjoyed by any other observer of the new economic reality in its most advanced bastion.

2. FROM BARMEN TO MANCHESTER

Engels' progress toward a new view of the proletariat was a gradual one. During his Bremen period, when he oriented himself toward socioliterary journalism after the Börne model, he succeeded in raising a small scandal with a two-part pseudonymous article "Letters from the Wuppertal," published in the organ of Young Germany. The first part devastatingly describes how "the whole district lies submerged under a sea of Pietism and philistinism,"² and includes striking views of the misery of the workers. But the workers are only the object of pity and indignation; they are seen wholly from the outside. The writer notes that the factory workers resort to drink as an anodyne, the artisans to a mindless religiosity laced with brandy; and it is clear that this much one can see hurrying through the streets.³ The factory operatives are viewed merely as victims: they are forced to breathe more coal dust and smoke than oxygen; from the age of six they lose their strength and joy in life; they are mercilessly sweated and suffer an incredible incidence of disease; child labor ruins the next generation.

But the rich manufacturers have an elastic conscience, and blighting the life of one child more or less does not send any Pietist soul to hell, especially if he goes to church twice every Sunday.⁴

When the occasion arose, Engels' invocation was to the people in the usual liberal fashion. One such occasion was the anniversary of the July revolution of 1830 in France, celebrated in classical meter under the title "German July Days":

A-toss in my boat, I am thinking of you, O princes and kings of
Germany:
The patient people once raised you up on the gilded throne that
you sit on,
Bore you in triumph the homeland through, and expelled the
daring invader.

Then you grew brazen and arrogance-filled, you broke your word
 and your promise,
 Now out of France whirls the storm, and the masses of people are
 surging,
 And your throne is tossed like a boat in the storm, in your hand
 the scepter is trembling.
 On you above all, Ernst August, do I bend my eyes in anger:
 Rashly, O despot, you flouted the law—hark to the storm's roar
 swelling!
 As the people look up with piercing eye and the sword scarce
 rests in the scabbard,
 Say: Rest you as safe on your golden throne as I in my boat
 a-tossing?⁵

But there were no princes or kings in the Wuppertal; the workers whom the young man pitied were exploited by the same factory princes and cotton kings whose class had put Louis Philippe on the throne in July 1830. The king, Friedrich Wilhelm III, who had broken his promise to grant a constitution after Napoleon was expelled, had mainly aroused the anger of the church-going sweaters, not of the inebriated operatives or the psalm-singing craftsmen. This was still the rhetoric of Young Germany.

England changed all that. Socially, Manchester was a different world—a thoroughly bourgeois society such as could not be found anywhere in Germany, not even in Paris, nor even yet in London in concentrated form. At this point Engels was one of the few Continental revolutionaries who could be said to be living *under capitalism*.

As he circulated in the milieu of his business associates, he attended meetings of the workers' movements, read their press, got acquainted with their propagandists, met their leaders—John Watts and James Leach in Manchester; George Julian Harney, the left Chartist leader, in Leeds; the Owenites of *The New Moral World*, which began publishing articles by him in February. And what is most important, here there *was* a genuinely proletarian movement, quite class-conscious on various levels, from the revolutionary socialist wing of Chartism which Harney represented to the trade unionists. Three months before Engels' arrival, the trade unions had arrived at the point of attempting a general strike covering the industrial north—the so-called “summer uprising” or “August insurrection” which was intimidated by armed force.

In this capitalist society, not only was there an advanced economic development and class structure, but a pattern of political movement which was congruent with the class structure. There were parties roughly reflecting the main classes of the society. While *party* was an elastic term,* this was true even of organized movements—Tories, Whigs, Radicals, Chartists, and so on.

Late in life, Engels remarked in a letter that he had been “fortunate in being thrown into the center of modern, big industry and in being the first to keep my eyes open for the interconnections—at least [he added modestly] the most superficial ones.” Rejecting an intended compliment which labeled him the “founder of descriptive economics” on the strength of his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, he pointed to the economists before him who had written descriptively on workers’ conditions and general economic conditions. What he had pioneered in developing was the connection between descriptive economics and a new type of socialist theory.⁶

3. REPORTS FROM ANOTHER WORLD

The articles on the situation in England that Engels started sending back to be read by German leftists were therefore quite unusual, if not unique, at the time. His first series of five were sent to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and must have passed through the hands of Marx as editor; they were published during December 1842. It had been only a few months previously that von Stein’s book on French socialism and communism had first revealed, to the upsettment of the German burgher, the portentous political world of Paris, and classified the new social animal called the proletariat. Engels’ articles must have read to many like reports from another planet: indeed they gave a picture of another world.

From the first article, one of Engels’ main points was that revolu-

* *Political lexicon*: At this time and for a long time to come, the word *party* in the European languages did not necessarily imply an electoral organization, nor, in fact, necessarily an organized movement of any kind. It frequently meant nothing more than a political or ideological *tendency*. When the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was published by the Communist League in 1848, the title did not imply that an organization named the Communist party existed.^{5a}

tionary ideas were not a characteristic of a wing of the educated classes as in Germany, but rather rife among the workers, the proletarians.

Hence Chartism has been able to strike no roots at all among the educated in England, and will not do so very soon. When Chartists and Radicals are mentioned here, it is taken almost universally to mean the yeast of the masses, the mass of proletarians.⁷

To be sure, in these articles Engels' conception of what exactly comprised the working class was not at all fixed, since it did not rest on a theoretical generalization. It was a description rather than a scientific term. His second article began by speaking of the "lowest class," and of the "propertyless" or "non-property-owners" as if this was the name of a class. Included were also the tenant farmers on the land, who were indeed workingpeople too.

This is followed by increased emphasis on the workers in industry, but it would be misleading to try to read an exact class notion into the terms:

... industry does indeed enrich a country, but it also creates a class of non-property-owners, of the absolutely poor, who live from hand to mouth, who increase by leaps and bounds—a class which cannot subsequently be abolished since it can never acquire stable property. And a third, almost a half, of England belongs to this class. The slightest stagnation in trade makes a large part of this class jobless [literally, *breadless*]; a big trade crisis makes the whole class jobless. ... But by virtue of its size this class has become the strongest in England, and woe to the English wealthy if it becomes conscious of that fact.

It certainly has not, so far. The English proletarian is only as yet beginning to suspect his strength, and the result of this suspicion was the turmoil of last summer [August].⁸

The difference from Germany is brought out specifically. The middle class, writes Engels, has the position of an aristocracy in relation to the workers,

and in a country like England which lives only on industry and therefore has a mass of workers, this fact must instill consciousness sooner than, for example, in Germany, where the artisans and peasants are conceived of as middle class and the extensive class of factory workers are not known at all.⁹

After this series for the *Rheinische Zeitung*, there is a hiatus of some months, during which Engels read political economy and history. Meanwhile the *RZ* was suppressed, leaving no successor in Germany; his next articles were sent to a Swiss republican organ as "Letters from London," published during May and June 1843. The subject is again a more or less connected account of the social situation in England. The second letter (of four) describes the strength of the Chartist movement among the workers and hence the mass of the population; the third makes the socialist (Owenite) movement look very important. The fourth reflects the education derived through Mary Burns and is devoted to the Irish question, including the Irish workers' movement inside England. (The young man writes, about the mass support wasted on Dan O'Connell: "Give me two hundred thousand Irishmen and I could overthrow the entire British monarchy.")¹⁰

The December reference to the Radicals is corrected here: the Radical party is identified as mainly lower middle class; the Chartists as "the °working men,° the proletarians"; the Owenite socialists as recruited from both class strata.

Thus England exhibits the noteworthy fact that the lower a class stands in society and the more "uneducated" it is in the usual sense of the word, the closer is its relation to progress and the greater is its future.

This sounds like a conclusion about the proletarian nature of the social revolution, but in fact Engels has not yet generalized that far; it holds only for England.

In Germany the movement stems not only from the educated but even the learned class [that is, university elements]; in England the educated and the learned elements have been deaf and blind to the signs of the times for three hundred years.¹¹

4. ENGELS' FIRST PERIOD IN MANCHESTER

How very far Engels was, in fact, from a revolutionary social *theory* of the proletariat was fully brought out in the autumn of 1843, when he started writing about social movements on the Continent for the Owenite paper, *The New Moral World*. Conceptually he

was still where Hess had left him. German development is entirely different from that of England or France, apparently solely because of the national character: "the Germans became Communists *philosophically*, by reasoning upon the first principles," he informs the practical English.¹² In France, it is true, he sees the rise of communism as the outcome of the working class, which "seized upon Babeuf's Communism" after 1830; and it would appear that communism then spread among the workingmen. But then he also thinks that the communists in France include not only the peaceful Cabet but also the reformist Leroux, the Christian socialist Lammenais and the very anti-communist Proudhon.

The state of his thinking becomes most evident with respect to Germany. He recognizes Weitling's movement as a workingmen's communism, while justly explaining that "Germany having comparatively little manufacturing industry, the mass of the working classes is made up by handicraftsmen."¹³ The Weitlingites form the "popular party" which "will no doubt very soon unite all the working classes of Germany." But he devotes more space to the philosophical Communism that emerged from Young Hegelianism, including in this party not only Marx but also Ruge and the poet Georg Herwegh, who were in no sense communists. Obviously this other kind of communism has, itself, nothing to do with the working classes. It will win the Germans, however, because they are so philosophical:

... the Germans are a philosophical nation, and will not, cannot abandon Communism, as soon as it is founded upon sound philosophical principles. . . . There is a greater chance in Germany for the establishment of a Communist party among the educated classes of society, than anywhere else. The Germans are a very disinterested nation; if in Germany principle comes into collision with interest, principle will almost always silence the claims of interest. The same love of abstract principle, the same disregard of reality and self-interest, which have brought the Germans to a state of political nonentity, these very same qualities guarantee the success of philosophical Communism in that country. It will appear very singular to Englishmen, that a party which aims at the destruction of private property, is chiefly made up by those who have property; and yet this is the case in Germany. We can recruit our ranks from those classes only which have enjoyed a pretty good education; that is, from the universities and from the

commercial class; and in either we have not hitherto met with any considerable difficulty.¹⁴

This too was pure Hess¹⁵ on the background of the student élitism of the Young Hegelians. He had not yet advanced beyond it theoretically, even though English conditions enforced quite different views for the English case.

Engels' first articles in the English press were published in the Owenite *New Moral World* and the left Chartist *Northern Star*.^{*} The Owenite movement was definitely socialistic in the sense familiar to Engels: it proposed a model (utopian) socialist society like those of Cabet, Weitling, and so on; but it was not a working-class movement. As he himself had noted, it recruited workers as well as middle-class people, but it was not a movement of the working class. On the other hand, Chartism was not only a movement of the working class, it was *the* movement of the militant working class; it was the very embodiment of the English class struggle at the level the class had then reached. It was, as he shortly wrote, "nothing but the political expression of public opinion among the workers."¹⁶ But as a whole it was definitely nonsocialist; and even its socialist wing, while revolutionary enough in an English sort of way, was by no means ideologically clear by the standards of the Continent.

Engels had earlier got acquainted with the German émigré communists in London who formed the League of the Just—Schapper, Moll, Bauer, and the rest; and the great impact they made on him was recorded in 1885.¹⁷ But in fact its effect was latent. He developed his relations with Harney and the left Chartists—a very important fact for the near future—but for the present Chartism was labeled radical democratic¹⁸ as against Owenism's tag of socialist.

Then there was a third sector of the working-class movement, neither Chartist nor Owenite socialist—the trade unions, new and embattled. They had in fact just attempted a general strike, no less. But Engels' unanalyzed attitude, here too, is standard Continental. There is as yet no indication that he has any special contact with them, is interested in a relationship, or holds a view about their future.

^{*} The new English version of the Marx-Engels *Collected Works*, volume 3, discloses new pieces by Engels in *The Northern Star*, showing that he began writing regularly for the periodical earlier than previously known.

All this describes the then standard revolutionary attitude in its best form. It provides a benchmark from which to measure the great transformation to be accomplished by Marx's theory of the proletariat. The sequel for Engels will appear in Chapter 10.

5. ON CARLYLE

It was while Engels was writing his first articles for *The New Moral World* (November 1843 to beginning of 1844) that he also wrote the two articles for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

One of them—actually the second one written—was a continuation of his series of articles on the “Condition-of-England question,” to use the phrase which had already been made famous by Thomas Carlyle. This one, in fact, was a review of the latest book by Carlyle himself, *Past and Present*. Carlyle's views will concern us in another volume, but we must mention now that his prophetic uniqueness among the well-known writers of the time was his sensitivity to the threat of subversion from below, from the Lower Orders, specifically the Working Classes (capitalized, of course). In this book, as before and after, his message was an appeal to the ruling classes to do something before the dark sullen masses overran Civilization. The “something” was usually philanthropy, plus despotism, but in the earlier versions it was philanthropy that set the tone, accompanied by a rhetorical broadside against both the aristocracy and the middle class.

In his article Engels quoted Carlyle's castigation of the ruling classes with natural relish but used it to present the English working class in a quite different light—not as a menace to be pitied, propitiated, and put down, but as the class of the future that would replace the worn-out and exhausted holders of present power.

The English—that is, the English of the educated classes, from whom the national character is judged on the Continent—these English are the most contemptible slaves under the sun. Only the sector of the English nation that is unknown on the Continent, only the workers, England's pariahs, the poor, are really respectable, despite all their roughness and all their demoralization. From them will come England's salvation; they still possess plas-

ticity; they have no education, but also no prejudices; they still have forces to expend on a great national achievement—they still have a future.¹⁹

On the one hand is the condition of the ruling strata according to Carlyle: the landed aristocracy sunk in idleness, the bourgeoisie in Mammonism, Parliament in corruption, philosophy in laissez-faire, religion in despair; everywhere “a general spiritual death”; the educated classes are “impervious to any progress, and still kept going to some degree only by the pressure of the working class,” says Engels.²⁰ On the other hand, “a disproportionately strong working class, under intolerable conditions of hardship and misery, wild dissatisfaction and rebellion against the old social order, and hence a threatening, irresistible advancing democracy. . . .”²¹

In this essay, as we have noted before, the attitude toward Chartism is favorable but cool—cool because it is merely about political, not social, change. “Social evils are not to be cured by People’s Charters,” Engels writes critically, “and the people feel this—otherwise the People’s Charter would be the basic law of England today.” Chartism has to be victorious, but it will be only a passing stage. He is critical of the Owenites too—for they are, after all, empirical Englishmen and panacea-mongers in their own way—but they are “the sole party in England that has a future, relatively weak though they may be. Democracy, Chartism must soon win out, and then the mass of workers will have only the choice between starvation and Socialism.”²²

6. FIRST STEP IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

It is Engels’ other article in this issue of the *DFJ* that marks a new step—and that also had an immediate impact on the magazine’s editor, Marx. Entitled “Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy,” it was the fruit of Engels’ studies of the British economists, and was a first effort (outside of England itself) to draw socialist conclusions from their work. It is, perhaps, more important now for its effect on Marx than its contribution to the subject, for a materially based theory of the proletariat as revolutionary class could be based only on such an inquiry into the economic system.

But in the essay itself, the spotlight is by no means on the working

class or its role. The worker is only one of the cast of characters, so to speak. Indeed, at first the focus is on trade, not production; further on the productive system takes center stage, but not in a systematic way. It is only incidentally that we hear of "the division of mankind into capitalists and workers—a division which daily becomes ever more acute, and which, as we shall see, is *bound* to deepen."²³ The article ends with the statement that another subject, the factory system, has been left out, because he has "neither the inclination nor the time to treat this here."²⁴

There is no doubt that this essay of Engels' was at least one of the important influences, if not the most important one, that turned Marx toward the study of political economy at this time. He was anxious to acknowledge its impact more than once.* The economists whom he proceeded to read were, for the most part, those mentioned in Engels' article. His study notebook shows excerpts first from that article itself, then Say, Skarbek, Smith, Ricardo, and James Mill—at which point there occurs an extended comment which turns into Marx's first draft of an essay in economics. Our interest, as before, is not in its significance for the development of Marx's economic theory, but a more limited one: its relationship to the development of a theory of the proletariat.

The difference from Engels' article is that, for most of the note, the focus is on labor and the laborer, though there is only an incidental mention of "the antithesis between capitalist and worker."²⁹ The subject, however, is not wage labor (*Lohnarbeit*) but what Marx here calls *Erwerbsarbeit*, labor carried on to earn a living. The difference between the two is crucial to understanding what Marx is writing about. Labor for wages puts the spotlight on the relation between the worker and the capitalist who pays him; labor to earn a living spotlights the difference between labor performed for its own sake and labor performed simply to stay alive, with no interest in the labor itself. The latter is therefore a broader term, comprising more than wage labor. Marx indicates this also by deriving it from the relationship of ex-

* Later in 1844, writing the preface to his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx noted that the German socialist works on political economy that he had used were Hess's articles of 1843 and Engels' articles in the *DFJ*, plus Weitling's writings.²⁵ Engels' article is also given considerable credit by Marx in *The Holy Family*.²⁶ In the preface to his *Critique of Political Economy* of 1859, Marx also acknowledges Engels' "brilliant sketch."²⁷ It is even quoted three times in the first volume of *Capital*, and mentioned once.²⁸

change,³⁰ not from the capitalist-worker antithesis: wherever products are made for exchange, not out of immediate human need or enjoyment by the laborer, there you have *Erwerbsarbeit*.

This conception, Marx will find, is not serviceable to explain the laws of motion of capitalist production; but that is not the line of thought in which Marx is engaged at this point. The concept of *Erwerbsarbeit* does concretize what Marx had discussed in his *DFJ* article: it gives something of an economic meaning to the dehumanizing effect of labor on the "class with radical chains."

For, when labor is merely labor to earn a living,

it becomes altogether *accidental* and *immaterial* not only whether the producer's relationship to his product is one of immediate enjoyment and personal need, but also whether the *activity*, the act of working itself, is for him the self-enjoyment of his personality, the realization of his natural predispositions and spiritual aims.

In this case, the worker labors only to satisfy social needs that are alien to him, external to his own individuality, needs that act as an external constraint on his being and to which, therefore, he has the relationship of a slave. The aim of labor becomes merely to maintain existence, not the act of labor itself; living becomes merely earning a living.³¹

My labor should be a *free expression of life*, hence an *enjoyment of living*. [But] on the premise of private property, it means *alienation of life*,* because I work *in order to live*, in order to provide myself with the *means* of living. My working is *not* living. . . . On the premise of private property, my individuality is alienated to the point where this *activity* is *hateful* to me, a *torment*, only the *appearance* of an activity, and therefore also only a *forced* activity, one which is imposed on me by an *external*, accidental need, *not* by an *internal*, necessary need.³²

This conception of alienated labor will shortly be elaborated in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, whose passages on the subject

* There is an incidental play on words here: "expression of life" is *Lebens-äusserung*, and "alienation of life" is *Lebensentäusserung*. This may help to underline that *Entäusserung* can be translated as "alienation" only if it is understood to connote also *externalization*—not one's alienation from life, but the making of a part of one's life (labor) a thing external to one's human predispositions. This is essentially the same way that the similar word *Entfremdung* (estrangement, alienation) is used in *Capital* and in the *Grundrisse*.

are better known, and still later integrated into the economic analysis in *Capital*. What we are interested in, at this point, is what it does *not* yet say. For as long as labor is conceived as *Erwerbsarbeit*, rather than wage labor, one can arrive at an important observation about work in general and about the working classes in the old sense; but one cannot arrive at a theory of the proletariat, the modern working class.

It is exactly this conception that is transformed in the very first sentence of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*.

7. ENTER: THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The key to understanding the Manuscripts is that they are the first fruits of Marx's study of political economy, that is, of the system of *developed* capitalism.* For the first time the subject does not revolve around German problems and German conditions. The impact of Engels' writings and of his own readings in British and French political economy is evident in the references especially to English social conditions. For the first time Marx confronts modern capitalism in its contemporary form, rather than the backwardness of a country that still has one foot in the old regime. Even more specifically, the focus is not simply on the commercial phenomena of capitalism but on industry, the factory system:

All wealth has become *industrial* wealth, the *wealth* of labor, and *industry* is consummated labor, just as the *factory system* is the perfected essence of *industry*, that is of labor, and *industrial capital* is the consummated objective form of private property.³⁴

* With the exception, of course, of the incidental notebook passage on James Mill already discussed. The title *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* was conferred in MEGA (1932) and is a little misleading, for until the very last chapter it is definitely focused on political economy, not philosophy. In fact, in writing the preface with a view to publication, Marx felt called on to explain that he "considered the concluding chapter of the present work, the settling of accounts with the *Hegelian dialectic* and philosophy in general, to be entirely necessary, [since] a job like that has not been carried out." Before this, referring to the work as a whole, he had stressed that it resulted from "a wholly empirical analysis based on a conscientious critical study of political economy."³³ He clearly saw the subject of the work as political economy, not philosophy.

This realization was a giant step. Even Engels' essay had not felt compelled to start with the factory system; that subject was merely promised for a future time. This step likewise does away with the category of *Erwerbsarbeit* (labor to earn a living) as a central notion. In the factory system, labor is *wage labor*. Hence the first sentence of the first manuscript is this: "*Wages are determined through the antagonistic struggle between capitalist and worker.*"³⁵

Thus with the first sentence the concept of the class struggle becomes inseparable from the analysis of modern society. In Marxist theory the class struggle is the middle term, the *trait d'union*, between economics and politics as between economics and historical analysis. This is where it starts, as a consciously formulated approach.

The class struggle between labor and capital is not simply a fact, it is the active principle representing the *contradiction* within modern society:

But the antithesis between *propertylessness* and *property*, as long as it is not understood as the antithesis of *labor* and *capital*, is still a passive antithesis, one which is not grasped in its *active connection*, in its *internal* relationship—not yet grasped as a *contradiction*.³⁶

It is in modern times, under the factory system which produces this antithesis between labor and capital, that the antithesis becomes a "developed relationship of contradiction, hence a dynamic relationship driving to resolution."³⁷ Moreover, it is built into the system; the political economists are wrong to view it as accidental:

... the political economist postulates the original unity of capital and labor as the unity of capitalist and worker; this is the original state of paradise. How these two factors, as two persons, leap at each other's throats is for the political economist an *accidental* event, hence to be explained only from the outside.³⁸

The working class is not merely the suffering class; it is organically linked with the idea of a class that "has to struggle."³⁹ The class struggle is generalized even beyond the labor-capital relation. Thus

The rent of land is established through the *struggle between tenant and landlord*. Throughout political economy we find the hostile contraposition of interests, struggle, warfare, recognized as the basis of social organization.⁴⁰

But the decisive antagonism today is between the two polar classes characteristic of the new system; for the capitalists acquire landed property and the landlords become capitalists:

The final result is therefore the disappearance of the difference between capitalist and landowner, so that thus there remain, on the whole, only two classes in the population, the working class and the class of capitalists.⁴¹

And, finally, as the landowners are ruined as a class, and the conditions of the workers are worsened, all this "necessarily leads to revolution."⁴² Marx sees "the necessity that the whole revolutionary development finds both its empirical and theoretical basis in the development of *private property*—of the economy, to be exact."⁴³

These form a series of momentous conclusions for the recasting of the socialist movement. The formulations are far from finished; the argumentation is full of gaps; but already this is a socialism (or communism) which is qualitatively different from any existing. No longer is the proletariat merely a suffering class, merely a "class with radical chains"; it is the class which is at the levers of the whole economy. No longer can the new type of worker, the industrial wage-workers, blur into the same background as other people who earn a living by their labor—they now have a meaning as a class in their own right. No longer is this class merely an object of injustice and oppression; it is a class that *must* struggle.

The basic elements of a theory of the revolutionary proletariat are now in existence.

2. NEW CONCEPT OF ALIENATED LABOR

There is a second big change wrought by the Manuscripts in the concept of the proletariat: in the meaning of the *alienation* of labor. In the notebook comment on Mill, Marx was still working with, or working out, a notion of alienation which was by no means essentially original with him. It had already been largely suggested (via Hegel and Feuerbach's idea of alienation) by Moses Hess's essays of 1843 and 1844, which Marx had read with appreciation.⁴⁴ The target, as we have seen, was the *kind of work* enforced on the laborer by the existence of private property exchange relations.

This is now seen by Marx as only one aspect of the alienation of labor. It is still very important, to be sure: it is twice elaborated to considerable effect.⁴⁵ But what is new is that Marx explains another aspect of this alienation that ties in closely with his new view of the economy in society.

This new aspect emerges only through "*considering the direct relationship between the worker (labor) and production.*" Until now, Marx says, we have been considering only the worker's relationship to the *products* of his labor—that is, he is compelled to labor on things that have no direct, human meaning for him. "But the estrangement [or alienation] manifests itself not only in the result but in the *act of production*, within the *producing activity* itself."⁴⁶

Specifically, it is production in the factory system that is in question. The shift in perspective is a basic one, with long-range implications for Marx's continuing analysis of economic forces. Consider this difference: the earlier aspects of alienation would also apply, say, to a peasant who is economically forced to produce a cash crop for consumption by others. His labor too is alienated labor. But the crop *does* belong to him when he harvests it. The same is true for a master artisan. Something different happens in the process of factory production:

... the external character of labor for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to someone else.⁴⁷

The product of labor becomes "an alien object dominating him."⁴⁸ Both labor and the worker become a commodity, and "this fact expresses nothing but the following: The object which labor produced, its product, confronts it as an *alien entity*, as a *power independent* of the producer."⁴⁹ So far in Hegelese. Now Marx works toward plain German:

We have formulated this fact in terms of a concept in the following way: *estranged, alienated* labor. We have analyzed this concept, thus analyzing simply a fact of political economy.

Now let us see further how the concept of estranged, alienated labor must be formulated and presented in terms of reality.

If the product of labor is alien to me, confronting me as an alien power, to whom does it then belong? . . .

To someone *other* than myself.

Who is this someone? . . .

If the product of labor does not belong to the worker and is an alien power confronting him, this is possible only because it belongs to some *other person than the worker*. If his activity is torment for him, it must be *pleasure* for another, the joy of another's life. . . .

[It must be] that some other person, who is alien, hostile, powerful and independent of him, is the master of this object. . . . [His labor is] activity in the service of and under the dominion, coercion, and yoke of some other person.⁵⁰

Marx's step-by-step argument is much more drawn-out than appears in this condensed extract. Yet the whole thing could have been stated in two lines. Why so circumspect? Because there is a novelty: he is translating a Hegelian *concept* into real-life terms (instead of the other way round). He is developing a novel reinterpretation of alienation. He is transposing it out of the speculative sphere of philosophy, through the ideological sphere of the bourgeois economists, into the realities of the social struggle. The conclusion is not left in doubt:

Thus, through *estranged, alienated* labor the worker creates the relationship to this labor of a person who is alien to labor and situated outside it. The relationship of the worker to labor creates the relationship to it of the capitalist—or whatever one wants to call the master of labor.⁵¹

This is an alienation of labor which is peculiar to capitalism, which is specific to the worker-capitalist relationship, whereas the other had long existed wherever private property and exchange relations reigned.* The peasant, selling his good grain to others while he lived on stunted potatoes, could not be conscious that his product was alienated from him; the laborer in the workshop or mill *saw* his product taken from him, knew indeed that it did not belong to him for a moment. It was taken by one who "is alien, hostile, powerful, and independent of him." *This* type of alienation was as inseparable from the class struggle as from the act of production. This was the type of alienation specific to the proletariat. At the same time it pointed beyond:

* There is still a third aspect of alienation expounded in the same section—the estrangement of man from nature and from his own "species-life"—which for present purposes can be considered along with the first aspect presented.⁵²

From the relationship of estranged labor to private property it follows, further, that the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the *political* form of the *emancipation of the workers*—not as though it is only a question of their emancipation but because in their emancipation universal human emancipation is comprehended; and this is so because the whole of human servitude is involved in the relationship of the worker to production, and all relations of servitude are only modifications and consequences of this relationship.⁵³

Thus the concept of alienation—mutated from Hegel through Feuerbach and Hess—became an integral part of a revolutionary theory of the proletariat. But not as a merely philosophical notion: it was now a part of the socioeconomic foundation of the politics of class struggle.

8 | TOWARD A CLASS THEORY OF THE STATE

The *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* scarcely mentioned a basic aspect of political theory with which Marx had been previously much concerned: the nature of the state. One might conclude that Marx was uninterested in it at this time, were it not for an important article which he published in the midst of working on the Manuscripts. This article was provoked by an unexpected event.

The relationship between the state and other elements of society had previously played an important part for Marx, as we have seen; naturally so, in view of its importance in Hegelianism. In previous chapters we have occasionally pointed out anticipations of the future to be seen, for example, in Marx's articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung* (especially the article on the wood-theft law) or in the notebook analysis of Hegel's philosophy of right. There had also been considerable attention paid to the state in the essay "On the Jewish Question," since it dealt directly with a current political issue.

The anticipatory elements were usually connected with Marx's discussions of real political life, not theoretical generalization; for, from the standpoint of state theory, the latter were dead ends. They could not be otherwise as long as they remained within the framework of the Hegelian conception of the state as the organization of communality distinct from egoistic civil society. While by now Marx had drawn many conclusions in opposition to Hegelian views (old Hegelian and Young Hegelian), his thinking still revolved inside the Hegelian category of the state—a category which did not correspond to the new social reality.

At bottom, it was not the power of Hegelianism that enforced this; it was the conditioning influence of the backward German social and political conditions. The Hegelian way of looking at the nature of the

state still seemed to make sense in Germany, no matter what objections it raised, whereas it made no sense at all in France or England. In absolutist Prussia, the state was still in the hands of a precapitalist ruling class which was habituated for centuries to identify its social morality with everything worthwhile in society, with the dictates of the Absolute Spirit of God, and hence with the God-given nature of the state as the realm of communality as against the selfish strivings of a rising bourgeoisie which was obviously interested in individual enrichment and the devil take the hindmost. There *was* an obvious gulf between the state on one hand and the civil society of the bourgeoisie on the other; and if Hegelian theory took this contemporary fact as basic to a *definition* of the state, the error was hard to see from the inside.

That this state was not the instrument of the bourgeoisie was obvious; but could the notion easily arise that it was the instrument of any other class—of the aristocracy, for example? It was not that simple: as we shall see later,* it could be understood in class terms only as a transitional balancing act between two social worlds. Its complexity could be analyzed in class terms only *after* a class theory of the state had been worked out—just as in *Capital* complex labor can be understood only after simple labor has been isolated. This Prussian state was indeed forced to exercise control over the aristocracy itself; it was no longer the simple feudal state, but the *Beamtenstaat* of absolute monarchy—the state of the functionaries, who had to keep a rein on all classes in order to keep the growing antagonisms from pulling society apart.

1. THE SHELL OF HEGELIAN STATE THEORY

Now we already know that in his notebook critique of Hegel's philosophy of right, Marx had seen through the theory that the state bureaucracy was the universal class, the class that embodied the communal interest as against every other social estate's particular or selfish interest. But not there, and not in the essay, "On the Jewish Question,"

* In the discussion of absolute monarchy as a type of autonomized state, in Chapter 19.

had Marx yet broken with the Hegelian type of *definition* of the state as the embodiment of communality.

This is what explains the otherwise peculiar statements in "On the Jewish Question" on the relation between political state and society. There Marx refers more than once to the "split between the *political* state and *civil society*"; to "civil society in its antithesis with the political state," and so on.¹ There he is under the impression that the French Revolution was a time "when the political state as political state was forcibly born out of civil society,"² instead of seeing it as the transformation of one type of state into another. If the political state was born only in 1789 in France, what about Prussia? There is *no* political state in that benighted country, he explains in this essay; for unless there is a democratic state expressing the sovereignty of the people, no state exists at all. The reason is simple enough once the premise is understood: only a democratic state can be said to embody the communal interest.* This is a very important break with Hegelianism, *but it takes place within the Hegelian view of what the state is*.

In this essay, therefore, remarks that now sound like an approach to a class theory of the state were not really intended to have that meaning. Marx comments on the contradiction between "the practical political power" of Jews (due to their "money power") and their lack of political rights; this contradiction, he says, is "the contradiction between politics and money power in general." And he adds: "While the first [politics] ideally stands superior to the second [money power], it has in point of fact become its serf."⁶ That money power has enserved political power is, however, regarded as abnormal; it is a *distortion* of social life and constitutes one of the evils of this egoistic society.

* This is why the democratic state is called the "real state" whereas in Germany there exists "no political state, no state as a state."³ Elsewhere in this essay, he writes, within the same dozen lines, that "the so-called Christian state" of Prussia is (a) "simply a *nonstate*"; (b) "the Christian negation of the state"; and (c) "the imperfect state."⁴ Also involved, still, is the basically Hegelian-idealist approach of evaluating the existing state in terms of the Ideal State: if only the Ideal State is a "real" state (or really a state), and if the existing state is so very distant from this ideal, then the existing state is not really a state at all. If only the democratic state has been "perfected" as a state (that is, brought close to the Ideal State of communality), then the existing state is an "imperfect" state. So it goes in Hegelese. We should mention that this Hegelese wordplay about nonstates was destined to become fused (confused) with anarchoid conceptions. In 1845 the protoanarchist Max Stirner published his book *The Ego and His*

Within this framework of thought, the different social eras are differentiated not according to the class which controls the political power but according to the relationship between politics and economic life in a quite different sense. In medieval society, civil society was not separate from the political sphere—political power and social power were one; but this oneness existed in a condition of unfreedom.⁷ The French Revolution, inaugurating the bourgeois era, forcibly split society into two parts—the political state on one hand, civil society on the other—in a systematic and “perfected” way. Every person was now a split entity like the society itself: a member of the political state on one hand, a member of the civil society on the other. What dominates this interpretation is the view that society has bifurcated into these two aspects which were once united; this is what *characterizes* the bourgeois era for Marx at this point. He does not raise the general question: which aspect rules the other, bourgeois society or the political state? The point is not that he gives a different answer than he was to give later, but that he had not raised the key question.

By the same token, the era of human emancipation (not merely political emancipation) which was to dawn would be characterized by the *reintegration* of social and political life—when “social power is no longer divided within itself in the form of *political power*”⁸—only this time, unlike the oneness of the Middle Ages, the reassociation would be under conditions of freedom. That was the goal of communism.

This schema by no means disappeared in later Marxism: it reappeared as the reintegration of communality and individualism. However, it would not do as the historical explanation of real social change. It was a schema that could be entertained on the assumption that societies acted out philosophical categories, just as Life bodied forth the Idea. But when real social forces replaced the permutations of the Spirit as the motive force of historical development, it had to go by the board.

Own, in which (among other things) the state is handily abolished; it is the Hegelian state of communality as well as the political state which is abolished in favor of egoism. Writing *The Holy Family* in 1844 Marx uses the word *anarchy* itself to describe the modern civil (*bürgerlich*) society which has been purged of feudal privilege. The formulation that “no state” exists in Prussia is not repeated; indeed “the *anarchy* of civil society is the basis of the modern public order just as the public order is in turn the guarantee of this anarchy.”⁵ Here *anarchy* does not refer to chaos or planlessness, but simply to the separation between the state and the business of civil society—the *laissez-faire* idea. (Marx’s later reference to anarchy of production under capitalism reflects the different idea of planlessness.)

2. BREAKING THE SHELL

Marx's transplantation from Germany to Paris was more than a move from backward conditions to more advanced conditions. The case was not simply that Germany was a more backward bourgeois society while France (like England) was a more advanced one: for the qualitative political difference was that in Germany the bourgeoisie was still virtually excluded from participation in the state power. In France, on the contrary, capital was king—in fact, the king himself was the bourgeois monarch of the July revolution, Louis Philippe. Likewise, it became clear from British political economy that the interests of capital were also the dominant interests in the constitutional monarchical state and even in the English aristocracy itself, not to speak of the “millocracy.”

The eventual effect of this shift on the schema just explained—the one embodied particularly in “On the Jewish Question”—was shattering. The pattern which Marx ascribed (at some length too) to the society established by the French Revolution, that is, the *separation* of the political state from civil (bourgeois) society, simply did not exist in actuality. On the contrary, it turned out to be a peculiarity of the *German* reality, precisely because Germany had *not* yet had its 1789, rather than a characteristic of a more advanced society which had had its bourgeois revolution (what Marx had mistakenly considered merely political emancipation). Wherever absolutism still maintained its state in the face of, and counterposed to, a rising bourgeoisie, *there* did the separation between political state and civil society still loom large; there did society seem to be split into two aspects. But where absolutism had been overthrown, where the interests of capital were accepted as the most important interests of the state, that separation was reduced to its minimum. Political life and economic life were reintegrated indeed, but not in the medieval fashion and not in the communist way. Capital ruled politically as well as economically.

Marx's development in the direction of this view begins with the analyses he performed in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. Just as this was a view that could hardly have been acquired from a preoccupation with German conditions, so was it a view that could hardly be avoided once the optical angle was moved to England. Hegel had philosophized that it was wrong for selfish economic interests to

rule state and society; but Adam Smith and Ricardo not only assumed it was right for capital to rule, they demonstrated that it did rule, and that society could progress only if it ruled. Marx, as he explained some years later, did not have to discover the class struggle; what he discovered was that French historians and British political economists took it for granted as a fact of life. All Marx had to do was to explore its role in social change, without inhibitions.*

We have noted that, from the first sentence of the Manuscripts, the class struggle is seen to play a basic role in political economy, manifesting itself in economic terms as the struggle over the appropriation of the products of labor. But political economy is the endoskeleton of the state—that is what makes it political. The shift in optical angle, therefore, meant that the state too had to be viewed within the context of a class struggle which necessarily raged over all of society.

In the course of the year 1844, all of the elements for such a theory of the state had accumulated. There is no need to suppose that some cataclysmic wrench was necessary. There is a Jules Verne tale⁹ in which our hero stands on the shore of a strange sea and observes that the water's temperature has already descended to the freezing point, yet it has not frozen over. He shows his companions what is involved: an object is thrown into the water, and as the ripples spread the surface turns to ice. For all the molecular changes preliminary to freezing had already taken place; only a relatively slight addition of energy was needed to precipitate the change in state, from liquid to solid.

Yet, as has been mentioned, the class theory of the state which is implied by the analyses of the Manuscripts scarcely appears in its pages; Marx is working out the economic side mainly. A reference to the nature of the state occurs in passing as part of a broader statement about the economic basis of (what will later be called) the ideological superstructure. For Hegel state power, like religion, etc., was only a "spiritual entity,"¹⁰ but now Marx sees clearly that the basis of social dynamics is the economy. We have already mentioned his statement that "It is easy to see the necessity that the whole revolutionary development finds both its empirical and theoretical basis in the development of *private property*—in the economy, to be exact."¹¹ This is immediately followed by the following germinal passage, loosely

* Even Hegel had explained, within his own framework, that the state arises in response to class distinctions and property relations. These passages are cited (in another connection) on page 648-649 fn.

worded as compared with later Marxism but unmistakable as the starting point of the materialist conception of history:

This *material* and directly tangible private property is the material and tangible expression of *estranged human* life. Its development—production and consumption—is the *tangible* manifestation of the development of all previous production, that is, the actualization or actuality of man. Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc. are only *particular* ways of production and fall under its general law. The positive abolition of *private property*, which means taking on a *human* way of life, is therefore the positive abolition of all estrangement, hence the reversion of man from religion, family, state, etc. to his *human*, that is, *social* existence.¹²

Here, just as the concrete and tangible content of alienation (estrangement) is seen to be economic in nature, so too the state is seen concretely as a manifestation of the general laws governing production.

3. LIGHTNING FLASH FROM SILESIA

Yet the changeover from the old to the new view of the state took place in ragged steps, not neatly at all. The first evidence appeared in an article written at the end of July 1844, before the Manuscripts were completed.

Marx was moved to a direct discussion of the state by an unexpected event. Now faded out of the history books, it was like a lightning flash across the social skies of Germany: the first German workers' uprising against bourgeois exploitation, immediately confronted by the state's armed force. Its impact on Marx cannot be exaggerated. He had scarcely begun to realize that in France at least there was a rebellious working class in motion such as had not been visible in Germany—when lo, here it was erupting in Germany for the first time!

This was the so-called revolt of the Silesian weavers in June of 1844, today better known through a poem by Heine and a play by Hauptmann than through the attention of historians. (Engels translated Heine's "The Silesian Weavers" into English for the December 1844 issue of the Owenite paper, after sending two reports on the event to the Chartist *Northern Star*.)¹³

These weavers were not factory workers, but rural domestic-industry workers living in East Elbian villages—no longer peasants but not yet modern proletarians.* Paid incredibly low rates for their weaving by the few local employers, men, women, and children of whole families labored night and day without always succeeding in staving off death by starvation. During the “Hungry Forties,” attempts at workers’ “combinations” and strikes (for example by the cotton printers in Berlin or the railway workers in Brandenburg) had already been put down by police clubs. Resistance was hunger-driven, planless, the product not of plots but despair. Such actions also took place in Bohemia; but the most extensive movement broke out on June 4 in the Silesian weaver village of Peterswaldau (now Petřvald, Czechoslovakia), against the most brutal of the local nabobs, the Zwanziger brothers. A crowd of weavers had gathered before the Zwanzigers’ mansion to sing the defiant Weavers’ Song (“Das Blutgericht”), which had arisen line by line and stanza by stanza from the people themselves; one was arrested. The demonstrators demanded higher pay; scornfully rebuffed, they finally stormed the house and ripped it apart, allowing the Zwanzigers themselves to flee unharmed. The next day, three thousand marched to Langenbielau (now Bielawa, Poland), where the establishment of the hated Dierig brothers was stormed. The military, called in by the masters, fired on the unarmed crowd, killing eleven outright and fatally wounding twenty-four others. The weavers, picking up cudgels, rocks, and axes, drove the soldiers away. The following morning, three companies of infantry, plus gun batteries, artillery, and cavalry, took over the battlefield. Weavers who fled to the mountains and woods were hunted down; scores were sentenced to prison.¹⁵

The Prussian government was understandably inclined to belittle the significance of the movement, to treat it as a local contretemps. But the same tack was also taken by Marx’s former coeditor of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, Ruge, who had moved from disbelief in the possibility of revolution to a liberal dismay at its reality. Ruge’s article, published in the Paris German-language organ *Vorwärts*, was entitled “The King of Prussia and Social Reform,” and signed “A Prussian.” Marx took the occasion to reply in the same paper in an open political break with Ruge, with his “Critical Notes on ‘The King of Prussia and Social Reform.’”

* See the reference to the rise of rural weavers’ settlements in *The German Ideology*, and compare Engels’ description, in the first few pages of his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, of the English counterpart.¹⁴

The center of the argument was the evaluation of the uprisings. Marx took the following passage from Ruge as his butt:

It is impossible [wrote Ruge] for an *unpolitical* country like Germany to perceive the distress of factory districts in a *part* of the country as an affair of general concern, let alone as an injury to the whole civilized world. For Germans the event has the same character as any *local* drought or famine. For this reason the king considers it an *administrative defect or lack of charity*. On this ground, and because it took few soldiers to deal with the weak weavers, the destruction of factories and machines did not inspire even the king and the authorities with "*terror*."¹⁶

Marx gives a crushing reply to the "weak weavers" argument: the political banquets of the bourgeois liberals had collapsed before a mere decree of the king; "*not a single* soldier was needed to quash the desire of the *entire* liberal bourgeoisie for freedom of the press and a constitution." On the other hand,

in a country where passive obedience is the order of the day, in such a country was not the compulsion to use armed force against weak weavers an *event*, indeed a *terror-inspiring* event? And the weak weavers won out in the first encounter. They were suppressed by a subsequent troop reinforcement. Is the uprising of a mass of workers less dangerous because it does not need an army to stifle it? Let our clever Prussian [Ruge] compare the Silesian weavers' uprising with English workers' uprisings, and the Silesian weavers will look like *strong* weavers to him.¹⁷

The favorable comparison with the "English workers' uprisings" no doubt refers to the outcome of the general strike movement of August 1842 in the English factory districts, which collapsed before the threat of armed force without actually joining battle. To be sure, the comparison is unfair when all the facts are examined; but a full story of what had happened in Silesia was not easy to get out of the German and French press immediately after the embarrassing events themselves. Further on, Marx's article also gives a glowing picture of "the *theoretical* and *conscious* character" of the Silesian action as greater than anything in England or France—a considerable exaggeration in hindsight, though this was no doubt the general view taken by the gleeful German workers' movement abroad. The exaggeration, reflecting their enthusiasm at seeing *something* break the ice of the apparently frozen social situation in Germany, was premature by four years.

The implicit meaning of the weavers' outbreak was endowed with more conscious generalization than then existed:

To begin with, let us remember the *weavers' song*,* those bold *watchwords* of struggle, in which home, factory, and district are not mentioned once, but rather the proletariat directly roars out its antagonism against the society of private property in a striking, sharp, ruthless, powerful way.¹⁹

But beyond doubt was the salient fact that this uprising was aimed directly against bourgeois exploiters, not against the old ruling class. This was its portentousness; this linked it to the new social phenomena in England. Its future was also visible in England:

In England the distress of the workers is not confined to a *part*, it is *universal*; it is not limited to the factory districts but has spread to the rural districts. There these phenomena are not just in inception; they have recurred periodically for nearly a century.²⁰

Even in England the authorities still ascribe economic distress to "administrative defects," and so on, but no more than in Prussia can this explanation hold. Also, English experience has amply demonstrated that it cannot be abolished "by *benevolence* and *administrative measures*." All this is, rather, "the necessary consequence of modern *industry*." All England can do with pauperism, chronic poverty, is "to *discipline* it and perpetuate it"—institutionalize it. It cannot be eliminated by political will, by a state decree, whether issued by Napoleon or the Prussian king or even the French revolutionary Convention, "that *high point of political energy, political power, and political intelligence*."²¹

* This does not refer to Heine's poem but to the homespun song sung by the weavers before the mansion of the Zwanzigers on the eve of the explosion. Here are most of the stanzas quoted in Mehring's history:

Here torment slowly shuts your eyes,
Here torture victims languish,
Here men exhale a million sighs
As witness to their anguish.

The hangmen are the Zwanzigers,
The constables serve their Graces.
How brave they crack the whip, the curs,
They should find hiding-places.

You villains all, you hellish drones,
You knaves in Satan's raiment!
You gobble all the poor man owns—
Our curses be your payment!

No use to plead or beg, we know,
In vain is lamentation:
If you don't like it, you can go
And die of slow starvation!

Now think you that this sore distress,
Drawn limbs and cheeks so ashen,
Without a crumb of bread to bless,
Would move them to compassion?

Compassion? Ha! All mercy lacks.
You cannibals, take our curses!
You want the shirts from off our backs,
Our hides to stuff your purses!¹⁸

4. FIRST REACTION: ANTISTATISM

Marx then asks: "Can the *state* proceed in any other way?" No, it cannot; it is useless to seek "the cause of *social ills*" in the political domain.²² "Even the radical and revolutionary politicians seek the cause of the evil not in the *nature* of the state but in a specific *state form*, which they want to replace by *another state form*."²³

This makes clear the present direction of Marx's thinking about the state: he is not moving directly toward a class theory of the state but rather toward a depreciation of the state in general. Ruge's article had asked: who can remedy poverty, "the state and the authorities?"—only to answer insipidly, "No, but the union of all Christian hearts [can]."²⁴ Marx argues back that neither the state nor Christian hearts can solve such basic social ills.*

In a key passage of this article, old and new views jostle side by side. First the old (Hegelian) view of the state is reiterated to this extent: "It [the state] rests on the contradiction between *public* and *private life*, on the contradiction between *general interests* and *particular interests*." But the conclusion that follows reverses Hegel's view of the central role of the state:

The *administration* must therefore limit itself to a *formal* and *negative* activity, since its power has come to an end exactly where civil [*bürgerliche*] life and its work begins. Indeed, vis-à-vis the consequences springing from the unsocial nature of this civil life, this private property, this commerce, this industry, this mutual plundering of different sectors of civil society—vis-à-vis these consequences the *natural law* of the administration is *impotence*.

This is very far indeed from seeing the state as a class weapon and a potent one. Yet it, in turn, is immediately followed by a statement about the *class basis* of this state's existence:

* This also makes clear what he had in mind in writing at the beginning of the article that he was going to examine "the *general* relationship of *politics* to *social ills*." Today the proletariat stands counterposed to the bourgeoisie, he also wrote, but when it gets stronger it will "turn the whole enmity of politics against itself."²⁵

For this internally torn and debased condition, this *slavery of civil society* is the natural foundation on which the *modern* state rests, just as the *civil society of slavery* was the natural foundation on which the state of *antiquity* rested. The existence of the state and the existence of slavery are inseparable. The state and the slavery of antiquity (with their candid *classical* antagonisms) were not more intimately *welded* together than are the modern state and the modern huckster world (with their hypocritical *Christian* antagonisms).²⁶

But while the state is recognized as having a varying class basis (in a rather passive sense: the state “rests” on a particular form of civil society), it is seen only on the negative side, only on the side of what it cannot do: it cannot solve the basic *social* ills. This inability is not linked with its particular class bias but with the general impotence of the state. Therefore the only conclusion is that the state must go:

If the modern state wanted to abolish [*aufheben*] the *impotence* of its administration, it would have to abolish the present-day *private life*. If it wanted to abolish this private life, it would have to abolish itself, for it exists *only* in contrast with this life.²⁷

But the state cannot realistically be expected to commit suicide: “Hence the state cannot believe in the *inherent* impotence of its administration, that is, of its own self.” This is why it explains events like the weavers’ movement by “administrative defects.”

This sort of flat counterposition of the political sphere to the social was (as we saw in another connection) typical of the thinking of the radicalism of the day.* Marx had broken with this pattern by advocating positive participation on political issues. But the extent to which he still shared its blind spot is fully visible here; it will not altogether disappear until virtually the writing of the *Communist Manifesto*.

One result is a gaping contradiction, which was typical of the contemporary radicalisms. The state and political thought in general are impotent to solve social ills, Marx reiterates—yet we find next that this

* This general negative attitude toward the political sphere can, to be sure, be labeled anarchism, as has been done often enough. But at this early date, the label can be misleading if taken too literally; strictly speaking, it puts a part for the whole. Anarchism proper took shape out of this general mood to negate politics, by pushing all its implications *ad absurdum* and systematizing its errors. But otherisms also flowed out of this general pool of anti-politicism too, including pure-and-simple trade unionism, cooperative movements, and so on.

very impotent state is the *source* of what is wrong with society. The trouble with the political approach, says Marx, is that it is not inclined

to seek the cause of *social* ills and grasp their *general* principle in the *principle of the state*, hence in the *present ordering of society* of which the state is the active, self-conscious, and official expression.

Even the political thought of the French Revolution shared this mistake: "Far from discerning the source of social defects in the principle of the state, the heroes of the French Revolution rather discern the source of political abuses in social defects."²⁸

It would seem, then, that something called the principle of the state is the source of social evils—of the same social evils which political thought is impotent to do anything about. Nothing else is vouchsafed about this all-potent principle of the state, for this train of thought was common coin and did not have to be explained to readers who had seen it before often enough.

If the principle of the state is the source of social evils, what then is the source of the principle of the state? This interesting question could not possibly be answered by Marx as yet, but more important, it could not have been *asked* on the basis of this approach.

However, at the end of this article we get a clear statement on one aspect of the state and politics: the conception of a political revolution which is also a social revolution. If we leave out the fuzzy polemical form in which this is cast against a remark by Ruge,* the following remarks stand out.

A revolution which is merely political—Marx means one that changes the state but leaves private property, like the French Revolution—is one that "necessarily organizes . . . a ruling sector in the society, at the expense of society."³⁰ And: "Every revolution breaks up the *old society*; to that extent it is *social*. Every revolution overthrows the *old power*; to that extent it is *political*."³¹

The coming revolution, says Marx, has to be "a *political* revolution with a *social* soul." (The specific phraseology is due to his reversing a phrase of Ruge's.)

* The same passage also contains a formulation about the nature of the state which is the fuzziest Hegelese in the article: "an *abstract* whole, which exists *only* through separation from real life, and which is unthinkable without the *organized* antithesis between the general idea and the individual existence of man."²⁹

Revolution in general—the *overthrow* of the existing power and the *dissolution* of the old relations—is a *political act*. And without *revolution*, *socialism* cannot be realized. It needs this *political act* insofar as it needs the *destruction* and *dissolution*. But where its *organizing activity* begins, where its *own aim* and its *soul* emerge, there socialism throws away the *political husk*.³²

The germinal idea here will later be formulated as the task of first smashing the old state power (the political aspect of social revolution) and then organizing the new social relations (the social revolution proper). What is missing is the conception of what must come in between, a transitional period based on a new type of “political husk.” But if there is no conception visible as yet of a new class state (workers’ state) as a class weapon, that is hardly surprising since the article likewise betrays no conscious conception that the existing state is a class weapon of the old order. *Caution*: this lack does not mean that Marx had not observed the class role of the existing state; it means that this observation of fact was not integrated into a theory of the state.

In the same issue of *Vorwärts* that carried the last installment of Marx’s article, there was also a short item headed “From a German Lady’s Letter”—actually an excerpt from a letter by Marx’s wife Jenny, written from Trier where she was visiting. Marx had had it inserted into the paper. It is therefore interesting that Jenny’s comment on a recent assassination attempt against the Prussian king is that “right here is proof once again that in Germany a political revolution is impossible, but for a social revolution all the seeds are present.”³³ The idea is that a purely political revolution, a merely political revolution, is impossible; the coming political revolution must become a social revolution. This central idea of what soon afterwards became the concept of permanent revolution is boldly stated in Jenny’s letter but is only implicit in Karl’s article.

5. ENGELS TAKES THE LEAD

Marx worked on the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* until August; toward the end of that month Engels, returning home from England, met Marx in Paris and the two decided to collaborate on a polemic against the Bauer brothers, which occupied Marx till Novem-

ber. This was *The Holy Family*, a book which we will examine more closely in Chapter 10. For, as far as the theory of the state is concerned, it marks no qualitative change, and need not detain us long. Its plan entailed no systematic *positive* exposition on any subject, though there are some positive statements in incidental passages. On the state, the nearest thing to a theoretical discussion occurs in a section dealing with the French Revolution (Chapter 6, section 3c).

As compared with the essay "On the Jewish Question," there is a distinct advance in that the social transformation is no longer interpreted in the Hegelese terms of the integration of civil society with political life. Instead, the French Revolution is very clearly seen as the overthrow of the society of feudal privilege and the inception of a bourgeois society, "freed by the revolution itself from feudal fetters" and stimulating a powerful new economic development. The whole pattern is portrayed in class terms.

The very word *bürgerlich*, hitherto equivocal ("civil" or "bourgeois"), is given a class meaning: "The *bürgerlich* society is *positively* represented by the *bourgeoisie*. The bourgeoisie thus *begins* its reign." Napoleon's dictatorship is accurately seen as the suppression of bourgeois liberalism in the sphere of political forms, but

Napoleon, to be sure, already had insight into the nature of the *modern state*, the insight that it rests on the unhampered development of bourgeois society and the free movement of private interests, etc. as its basis. He decided to recognize and protect this basis.³⁴

With the revolution of 1830 (the establishment of Louis Philippe's bourgeois monarchy), adds Marx, the bourgeoisie was resigned to exclusion from direct political power as long as its social interests were taken care of.³⁵

However, there is no advance beyond this still static view of the basis on which the modern state "rests."³⁶ As for the idea of a political transitional period, good will might possibly read something into Marx's comment that he "considers material, practical upheavals necessary even to win the time and means that are required just for concern with 'theory'!"³⁷

While Marx was working on *The Holy Family*, of which he wrote the bulk, Engels was in Barmen writing his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* amidst a sea of English books and documents.

This first book by Engels is a treasury of seedlings; a good deal of later Marxism can be found in it, by hindsight, in seminal form; the temptation is to read into its passages much more than was consciously in Engels' head when he wrote it. For it is so permeated with the influence of the English class struggle that parts of it, by dint of merely generalizing a little on the *English* facts, sound like theoretical generalizations of wider import. It is one of those germinal works of which it can be said (as Rupert Brooke did in another connection) that "thoughts go blowing through them, are wiser than their own."^{*}

The bourgeoisie is the ruling class (Marx has not yet used such a term); it is "the chief, in fact, the only power in Parliament"; the cabinet minister is "the obedient servant of the bourgeoisie . . ."³⁹ Even more directly:

. . . theirs [the workers'] is not a state in which a man or a whole class of men can think, feel, and live as human beings. The workers must therefore strive to escape from this brutalizing condition, to secure for themselves a better, more human position; and this they cannot do without attacking the interest of the bourgeoisie which consists in exploiting them. But the bourgeoisie defends its interests with all the power at its disposal by wealth and the might of the state.⁴⁰

Here, before anything to be found in Marx, Engels states the basic idea that the state is a *class weapon* in the hands of the bourgeoisie, to

^{*} Not to be overlooked is also the influence of the left-wing Chartist, particularly George Julian Harney, editor of the *Northern Star*, whom Engels had met in Leeds in autumn 1843. Harney had no head for theory but was well ahead of Marx and Engels in a class-struggle approach to socialism. Schoyen rightly says:

There was a great deal that this young foreigner [Engels], with his German training in philosophy, could, and did, learn from such radical leaders as Harney. Immersed from early youth in the struggles of a working class confronted for the first time with the problems of industrialism, Harney was saturated with ideas and attitudes which were new to Engels. When, for example, Harney told an average Chartist meeting that profits and wages, and thus the interests of the middle class and the working class, were diametrically opposed, neither he nor his audience considered these concepts anything out of the ordinary. But Engels, still filled with abstractions, was only in the process of realizing such concepts; he had just recognized the dominance of interests over principles in Manchester.³⁸

In general, the influence of left Chartism, then the most advanced proletarian revolutionary tendency in the world, on the maturation of Marx and Engels has been undervalued. Though it is indubitable, it is largely undocumentable; there are no manuscripts about it requiring exegesis.

keep the working class in its condition of subjection. The idea is elaborated at even greater length in a subsequent chapter. The state, explains Engels, is a burden in bourgeois eyes from the standpoint of free competition and its laissez-faire yearnings.

Since, however, the bourgeoisie cannot dispense with government, but must have it to hold the equally indispensable proletariat in check, it turns the power of government against the proletariat. . . .⁴¹

He applies this class view of the state so effectively to an analysis of the state of law and justice that it reads like something that he or Marx might have written ten years later—but like nothing that Marx has written so far:

Let us turn now to the manner in which the bourgeoisie as a party, as the power of the state, conducts itself toward the proletariat. It is quite obvious that all legislation is calculated to protect those that possess property against those who do not.

The judges construe the law in accordance with what the ruling class wants—for one thing, because “they are themselves bourgeois, who see the foundation of all true order in the interests of their class. And the conduct of the police corresponds to that of the Justices of the Peace. . . .” Events show “how little the protective side of the law exists for the workingman, how frequently he has to bear all the burdens of the law without enjoying its benefits.”⁴²

6. ENGELS IN ELBERFELD

This is, without doubt, a very important step forward, and bears witness to the contribution which Engels was to bring to the coming Marx-Engels partnership. (So far they had spent only ten days together talking in Paris, followed by some correspondence.) But some additional facts must be presented to avoid exaggeration.

At the same time that Engels was writing in this vein about English conditions, he was also confronting the far more backward German conditions: first as an activist and speaker in organizing communist meetings in the Rhineland, and second in reporting on the German movement for the English Owenite organ *The New Moral World*. To

what extent does his insight into the English bourgeois state carry over into his approach to German activity?

Only partially at best; this is a caution against exaggerating the extent of the theoretical clarity embodied in *The Condition of the Working Class*. The difference is not due to any notion that England was in some way exceptional, as distinct from merely more advanced. While working on the book, for example, Engels remarked in a letter to Marx that "it is self-understood that when I hit the bag I mean to strike the donkey, namely, the German bourgeoisie, of whom I say clearly enough that it is just as base as the English, only not so courageous, consistent, and adept in sweatshop methods."⁴³ Yet in Germany, in letters and in articles, Engels was elated over the "rapid progress of communism in Germany" when, in fact, as he explained in the same contexts, the meetings and groups had not reached any workers at all, only bourgeois scions, intellectuals, and other men of good will of the "educated classes,"⁴⁴ including the police inspector in Barmen.⁴⁵

Besides the articles for *The New Moral World*, which may have been affected by the non-class-struggle character of the Owenite movement on the receiving end, an interesting glimpse is afforded by the text of two speeches made by Engels in February 1845 at meetings held in Elberfeld to propagandize for communism. The emphasis in making the case for communism is overwhelmingly on the need for rationality in social planning and organization and on the prospect of a decent life for all men in a rational social order. The approach is obviously appropriate for a middle-class audience. The class struggle is not overlooked, but there is a tendency to represent it as a *threat* which can be avoided only by taking steps toward a communist society which would satisfy the workers' grievances.

Here are some representative excerpts showing both sides.

Today what keeps the administrative authorities busy is, in origin, the continuing state of [social] warfare: the police and the whole administration do nothing but make sure that the warfare remains hidden and indirect and does not develop into open use of force and into crime.⁴⁶

A standing army, he explains, is needed only because of the authorities' fear of revolution; and "Fear of revolution is indeed only a consequence of a conflict of interests; where all interests coincide, there can be no thought of such fear."⁴⁷

Yet the plea in these speeches is for "a peaceful transformation of society" through three key demands: universal education, state-sponsored productive associations for the jobless poor, and a progressive capital levy to finance it all.⁴⁸ This is just where the mild socialists were; in fact, Hess, who did not have a class-struggle notion in his head, was organizing this propaganda movement.

To be sure, Engels' second speech in Elberfeld laid stress on the inevitability of social revolution:

A social revolution, gentlemen, is something altogether different from the political revolutions seen up to now; it does not direct itself, like the latter, against the property of monopoly but rather against the monopoly of property. A social revolution, gentlemen, is *the open war of the poor against the rich*. And such a struggle . . . threatens to become more intense and bloodier than all its predecessors. . . .

If these consequences are correct, gentlemen, if social revolution and communism in practice are the necessary result of our existing conditions, then we should concern ourselves before anything else with the measures whereby we can obviate a forcible and bloody upheaval in the social situation. And there is only *one* way to do that, namely, the peaceful introduction of, or at least preparation of, communism.⁴⁹

There is more of the same, in an implicit appeal to his audience to do the needful before an exacerbated proletariat does it to them with bloody violence. Moses Hess and G. A. Köttgen also spoke for "communism" at these meetings, where Köttgen answered criticism by explaining that only a spiritual transformation of society was proposed, and where it was agreed that another meeting would discuss "How communism might be introduced among us under the present [social] relations and constitution."⁵⁰

One must conclude that the insights which the English class struggle had enforced regarding the nature of the state had not yet been integrated into a theory of social revolution.

7. PRELUDE IN BRUSSELS

It is in the first work written jointly by Marx and Engels, begun a year and a half after these speeches were delivered, that the characteristic Marxist theory of the state is present in all its essentials for the first time. This is *The German Ideology*.*

A great deal had happened during the intervening year and a half (over two years if we count to the date of completion). The written record is sparse, and yields few documents for exegeses; hence, it is easy to overlook the crucial importance of this period as the birthtime of Marxism—its parturition as distinct from its gestation or conception. The best known document of the period is Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach," which we will come back to in another connection. For present purposes, it does not bear directly on the theory of the state, although its germinal importance is indisputable, especially in effectuating a final break with Hegelianism—Hegelianism in its last-ditch Feuerbachian form—the "German ideology" itself. Again, this does not mean that Marx was uninterested in political questions; on the contrary, he actively planned to write a book on that subject, and his brief outline for it is extant.**

What *did* happen during this parturition period? Let us mention three salient developments:

1. *Relocation to Brussels*. At the beginning of February 1845 the French government, under Prussian pressure, expelled Marx and others of his circle; he moved to Brussels. It is Belgium, therefore, that has the honor of providing the locale for this crucial period, as well as providing

* *The Holy Family* had been a collaboration of the two men, but had not been written jointly. Different sections were written either by Marx or Engels separately. Indeed, even the discussions that gave rise to it could not have lasted more than a part of the ten days that they spent together at this time, since Engels had dashed off his assignments before he left town.

** The outline is tantalizing in its intimation of what might have been written. Here it is:

(1) *The genetic history of the modern state or the French Revolution*.—The overweening presumptuousness of the political sphere—confusion with the state of antiquity. Relationship of revolutionaries to civil [*bürgerliche*] society. Duplication of all elements in the domain of civil society and of the state. (2) *The proclamation of the rights of man and the constitution of the state*.—*Freedom, equality, and unity*. The sovereignty of the people. (3) *The state and civil society*. (4) *The representative state and the Charter* [program of the British Chartists].—The constitutional

systematic police harassment for its guest. Brussels was not Paris as far as the organized revolutionary movement was concerned any more than in other well-known respects; but Belgium's socioeconomic development was about on France's level. Besides, it had its advantages. Socially as well as geographically, it faced toward England, France, and Germany (especially the Rhineland), the three main fronts on which society was being transformed in Europe. The optical angle from this binational, bilingual country added another dimension to Marx's cosmopolitanism, as an ingredient in internationalism. And Brussels had its own radical democratic movement, which Marx helped to build, as well as a German workers' colony and a gathering of Polish and Italian revolutionary émigrés.

2. *Beginning of collaboration with Engels.* In early April Engels came to live in Brussels near the Marx family. It is from this date that regular intellectual communication between the two became possible, hence the definitive amalgamation of the special contributions which each brought to the union of minds. Un-Boswellized conversation leaves no historical deposit, unfortunately; but the written documents are no more the sole content of intellectual biography than potsherds are of archeology.

3. *Visit to England.* In July and August, for about a month and a half, Marx and Engels visited England together—Marx for the first time. Most of the time was spent in Manchester, where Engels knew his way around, on two activities: reading in political economy (as Marx had been doing in Brussels too) and getting acquainted with the English working-class movement through Engels' contacts. In London, they held discussions with Chartist leaders, especially Harney, and with the leaders of the German émigré revolutionary group then called the League of the Just (the future Communist League), which was ideologically in flux.

It was right after their return to Brussels that Engels quit writing for the Owenite periodical. And both started work on *The German Ideology*. Marx later summed it up this way:

representative state, the democratic representative state. (5) The separation of powers. Legislative and executive power. (6) The legislative power and the legislative bodies. Political clubs. (7) The executive power. Centralization and hierarchy. Centralization and political civilization. Federal system and industrialism. State, administration and local administration. (8a) Judicial power and law, (8b) Nationality and the people. (9a) Political parties. (9b) Suffrage, the struggle for the abolition [*Aufhebung*] of the state and civil society.⁵¹

Friedrich Engels, with whom I had maintained a constant epistolary exchange of ideas since the publication (in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*) of his brilliant sketch of a critique of the economic categories, had come to the same result as I by a different path (compare his *Condition of the Working Class in England*); and when he too settled in Brussels in spring 1845, we decided to work in common to hammer out the contrast between our own view and the ideological [idealist] view held by German philosophy—in fact to settle accounts with our former philosophical conscience.⁵²

8. THE FIRST “MARXIST” WORK

The German Ideology is the first work that can be read as a reliable exposition of the essential views of developed Marxism (except in economics). In that sense it is the first “Marxist” work, all previous writings being anticipations, forerunners, or harbingers to one extent or another. This is true above all of the Marxist theory of social change (historical materialism), the underlying basis of all Marxist social science and hence also of political theory. With this work there is no more point in talking about the “young Marx,” regardless of the fact that he was twenty-eight when the manuscript was substantially completed—though, to be sure, there are many modifications and additions still to come.

Another way of putting it is that the bulk of the content of the *Communist Manifesto* is already contained in it, including the content of the Manifesto’s famous opening:

... society has hitherto always developed within the framework of a contradiction—in antiquity the contradiction between free men and slaves, in the Middle Ages that between nobility and serfs, in modern times that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.⁵³

The theory of the state as a class-bound institution, of course, rests entirely on the previous development of a class-struggle view of social dynamics in general. In the first few pages Marx already makes the point that empirical observation of historical facts must bring out “the connection of the social and political structure with production. The

social structure and the state are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals" who are grouped as social classes.⁵⁴

The Hegelian antithesis between particular interests and universal (or general) interests is not entirely abandoned; but it is filled with a new theoretical content and therefore entirely transformed. The book starts with an analysis—nowhere done again as thoroughly—of the basic rôle played in the development of society by the division of labor, beginning with the division of labor between the sexes. The social division of labor, while historically necessary, is seen as implying the contradiction between the interest of an individual (or family) and "the communal interest of all individuals who have intercourse with one another."

And indeed this communal interest does not exist merely in the imagination, as the "general interest," but first of all in reality, as the mutual interdependence of the individuals among whom the labor is divided.⁵⁵

The state arises out of this contradiction, *not out of a class plot*.

And out of this very contradiction between the interest of the individual and that of the community, the latter takes an independent form as the *state*, divorced from the real interests of individual and community, and at the same time as an illusory communal life, always based, however, on the real ties existing in every family and tribal conglomeration . . . and especially, as we shall enlarge upon later, on the classes, already determined by the division of labor, which in every such mass of men separate out, and of which one dominates all the others.

This is essentially the same view of the state's origin that Engels will elaborate later, as explained in Chapter 11. The rise of the state is *not* impelled simply by a thrust toward class oppression. There are two related impulses: on the one hand, the basic need for an institution to take care of certain social tasks that had become more complex, without which the community as a whole could not survive; and on the other, the fact that this takes place within the framework of developed class antagonisms. The *socially necessary* institution becomes also a *class* institution.

With regard to this sequel, the above passage continues on as follows:

It follows from this that all struggles within the state, the struggle between democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, the struggle for the franchise, etc. etc., are merely the illusory forms in which the real struggles of the different classes are fought out among one another. . . .^{*} Further, it follows that every class which is struggling for mastery, even when its domination, as is the case with the proletariat, postulates the abolition of the old form of society in its entirety and of domination itself, must first conquer for itself political power in order to represent its interest in turn as the general interest, which in the first moment it is forced to do.⁵⁸

The state is clearly seen as a historically evolved institution, developing out of earlier tribal society without a state⁵⁹ and culminating in the modern state which is thoroughly dominated by the bourgeoisie.⁶⁰

Through the emancipation of private property from the community, the state has become a separate entity, beside and outside civil society; but it is nothing more than the form of organization which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests. . . . The modern French, English, and American writers all express the opinion that the state exists only for the sake of private property, so that this fact has penetrated into the consciousness of the normal man.

Since the state is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests, and in which the whole civil society of an epoch is epitomized, it follows that the state mediates in the formation of all common institutions and that the institutions receive a political form.⁶⁰

In every case the rule of a particular class is expressed in the existence of the state.⁶¹ Subsequent discussions in the book are likewise permeated with the class view of the state, which plays an important part in the polemic against Max Stirner, one of the book's chief targets.

* At this point Marx makes the claim that "a sufficient introduction to [this subject]" already appeared in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* and *The Holy Family*. This claim is partly explained when it is repeated later: "In the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* this was done, in view of the context, only in relation to the Rights of Man proclaimed by the French Revolution."⁵⁶ This plainly refers to the section of the essay "On the Jewish Question" at the end of the first part, already discussed in Chapter 5 above.⁵⁷ From our hindsight, this was hardly a "sufficient introduction," to be sure, but the statement is interesting as evidencing Marx's strong feeling of continuity in the development of his views.

Stirner, in the Hegelian and general German tradition, sees the state as the root and crux of society; as against his emphasis that "the state pays well," Marx replies:

This should read: the bourgeois pay their state well and make the nation pay for it in order to be able without danger to pay poorly; by good payment they ensure that they have among the state servants a force that protects them, the police; they willingly pay, and force the nation to pay, high taxes so as to be able without danger to shift the sums they pay on to the workers as tribute (as deductions from wages).⁶²

Law reflects the interests of the mode of production on which the particular state rests:

The individuals who rule in these conditions, besides having to constitute their power in the form of the *state*, have to give their will, which is determined by these definite conditions, a universal expression as the will of the state, as law—an expression whose content is always determined by the relations of this class, as the civil and criminal law demonstrates in the clearest possible way.⁶³

It is not "will" that creates the state but, rather, the state that shapes social will: "Hence the state does not exist owing to the ruling will, but the state which arises from the material mode of life of individuals has also the form of a ruling will."⁶⁴

To be sure, the bourgeois keep the state from interfering in their own affairs as much as possible. Still the state has and utilizes powers over private property insofar as this is necessary in the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole. But it is an illusion to believe, because of such phenomena, that the state therefore really controls private property while the bourgeoisie is simply *its* servitor.

Marx quotes Stirner's view that "the state has the factory as property, the manufacturer only as fief, as possession." No, answers Marx—"In exactly the same way when a dog guards my house it has the house 'as property,' and I have it only 'as fief, as possession' from the dog."⁶⁵ What sometimes appears as the power of the state over private property is one aspect of the way in which the bourgeoisie uses the state "in order to safeguard their common interests." True, "if only because of the division of labor," the state may "delegate the collective power thus created to a few persons," but it is a fantasy to conclude from this that it is the state that is at bottom the controller of society. On the

contrary, views like Stirner's merely flow from "the *petty-bourgeois German* idea of the *omnipotence* of the state, an idea which was already current among the old German lawyers and is here [in Stirner] presented in the form of grandiloquent assertions."⁶⁶

It is true that there is "external compulsion" in society, but society is not based on *it*; rather, it is the result of the way society is organized. It is false to see this compulsion "only as the compulsion exercised by the *state* in the form of bayonets, police, and cannons, which far from being the foundation of society, are only a consequence of its structure."⁶⁷

Many of the themes enunciated and problems suggested in *The German Ideology* remain to be further explored in Part II.

9 | CHARACTER AND REVOLUTION

With Marx's arrival at the theoretical level represented by *The German Ideology*, there remains for consideration one more aspect of the political development of the young Marx.

We have kept the purely biographical side of Marx and Engels to a minimum, not because it is irrelevant to their political development—after all, we are dealing with the thought of two individuals—but on the assumption that the reader will find this background elsewhere. However, there is one aspect that is not purely personal and not quite theoretical: it stands between these two categories in a fashion which is as unmistakable as it is undefinable. Obviously rooted in character and temperament, it intertwines with the questions of theory we have already discussed and eventually shows up in a principle that lies at the heart of Marx's politics, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

This factor of character or temperament has a tag, usually derived from the experience of the Russian revolutionary movement: the division between the Hards and the Softs. In individuals this division underlies formal differences in political opinion and program. Two pieces of statuary, both representing the same reality, may be made one of wax, the other of steel; so also the apparently same political view may be held by a Hard or a Soft. The difference concerns the degree to which an individual finds *revolutionary oppositionism* congenial or tolerable—not simply as an occasional or symbolic gesture, but as a relationship to the established currents of society around which to build one's life. Its powering agency appears as “revolutionary energy.”*

* Not to be confused with simple rejection of established society, implemented by a life-style of disaffiliation (from St. Simeon Stylites to today). This is

Like other character traits, for example firmness or pigheadedness, its name is duplex. Compare the following book titles: *Karl Marx: Man, Thinker, and Revolutionist*, edited by D. Ryazanov; and *Karl Marx: A Study in Fanaticism*, by E. H. Carr. These two titles tell us more about the writers than about the subject: to Carr, the Marxist is a revolutionary fanatic; to the Marxist, Carr is a bourgeois philistine. To Marx himself, the political leader who slithered about without steadfast convictions ("fanaticism") was a scoundrel. Happiness meant to fight—this can be taken as the credo of the Hard.**

1. OF DEMONS

Marx was able to fight his way through to a new view of society and politics only by battling against the current in threefold fashion: first, obviously, against the dominant ideological influences in society; second, against the pressures of his own immediate milieu, beginning with his parents; third, against conforming to any of the dominant *non*-conformist trends of the time, that is, the socialisms and communisms of the day.

Marx's father recognized the problem early. An intelligent and cultivated man, a modest success in his profession, Heinrich Marx was intellectually content in his liberal Prussian patriotism; there was no

a classic recourse of Softs; it tries to avoid the choice between oppositionism and adaptation by moving away from both at right angles. There is, of course, a larger problem of the relationship between individual psychology and social ideology, which is outside our purview.

** For Marx the very type of slithering politician was Disraeli. Disraeli had been baptized by his father in boyhood—like Marx—but what outraged Marx was that this cynic should become the defender of clericalism. He wrote his Dutch uncle Lion Philips in 1864:

Our blood-brother [*Stammgenosse*] Benjamin Disraeli has in recent weeks again brought great discredit on himself, by parading at a public meeting as monitory guardian angel of the "high church" and the "church rates" and as its defender against criticism in religious affairs. He is the best evidence of how great talent without conviction makes scoundrels, albeit galooned and "right honorable" scoundrels.¹

Marx filled out daughter Laura's copy of "Confessions," a questionnaire game of the time. Part of it went like this: "*Your chief characteristic*: Singleness of purpose. *Your idea of happiness*: To fight. *Your idea of misery*: Submission."²

demon in his breast pressing toward a clash with established society. When he recognized that his son showed unusual intellectual ability, he reacted like a father: "Your rise to a high position in the world, the flattering hope of seeing your name in high renown one day, as well as your worldly well being, these not only lie close to my heart, they are long-nourished illusions that have rooted themselves deeply." In this letter, written to Karl who was then at the University of Berlin and not quite nineteen, he wondered "since your heart is evidently inspired and ruled by a demon not vouchsafed everyone, whether this demon is divine or Faustian in its nature." He mentioned Karl's "demonic genius" a little further on.³

The same year, his son presented him on his birthday with a notebook of poems which should have settled the doubt: the demon was Faustian. In the section entitled "Epigrams," homage was rendered repeatedly not only to Goethe in general but to the figure of Faust in particular.⁴ The year before, in a set of poems presented to his fiancée Jenny von Westphalen, the Faustian note had been struck in an explicit credo,⁵ part of which goes:

I would compass all, attaining
Every boon the gods impart:
Dare to crave all knowledge, straining
To embrace all song and art.

* * *

So let's dare all things to seek out,
Never resting, never through,
Not so dead as not to speak out,
Not to want, and not to do.

The main characteristics of this body of juvenile verse are, on the one hand, a passionate energy of spirit, and, on the other, a "protest against the intellectual domination of the philistine" which, in D. Ryazanov's view, is "nothing but the germinal form of rebellion against the dominant state of things in society."^{*}

Passion and reason were never mutually exclusive for Marx. Intellectual passion and the passion of intellect are nowhere exhibited more strikingly than in a letter he sent his father on November 10, 1837,

^{*} See Special Note B for a fuller discussion of Marx's youthful verse.

describing his efforts to orient himself amidst the currents of contemporary thought, art, and philosophy.*

When he wrote this letter, Marx had already joined the Doctors' Club at the university, the group of radical Young Hegelians in which his first political thinking would develop. There he earned a reputation both for intellectual brilliance and passionate intensity. For the first, there is the evidence of the well-known letter in which Moses Hess wrote of Marx: "he combines the most profound philosophical seriousness with the most biting wit; think of Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine, and Hegel united in one person—I say *united*, not thrown together—and there you have Dr. Marx."⁸ For the second, there is the amusing evidence of the impression Marx's character made on his young associates in a long, satiric epic poem written by Engels in protest against the March 1842 dismissal of Bruno Bauer from his university position. The leading Young Hegelians are introduced as Bauer's troops, with descriptions that are friendly caricatures. The passage devoted to Marx, whom Engels did *not* yet know personally, goes approximately as follows, in limping hexameters:

Then who, with fiercesome rage, comes rushing thereupon?
A swarthy chap from Trier, a real phenomenon.
He neither walks nor skips but springs up in the air,
And storms about with red-hot fury as though to tear
Down to the earth the far-hung tent of the broad sky—
His arms he stretches up to seize the winds on high.
With angry fist up-clenched, he rages without rest
As if ten thousand flaming demons him possessed.⁹

No other year saw more hard thinking on Marx's part than 1844; but it was in that year that he twice consciously confronted the conjunction of reason with passion. In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* he wrote it down as an aphorism: "Man as an objective, sentient being is therefore a *suffering* being, and since he is a being that feels his

* The entire letter needs to be read to appreciate this. Several English translations are available.⁶ Marx would certainly have agreed with an address adopted by the International Association (not to be confused with the First International) in 1859, in which its Central Committee proclaimed: "We speak to the reason of democrats. Passion is in its place when there are great things to be created; calm judgment is to do its work, when there is before our eyes a society which dies, and a lie which triumphs."⁷

suffering, a *passionate* being. Passion is man's essential force striving energetically after its object."¹⁰ (There is a wordplay here: *Leiden*, "suffering," and *Leidenschaft*, "passion," have the same stem.) Then in the fall, in a letter to Feuerbach, he criticized a Fourierist maxim which seemed to see people simply in terms of their passions: "Don't all these statements look as if the Frenchman had deliberately counterposed his 'passion' to the *actus purus* of German thought?" It is the counterposition of one against the other that is wrong. He goes on to criticize Bauer's view—which he will shortly attack in *The Holy Family*—that all mankind is nothing but an "inert mass" counterposed to spirit. "It is therefore considered to be the worst of crimes if the critic possesses *heart* or *passion*; he has to be an ice-cold, ironical *sophos*." Quoting Bauer, he shows that the result is Bauer's "tone of passionless contempt," contempt for the mass of "decaying humanity."¹¹

We may suggest further that behind such an apparent "tone of passionless contempt" is passionate rancor against a mass so inert as to misprize the passionless superiority of the Thinker. In contrast, to Marx passion is not a mindless storm of emotion, but the driving force of mind. This is what it also was to Hegel: "nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion."¹²

2. OF SIEGFRIED AND OTHER HEROES

Engels himself had the same threefold obstacle course to get over. To begin with, he had a longer distance to travel from the authoritarian Pietism of his family and friends. His father, who had more than the usual premonitions about demonic possession, wrote to his wife about the boy before he had turned fifteen:

Externally, as you know, he has become better behaved, but in spite of previous strict chastisement, he does not seem to have learned unconditional obedience even out of fear of punishment. Thus today once more I was grieved to find in his desk a nasty book from a lending library, a tale of chivalry from the thirteenth century. Noteworthy is the carelessness with which he leaves such a book around in the drawer. May God mend his nature—I am often uneasy about the otherwise excellent youngster.¹³

Here indeed was a situation made to order for antiparental rebellion! The touch about the "tale of chivalry from the thirteenth century" was typical; the young Engels dreamed of going out into the world to do great deeds. A year after the above revelation of his depraved taste in literature, one of his earliest poems celebrated a vision of idealistic heroes of chivalric literature.*

Of this parade of heroes, it was the image of Siegfried that recurred during Engels' youth. In 1839 he composed a lengthy "Fragment of a Tragicomedy," entitled *Der gehörnte Siegfried*.¹⁵ Naturally it begins with Siegfried's leaving home to make his way in the world. ("Why tarry longer staying / Here in the castle hall? / Outside my steed is neighing, / My sword hangs on the wall.") The romantic clichés are there, but while this was written in the same year as Marx's poetry notebooks for Jenny, the choice of clichés is different. For one thing, Engels was two years younger, and not in love.

Four years later, in more mature retrospection, he looked back at this pattern as a social phenomenon:

What is it that moves us so powerfully in the myth of Siegfried? . . . Siegfried is the representative of the German youth. All of us whose bosom bears a heart not yet beaten into submission by the restrictive narrowness of life—we know what it is trying to say. We feel in us the same aspiration for great deeds, the same defiance of tradition, that drove Siegfried out of his father's castle; the eternal weighing of pros and cons, the philistine fear of the bald deed is repugnant to our very soul; we want out into the free world; we want to leap over the bounds of circumspection and reach out in struggle for the crown of life, the deed. Giants and dragons have been attended to by the philistines especially in

* The poem, untitled, was inscribed in the fashion of an illuminated manuscript, and decorated with his own drawings.¹⁴ It went like this:

There dawns on my eyes the far light
Of a lovely vision that gleams
As through the clouds the starlight
Shines down its tender beams.
They come, and now I distinguish
Their faces and forms aglow:
I see *William Tell* the marksman—
Siegfried—his dragon foe;
Faust the defiant is coming,
Achilles is at hand,
Bouillon the noble champion
And all his knightly band;

And also—laugh not, brothers—
Don Quixote of chivalrous deed
Who roams the wide world over
Upon his noble steed.
Thus they come by, and never,
Never stop or stay;
Oh, can you bind them forever,
Keep them from fleeting away?
Oft may you see the vision
Sweet poetry shows to you,
That cares and sorrows may vanish
As they gleam into view!

the domain of church and state. But those days are gone; they stick us into jails called schools . . . and when we are released from discipline, we fall into the hands of the gods of the age, the police. Police for thinking, police for speaking, police for moving, riding, traveling—identification papers, residence permits and customs forms—the devil take giants and dragons! They have left us only the shadow of deeds—the rapier instead of the sword; and what is the good of any skill in fencing with the rapier when we are not allowed to apply our skill with the sword?¹⁶

At this point, Engels was a liberal adherent of the Young Germany tendency. Gone was the boyish pattern of looking back to heroes of the past: the keynote of Young Germany was *modernization*—on a mildly liberal basis. The praise of the deed, of course, comes from Goethe's famous lines. In modern jargon, young Engels was yearning for activism.

Writing to a friend in 1839, the nineteen-year-old adopts the cause of the most recent popular uprisings and movements—first of all, the French revolution of July 1830: "What did we have before 1830? . . . Then came the July revolution, like a thunderbolt—the finest expression of the will of the people since the wars of liberation [of Germany against Napoleon]." Young Germany, he tells his friend, expresses "the ideas of the century" on the "natural rights of every man."

These ideas include: above all the participation of the people in running the state, hence a Constitutional Assembly, furthermore the emancipation of the Jews, abolition of all religious coercion, all aristocracy of birth, etc. Who can have anything against this?

He is writing this letter from Bremen, where his family had installed him as a commercial apprentice, and the detested Prussian coat of arms hangs in the workroom.

I cannot sleep at night for thinking of nothing but the ideas of the century; when I am at my job and glance up at the Prussian coat of arms, the spirit of freedom seizes hold of me; every time I look at a periodical I go searching for the progress of freedom. . . .¹⁷

Adherents of Young Germany "wish and strive to imbue the German people's flesh and blood with the ideas of our century, the emancipation of the Jews and serfs, constitutionalism in general, and other good ideas."¹⁸ That was what the liberal youth was for: all the Good Ideas

that would bring the backward society of Germany up to date, under Good Men.

The year 1840 was a turning point for these vague aspirations.

3. OF SAVIOR-RULERS

One of the characteristics of Softs is a propensity to attach themselves to Power, to look upward for emancipation. It is naturally the common pattern of liberalism. Under conditions of absolutism, it gravitates perforce toward the illusion of the savior-ruler. A common form of this illusion has always been hope for salvation from the ascent to the throne of a new, liberal monarch. Marx went through this at an early age along with Rhenish liberalism and the Left Hegelian circle.

In mid-1840 the old king of Prussia was succeeded by his son, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who as crown prince had excited great hope in liberal circles that he would grant constitutional reforms, for he had made certain noises about liberty and national unity. It was a not uncommon habit of royal heirs: the same pattern had held a century before, when Frederick the Great had uttered similar "nice phrases . . . shortly or immediately after his accession to the throne." So remarks Mehring in *The Lessing Legend*, which observes that this is "the noted liberalism of crown princes." The leading figure of the Young Hegelians, Bruno Bauer, seized the opportunity to pay fulsome homage to "the highest idea of our state life," the spirit of the Hohenzollerns.¹⁹

These hopes for democratization from above collapsed quickly. Bauer's prostrations before the crown earned only a kick in the face: the new king appointed an orthodox reactionary to the university post that Bauer wanted. Next, Bauer was even ousted from his post at the University of Bonn.²⁰ The events made it clear to Marx that an academic career was closed to him, unless he was ready to bootlick the establishment like academia in general.

There is indirect evidence that Marx was caught up with the rest in the liberal illusion about the new king. In April 1840, looking to the new reign, Marx's close friend K. F. Köppen—a prominent left Hegelian, ten years older than Marx—had published a book on Frederick the Great.²¹ One biographer of Marx describes the book as follows:

Köppen honored Frederick, "in whose spirit we swore to live and die," as the enemy of Christian-German reaction. His basic idea was that the state was embodied in its purest form in a monarchy ruled over by a monarch like Frederick, a philosopher, a free servant of the world spirit. Renewal could only come from the top. . . .²²

Köppen's book was not simply an exercise in history but a tract for the times. He wanted to suggest that the new monarch should bear the torch of the savior-ruler like his great predecessor. Mehring comments:

The fact that a man like Köppen yearned for "the spiritual resurrection" of the worst despot in Prussian history in order "to exterminate with fire and sword all those who deny us entrance into the land of promise" is sufficient to give us some idea of the peculiar environment in which these Berlin Young Hegelians lived.²³

This is unjust and, what is worse, unhistorical: there was nothing "peculiar" about Köppen's attitude. It had been dominant, among intellectuals as among others, since time immemorial, and essentially it is still dominant. Frederick may have been the worst despot but he was a *modernizing* despot, and this variety still gains mass allegiance from well-intentioned people, especially those who would like to be the modernizing bureaucrats or mouthpieces for the modernizing despot. Liberal circles held to the old illusion that, if only power found its way into the hands of a Good Man, he would hand salvation down from his seat of rule—and thus, incidentally, spare one all the inconveniences of having to conquer salvation for oneself in struggle against power.

Köppen's book was prominently dedicated to "my friend Karl Heinrich Marx of Trier." No doubt at this point Marx, along with the rest of this circle, shared the attitudes of the work that was dedicated to him.²⁴

4. OF PROMETHEUS AND PRINCES

The following year Marx returned the compliment with an admiring mention of Köppen's book. It is rather dragged in by the hair, for it occurs, of all places, in the foreword that Marx wrote, in March 1841,

for the planned publication of his doctoral dissertation on Greek philosophy.²⁵ But the case was simply that Marx was obviously determined to utilize this opportunity, *faute de mieux*, to make a declaration of conscience against the political status quo. The tribute to Köppen's work on Frederick was a way of taking a stand on the current political alignment.

The rest of the foreword is deliberately chip on the shoulder. Next comes a thrust against religion, by upholding the "sovereign authority" of philosophy against religion. He rests this first on a quotation from Hume, who asserts that if the hegemony of philosophy is questioned from an inferior area, then "This puts one in mind of a king arraign'd for high-treason against his subjects." Marx underlines this sentence so that it cannot be missed.²⁶ Epicurus is the next witness. And finally there is the most provocative antireligious statement of all using the figure of Prometheus:

Philosophy makes no secret of it. Prometheus' avowal, "In a word, all gods I hate," is its own avowal, its own dictum against all gods in heaven and on earth who do not acknowledge human consciousness as the supreme divinity. There shall be none beside it.

To the wretched rabbits, however, who gloat over the apparent worsening in the social position of philosophy, it replies once more in the words of Prometheus to the lackey of the gods, Hermes:

Never would I exchange my doleful lot
For your servitude—be sure of that.
Better it is to be bound to this rock
Than serve Father Zeus as faithful errand-boy.

Prometheus is the noblest saint and martyr in the calendar of philosophy.²⁷

Thus, although the dissertation's subject was Democritus and Epicurus, in writing the foreword Marx handed the center stage over to Prometheus, as a means (a typically academic means; to be sure) of raising the banner of rebellious defiance of authority. The dissertation itself had not mentioned Prometheus, although in his workbooks for it Marx had written:

... just as Prometheus, after stealing fire from heaven, begins to build houses and settle on earth, so philosophy, upon reaching

out to the world, directs itself against the world that makes its appearance.²⁸

Prometheus never reappears in any of Marx's writings as a symbol of rebellion,²⁹ but the quickening spirit of dissent broke out in his notes to the dissertation. There is the significant observation that

It is a psychological law that the theoretical mind that has become free in itself turns into practical energy; emerging as *will* out of the shadow-realm of Amenthes, it directs itself against the world of actuality that exists apart from it.³⁰

Further on, he writes that when "philosophy as will" is inspired to realize itself, it enters on a state of tension with existing reality. "The inner self-sufficiency and rounded wholeness are broken up. What was an inner light becomes a consuming flame which turns outward."³¹ He bids Schelling, whom the Prussian regime had installed as official state philosopher, to think back to what he had once written: "*It is time to proclaim freedom of the mind to a better humanity, and no longer suffer it to bewail the loss of its fetters.*"³²

Even the dedication (to his future father-in-law, Baron von Westphalen) is written as a thrust against the reactionaries: he is fortunate

to admire a graybeard of youthful strength, who welcomes every progressive step of the day with the enthusiasm and thoughtfulness of truth and with that sun-lit idealism of deep conviction which alone knows the true word to call forth all the spirits of the world, which never shrank before the shadows cast by specters of retrogression or the often dark cloudrack of the time, but rather with divine energy and a man's steady gaze ever saw through all dissimulation right to the empyrean that burns at the heart of the world.³³

His friend Bruno Bauer warned him against using the quotation from Aeschylus, invoking Prometheus, at the close of the planned foreword to the dissertation: it was an act of "temerity" that would keep him from getting any academic post. "Only not now!" advised Bauer. "Afterwards, once you have a university post . . . you can say whatever you want and in whatever form you want."³⁴ Bauer's caution was an echo of the counsels of timorous prudence given to Prometheus by the leader of the chorus in Aeschylus' drama.

As things turned out, the dissertation was never published in any case. But we are at a watershed here: this is the point where Marx had to make an intellectual commitment to a course of *oppositionism*.

To be sure, he was not the only one. The new king's failure to conform to others' illusions brought about a revulsion of feeling in liberal circles. The result was later described by Engels as follows:

°°Indeed, the middle classes, who had partly expected that the new King would at once grant a Constitution, proclaim the Liberty of the Press, Trial by Jury, etc., etc.—in short, himself take the lead of that peaceful revolution which they wanted in order to obtain political supremacy—the middle classes had found out their error, and had turned ferociously against the King.³⁵

The young Engels had also gone through his process of disillusionment with benevolent rulers, before and after Friedrich Wilhelm IV's accession. In 1839 the nineteen-year-old Engels was already boiling over with disgust at the failure of the old king (Friedrich Wilhelm III) to carry out his promise of a constitution. We have seen his sentiments in verse in Chapter 7;³⁶ a few months later, he wrote to the same boyhood friend in good prose:

The same king who in 1815, sweating with fear, promised his subjects in a Cabinet Order that they would get a constitution if they pulled him out of that pickle—this same shabby, lousy, god-damned king now lets it be known . . . that nobody is going to get a constitution from him. . . . There is no period richer in royal crimes than 1816–1830; nearly every prince that reigned then deserved the death penalty. . . . Oh, I could tell you delightful tales about the love that princes bear their subjects—I expect anything good only from the prince whose head is buzzing from the buffets of his people, and whose palace windows are being smashed by a hail of stones of the revolution.³⁷

After the accession of the new king in 1840, Engels published an essay attacking his political and social views and warning that a free press and a real parliament would not be granted by the monarch but would have to be won by the people. The article closed with a hint that Prussia was nearing its 1789.³⁸

At about the same time, in 1840 or 1841, the twenty-year-old Engels wrote an opera libretto (unfinished) on the figure of Cola di

Rienzi; it is of exceptional interest in this connection. Rienzi was the popular leader of fourteenth-century Rome whose career has often been idealized as a herald of modern nationalism and national liberation. Only a few years before, an immensely popular novel about him had been published by Bulwer-Lytton, in Germany as well as in England; Wagner's opera was written a year or so after Engels' piece.

Rienzi would seem to be tailor-made for glorification as a Siegfried type. But by this time, in Engels' literary productions, the role of Siegfried was being played by the people, not by a hero. This had already been manifested in one of his poems glorifying the American Indians as freedom fighters resisting the rape of their land by the whites.³⁹ In his *Rienzi* fragment, the people (split into two choruses) are literally brought on the stage as protagonist. Rienzi, the Tribune of the People, is shown in struggle against the old aristocracy—and *both* sides are depicted as villains of the piece. At first the people are divided; one chorus hails Rienzi as liberator of the people and the other cries "Down with him!" The spokesman for the rebels is a character called Battista: the tribune, he says, is really just as bad as the old rulers—a new despot replacing the old tyrants.

He's just as bad and just as good
As these, our lords of ancient blood.
He has fine words for you to hear,
But it's not the people that have his ear.
Tyrants out and despots in—
In the end it's the same as it's always been.

In another confrontation, Battista, speaking for the rebellious section of the people, denounces Rienzi as head of a band of foreign mercenaries who poses as a liberator but is really afraid of the people. He predicts the people will soon learn this from their own sad experiences.

Haughty and insolent, see him there,
Now that he's led us into his snare.
His haughty airs will soon be through
When the people change their point of view!

On the other hand, Rienzi is depicted as exulting over his ambition to conquer the world even as he is again hailed as liberator. When he kills Battista, the two sections of the people unite against him. As the

fragment ends, they are about to storm the Capitol;* and the people's chorus, now unified, sings:

All of your flattering speeches, meant
Just to seduce us, fail in art.
Now we are alone intent
On vengeance for our freedom's loss!⁴¹

Engels' "Rienzi" is an unusually clear rejection of the hero-liberator or savior-messiah pattern.

5. OF THE SERVILE STATE

The failed hopes in the new king in 1840 merely taught the liberals not to expect much from this particular monarch: by nature, liberalism typically seeks reform by seeking the ear that is connected to the hand holding the levers of power. But for Marx the lesson bit deeper; it was his last illusion in the savior-ruler.

Most immediately, it helped to rid him of the view, dominant among the liberals, that the political goal to be realistically attained was a *constitutional* monarchy, as successor to the absolutist monarchy. Marx's argument for the rejection of any kind of monarchy was made in his notebook *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* in 1843, as we noted in Chapter 3.⁴²

Marx later summarized the whole episode in hindsight at a point (May 1843) when he was in midstream of the passage from radical democracy to communism. In one of the *DFJ* editorial letters, he wrote that the king's "liberal speeches and outpourings" did signify a desire "to bring life into the state," if only his own variety of retrogressive life ("old German fancies"); but when even this variety of change threatened to open the gates to other changes, the old bureaucratic-despotic

* An interesting aspect which we can only mention at this point is that in the last scene, the revolutionary people are being headed by a woman, Camilla, the rebellious daughter of the leader of the aristocracy. However, the fragment ends before her role is developed. The dramatic problem of the continuation would have been integration of her personal motives with the dominant social-political theme. Well before this, young Engels had already shown his awareness of the place in literature of the "modern question . . . the emancipation of women."⁴⁰

system "soon killed these un-German activities."* It was a "miscarried attempt to transcend the philistine state on its very own basis."⁴⁴

One was only mistaken for a while in considering it important which wishes and thoughts the King would come out with. This could not change anything in substance; the philistine is the stuff making up the monarchy, and the monarch is always only the king of the philistines. He can make neither himself nor his people into free, real men, if both sides remain what they are.⁴⁵

Since it was impossible for this state "to abandon its own basis and pass over to the human world of democracy," the inevitable result was

regression to the old fossilized servile state [*Dienerstaat*], in which the slave serves in silence and the owner of the land and the people rules as silently as possible simply through a well-trained, quietly obedient servant-staff. Neither of the two could say what they wanted—neither the former, that they wanted to become men, nor the latter, that he had no use for men in his land. The only recourse, therefore, is to keep silent. *Muta pecora, prona et ventri oboedientia*. [The herd is silent, submissive, and obeys its stomach.]⁴⁶

Therefore

The self-reliance of men—freedom—would first have to be re-awakened in the hearts of these men. Only this consciousness, which vanished from the world with the Greeks and into the blue mist of heaven with Christianity, can again turn society [*Gesellschaft*] into a community [*Gemeinschaft*] of men to achieve their highest purposes, a democratic state.⁴⁷

For Marx, the freedom of self-reliance meant not only the abandonment of the savior-ruler illusion, but also the decision to abandon the road of scholarship in the university world. For that road was possible

* A similar appreciation was given by Marx much later, in 1859, looking back at 1840: "°°When the King with the brainless head ascended the throne, he was full of the visions of the romantic school. He wanted to be a king by divine right, and to be at the same time a popular king; to be surrounded by an independent aristocracy in the midst of an omnipotent bureaucratic administration; to be a man of peace at the head of the barracks; to promote popular franchises in the mediaeval sense while opposing all longings of modern liberalism; to be a restorer of ecclesiastic faith while boasting of the intellectual preëminence of his subjects; to play, in one word, the mediaeval king while acting as the king of Prussia—that abortion of the Eighteenth Century."⁴³

only by accepting a life of silent submission to the Servile State, refraining from giving battle to ensconced power, burying one's nose in scholarly busy-work and profound thoughts, while injustice and inhumanity reigned outside the stained-glass windows.

With the liberal bourgeoisie's disappointment at Friedrich Wilhelm IV,

°° they were so exasperated that they, being short themselves of men able to represent them in the Press, went to the length of an alliance with the extreme philosophical party [Young Hegelians]. . . . The fruit of this alliance was the *Rhenish Gazette* [*Rheinische Zeitung*].

So went Engels' later account.⁴⁸ Thus the same episode that turned Marx to oppositionism also provided the vehicle for his introduction to political life.

We saw, in Chapters 1 and 2, the course of education in the political and social realities of the day that the *Rheinische Zeitung* provided, ending with the government's acknowledgment that it could cope with reason only by swinging the policeman's club. For a while the RZ was the David hurling slingshots at the Prussian Goliath; when the regime closed it down, a contemporary cartoon saw its editor as Prometheus bound to a printing press while the royal Prussian eagle gnawed at his vitals.⁴⁹ The last issue of the paper carried an unsigned farewell poem breathing defiance of the authorities; the poem was so thoroughly anonymous that one cannot help wondering whether it was a flare-up of Marx's temptation to write verse.*

* The last two stanzas proclaimed:

Our mast blew down, but we were not affrighted,
The angry gods could never make us bend.
Columbus too at first was scorned and slighted,
And yet he saw the New World in the end.

Ye friends, who cheer us till the timbers rattle—
Ye foes, who did us honor with your strife—
We'll meet again on other fields of battle:
If all is dead, yet courage still is life.⁵⁰

Seven years later, when Marx's *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed in the same city in 1849, a farewell poem by Ferdinand Freiligrath was published in the final issue, naturally striking the same note.

6. OF A THINKER WHO DREAMS

The character of a revolutionary was formed in Marx and Engels by 1843—one side of it, at any rate: the spirit of revolutionary oppositionism, of defiant resistance to authority. This side can be represented by Prometheus, if a symbol is insisted on. The steel core of that character has been portrayed by Marx's favorite dramatist (alongside Shakespeare): Aeschylus, in *Prometheus Bound*. Aeschylus does not really explain why Prometheus, insisting on serving humanity whom the new gods would destroy, refuses to bow the neck to Zeus, to Power—like everyone else and as all his well-wishers advise him to do. It is simply the fatality of his character, it would seem. It was also Marx's and Engels'.

Such a character will naturally excite a variety of reactions. Aeschylus covers this ground for us today. Many are in the position of Hephaestus, who, weeping salt tears very liberally, is the one who actually fetters the hero, protesting it is against his will. "The dirty job must be done," he whines to Power, "but don't push me too hard." More are in the position of Oceanus, who delivers himself of sage advice: "I would admonish thee to prudence" . . . see what are the wages of too bold a tongue. Thou hast not learned humility, nor to yield to evils. . . ." He will try to negotiate peace with Zeus, but meanwhile: "Do thou keep thy peace, and restrain thy blustering speech." Others are in the position of the leader of the chorus, who has his own diagnosis of the hero's sins: "Care not for mortals overmuch, whilst you neglect your own profit."⁵¹ (In other words: get a good job instead of wasting time in the British Museum.) Then there are also the descendants of Hermes, the "lackey of Zeus," who thinks anyone who does not cringe before power is simply stark mad—an excellent frame of mind for a lackey.

In life Marx's character naturally excited a similar variety of reactions, since they were mostly dependent on a prior response to what he represented politically. Those who were appalled by his "revolutionary fanaticism" (Carl Schurz, for example) were also offended by his character, for its most striking trait was a hard strength, a thrusting intensity that outraged the Softs. To the latter, a character built around a steel frame was a personal insult.

But those who loved him were just as conscious of the steel frame.

Perhaps the most interesting evidence comes from his wife Jenny: after a year of marriage they were temporarily separated when she went to visit her parents in Germany to display their first child. In a tender letter, she wrote how she awaited his letters:

Please, dear heart, just let the pen skim over the paper, even if it trips and stumbles once or twice and takes a sentence down with it— Your ideas stand up straight like the grenadiers of the old guard, so honor-true and brave, and like them can say: *Elle meurt mais elle ne se rend pas* [It dies but never surrenders]. What does it matter if, this once, the uniform hangs loose and isn't so tightly buttoned up. How nice it is about French soldiers, that relaxed, easy look. Think of our machine-polished Prussians. It makes you shudder, doesn't it.—Let the belt out a few notches this time and loosen cravat and shako—let the participles flow, and place the words whichever way they want to go. Such troops should not march with such regularity.⁵²

Around 1846, a Russian aristocratic tourist named Annenkov, slumming amidst the advanced ideas of the West, made Marx's acquaintance; many years later, after Marx was already famous, he published his impressions, including this:

Marx himself was a man of the type made up of energy, will power, and invincible conviction—a type of man extremely remarkable also in outward appearance. With a thick mop of black hair on his head, his hairy hands, dressed in a coat buttoned diagonally across his chest, he maintained the appearance of a man with the right and authority to command respect, whatever guise he took and whatever he did. All his motions were awkward but vigorous and self-confident, all his manners ran athwart conventional usages in social intercourse but were proud and somehow guarded, and his shrill voice with its metallic ring marvelously suited the radical pronouncements over things and people which he uttered.⁵³

In the "fantasy" of this Russian aristocrat, as he put it, Marx represented "the figure of the democratic dictator incarnate. . . . The contrast with the types of people I had left behind in Russia was of the most emphatic kind." The Russian novel has made us familiar with these types—flabby, futile, and flexible.

Part of Annenkov's impression jibes excellently with a comment once made by Marx himself. In an article giving a blistering portrait of

the British army bureaucracy as displayed in the Crimean War, he included the following count in the indictment, one that applies to bureaucratic types generally: "Everything with them must be round and smooth. Nothing is so objectionable as the angular forms which mark strength and energy."⁵⁴ There is no doubt that Marx's character was "angular" in this sense.

The American Fourierist leader Albert Brisbane, touring Europe in 1848, saw Marx at work in Cologne,

where I found a great popular agitation, and where I found Karl Marx, the leader in the popular movement. . . . His expression was that of great energy, and behind his self-contained reserve of manner were visible the fire and passion of a resolute soul.⁵⁵

After the furor over the Paris Commune, a correspondent of the *New York World* visited Marx's home for an interview. His thumbnail sketch of the man began by recalling "the bust of Socrates, the man who died rather than profess his belief in the gods of the time." He continued:

Throw a veil over the upper part of the face and you might be in the company of a born vestry man. Reveal the essential feature, the immense brow, and you know at once that you have to deal with that most formidable of all composite individual forces—a dreamer who thinks, a thinker who dreams.⁵⁶

A dreamer who thinks, a thinker who dreams . . . that can be paraphrased: passion disciplined by intellect, intellect energized by passion. Marx's father was right, of course: there was a demon in his breast, as in the breast of any man who sets out to change the world instead of capitulating to it.

10 | TOWARD THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-EMANCIPATION

The Promethean rejection of injustice-by-power was only one side of the revolutionary character that Marx was developing. Aeschylus himself raised a pertinent question long before Lord Acton: "*Who could endure you in prosperity?*" It is the lackey Hermes who directs this sneer to Prometheus. Even in Olympus there were not a few who rebelled against Zeus in order to replace him as ruler. And even if Prometheus' intentions were the best, who else *could* take the throne if the incumbent were ousted? The opponent of Zeus was merely a philanthropist, an early Owenite.

If the primary question was the revolutionist's relation to society, the next was his relation to the masses whom he aspired to serve. Robert Owen, personally the finest character among the Utopian predecessors of Marx, proposed "to govern or treat all society as the most advanced physicians govern and treat their patients in the best arranged lunatic hospitals, in which forbearance and kindness . . . govern the conduct of all who have the care of these unfortunates. . . ."¹ As we saw in Chapter 6, the mass of workers could be looked on à la Owen as victims and wards or as a battering-ram; as a recruiting-ground for a gang, as a diversionary threat, or merely as a limited interest group. But no one yet looked on them as literally the potential rulers of society.

For this there was no effective precedent, above all none outside the socialist ranks.* The view of the masses as mere tools, born to be

* As usual there are possible exceptions. A prominent candidate is the remarkable Gerrard Winstanley, leader of the True Levellers ("Diggers") as the left wing of the English Revolution; but he was unknown in Marx's time, completely forgotten. Then, perhaps, there was Thomas Münzer, who was the subject of Engels' historical work written after the 1848 revolution, *The Peasant War in Germany*; and Spartacus—"the most splendid fellow that all ancient history has to

managed and controlled, is the unanimous view of all ruling-class society and its thinkers, back through all recorded history, far as human eye can read. It is a pattern which is not of the socialist movement, but merely extends into it.

1. THE ACHERONTIC DANGER

Before the rise of socialism, the masses could be called out into action under certain circumstances: one section of the propertied classes, beaten on top, becomes desperate enough to resort to arousing the broader masses below both contestants; it sets the plebs into motion, with appropriate promises and slogans, in order to hoist itself into the seats of power. Aristotle already knew all about it.³ The *tyrannoi* of ancient Greece became "tyrants" in modern languages not because they tyrannized over the masses any more than the oligarchies, but because they used the masses to tyrannize over the oligarchies themselves.

But there is always a social gamble: after you have called the masses from below onto the stage of social action, how are you going to get them off, and back to their holes, after they have done the job for you? They may become so arrogant as to reach out for something for themselves. That danger existed even in ages when the broad working masses (slaves, laboring freemen, or serfs) could have no vision of a new social order corresponding to their own class interests; when therefore their victory could not in fact mean a reorganization of society from below, but merely chaos. When that changes, what was previously a serious danger to public order becomes a mortal danger to the social order itself.

In Marx's eye, this is the change that takes place in history with the rise of capitalism and its shadow, the revolutionary proletariat. For the first time, there *does* exist a class below, a class on whose labor society is founded, that inherently *does* suggest a social program for its own

show; great general—no Garibaldi—noble character, real representative of the ancient proletariat," wrote Marx.² But we know too little about the last two. In my opinion the first to present a socialism-from-below based on a self-emancipating working-class movement was William Thompson; but this contribution is almost as forgotten today as in the time of Marx, who respected Thompson as a Ricardian-socialist economist.

reorganization of society. Once set in motion (struggle), this class has a historical option: it can "go into business for itself" instead of merely serving as a tool for one upper class (or class section) or another. It is only an option: the new power can still be controlled, to be sure; for it is very immature, largely unformed, often childishly foolish, ill educated. But how long can this adolescent giant be kept in short pants?

Because of this new danger, the class instinct of the bourgeoisie early made it reluctant to call the working masses into civil conflict even as an ally in its own drive to gain power from the old order (a subject to which we will devote considerable attention in Volume 2); and since then, it has been interested mainly in ways and means of fragmenting and channeling the dangerous mass forces below. But individual ideologists and political adventurers are another matter; so also are political tendencies which look in the direction of an *anticapitalist* élite. Even individual bourgeois politicians vary considerably in their willingness to play with this fire, as Marx once noted.^{3a} He commented on a similar pattern in his thumbnail sketch of the French liberal politician Thiers who, after servicing both Louis Philippe and Bonaparte, carried out the task of massacring the Paris Commune:

°° A professional "Revolutionist" in that sense, that in his eagerness . . . of wielding power . . . he never scrupled, when banished to the banks of the opposition, to stir the popular passions and provoke a catastrophe to displace a rival. . . . The working class he reviled as "*the vile multitude*."⁴

This political type had a Virgilian tag: *Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo*—"If I cannot change the Powers above, I shall set the Lower Regions [Acheron] into motion."⁵ It was much better known in Marx's day than our own, and the frequency with which it showed up reflects sensitivity to the difference between political movements from above and from below.*

* George Brandes' biography of Lassalle relates that the would-be workers' dictator, weighing his political course, "pondering like Achilles in his tent, mentally repeated to himself for nights and days the burden of Virgil's line. . . ."⁶ Since it does indeed provide the key to Lassalle's politics, it is well that Brandes used the Virgilian quotation as the title-page motto for the biography, as Lassalle himself had done for his pamphlet *The Italian War*. The motto also came to Engels' mind as he contemplated the cowardice of the French liberals of a later day: "the *flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo* is not their business. . . . They are afraid of the proletarian Acheron."⁷ Note also its occurrence in the excerpt from Marx's youthful "novel," *Scorpion und Félix*, given in Special Note B, p. 615 fn.

As against all varieties of socialism and reform which looked on the working masses in the accusative case ("we will emancipate *them*"), Marx developed the principle of the self-emancipation of the working class. Its classic formulation was written down much later, in 1864, as the first clause of the *Rules* of the First International: "*Considering, That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves; . . .*"⁸ But as Engels rightly said, by that time the idea had long been their operative conception: "our notion, from the very beginning, was that 'the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself.'"⁹

2. THE EDUCATION OF ENGELS

From the very beginning? This applies to Marxism in a general sense; but it is instructive to explain how it does *not* apply to Engels in his pre-Marxist period of gestation.

We have seen something of Engels' early development before his association with Marx. By the time he left for England in November 1842, he had been converted to what Moses Hess then called his communism, a philosophical communism quite unlike most of the French communists, essentially reformist and above all alien to any class commitment. This sentimental, petty-bourgeois radicalism was soon baptized "True Socialism," under which label the reader will find it discussed in the *Communist Manifesto*. Also, Hess was then in his period of *Schwärmerei* over Proudhon's writings, which he understood, not without justice, to be similar to his own mangle-mangle of ideas; Hess used a vague no-state (anarchist) rhetoric like his model. Such more or less was Engels' theoretical equipment when he arrived in England, insofar as he generalized. We have already mentioned that for a whole period it was precisely these theoretical generalizations, derived from the philosophical radicalism of backward Germany, that warred in his mind with the concrete revolutionary conclusions which he increasingly drew from the experience of the English class struggle and its organizations.

In the autumn of 1843 Engels began his writing career in the English press with articles for the Owenite organ *The New Moral World*. In a key article he praised Proudhon's *What Is Property?* as the most

important "communist" work published. (For he was ignorant of the fact that Proudhon denounced communism: his enthusiasm for Proudhon came via Hess, who had adopted that label.) The article especially emphasized this about Proudhon:

°° Having proved that every kind of government is alike objectionable, no matter whether it be democracy, aristocracy, or monarchy, that all govern by force; and that, in the best of all possible cases, the force of the majority oppresses the weaknesses of the minority, he comes, at last, to the conclusion: "Nous voulons l'anarchie!" What we want is anarchy; the rule of nobody, the responsibility of every one to nobody but himself.¹⁰

There was more of this Proudhonism in Engels' article, radical in sound and reactionary in content. The following is pure Proudhonism:

Democracy is, as I take all forms of government to be, a contradiction in itself, an untruth, nothing but hypocrisy . . . at the bottom. Political liberty is sham-liberty, the worst possible slavery; the appearance of liberty, and therefore the reality of servitude. Political equality is the same; therefore democracy, as well as every form of government, must ultimately break to pieces . . . we must have either a regular slavery—that is, an undisguised despotism, or real liberty, and real equality—that is, Communism.¹¹

It is in the same article that he boasts that, unlike the economic-minded English and the political French, "the Germans became Communists *philosophically*, by reasoning upon first principles."¹² We have already cited (in Chapter 7) the whole of the tell-tale passage which ends with the announcement that in Germany the communists can recruit only from the educated classes, "that is, from the universities and from the commercial class," because of the Germans' disinterested "love of abstract principles" and "disregard of reality and self-interest."¹³ This regurgitation of Hess's communism may illustrate why later Marx and Engels were so scornful of his "True Socialism" and the whole school of sentimental socialism. As for the marvelously philosophical Germans: in 1885 Engels commented retrospectively that at this time (1843) when he first met the London German communists, "I still owned, as against their narrow-minded equalitarian communism, a goodly dose of just as narrow-minded philosophical arrogance. . . ."¹⁴

Engels' next contribution to the Owenite paper is especially taken

with Wilhelm Weitling, who had also been praised in the previous article as the leader of the working-class wing of German communism. Engels now stressed

the chief point in which Weitling is superior to Cabet, namely, the abolition of all government by force and by majority, and the establishment in its stead of a mere administration . . . [and] the proposal to nominate all officers of this administration . . . not by a majority of the community at large, but by those only who have a knowledge of the particular kind of work the future officer has to perform; and, one of the most important features of the plan, that the nominators are to select the fittest person, by means of some kind of prize essays. . . .¹⁵

Weitling was by no means the only one on the socialist scene who advocated some kind of rule by élite; on the contrary, some version of rule by a new and more meritorious bureaucracy was typical of the extant socialisms and communisms.*

Engels' subsequent articles for the Owenites gradually became more ambivalent about the relation between communism and the classes. When in February 1845 he wrote Marx glowingly about the successful communist meetings in Elberfeld (as mentioned in Chapter 8), he was aware there was a missing piece in the bright picture even while he boasted that "Communism in the Wupper valley is a reality, and indeed almost a power already." For "All Elberfeld and Barmen, from the money-aristocracy to the grocery-trade was represented, leaving out only the proletariat." And a little later: ". . . nothing new here. The bourgeoisie talks politics and goes to church. What the proletariat is doing we don't know and can hardly get to know."¹⁷

* Weitling's scheme for civil-service examinations to select an oligarchy reappeared regularly in the later history of socialism; for example, it became the pet proposal by Fabianism's Bernard Shaw on how to replace democracy. Marx had already attacked this scheme as a bureaucratic ritual in the pages of his notebook critique of Hegel's state theory, which anticipated Weitling. The idea of such examinations for state officials, he wrote, "is more germane to becoming a shoemaker than to becoming an executive functionary." For one can be a good citizen though ignorant of shoemaking but not if one is ignorant of political affairs, which should not be the monopoly of a special group.

The "examination" is nothing but a masonic rite, the legal recognition that knowledge of civic affairs is a privilege. The "linking together" of "state office" and the "individual," this objective tie-up between knowledge of civil society and of state affairs—this *examination* is nothing more than a *bureaucratic baptism of knowledge*, the official recognition of the *tran-*

The documentable turning point came in late 1845, when Engels was well under way in collaboration with Marx on *The German Ideology*. This was after Marx's and Engels' joint visit to England and talks with the Chartist leaders. In an article Engels contributed to *The Northern Star*, he spelled out the turn he had made by cautioning the Chartists not to expect any revolutionary change from the middle classes:

It is from the very heart of our working people that revolutionary action in Germany will commence. It is true, there are among our middle classes a considerable number of Republicans and even Communists, and young men too, who, if a general outbreak occurred now, would be very useful in the movement, but these men are "bourgeois," profit-mongers, manufacturers by profession; and who will guarantee us that they will not be demoralized by their trade, by their social position, which forces them to live upon the toil of other people, to grow fat by being the leeches, the "exploiteurs" of the working classes?

Those who remain "proletarian in mind" will be infinitely small in numbers, he went on: "Fortunately, we do not count on the middle classes at all."¹⁸

Engels was now becoming a Marxist.

3. THE ACTIVE ELEMENT OF EMANCIPATION

We can now return to a question we raised at the end of Chapter 6. There we saw that, in the 1843 article in which Marx first pointed to the proletariat as the revolutionary class, he included two phrases that have given rise to much speculation: namely, "philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the proletariat," and "The *head* of this emancipation is *philosophy*, its *heart* is the *proletariat*." Taken (out of context) with a previous reference to the "passive element" in revolution, these phrases are assembled together to make the statement that the proletariat is only a passive instrument to be wielded by the philosophers of revolution, the intellectual elite. This reconstruction is all the more

substantiation of profane into sacred knowledge (it goes without saying in every examination that the examiner knows everything). No one heard of Greek or Roman statesmen taking examinations. But after all, what is even a Roman statesman compared with a Prussian functionary!¹⁶

plausible since this was indeed the pervasive view among the Young Hegelian exponents of philosophical radicalism; and in March 1845 (before joining Marx in Brussels) the young Engels reflected the standard thinking of the time when he referred to this very passage by Marx as meaning that the revolution would go forward "with the philosophers to think, and the working men to fight for us."¹⁹

But already in the middle of 1844 Marx had made his views on precisely this question crystal-clear—to us in hindsight, at any rate, if not to all of his contemporaries. It was published in Paris while Engels was still in Manchester. This is the article in which Marx publicly attacked the views of Arnold Ruge on the Silesian weavers' uprising. As we pointed out in Chapter 8, in this article Marx greatly emphasized the dynamic combativity of the weavers, indeed exaggerated it. For the leitmotiv of this article is the *self-activity* of the working class.

It is therefore in this article that Marx particularly exalts Wilhelm Weitling's book and his standing as a theoretician of the movement; for just as the Silesian weavers showed that the working class could be its own activator, so Weitling showed that the working class could produce its own "heads." In the following passage it is the last sentence which is the crux:

Where could the bourgeoisie, including its philosophers and scribes, boast of a work like Weitling's *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit* that deals with the emancipation of the bourgeoisie, of *political* emancipation? If one compares the empty, dispirited mediocrity of German political literature with this *immeasurable* and brilliant literary debut of the German workers; if one compares these giant-sized *children's shoes* with the midget size of the German bourgeoisie's worn-out political shoes, then one must prophesy that the *German Cinderella* will have an *athlete's figure*. It must be admitted that the German proletariat is the *theoretician* of the European proletariat, just as the English proletariat is its *political economist* and the French proletariat its *politician*.

Note: it is not the philosophers that are the theoreticians for the German proletariat but the German proletariat that is itself the theoretician. Then the *i*'s are dotted:

For just as the impotence of the German bourgeoisie is the *political* impotence of Germany, so the capacity with which the German proletariat is endowed is—even apart from German

theory—the *social* capacity of Germany. The disproportion between the philosophical and the political development in Germany is not an *abnormality*. It is a necessary disproportion. Only in socialism can a philosophical people find its corresponding practice; hence only in the *proletariat* can it find the active element of its emancipation.

The proletariat is the active element of the revolution; its role does not depend on “German theory,” that is, German philosophy. In case there could be any doubt that Marx is rebuking the philosophical arrogance of the Young Hegelian mind, he adds the warning that the Ruges should not view themselves as the educators of the workers: they have something to learn.

... the sole task of a thoughtful and truth-loving mind with respect to this first outbreak of the Silesian workers’ uprising did not consist in playing the *schoolmaster* to this event but rather in studying its *particular* character.²⁰

4. ELITISM VERSUS THE MASSES

This line of argument was continued in the book which Marx, in collaboration with Engels, wrote later the same year—*The Holy Family*. This too was directed against Young Hegelian élitism; for if Ruge was one of the outstanding leaders of the tendency, Bruno Bauer was its most prominent representative.*

The Holy Family was an all-out polemic against Bauer and the circle around his *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, published in Charlottenburg in 1843–1844. Marx’s essay “On the Jewish Question” had also been directed against Bauer, but its approach had mainly been one of

* Not that Young Hegelianism could be considered a homogeneous tendency by this time: on the contrary, it was already fragmenting in various directions. By the end of 1844, Bauer’s journal was defunct and Young Hegelianism was dead as an operative tendency.²¹ Marx’s revulsion against Bauer’s developing élitism had already been written into the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* earlier in 1844; it is stated there but not elaborated.²² Likewise to be found already in the Manuscripts is Marx’s new, dim view of the role of the philosopher: “The philosopher—himself an abstract form of alienated man—sets himself up as the *measure* of the alienated world,” he writes scornfully.²³ This is associated with the dim view of philosophy itself which we find there.²⁴

disagreement, albeit sharp disagreement, *within* a tendency. *The Holy Family* was a general assault all along the line. The divergence had come from both sides: Marx, as we have seen, had been clarifying his views in a more and more revolutionary direction; Bauer was abandoning the radicalism of the early 1840s and moving to the right. He eventually wound up as a conservative Bismarckian.

The first stage of Bauer's transmogrification was marked by his onslaught against the main enemy of the revolution, namely the masses. It was no longer simply a question of the traditional intellectual (and Young Hegelian) élitist and patronizing view of the masses; this was qualitatively different. And the theme of *The Holy Family*—insofar as that sprawling book has a theme*—is precisely a counterattack against the view of the masses taken by the Bauer circle, which called its ideology "Critical Criticism."

This theme is launched in the first sentence (by Engels): "Critical Criticism, however superior to the mass it deems itself, has infinite pity for the mass." To be sure, it "shrank from contact with the sinful leprous mass," but it seeks "to redeem the mass from massiness."** Just as it tells history "You ought to have happened in such and such a way!" so also it will cure the masses of their "stupidity" by deigning to place its wisdom before the world.²⁵ All the "massy" people have to do is sit at the feet of the Critics, grasp the Criticism, change their con-

* *The Holy Family* is an exasperating book in form and style of presentation, the worst in these respects that Marx ever wrote. (It is a pity that it, and not *The German Ideology*, succeeded in gaining contemporaneous publication, even though the latter shares some of the defects in form, particularly in Part II.) Structurally *The Holy Family* is amorphous and disorganized; stylistically it is often self-indulgent in a sophomoric way; too frequently it has the ingrown air of the literary clique quarrel; sometimes it descends to pointless nit-picking. All of this stands in the way of appreciating the real importance of its theoretical content. And into the bargain, the extant English translation is not exactly a triumph against difficulties. This said, it must be added that the book repays a second reading, after one is able to discount its many defects and read it as a polemic against intellectual élitism, written before there was much consciousness that such a tendency was objectionable.

** Throughout the book there is much word-play with *massy* (*massenhaft*) and *massiness*—terms improvised to convey the scornful attitude of the Bauerites to the real (profane) world in which the masses live, as distinct from the idealist fantasy-land which the "Critical" philosophers inhabit. Thus *Critical* becomes a synonym for Bauerite; *Criticism* means the Bauerite tendency; *massy history* is what actually happened in the world, whereas *Critical history* is fantasized history as described by the Bauerite ideologists.

sciousness, and—*voilà!* there is the revolution.²⁶ But in fact, according to the Critical philosophers, “the worker makes nothing, therefore he has nothing” (quoted from Edgar Bauer).²⁷

Marx pushes the case further in an important section entitled “‘Spirit’ and ‘Mass.’” (Since the meaning of *Geist* extends from “spirit” to “mind” and “intellect,” the title could be modernized, with some stretching, to “Intellectuals versus the Masses.”)

The Critical philosophers counterpose their “Absolute Critical wisdom” to “absolute massy stupidity.” The masses constitute an inert, unchanging dead weight on society: to the Critics’ eyes, the masses of the sixteenth century and those of the nineteenth are the same “abstract, immutable ‘Mass.’” The Critical Truth “addresses itself not to the empirical man but to the ‘innermost depths of the soul,’” and when the masses are able to appreciate this, their attitude will change.²⁸ But meanwhile—here Marx quotes Bauer:

“All great actions of previous history,” we are told [by the Critics], “were failures *from the start* and had no marked success because the mass became *interested* in and *enthusiastic* over them; in other words they were bound to come to a pitiful end because the idea involved in them was such that it had to be satisfied with a superficial conception and therefore to rely on the approval of the mass.”²⁹

So, according to the Bauerites, it’s all the fault of the masses, because they are moved by interests (a dirty word) rather than ideas. Marx replies that the historical lesson is just the reverse: revolutionary efforts fail insofar as they do *not* really appeal to the interests of the masses sufficiently. “The ‘idea,’” he writes, “always disgraced itself insofar as it was different from the ‘interest.’” The French Revolution was a success from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie’s interests, a failure from the standpoint of the masses’ interests—because the latter were led to act only on the basis of an exalted idea rather than on the basis of their real interests.

The *interest* of the bourgeoisie in the Revolution of 1789, far from having been a “*failure*,” “*won*” everything and had “*the greatest success*” however much its “*pathos*” evaporated and the “*enthusiastic*” flowers with which that interest adorned its cradle faded. . . . The Revolution was a “*failure*” only for *that* mass which did not find in the *political* “*idea*” the idea of its real “*interest*,” whose real life-principle of the Revolution, whose real

conditions of emancipation were essentially different from the conditions within the bounds of which the bourgeoisie could emancipate itself and society. If then the revolution . . . was a failure, it was so because the mass whose conditions of life were essentially the bounds within which the revolution stayed was an *exclusive* mass which did not embrace the whole, a *limited* mass. If it was a failure it was not because the mass became "*interested*" in and "*enthusiastic*" about the revolution, but because the most numerous part of the mass—the part that was distinct from the bourgeoisie—found that the principle of the revolution included neither its *actual* interest nor *its own* revolutionary principle, but *only* an "*idea*," hence only an object of momentary *enthusiasm* and an *exaltation* that was only apparent.³⁰

In historical action the decisive thing is the "active mass," "the empirical *interest*" involved in the action—not merely the idea in it, as Bauerite Criticism thinks. Because of its fancifully inverted view of historical dynamics, it inverts enemy and ally, and sees the masses as the enemy:

"*In the mass*," it informs us, "*not somewhere else*, as its former liberal spokesmen believed, *is the true enemy of the spirit to be found*."³¹

In this quotation from the Bauerites, the emphasis is by Marx. According to them, the enemy of the spirit (or intellect, *Geist*) is not the absolutist regime, not the bourgeois exploiters (for the worker "makes nothing" anyway); the masses themselves are the enemy to be mastered, by the Critical philosophers.*

5. MARX'S ATTACK ON PHILOSOPHICAL ELITISM

Marx replies with a summary of his conception of how the masses are moved to revolution in order to overcome their own alienation. He brings forward the motto launched by Loustalot's *Révolutions de Paris* in 1789:

* Further on, the Bauerites are quoted along the same lines again: "Absolute Criticism has declared the '*mass*' to be the *true enemy of the spirit*. It develops this further as follows: 'The spirit now knows where to *look for its only adversary*--in the self-deception and the pithlessness of the mass.' " Marx sets out to take up the Critics' "*campaign against the Mass*."³²

<p><i>Les grands ne nous paraissent grands</i> <i>Que parce que nous sommes à genoux</i> <i>—Levons nous!—</i></p>	<p>The great seem great to us Only because we are on our knees —Let us rise!—³³</p>
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If the Critics see the masses as the obstacle to progress, it is because (says Marx) they view progress as simply an “abstract *phrase*.” Concretely so far, on the present bases of contemporary society, all spiritual (or intellectual) progress has been “*progress against* [the interests of] *the mass of mankind*, driving it into an ever more *dehumanized* condition.” The revolutionary organization of the workers is itself a step toward the solution: “To this communist criticism, there was an immediate correspondence in practice of the movement of the *great mass* in antithesis to which previous historical development had taken place.”³⁴ There follows the passage, already quoted,³⁵ in which Marx praises the French and English workers’ craving for knowledge, urge to self-development, and human nobility.

Instead of seeing the relationship between spirit (intellect) and material interests, the Critics establish a dogmatic antithesis between them. Moreover,

This antithesis indeed is expressed in history, in the world of man itself, in such a way that a few select *individuals* are opposed, as the *active spirit*, to the rest of mankind as the *spiritless mass*, as matter.³⁶

Naturally, the “few select individuals” are the Critical Philosophers themselves, who tower over the masses by virtue of their overweening wisdom, and look upon themselves (and themselves alone) as the “active spirit” of historical change. In the French Restoration, there had been the group of so-called Doctrinaires (like Guizot) “who proclaimed the *sovereignty of reason* in opposition to the *sovereignty of the people* in order to exclude the masses and rule *alone*.”

Even in Hegel, Marx points out to these disciples, it is not the philosophers that constitute the active principle of history. The following passage is important in order to clear up the ambiguity, which we discussed earlier, between the role of philosophy and of the philosopher—that is, of theory and the theoretician:

Already in Hegel, the *Absolute Spirit* of history finds its material in the *mass*, and the expression appropriate to it only in *philosophy*; but *the philosopher* figures only as the organ in which the

Absolute Spirit, which makes history, arrives at self-consciousness *subsequently*, after the development has run its course. It is to this subsequent consciousness of the philosopher that his participation in history is reduced, for the real historical development is brought about by the Absolute Spirit *unconsciously*. The philosopher, then, comes along *post festum* [after the event].³⁷

To be sure, Marx continues, Hegel is inconsistent; but Bauer eliminates inconsistency and goes all the way. Bauer sees himself and his followers as the only active element of history:

For one thing, he proclaims *Criticism* to be the Absolute Spirit and *himself* to be *the Criticism*. . . . *The Criticism* therefore deems itself to be exclusively incarnated not in a *mass* but in a small *handful* of selected men, in Herr Bruno and his disciples. . . .

On one side stands the mass as the passive, spiritless, historyless, *material* element of history; on the other side stands *the Spirit, the Criticism*—Herr Bruno & Co. as the active element from which all *historical* action proceeds. The act of social transformation is reduced to the *brain activity* of Critical Criticism.³⁸

This section ends with a quip (typical of the book), but this time—by exception—the quip is a pointed one:

Critical Criticism, which becomes *objectified* only in its antithesis—namely, the mass, *stupidity*—must therefore continually *produce* this antithesis for itself, and Messrs. Faucher, Edgar, and Szeliga [of the Bauer circle] have supplied ample proof of the virtuosity they possess in their specialty, the *mass stupefaction* of persons and things.³⁹

The Critics' conception of social reorganization is based on the antithesis between spirit and mass, "in which *the Spirit*, or *the Criticism*, represents the organizing *labor*, the mass the *raw material*, and history the *product*."⁴⁰ The mass of humanity "is only the *matter* on which Critical Criticism operates."⁴¹

Thus, in *The Holy Family* Marx wrote the first direct polemic against the pervasive conception that it is the prerogative of some band of superior intellectuals to think for the masses, whose duty in turn is to repay this service by acting as their instruments, flock, or raw material.

6. SUE'S *LES MYSTERES DE PARIS*

This theme of *The Holy Family* helps to explain why about a third of the book is devoted to analyzing the novel by Eugène Sue, *Les Mystères de Paris*, recently published and a runaway best-seller, not only in France but in translation all over the Continent. The book was not merely a popular novel; it had "social tendencies," that is, a socialistic air. Its positive merit was that it was able "to direct public attention to the state of the poor in general," as Engels wrote in the Owenite organ only a half year before he collaborated with Marx on *The Holy Family*.⁴²

More to our point, it was taken up, among others, precisely by the Critical philosophers of the Bauer circle, and lauded in their organ by Bauer's disciple Szeliga. Marx therefore takes it up as a concrete example of what the Bauerite social views come to, once brought down from the heights of philosophical abstraction.*

Sue's novel must be read in order to appreciate Marx's discussion; *The Holy Family* could and did assume that "everybody and his wife" had read it. The point is this: not only is *Les Mystères de Paris* a prime example in world literature of glorification of the Social Savior from Above, but it is one of the most revolting examples of that genre.

Sue himself is perfectly reflected in it. Scion of a wealthy big-bourgeois family with aristocratic pretensions, he ran through a couple of fortunes through sybaritic living as a dandy à la mode, including the money he made as a writer with conservative, royalist views. What made him a leftist? The turning-point was sheer impoverishment due to unrestrained expenditure on the beautiful life until one day his banker informed him he was ruined; it seems moreover that an aristocratic lady had stingingly rejected his proffered person. In the face of this manifest injustice, he thought of shooting himself, but instead set about writing again. *Acheronta movebo*: having been offended by the powers above, his attention turned to the lower regions. In *Mathilde* he dealt with the world of the people for the first time. His friend Dumas has told of the "physical repugnance" with which Sue went slumming for his material.

* Marx introduces his discussion of Sue with this: "'Critical Criticism' in the person of Szeliga-Vishnu presents an apotheosis of *Les Mystères de Paris*. Eugène Sue is declared to be a 'Critical Critic.'"⁴³ In taking up Sue, therefore, Marx is discussing a writer with whom the Bauerites have expressed ideological solidarity.

In this novel a dour bourgeois is transformed into a philanthropic capitalist.

Then *Les Mystères de Paris* made him famous: it was acclaimed by a new public, including workers who had to have it read to them in groups, as well as the *beau monde*; it was praised by the right-wing press as well as by the Fourierist socialists. Sue became himself an advocate of Fourierism, which by this time was a movement of petty-bourgeois reformism exalting class collaboration and peaceful propaganda. The best thing that can be told of his later career is that he refused to make peace with the second Bonaparte despite solicitation.⁴⁴

In the 1840s, what was new about Sue's novel was its philanthropic concern with the subterranean hordes of the People who pullulated in the entrails of modern society. There is scarcely a worker in the book.* Sue's People consists of criminals, prostitutes, and other social disjuncta; at both ends society consists mainly of parasites, the lumpen-world. But there are positive reforms urged in the book: right of divorce, cheaper legal aid to the poor, model farms for the unemployed, a state substitute for pawnshops, and so on. Unquestionably Sue was one of the first literary do-gooders and welfare-statists.

The crux of the novel, and of Marx's criticism, is the hero: Rudolph, prince of Gerolstein, a German principality, who goes about the slums of Paris as plain Mr. Rudolph, doing good. ("To recompense the good, punish the bad, solace those who suffer, probe all the wounds of humanity, to endeavor to snatch souls from perdition—such is the noble task that I have imposed upon myself.") Besides being wealthy, wise, learned, handsome, graceful, and saintly, he can also beat up the toughest hoodlums in Paris—"a man of action, whose physical strength and prompt boldness would always awe the mass." His eyes have such

* The exception to prove the rule is the lapidary Morel, who trots out as the Model Workman, suitably grateful that by backbreaking labor he can earn a sou or two to keep from starving to death. Of him Sue speaks in his own voice:

Does not this mechanic, so wretched, yet so honest, with all this treasure [the gems he works on] within his grasp, represent an immense and formidable majority of artisans, who, doomed forever to evils and privations, but peaceable, industrious, and resigned, see every day, shining before their eyes, without hatred or envy, the magnificence of the wealthy? Is it not gratifying, is it not ennobling to reflect, that it is not force, not fear, but *sound moral sense*, which alone restrains this formidable popular ocean, whose over flowing would swallow up society! Shall we refuse to cooperate with all the powers of mind and body, with such generous spirits, who ask but a little *sunshine* for so much misfortune, so much courage, so much resignation?⁴⁵

irresistible magnetism that he can paralyze a malefactor simply by looking at him.⁴⁶

7. THE SAVIOR FROM ABOVE AS DESPOT

Aside from the divagations and excursus characteristic of *The Holy Family* as a whole, Marx especially goes after the depiction of Rudolph as the emancipator from above. The main notes struck are these:

1. If the people are to be kept looking for salvation to the powers above even though injustice continues to reign, there must be an explanation available for the failure of the higher-ups to act. Since time immemorial the explanation has been: the king (czar, *vozhd*, president, chairman, dictator) is unaware of what his bad underlings are doing. Sue made this explicit;* and the Bauerite paper chose precisely this to compliment. Marx points out that Sue is only replacing the old saw, "Ah, if the king only knew!" with the new bourgeois version, "Ah, if the rich only knew!"

Herr Szeliga does not know that Eugene Sue commits an *anachronism* out of courtesy to the French bourgeoisie when he puts the motto of the burghers of Louis XIV's time "*Ah! si le roi le savait!*" in the modified form: "*Ah! si le riche le savait!*" into the mouth of the workingman Morel in the time of the *Charte vérité* [Louis Philippe's constitution]. In England and France at least, that *naïve* relation between rich and poor has ceased.⁴⁹

2. Rudolph, whose whole aim in life is to "serve the people," is taken at face value by the Critic. "Rudolph, as Herr Szeliga reports, is the *first* servant of humanity's *state*," writes Marx tauntingly. But in fact this "servant" is the master, for the dichotomy established by Szeliga, as by Sue, is between the active principle (Rudolph) and the passive material (the people).

* Morel tells his wife:

The rich do not see, and cannot know what misery is . . . they cannot imagine such misery; how can they understand privations they never felt? . . . As I always said, if the rich knew—if the rich only knew . . . Unfortunately, they are not aware of half the misery that exists among the poor. . . .

Sue came forward as the man to tell them about "the other France." Rudolph has already given his sage advice: "remember *that to be rich—is to give much*."⁴⁷

On one side is the "divine" (Rudolph), "to which all power and freedom" are attributed, the only *active* principle. On the other side is the passive "world situation" and the human beings belonging to it.⁵⁰

3. It is Sue who presents Rudolph as virtually divine.* In the novel, Marx points out, "Rudolph is the *deus ex machina* and the mediator of the world." His servant "sees in his master [Rudolph] the salvation of mankind personified," but then so do Sue and Szeliga. Rudolph, wrestling with the devil, "tries to copy on a small scale the opposite of the devil, *God*. He likes 'to play the role of Providence a little.'" While in the real world the difference between poor and rich is decisive, the ideology of the aristocracy wants to dissolve all differences in the antithesis between "good and evil." "This distinction," adds Marx, "is the last form that the aristocrat gives to his prejudices."⁵²

4. Rudolph's "passion for *playing the role of Providence* and arranging the world according to his fixed ideas" means that he takes it on himself to deal out justice with the ruthless arbitrariness of a despot.** Among other things, he has a gang leader's eyes gouged out so that the misguided wretch can learn to pray: Marx keeps coming back to this operation of Rudolph's morality with increasing revulsion at the smug hypocrisy of the concept.⁵⁴ Of one of Rudolph's murderous frenzies, Marx writes caustically:

"Good" Rudolph! Burning with desire for revenge, thirsting for blood, with calm deliberate rage, with a hypocrisy which sophistically excuses every evil impulse, he has all the passions of *evil* for which he gouges out the eyes of others. Only good fortune, money, and social rank save this "*good*" man from *prison*.⁵⁵

Money also makes him the Redeemer:

In addition Sue paints the state power as being as benevolent as the good Rudolph himself: policemen are just good fellows doing their duty, prison guards are kind, fatherly types, and so on.⁴⁸

* There are many passages in the novel in which the objects of his benevolence refer to Rudolph as their Providence, or even God, with a suitable qualifier; Rudolph himself does it twice. Elsewhere we read: "Weary of life, save for doing good, he took a deep liking for playing the part of a minor Providence. . . ." ⁵¹

** Sue was the original Mickey Spillane. Rudolph thunders: "I judge you and I will punish you!" Or again: "Although the end justifies the means, and scruples should have no weight as regards this scoundrel, sometimes I regret having employed Cecily in this just and revenging reparation." Even: "To your violence which slays I oppose a violence that saves."⁵³ But this last precept applies only to princes, not proletarians.

The miraculous means by which Rudolph accomplishes all his acts of redemption and miraculous cures is not his fine words but his *ready cash*. This is what the moralists are like, says Fourier. You must be a millionaire to be able to emulate these heroes.⁵⁶

5. One of the most corrupt aspects of Sue's novel is its view of charity, which is recommended to the rich and powerful as a sovereign amusement: for women bored with idleness, more interesting than an adulterous affair; for "a man who unites *knowledge, will and power*," more intriguing than some stale adventure.* With unerring concord of mind, Sue's Bauerite admirer picks up precisely this turd as testimony to the beauty of Rudolph's soul. Marx quotes Szeliga's "Rudolph draws her attention to the *entertaining side of charity*," and makes a number of suitable remarks on the exploitation of misery by rich philanthropists, including this:

Rudolph has thereby unconsciously expressed the mystery unveiled long ago that human misery itself, the immeasurable desolation of having to take alms, must serve as a *plaything* to the aristocracy of money and education to satisfy their self-love, tickle their arrogance and amuse them.

... Thus it seems, therefore, that even charity has long been *organized* as entertainment.⁵⁸

Charity is the reverse side of exploitation:

Herr Rudolph indulges in charity and dissipation something like the Caliph of Bagdad in the *Arabian Nights*. He cannot lead that kind of life without sucking the blood out of his little province in Germany to the last drop like a vampire.⁵⁹

To be sure, Sue informs his readers that Gerolstein is nothing less than "the Paradise of Germany." The people are so happy and content "that the enlightened solicitude of their grand duke [Rudolph] had

* [Rudolph:] "... if you would *amuse* yourself, as I do, in occasionally playing the part of an inferior *Providence*, you would confess that *good deeds* have sometimes all the piquancy of romance."

"I must confess it has never occurred to me to consider charity from the *amusing* point of view," said Clémence, smiling in her turn.

"It is a discovery I owe to my horror of wearisome conventionalities. . . . But to return to our *amusing benevolence* . . . And really, if your ladyship would become my accomplice in some *dark intrigues* of this nature, you would see, I repeat, that setting aside the praiseworthiness of the deed, nothing is more exquisite, more engaging, more attractive, and frequently more diverting, than these charitable adventures."⁵⁷

experienced little trouble in preserving them from the mania of *constitutional* innovations."⁶⁰ All that, and amusement too!

6. In a passing remark, Marx compares this benign blueblood with a social tendency which we will hear more about in later chapters, the tendency discussed in the *Communist Manifesto* as "feudal socialism": "This great lord is like the members of *Young England* who also wish to reform the world and perform noble deeds and are subject to similar hysterical hazards."⁶¹ Within three years this tendency, here dismissed with a quip, would become a pressing political problem in Germany.⁶²

8. THE THESIS ON REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE

While much of the impact of *The Holy Family* is lost because of its undisciplined diffuseness, we come now to the most concise and compressed statement of germinal ideas that Marx ever set down. The writing of *The Holy Family* was still under the influence of the Feuerbachian halfway house; by the time it was published in early 1845, Marx was already a stage ahead of it. Some time in the spring of that year, he jotted down eleven points in his notebook to clarify for himself how Feuerbach fell short of a consistently materialist world view. These "Theses on Feuerbach" are naturally most important for the development of Marx's historical and philosophical outlook, which is not our subject; but one, the third thesis, is fundamental to an understanding of the principle of self-emancipation.

It had already been anticipated in an inspired passage which Marx had written in his presocialist days of 1842, indeed in the very first article he had published, dealing with the freedom of the press and democracy—a version of *Quis custodiet?* or "Who will watch the watchers?"* The crux of the Third Thesis is that it asks the question: *Who will educate the educator?*

It goes directly to the élitist concept of the role of the educated

* This passage is, so important that we repeat it here from Chapter 1. It is Marx's comment on a legislator who had argued in the Diet that man is naturally imperfect and immature and needs educational guidance:

For him true education consists in keeping a person swaddled in a cradle all his life, for as soon as he learns to walk he also learns to fall, and it is only through falling that he learns to walk. But if we all remain children in

bringer of socialism to the uneducated masses. Naturally Marx need not question the matter of *fact* that it is the educated who have generally raised the idea of socialism before the masses. That is how it may begin; but the point is that it cannot remain merely a one-way relationship.

When Engels published his edited version of the "Theses on Feuerbach" in 1888, he usefully concretized this meaning by introducing an example, Robert Owen, though this reference was not in Marx's original note. It was Owen's type of materialism which *one-sidedly* emphasized that people are the products of their environmental circumstances and upbringing, and which concluded that to change people for the better, one had to change the environmental circumstances and upbringing. Marx's thesis cuts straight to the heart of the difficulty in this reasoning: *who* are the people who are going to operate this change? These people apparently stand exempt from the very law they enunciate; for they, who are also the product of their environmental conditioning, are going to act to change the world which conditioned them. Prometheus was able to change people from the outside, because he was himself a god; but Owen's (and Marx's) problem is harder than his.

Who are these educators to be, and how do they come into being? Owen's implied answer is very simple and unenlightening: they are "people like me," who just happen to get the idea, plus others whom I convince with its inexorable logic. . . .

Against this, Marx's thesis points out (1) that "it is essential to educate the educator himself," and (2) that until this educator is himself changed (educated), one cannot overcome the division of society between rulers and ruled.

The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing [*that men are products of circumstances and upbringing and that therefore changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing*] forgets that circumstances are changed by men [*themselves*], and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. Hence this doctrine must [*necessarily have the effect to*] divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. [*For example, in Robert Owen.*]

swaddling-clothes, who is to swaddle us? If we all lie in a cradle, who is to cradle us? If we are all in jail, who is to be the jail warden?⁶³

It is in this passage, too, that Marx adds: "Does not education itself also need education?"—thereby anticipating the Third Thesis even more closely.

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary practice*. *

How then are the educators to be educated, and for that matter, how do the uneducated become educators? How does this whole two-sided process of self-changing take place? Marx's answer is: *by revolutionary practice*. One learns to revolutionize society even as one revolutionizes oneself; one learns to revolutionize oneself by trying to revolutionize society. For the working class, it is a process in which two sides interpenetrate; a mountain-climber, making his way up a chimney formation, can understand it better than a metaphysician. (We shall return to this basic aspect of revolution in Volume 2.)

The Third Thesis is the philosophic formulation by Marx of the basis of the principle of self-emancipation. It represents perhaps the first time in socialist thought that theory turns around to take a hard look at the theoretician.

The Third Thesis is that formulation of the principle of self-emancipation which links the philosophic background of Marxism with its political course. Marx's political theory develops as a guide to revolutionary practice in the course of which the revolutionary changes society, and the struggle changes the revolutionary *and his political theory*. We will see this happen more than once.

* If read without the bracketed italics, this is Marx's formulation of 1845. The bracketed italics are some of the editorial explanations introduced by Engels in his 1888 edited version.⁶⁴

II | THE THEORY OF THE STATE

11 | THE STATE AND SOCIETY

Society involves relationships among people and groups of people—social relationships—of various sorts. One sort is economic relationships: relations between men in the process of making a living—the kind of relationships that Marx analyzed in *Capital* for a particular socio-economic system. But if a society is to fulfill its economic needs, it needs another complex of relationships too—relationships required to organize or integrate the operation of the society as a whole.

These relationships include the political as distinct from the economic, but we run into a terminological problem at the outset. The word *political* derives from the Greek *polis*, the ancient city-state; its connotations are already tied up from the beginning with the idea of a *state*. But there were earlier forms of social organization that preceded the rise of the state. In various forms there were tribal communities, primitive societies that existed without any state institutions. In these stateless societies too it was necessary for the operation of the community to be organized, or integrated, as a whole, and not only for specifically economic activities. Thus in these early societies too there was a function which seems to be analogous to the political.

In order to understand the state as an institution of society, we must first understand this function in the early communal societies in which a state had not yet developed and which got along without it. The very idea that a functioning society could ever do without a state is relatively modern and, naturally, still controversial.*

* This, I suppose, is what is meant by the following statement in one of the summary articles in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*: "In part, political science could emerge as a discipline separate from the other social sciences because of the impetus Marx had given to the idea of the difference between state and society, an idea virtually unheard of before his time."¹

In the far from Marxian pages of the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, a summary article by A. Southall, "Stateless Society," holds that "the state, which has assumed a monopoly of political coordination, ruling, and making laws and enforcing them eventually with coercion, did not exist in ancient times," and describes the characteristics of stateless societies in a fashion made possible only by the work of Marx and Engels:

The most general and important is the fact that fundamental responsibility for the maintenance of society itself is much more widely dispersed throughout its varied institutions and its whole population, at least, usually, all its male adults. The remarkable spectacle of societies positively maintaining themselves at a high level of integration without any obvious specialized means of enforcement has undoubtedly led to new insight and attention to the fundamental responsibilities of all citizens, which for most people are obscured by the inequity of specialized political institutions. In stateless societies every man grows up with a practical and intuitive sense of his responsibility to maintain constantly throughout his life that part of the fabric of society in which at any time he is involved. Stateless societies are¹ so constituted that the kaleidoscopic succession of concrete social situations provides the stimulus that motivates each individual to act for his own interest or for that of close kin and neighbors with whom he is so totally involved, in a manner which maintains the fabric of society. It is a little like the classical model of laissez-faire economics translated into the political field. But if every man is thus for himself, he is so only within a very tight framework of reciprocal obligation that he cannot avoid absorbing. The lack of specialized roles and the resulting multiplex quality of social networks means that neither economic nor political ends can be exclusively pursued by anyone to the detriment of society, because these ends are intertwined with each other and further channeled by ritual and controlled by the beliefs which ritual expresses.²

1. POLITICAL AND PROTOPOLITICAL AUTHORITY

Marx and Engels provide a fuller notion of what was involved. In the following explanation, not all details are of equal importance; some may change as a result of anthropological research; but the important thing is the over-all conception.

Marx starts with the view that the very first social relationships among people are sexual, and the resulting social group is based on blood relationship. The first human societies arise as extended families; the social relationships that knit the group together are those of *kinship*. To be sure, this group may also be associated with a given territory, but its basic social structure is not determined by territorial links but by its kinship structure. Engels explained:

According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the last resort, the production and reproduction of immediate life. But this itself is of a twofold character. On the one hand, the production of the means of subsistence, of food, clothing and shelter, and the tools requisite therefor; on the other, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social institutions under which men of a definite historical epoch and of a definite country live are conditioned by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor, on the one hand, and of the family, on the other. The less the development of labor, and the more limited its volume of production and, therefore, the wealth of society, the more preponderatingly does the social order appear to be dominated by ties of sex. However, within this structure of society based on ties of sex, the productivity of labor develops more and more . . .³

Sexual production, "the production and reproduction of immediate life," is anterior to economic production in the usual sense, and at the beginning of human society is more decisive in determining the social structure. The organizing authority that arises in such a tribal community based on kinship ("ties of sex") is not, in the first place, an authority over a certain territory but primarily over a group of related *people*. The chief of the Iroquois is the head of a people; the emperor of Persia is the ruler of a territory.

Such an organizing authority arises because it is needed to regulate the common affairs of the community for the benefit of all. It may be loose or tight, simple or complex—we can read of an amazing variety of types of social organization in anthropological and historical works. But in any case *some* organizing authority is needed. We give the following three reasons for the need, and call attention to the fact that these same three reasons will continue to apply later in a different form.

1. The society is in a struggle with nature, and there must be a decision-making authority to carry out activities like hunts, agricultural labors, river works, and so on, as needed.

2. The society may be in a struggle with other communities (war), and a decision-making authority is needed to organize this struggle too.

3. The society consists of individuals, who may get involved in antagonisms and struggles among themselves; such internal disputes have to be settled by an authority, lest they tear the social fabric apart.

Now we encounter another terminological difficulty: there exists no accepted term, Marxist or non-Marxist, for this organizing authority in a communal society *without* a state. *Government* will not do: like others, Marx and Engels regularly used the term *government*, as well as the word *political*, in connection with a state; Marx even once defined the state as “a *politically* organized society.”⁴ It would be confusing to conscript such terms for the name of this prestate authority.* We are therefore forced into the desperate step of inventing a new term for this unbaptized organizing authority in a stateless society: a *proto-government*, or *protopolitical* authority.

What difference does it make whether we are talking about a primitive protopolitical authority in a community which has not yet developed a state, or a more advanced political structure which does amount to a state? The basic difference involves *the role of coercion and force in society*.

All society implies some kind of coercion (compulsion, constraint,

* Some Marxist literature has used the expedient of calling a prestate authority a government rather than a state; for example, William Paul's *The State*; the same device has been suggested by non-Marxists, for example, A. J. Nock.⁵ Terminologically speaking, these words are already ambidextrous enough. There is, of course, the peculiarly American use of *state* for one of the fifty. *Government* is either a popular synonym for state, or it refers to the executive power as distinct from the legislative; even more narrowly, especially in British usage, it refers to a particular cabinet or ministry in power, like *administration* in the United States. All of these usages of *government* will be found in Marx and Engels as elsewhere.

and so on), but there are different kinds of coercion and it is exercised in different ways. Nature exercises coercion on us: a tribe that lives mainly by fishing *must* go to work when the fish are running, on pain of starving. This is a *blind* coercion, not consciously exercised by men. A social system may impose another kind of blind coercion—for example, when a youth is compelled to leave school and go to work in a dead-end job because of his economic circumstances, not because of some conscious decision by an authority. This is economic coercion. Another blind force of coercion is the moral compulsion exercised by tradition and public opinion, which appears as an internalized feeling about the right thing to do. Although the origin of this compulsion lies outside the individual in the consensus which society establishes as a reflection of its needs, still it takes the form of an inner certainty.

We have specified these blind coercions in order to separate out that type of coercion which is not blind but rather conscious, overt, directly recognizable as a command from outside the individual. The characteristic of blind coercion is that the individual *wants* to do what he has to do. The characteristic of outside coercion is that the individual acts as he is supposed to act under the threat of force, expressed or implied.

Marx was concerned to point out more than once that the course of social development was historically accompanied by a change in the forms of coercion. One of the first forms of (what we have called) blind coercion, he argues, was already implied in the early rise of money. In the process of money circulation, exchange values are realized; the product is alienated from the direct producer; a system of "general alienation" is given form. Although the separate acts in this process arise out of the conscious aims of individuals, the total result goes beyond the individuals, and

the totality of the process appears as an objective interconnection arising directly from nature. To be sure, it emerges out of the interaction of conscious individuals, but it does not reside in their consciousness, nor as a totality is it subsumed under them. Their own mutual collisions produce an *alien* social force that stands above them; [produce?] their reciprocal effects as a process and a power independent of them. . . . The social relation of individuals to each other as an autonomized force above the individuals—whether it is represented to be a natural force, an accident, or in any form you like—is a necessary result of the fact that the starting point is not the free social individual.⁶

In various societies, the tiller of the land has had to turn over his surplus labor, in whole or in part, to a lord; but this was done in different forms and under different compulsions. When labor rent (for example, corvée labor for the lord) evolves into rent in kind (giving the lord part of the product), then "the direct producer is driven rather by force of circumstances than by direct coercion, through legal enactment rather than the whip, to perform it [his surplus labor] on his own responsibility."⁷

Marx's interest was centered on the fact that it is under capitalism that the system of blind coercion reaches fullest development:

Under capital, the *association* of workers is not compelled by direct physical force or by forced labor, corvée labor, slave labor; it is compelled by the fact that the conditions of production are another's property, that they have their own existence as *objective association*. . . .⁸

To this effect he quotes an early English economist with some relish:

Legal constraint to labour [wrote the Rev. Joseph Townsend] is attended with too much trouble, violence, and noise, creates ill will, etc., whereas hunger is not only a peaceable, silent, unremitted pressure, but, as the most natural motive to industry and labour, it calls forth the most powerful exertions.⁹

In all of this, Marx discussed mainly the role of direct coercion *in the process of production*, in economic relations; and even here the difference between direct and blind coercion is very important. But our concern is broader. The more that direct coercion is eliminated from the economic substructure of society, the more it is concentrated in the superstructure, in the state—much as a platoon of gendarmes may be withdrawn from plantation duty to take up ready quarters in a nearby fortress. The state is the institutionalized instrument of direct coercion, and of forcible coercion as necessary, even though it too utilizes less direct forms of coercion as much as possible.

2. THE STATE SEPARATES OUT

Forcible coercion—usually in the form of an implied last resort, not necessarily as an immediate act of force—is already a factor in the primitive stateless community. (In our new terminology, we would call it protopolitical coercion, just as later with the state we would call it political force.) It is not in the least a question of how often force is actually used, as long as the threat that it can and will be used if necessary is a factor in gaining compliance.

The key question, therefore, is not whether compliance with customs or laws is gained with the aid of forcible coercion expressed or implied; the key difference between stateless society and the state lies elsewhere.

Let us say that a tribal council, consisting of all the adults (or male adults), condemns the violator of a taboo or a social transgressor. The judgment is made by the social group as a whole; exactly how this is done depends on how the community is organized for the purpose. Discussing the history of the old German mark (village community organized around common land), Engels notes:

In primitive times, the whole public authority in time of peace was exclusively judicial, and rested in the popular assembly of the hundred, the shire, or of the whole tribe. But this popular tribunal was only the popular tribunal of the mark adapted to cases that did not purely concern the mark, but came within the scope of the public authority. . . . It was only when the old democratic freedom had been long undermined . . . that Charlemagne, in his shire-courts, could introduce judgment by *Schöffen*, lay assessors, appointed by the king's judge, in place of judgment by the whole popular assembly.¹⁰

The punishment is typically carried out by the community as a whole: for example, ostracism from the society. Obviously there is a kind of coercion here, with the use of physical force usually implied as an ultimate recourse, but that does mean it has to be brought into the normal case.

The important thing is that the coercion is applied *by the whole society*. It is a function of the community as a whole. There is no *special institution* separate from the collectivity that exists to imple-

ment it. "... the gentile* constitution had grown out of a society that knew no internal antagonisms, and was adapted only for such a society. It had no coercive power except public opinion."¹¹ The offense of the individual is an offense against the interests of the social group as a whole; and the social group is a single interest bloc as against the offender. In this case, the antagonism is that of an individual against the society, not connected with the internal antagonisms of one part of a society against another part of the same society.

This primitive type of situation changes drastically when society divides into antagonistic social classes. Then society is no longer a single interest bloc. There are now rival interest groups inside the society—rivals which are *structurally rooted*, which cannot be abolished by expelling or punishing individuals. These rivals are the social classes.

In the tribal or village community with common ownership of land ... a fairly equal distribution of products is a matter of course; where considerable inequality of distribution among the members of the community sets in, this is an indication that the community is already beginning to break up.¹²

That is, the community is beginning to break up into classes. The organizing authority which regulates the common affairs of the social group can now function no longer as the arm of the community as a whole, for the interests of the new classes are irreconcilable. At the same time, new institutions of coercion are necessary; they must be special institutions—specializing in coercion—for now the coercion has to be used by one organic part of society against another. Public opinion will no longer do as the organizer of the old sort of coercion. This class-oriented coercion is more likely than before to be based on physical force more immediately and overtly, whether or not the force has to be used more often.

... the inequality of distribution among the individuals and therefore the opposition between rich and poor becomes more and more pronounced. ...

But with the difference in distribution, *class differences* emerge. Society divides into classes; the privileged and the dispossessed, the exploiters and the exploited, the rulers and the

* *Gentile*: pertaining to a *gens* (clan or kinship group) in primitive society.

ruled; and the state,* which the primitive groups of communities of the same tribe had at first arrived at only in order to safeguard their common interests (e.g., irrigation in the East) and for protection against external enemies, from this stage onwards acquires just as much the function of maintaining by force the conditions of existence and domination of the ruling class against the subject class.¹³

Naturally, force must be available to keep the dispossessed in their place, to keep slaves from overthrowing their bondage (again: no matter how infrequently the force has to be used in fact). For this purpose there must be special bodies of armed men. In ancient Greek society, for example, it meant a special body of public bowmen to guard against the slaves.

The power of forcible coercion has now been separated from the general body of society: this is the basic change from the pattern of the primitive community. The state has come into existence.

3. THE STATE IS NOT SIMPLY A CLASS PLOT

Let us underline one aspect of the preceding picture which is important for our further development of state theory. The state does not appear out of the blue, simply in order to fulfill a class-repressive function.** It is not simply invented out of nothing. On the contrary, in the last-cited passage Engels has pointed out that the older public authority acquires a new function, a class function; the state comes into being as the transformation of an institution already playing a certain role. The state's beginning, its prototypical source, lies in indispensable functions of society.

* At this point Engels means what we have called the protopolitical predecessor of the developed state. Formally, this represents an inexactitude in terminology, obviously due to the fact that he has no separate name for this institution and is telescoping the transition; but the thought is entirely clear. We shall see Engels do it again, below.

** Compare the first statements of this idea in *The German Ideology*—see Chapter 8, p. 190.

Engels stressed this in a letter as follows:

Society gives rise to certain common functions which it cannot dispense with. The persons appointed for this purpose form a new branch of the division of labor *within society*. This gives them particular interests, distinct, too, from the interests of those who empowered them; they make themselves independent of the latter and—the state is in being.¹⁴

The state, then, arises out of a *division of labor* in society. It arises, of course, only as a result of the division of society into classes, but its institutional roots are in activities and functions of nonclass society.

This is a process extending over considerable time. Short summary formulations may speak of the state “arising” as if it popped into existence like a band of vigilantes. Nothing could be cruder than this notion, to which Engels paid considerable attention in *Anti-Dühring*. The rise of the state was a historical process of becoming, just as was the emergence of man himself.

As men originally made their exit from the animal world—in the narrower sense of the term so they made their entry into history: still half animal, brutal, still helpless in face of the forces of nature, still ignorant of their own strength; and consequently as poor as the animals and hardly more productive than they. There prevailed a certain equality in the conditions of existence, and for the heads of families also a kind of equality of social position—at least an absence of social classes—which continued among the primitive agricultural communities of the civilized peoples of a later period.

It is in this process that Engels sees the beginnings of state power, that is, in institutions *before* the rise of the state:

In each such [primitive] community there were from the beginning certain common interests the safeguarding of which had to be handed over to individuals, true, under the control of the community as a whole: adjudication of disputes; repression of abuse of authority by individuals; control of water supplies, especially in hot countries; and finally, when conditions were still absolutely primitive, religious functions. Such offices are found in aboriginal communities of every period—in the oldest German marks and even today in India. They are naturally endowed with a certain measure of authority and are the beginnings of state power.¹⁵

Just as anthropologists describe how *Man Makes Himself*,¹⁶ so we are dealing here with the historical process which might be called *The State Makes Itself*. Engels is concerned to show that it is in this process that the state makes itself independent of society as a whole:

The productive forces gradually increase; the increasing density of the population creates at one point common interests, at another conflicting interests, between the separate communities, whose grouping into larger units brings about in turn a new division of labor, the setting up of organs to safeguard common interests and combat conflicting interests. These organs which, if only because they represent the common interests of the whole group, hold a special position in relation to each individual community—in certain circumstances even one of opposition—soon make themselves still more independent, partly through heredity of functions, which comes about almost as a matter of course in a world where everything occurs spontaneously, and partly because they become increasingly indispensable owing to the growing number of conflicts with other groups.¹⁷

It has been too little noted that Engels does *not* here ascribe the growing independence of these leading organs (the protopolitical authorities) to the growth of class distinctions. On the contrary, this tendency arises spontaneously out of the growing complexity of the community. Even more to the contrary, it is out of this growing independence of the protopolitical organs that Engels sees the rise of a ruling class:

It is not necessary for us to examine here how this independence of social functions in relation to society increased with time until it developed into domination over society; how he who was originally the servant, where conditions were favorable, changed gradually into the lord; how this lord, depending on the conditions, emerged as an Oriental despot or satrap, the dynast of a Greek tribe, chieftain of a Celtic clan, and so on; to what extent he subsequently had recourse to force in the course of this transformation; and how finally the individual rulers united into a ruling class.* Here we are only concerned with establishing the fact that the exercise of a social function was everywhere the basis of political supremacy; and further that political supremacy has existed for any length of time only when it discharged its social functions.¹⁸

* We will return to this important passage in Chapter 21.

But all this was only one of two ways in which "this process of formation of classes" was taking place, Engels explains. The other, which we need not expound here, was the development of relations of exploitation and domination in production, like slavery. In point of fact, the two processes went on alongside of and interacting with each other:

In the first place, all political power is originally based on an economic, social function, and increases in proportion as the members of society, through the dissolution of the primitive community, become transformed into private producers, and thus become more and more divorced from the administrators of the common functions of society. Secondly, after the political force has made itself independent in relation to society, and has transformed itself from its servant into its master, it can work in two different directions.¹⁹ [That is, it can work either for or against economic development, but this leads into a different question.]

We see, then, that already in the primitive stateless community there are common interests and common functions, economic and social functions of the society as a whole that have to be taken care of by an authority analagous to the political, by a protopolitical authority. Engels refers to this authority as "the political force"* that makes itself independent of the community as a whole, with the coming of class divisions, and transforms itself "from its servant into its master." The

* Here we have another case of the terminological inexactitude noted before; actually it is the *protopolitical* force which makes itself independent and becomes the political institution, the state. It would be quibbling to point this out, were it not that whole marxological theories have been put forward, on this slim basis, asserting the existence of two or three "different theories of the state" in Engels. It must be remembered that the transformation from protogovernment to state entailed a more or less extended period of transitional forms; writing of this transition, Engels uses the expression "the nascent state" in one place.²⁰ A passage similar to the last cited will also be found in a later work of Engels':

Society had created its own organs to look after its common interests, originally through simple division of labor. But these organs, at whose head was the state power, had in the course of time, in pursuance of their own special interests, transformed themselves from the servants of society into the masters of society.²¹

Clearly Engels is taking account here of transitional forms in the rise of the state. The same is true of a similar passage in his essay *Ludwig Feuerbach*, where the transitional forms of state power—a power not yet primarily a class instrument but already making itself independent of society—are plainly set down.²²

protopolitical authority was a servant of the community; the state comes forward as the master of society.

In another part of *Anti-Dühring* Engels begins with a strong statement of the original need for class divisions from the point of view of *free time* as an overall social need:

The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequence of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labor only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labor engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bond slaves to labor, arises a class freed from directly productive labor, which looks after the general affairs of society: the direction of labor, state business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labor that lies at the basis of the division into classes.

Note that these *are* “the general affairs of society” even though only a ruling class is yet in a position to perform them.

But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working class, from turning its social leadership into exploitation of the masses.²³

Such “social leadership” was needed before the coming of classes and the state. The erection of the state continues the task of social leadership, but now in a class-distorted fashion. It is not a plot; it is the only way class society knows of carrying out the common functions along with carrying out its own aims.

So long as the really working population were so much occupied with their necessary labor that they had no time left for looking after the common affairs of society—the direction of labor, affairs of state, legal matters, art, science, etc.—so long was it necessary that there should constantly exist a special class, freed from actual labor, to manage these affairs; and this class never failed, for its own advantage, to impose a greater and greater burden of labor on the working masses.²⁴

4. THE STATE AS SUPERSTRUCTURE

The state, then, comes into existence insofar as the institutions needed to carry out the common functions of the society require, for their continued maintenance, the separation of the power of forcible coercion from the general body of society. It is *this* role of forcible coercion that makes it difficult for the academic establishment to agree on an alternative conception of the state, of what is "political."

The main article on the subject in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (IESS) of 1968 admits that "it is impossible to offer a unified definition of the state that would be satisfactory even to the majority of those seriously concerned with the problem."²⁵ Three decades before, the old *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (1937) had admitted outright that it had no definition of *political* to propose, that is, that it did not know what political science was.²⁶ The successor work now exhibits a number of attempts by different hands (under various headings beginning *Political* or *State*). It is clear that an obstacle to agreement is that any defensible definition brings up the specter of Marxism, that is, of a definition basically in terms of institutionalized forcible coercion, which, if accepted, suggests a class theory by raising the question, "coercion of whom by whom?"

One effort to avoid this peril operates with the term *decision-making*. To be sure, the state is a decision-making authority, but not all decision-making is political: hence what is *political* decision-making? This brings the question right back to the beginning. One IESS article partially admits the role played by the need to keep clear of Marxism: Early political sociologists, including Marx (writes D. Easton),

saw force and power, especially in the struggle and conflict among groups or classes, as an inherent aspect of political relationships. In the United States it took somewhat longer for this change to gain acceptance, if only because it was frequently associated with unacceptable European social philosophies.²⁷

This mainly stimulated efforts to find some formula to accept the approach while rejecting the unacceptable associations. The dubious

results of this effort led Easton to conclude that "the idea of power remains buried under a heavy cloud of ambiguity."

We must add that defining the political in terms of force was by no means originated by Marx; it was common enough before him. An indication of this can be found in the pre-Marxist Engels of early 1844,²⁸ and no doubt in many other places. What Marx did was establish an objective relationship between the state and the class structure of society.

The state is the institution, or complex of institutions, which bases itself on the availability of forcible coercion by special agencies of society in order to maintain the dominance of a ruling class, preserve existing property relations from basic change, and keep all other classes in subjection.

"In subjection" does not mean cowering under a whip—not necessarily and not usually. More generally it means also: in willing compliance, in passive acquiescence, or in ingrained dependence. The ruling class relies in the first place on its economic pressures:

The possessing classes [wrote Engels] . . . keep the working class in servitude not only by the might of their wealth, by the simple exploitation of labor by capital, but also by the power of the state—by the army, the bureaucracy, the courts.²⁹

Direct state measures are, to begin with, an auxiliary method, and in the end an *ultima ratio*.

Here is a summary which continues a passage from Engels cited above:

. . . within this structure of society based on ties of sex, the productivity of labor develops more and more; with it, private property and exchange, differences in wealth, the possibility of utilizing the labor power of others, and thereby the basis of class antagonisms: new social elements, which strive in the course of generations to adapt the old structure of society to the new conditions, until, finally, the incompatibility of the two leads to a complete revolution. The old society based on sex groups bursts asunder in the collision of the newly developed social classes; in its place a new society appears, constituted in a state, the lower units of which are no longer sex groups but territorial groups, a society in which the family system is entirely dominated by the property system, and in which the class antagonisms and class

struggles, which make up the content of all hitherto *written* history, now freely develop.³⁰

And:

The state . . . is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, of keeping it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.³¹

In this sense, politics is concentrated economics: "the power of the state," wrote Marx, is "the concentrated and organized force of society"; in this sense the state is "the summing up of bourgeois society."³² The relations it sums up "are *economic* before everything else."³³ It is "a reflection, in concentrated form, of the economic needs of the class controlling production," wrote Engels.³⁴ The "concentration" metaphor emphasizes the social essence of state power but, as we shall see, cannot do equal justice to all its aspects. Marx suggested another metaphor: the state is "the political superstructure" which rests on the socioeconomic organization of society; the formalist, eyes bent only on the political forms, refuses to become acquainted with the "economic realities" that underlie those forms; but "All real progress in the writing of modern history has been effected by descending from the political surface into the depths of social life."^{*} In modern history, says Engels, "the state—the political order—is the subordinate, and civil society—the realm of economic relations—the decisive element."³⁷

* The quotations here are from an article by Marx in 1858.³⁵ This basis-superstructure metaphor, sometimes treated as a late invention by Engels, was first set down in *The German Ideology*: "The social organization, evolving directly out of production and commerce, . . . in all ages forms the basis of the state and of the rest of the ideological superstructure. . . ." ³⁶

5. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STATE

The new political institution, the state, differs from the primitive (protopolitical) organizing authorities of tribal communities in a number of important respects.

1. The state is a power over a given *territory* (thereby including the people in the territory), rather than over a kinship group of related people. The equation of a political structure with a given territory or slice of the earth was once an innovation.

The state had to be based on territory because of the rise of private property and the social consequences of this change. Consider the way in which Engels traces this process, in a little detail, in the specific case of Athens.³⁸ As new economic relations (slavery, exchange of products, money, and so on) disintegrated the old kinship social groups over a period of time, the very members of the kinship groups were scattered over the whole of Attica, instead of concentrating around their communally owned land. In the city of Athens itself, commercial interests mingled them all helter-skelter. New occupations divided the population into new types of interest groups which had no relationship to the old kinship structure. The new slave class was outside the old structure altogether, as were also strangers and foreigners who settled in Athens for the new commercial purposes. Thus the old social structure based on kinship was progressively destroyed, and the new institutions developing to organize the new social relations could work only by taking people by where they lived, not by blood relationships.

Marx makes the further point that a state can scarcely arise as long as family units are (say) scattered singly through a forest area as among the old Germanic tribes. A certain amount of *urban* concentration is required to form the unity that corresponds to a state. In the old German case, there may indeed be a community formed by such rurally scattered family units connected by kinship ties; but while this community structure may serve to unify them, it does not turn them into such a unity. In Marx's words:

The *community* therefore appears as a *unification*, not as a *union*; as a unification in which the owners of land form independent subjects, not as a unity. Hence the community does not exist °in fact° as a *state*, a *state entity*, as in antiquity, because it does not

exist as a *town*. In order for the community to come into actual existence, the free landowners must hold an *assembly*, whereas—for example in Rome—it *exists* apart from such assemblies in the very existence of the *town itself* and the officials heading it, etc.³⁹

2. The second characteristic we have already stressed: the creation of *specialized* institutions and instruments of coercion divorced from the communal whole.

The second is the establishment of a *public power* which no longer directly coincides with the population organizing itself as an armed force. This special public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organization of the population has become impossible since the cleavage into classes. The slaves also belonged to the population; the 90,000 citizens of Athens formed only a privileged class as against the 365,000 slaves. The people's army of the Athenian democracy was an aristocratic public power against the slaves, whom it kept in check; however, a gendarmerie also became necessary to keep the citizens in check. . . . This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile [kinship] society knew nothing. It may be very insignificant, almost infinitesimal, in societies where class antagonisms are still undeveloped and in out-of-the-way places as was the case at certain times and in certain regions in the United States of America.* It grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have screwed up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to devour the whole of society and even the state itself.⁴⁰

Marx, commenting on the fact that the official title of a Hohenzollern ruler is *Kriegsherr*, "Lord of War," says it means

that the true prop of their kingly power must be sought for, not in the people, but in a portion of the people, separated from the

* The coming of state power to these regions is a characteristic theme of the Hollywood Western: the man with the badge or the cavalry detachment galloping to the rescue represents state power (the white man's). Part of the Western's fascination for overcivilized people no doubt stems from a primitive situation existing in relatively recent times.

mass, opposed to it, distinguished by certain badges, trained to passive obedience, drilled into a mere instrument of the dynasty which owns it as its property and uses it according to its caprice.⁴¹

3. The new state institution, from the very beginning, is more expensive than the old ways of organizing society. It has to be paid for by special contributions from the citizens: *taxes*.

These were absolutely unknown in gentile society; but we know enough about them today. As civilization advances, these taxes become inadequate; the state makes drafts on the future, contracts loans, *public debts*.⁴²

These are all different means by which the state conscripts the citizens' purse to finance itself. It follows that the old saw, "Nothing is certain but death and taxes," is a product of class society, not of human nature.

4. The new and special functions of the state require a new officialdom on an unprecedented scale, which becomes a bureaucracy—a *ruling* officialdom. Now it is true that even in the protopolitical authorities of the tribal communities, the division of labor required that certain individuals become functionaries, devoting most of their time to public functions (religious and tribal chieftains, and so on); but this was often a temporary status, it did not necessarily confer ruling power, and the number involved was small. However, the main difference between such functionaries and the typical state bureaucracy lies in something else. The state makes special efforts to separate its bureaucratic personnel from the population as a whole, to erect a special social wall around them, to elevate them above society, to invest them with an aura of unquestionable privilege.

Having public power and the right to levy taxes, the officials now stand, as organs of society, *above* society. The free, voluntary respect that was accorded to the organs of the gentile constitution does not satisfy them, even if they could gain it; being the vehicles of a power that is becoming alien to society, respect for them must be enforced by means of exceptional laws by virtue of which they enjoy special sanctity and inviolability. The shabbiest police servant in the civilized state has more "authority" than all the organs of gentile [clan] society put together; but the most powerful prince and the greatest statesman, or general, of civiliza-

tion may well envy the humblest gentile chief for the unstrained and undisputed respect that is paid to him. The one stands in the midst of society, the other is forced to attempt to represent something outside and above it.⁴³

While the status of the bureaucracy in society varies considerably according to time and place, it has never been clearer than today that it is this characteristic of officialdom which is increasingly the mark of exploitative societies. It will receive closer attention in later chapters.

6. THE STATE AS CLASS EXECUTIVE

Engels recognized the class role played by the mystique of "the sanctity of the law" very early, before he was much influenced by Marx, that is, in the pages of his *Condition of the Working Class in England*:

Certainly the law is sacred to the bourgeois, for it is of his own making, put through with his approval and for his protection and benefit. He knows that even if a particular law may injure him as an individual, still the complex of legislation as a whole protects his interests; and that above all the strongest support of his social position is the sanctity of the law and the inviolability of the order established by the active expression of will by one part of society and passive acceptance by the other. It is because the English bourgeois sees his own image in the law, as he does in his God, that he holds it to be holy and that the policeman's club (which is really his own club) holds a power for him that is wonderfully reassuring. But for the worker it certainly does not. The worker knows only too well and from too long experience that the law is a rod that the bourgeois holds over his head, and he does not bother himself about it unless he has to.⁴⁴

Marx noted the pattern of sanctification in a discussion which applied immediately to the justification of private property in land but would apply equally to all private property:

... they [jurists, philosophers, and political economists] disguise the original fact of conquest under the cloak of "Natural Right." If conquest constituted a natural right on the part of the few, the many have only to gather sufficient strength in order to acquire

the natural right of reconquering what has been taken from them. In the progress of history the conquerors attempt to give a sort of social sanction to their original title derived from brute force, through the instrumentality of laws imposed by themselves. At last comes the philosopher who declares those laws to imply the universal consent of society.⁴⁵

Engels sums up the general analysis as follows:

Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule,* the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labor by capital.⁴⁷

The best-known summary statement is in the *Communist Manifesto*. This is not directed generally to the nature of the state, but specifically to the situation where

... the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.⁴⁸

And at the end of Part II of the Manifesto: "Political power, properly so called, is [*] the organized power of one class for oppressing another."⁵⁰

* Note the qualification "as a rule": immediately following this section as quoted, Engels goes on to discuss exceptions to the rule; we will take this up in a later chapter. A similar qualification occurs in his *Origin of the Family*: "The cohesive force of civilized society is the state, which in all typical periods is exclusively the state of the ruling class. . . ."⁴⁶

** The standard Moore-Engels translation inserts the word *merely* at this point; it is not in the German original. Like the *but* (*nur*) in the preceding citation ("The executive of the modern state is but a committee . . ."),⁴⁹ the word is an intensive.

There is a common paraphrase of this, sometimes given (mistakenly) as an actual quotation from Marx, namely "The state is the executive committee of the ruling class." Similar summary sentences will be found elsewhere in Marx and Engels.⁵¹

The most useful short statement of the role of the state is the one suggested by the Manifesto formulation: the state is the institution "for managing the common affairs" of the ruling class. For Marx, there is no doubt that its basic task ("above all," as Engels says) is to "hold down and exploit the oppressed class." But whenever necessary they make clear that this is not its *only* task, not its *only* role, despite the occurrence of emphatic words like *merely*, *nothing but*, and so on in short aphoristic formulations.

7. SUBSIDIARY TASKS OF THE STATE

This state, which manages the common affairs of the ruling class, has other tasks too. Three other tasks, in fact, and it is not necessary to go far to find them. They are analogues of the same three tasks we listed a few pages back as characteristic of *any* organizing authority in a society, even in a stateless community. Translated into state terms, these subsidiary tasks may be described as follows:

1. There are certain functions which any government must perform in order to keep the society going, even if we assume they are of no special advantage to the ruling class. Sanitation departments prevent epidemics; policemen find lost babies; help is given to areas struck by natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes. These may take on the appearance of nonclass functions even in a class-bound state.

2. The state developed from the beginning on a national or imperial basis; it exists within territorial boundaries. As a national state, it manages the common affairs of the ruling class of that particular state as against the rival ruling classes of other national states. Entrenched behind national boundaries, the separate states vie for trade, raw materials, investment, commercial advantage, and so on. Behind each boundary, one of the tasks of the state is to safeguard and advance the interests of its own ruling class against all rivals.

3. The ruling class itself is not a monolithic block; it is shot through with criss-crossing interest blocs, as well as ordinary individual competitive antagonisms. Particularly under capitalism—which begins as dog-

eat-dog competition—one of the tasks of the state is to mediate, reconcile, in some way settle the internecine disputes and conflicts *within* the ruling class. This does not imply that the state institutions act as impartial Solomons even in intracapitalist terms: for there is a hierarchy of economic power as well as political influence. But some kind of settlement of intraclass disputes there must be, in order to avoid tearing the whole social fabric apart in an unregulated melee.

What is the relationship between the basic task of the state (“holding down and exploiting the oppressed class”) and the three subsidiary tasks which we have described? There are two differences to be noted.

1. The most obvious difference is that, from Marx’s standpoint, the state’s task of class domination is not only basic but its specific *reason for existence*. The other three are tasks which the state has taken over from its preceding protopolitical institutions; it is not these tasks which bring the state into existence.

Operationally, this difference has a profound consequence for the historical reactions of the ruling class; for experience shows that in practice the ruling class *does subordinate* the three subsidiary tasks to the first (basic) task, where there is a clash. It will forget internal class differences to make common cause against a threat from below, and it will conspire with the national enemy if its own working class threatens its rear. As Marx noted that the Prussians were aiding the French Versailles government in crushing the Paris Commune, he added:

It was only the old story. The upper classes always united to keep down the working class. In the eleventh century there was a war between some French knights and Norman knights, and the peasants rose in insurrection; the knights immediately forgot their differences and coalesced to crush the movement of the peasants.⁵²

About the same time, he entered in his notebook:

The *Paris-Journal*, the most ignoble of the Versailles papers, says: “the peace has been signed.—With our enemies? No, with the Prussians. And, however great our hatred may be of those who ruined us [Prussians], we must say that it cannot equal the horror with which we are filled by those who dishonor us [Parisians].”⁵³

In domestic affairs, wrote Marx, the same bourgeois liberals who condemn government intervention are the first to demand it if the target is the working class:

°° These same "gallant" free-traders, renowned for their indefatigability in denouncing government interference, these apostles of the bourgeois doctrine of *laissez-faire*, who profess to leave everything and everybody to the struggles of individual interest, are always the first to appeal to the interference of Government as soon as the individual interests of the working-man come into conflict with their own class-interests. In such moments of collision they look with open admiration at the Continental States, where despotic governments, though, indeed, not allowing the bourgeoisie to rule, at least prevent the working-men from resisting.⁵⁴

2. The second difference is that the three subsidiary tasks, unlike the basic task, may convey the appearance of being nonclass in character, as if simply actuated by the need of society or nation as a whole, rather than by the self-interest of the dominant class. On this ground it has been common to attack the Marxist "exaggeration" which views the state as primarily a class instrument. This is not the place to argue the question, but only to establish what Marx's viewpoint is.

It should be clear from what has already been explained that there is no question about one thing: the state really does have nonclass tasks, and it carries them out. *But it carries them out inevitably in class-distorted ways, for class ends, with class consequences.*

8. THE CLASS NATURE OF THE STATE

The position has nothing to do with denying that there are all kinds of nonclass *aspects* to society. What is important is understanding that the class character of a society permeates every aspect of the society, including these.

One illustration: it is certainly in the interest of society as a whole that epidemics be prevented; hence sanitation can be regarded as a nonclass task of government. But in historical fact the ruling powers embraced city-wide sanitation only when it was impressed on them that plagues originating among the poor also killed the rich. Marx noted in *Capital* that "the mere fear of contagious diseases which do not spare even 'respectability,' brought into existence from 1847 to 1864 no less than ten Acts of Parliament on sanitation," and "the frightened bour-

geois" in the big cities took municipal measures.⁵⁵ Engels describes what happened as science proved that such ravaging diseases as cholera and smallpox incubated their germs in the pestilential conditions of the poor districts before spreading to the other side of the tracks:

As soon as this fact had been scientifically established the philanthropic bourgeois became inflamed with a noble spirit of competition in their solicitude for the health of their workers. Societies were founded, books were written, proposals drawn up, laws debated and passed, in order to stop up the sources of the ever-recurring epidemics. The housing conditions of the workers were investigated and attempts made to remedy the most crying evils.

The capitalist state exerts itself to do the workers good, and its professors can now easily prove that the class bias of the state is grossly exaggerated. But to this day the class character of sanitation can be observed with the naked eye by comparing any workers' district with any rich residential district. The dominant economic interests certainly will not allow conditions so bad as to breed plagues:

Nevertheless, the capitalist order of society reproduces again and again the evils to be remedied, and does so with such inevitable necessity that even in England the remedying of them has hardly advanced a single step.⁵⁶

The next remedial step is "urban renewal" or slum clearance, in the name of such obviously nonclass aspirations as "civic improvement." This pattern was already an old story to Marx, who pointed out in *Capital*:

"Improvements" of towns, accompanying the increase of wealth, by the demolition of badly built quarters, the erection of palaces for banks, warehouses, &c., the widening of streets for business traffic, for the carriages of luxury [automobile freeways], and for the introduction of tramways, &c. [rapid-transit projects], drive away the poor into even worse and more crowded hiding places.⁵⁷

Engels pointed to the Bonapartist prefect of Paris, Haussmann, as the model for

the practice, which has now become general, of making breaches in the working-class quarters of our big cities, particularly in those which are centrally situated, irrespective of whether this

practice is occasioned by considerations of public health and beautification or by the demand for big centrally located business premises or by traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways, streets, etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the most scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but—they appear again at once somewhere else, and often in the immediate neighborhood.⁵⁸

In sum: the class nature of the state is attested not by the fact that every act is necessarily, equally, and exclusively in the direct interest of the ruling class only, but by the fact that all other interests are regularly *subordinated* to the interests of the ruling class, that the acts of the state are decisively shaped by what the ruling class and its representatives conceive its interests to be, and take place only within the framework of those interests. Along these lines Engels makes a comparison:

As all the driving forces of the actions of any individual person must pass through his brain, and transform themselves into motives of his will in order to set him into action, so also all the needs of civil society—no matter which class happens to be the ruling one—must pass through the will of the state in order to secure general validity in the form of laws. . . . If we inquire into this we discover that in modern history the will of the state is, on the whole, determined by the changing needs of civil society, by the supremacy of this or that class, in the last resort, by the development of the productive forces and relations of exchange.⁵⁹

The needs of society, no matter how class-neutral in origin or intention, cannot be met without passing through the political (and other) institutions set up by a class-conditioned society; and it is in the course of being processed through these channels that they are shaped, sifted, skewed, molded, modeled, and modulated to fit within the framework established by the ruling interests and ideas. This is how the class nature of the state and the society asserts itself, even without malevolent purposes or sinister plots.

12 | THE STATE IN PRACTICE: METHODS AND FORMS

While the essence of the state is class domination based on means of forcible coercion, there is much more to the state than an essence.

“The state presents itself to us as the first ideological power over man,” wrote Engels.¹ Ideological? Is a body of armed men an ideological power? But it must be understood that the state is not *merely* a body of armed men; if it were, it would be a much simpler institution: simpler to understand and simpler to overthrow. Its complexities are due to the fact that, for its own sake, it has to keep the body of armed men in the background as much as possible, and to put in the foreground its devices for the ideological (mental, moral, and spiritual) control of class antagonisms.

A state which maintains itself exclusively by the naked application of forcible suppression is both precarious and expensive. The state seeks stability and cheapness by finding working alternatives to the constant use of force. While it cannot eliminate force as its underlying sanction, it strives to reduce the use of force to (a) an *auxiliary* method of control in the short run, and (b) a *last resort* in the long run—at least, for as long a run as possible.

This holds true in general for the most despotic state as for the most democratic. Experience has thrown up countless methods, devices and stratagems whereby the state gains at least temporary compliance, acquiescence, and dependence by the bulk of the people without the overt use of force.

A catalogue of these force-substitute methods belongs elsewhere, even a catalogue of those that crop up in the writings of Marx and Engels, especially their journalistic writings. Some are more important than others; some operate on a larger social scale than others; some are

useful in short-run situations, some in the longer run. The more important ones are: the inculcation of inertia and apathy; moral subjugation; falsification of information; concessions and reforms; division of the ruled into more and less favored groups, from Janissaries to scapegoats; cooptation—winning over or buying out potential opposition leadership, including assimilation into the ruling class; direct and indirect corruption; and nationalism, as a means of directing social hostilities outside the state. Most of them are very old stories, historically speaking, merely taking new forms under different social systems. For present purposes the point is to see their relationship to the basic role of the state.

Some of these methods will be considered elsewhere, for their significance goes beyond the present subject.* But examples may be useful here.

1. SUBSTITUTES FOR FORCE: SOME EXAMPLES

1. *Moral means.* Very often Marx and Engels were concerned not so much to expose the conservatizing (pro-state) impact of these methods as to show their limitations as a barrier to radicalization. Thus Engels:

Now, if ever, the people must be kept in order by moral means, and the first and foremost of all moral means of action upon the masses is and remains—religion. Hence the parsons' majorities on the school boards, hence the increasing self-taxation of the bourgeoisie for the support of all sorts of revivalism, from ritualism to the Salvation Army. . . .

However, I am afraid neither the religious stolidity of the British, nor the *post festum* conversion of the Continental bourgeoisie will stem the rising proletarian tide. Tradition is a great retarding force, is the *vis inertiae* [force of inertia] of history, but, being merely passive, is sure to be broken down; and thus religion will be no lasting safeguard to capitalist society.²

* For example, religion (which bears on several of the above methods), nationalism, concessions and reforms, and division and scapegoats (including the formation of élite strata in the lower classes, such as a "labor aristocracy," and discrimination against women and racial minorities).

2. *Falsification* as a state method was not necessarily merely the result of ad hoc wickedness (concealment of this or that fact) and, by the same token, was more pervasive than might be supposed:

By its eternal compromises, gradual, peaceful political development such as exists in England brings about a contradictory state of affairs. Because of the superior advantages it affords, this state can within certain limits be tolerated in practice, but its logical incongruities are a sore trial to the reasoning mind. Hence the need felt by all "state-sustaining" [pro-state] parties for theoretical camouflage, even justification, which, naturally, are feasible only by means of sophisms, distortions and, finally, underhand tricks. Thus a literature is being reared in the sphere of politics which repeats all the wretched hypocrisy and mendacity of theological apologetics and transplants the theological intellectual vices to secular soil. Thus the soil of specifically Liberal hypocrisy is manured, sown, and cultivated by the Conservatives themselves.³

Capitalist technology has raised the possibility of systematic falsification by the mass media to a brand-new level, Marx remarked (apropos the slander campaign against the International):

Up to now it was believed that the development of the Christian myths under the Roman empire had been possible only because printing had not yet been invented. Just the contrary. The daily press and the telegraph, which in a trice spread their disclosures over the whole earth, fabricate more myths (which the bourgeois cattle believe and disseminate) in one day than could formerly have been turned out in a century.⁴

Whole sections of history, especially of revolutionary periods, are dropped down the Memory Hole, in order not to contaminate the young. Engels commented after reading a couple of books on the period of Bonaparte's coup d'état:

It necessarily happens after every victorious reaction that the causes of the revolution and counterrevolution are totally forgotten; in Germany the younger generation knows absolutely nothing about 1848 except the lamentations of the *Kreuzzeitung* [reactionary organ], and the echoing howls of all the other papers from 1849 to 1852; history suddenly comes to an end there in 1847.⁵

3. Flagrant cases of *class discrimination* by state organs involve not simply ordinary hypocrisy but the internalization of a class morality. When large-scale corruption among railway companies was exposed in the English courts, Marx reported:

°°The learned Judge remarked that "anything more flagrant or more gross could scarcely be conceived, and the way in which the plan had been carried out was still more gross." With this reflection he dismissed the guilty parties, as is usual among the bourgeoisie, while a poor devil of a proletarian would have been sure to be transported for a theft beyond five pounds.

It is curious to observe the British public in its fluctuating indignation now against the morality of mill lords, and now against the pit-owners, now against the little dealers in adulterated drugs, and then against the railwaymen [owners] who have supplanted the obsolete highwaymen; in short, against the morality of every particular class of capitalists. Taking the whole, it would seem that capital possesses a peculiar morality of its own, a kind of superior law of a *raison d'état*, while ordinary morals are a thing supposed to be good for the poor people.⁶

There was, of course, no lack of cases testifying to the class prejudices of courts and magistrates, and Marx gave them attention especially in his journalistic articles. In another case he pointed out that magistrates commonly intervened against strikes "in the most prejudiced and most unfavorable manner for the workingman" not because they were themselves necessarily manufacturers or businessmen, but especially because they "are at least intimately connected with, and dependent on, the commercial interest."⁷

4. Marx and Engels tended to look on *political racism* in the same light, as a class-repressive device stimulated and manipulated from above, to make use of volatile material below. The first German movement of political anti-Semitism (Christian Social movement), which began in 1878 and reached its first high in the course of 1881, was a case in point. Comrades in Germany sent Engels a packet of the papers and literature burgeoning out of the movement led by Stoecker, the court chaplain. While recognizing the force of anti-Jewish sentiments among the German people, Engels stressed that in origin and role the *movement* as such was an instrument shaped from above to keep the lower classes in subjection.

You will have received the anti-Jewish writings back in good order [replied Engels]. . . . I have never read anything so stupid and childish. The *only* importance this movement has is what *every* movement launched from above has in Germany, given the cowardice of the bourgeoisie: electoral maneuvering, in order to obtain conservative votes. As soon as the elections are over or even earlier when it has overshot the mark set for the higher positions (as is true now in Pomerania), it will altogether collapse by command from on top like a stuck pig's bladder, "to be seen no more." Such movements cannot be treated with sufficient contempt, and I am glad that the *Sozialdemokrat* did that. By the bye, C. H[irsch] writes me . . . from Berlin: "The anti-Semitic movement is purely arranged from above, indeed practically set up on order. I have gone into the most wretched places, and nobody minded my nose; in the buses and on the railway, nowhere did I get to hear a word against the Jews. The semi-official newspapers, which disseminate the Jew-baiting articles, have very few readers. The Germans have a natural antipathy toward the Jews, but the hatred of the regime that I have found among the workers and the progressive petty-bourgeois and philistines is far stronger."⁸

While the actual picture was, as usual, more complicated than represented in Engels' view from afar,* his estimate of the origin and role of the Stoecker movement was essentially accurate for this period.

The divisive role of racism directed against black workers, as well as discrimination against other ethnic minorities, is reserved for a later volume. We note here, however, a pregnant remark by Engels about the U.S. Constitution, formally the most liberal of the bourgeois constitutions then adopted.

* The complications are well summarized by Massing,⁹ together with an analysis of the movement which largely confirms the socialists' view of its class character and relation to state elements. Massing makes clear it got little support from the working class and that its mass base came from the *Mittelstand*, the social strata between the workers and the bourgeoisie. Stoecker's movement peaked by 1884 and declined; racial anti-Semitism flowered in the next decade. Engels' views on the anti-Semitic movement of the 1890s will be mentioned in a later chapter. Seeing the social role of racism as a tool wielded from above does not necessarily contradict recognition of its sources in the culture itself, ingrained in the people below. As Marx remarked apropos of Gobineau's theory of white supremacy, "to such people it is always a source of satisfaction to have somebody they think themselves entitled to *mépriser* [despise]."¹⁰

The developing bourgeoisie, explains Engels, which demanded liberty and equality for itself as against feudal fetters, also had to come out for liberty and equality for the masses of people who were supposed to support its struggle:

And it is significant of the specifically bourgeois character of these human rights that the American Constitution, the first to recognize the rights of man, in the same breath confirms the slavery of the colored races existing in America: class privileges are proscribed, race privileges sanctioned.¹¹

This is a highly condensed thought. If class privileges were not institutionalized in the Constitution, the same result had to be got at in other ways. The race privileges written into the Constitution, immediately in the interests of the slave-owning states, were congenial to a ruling-class society, which always needed forms adapted to "divide and rule." The bourgeois character of the human rights proclaimed by the Founding Fathers was manifested by the fact that they were applied to bourgeois society, with its polar-class structure of employers and workers, but not to the human beings who were enslaved outside of this bourgeois class structure.

5. *Cooptation.* The capacity of a ruling class to assimilate new elements was regarded by Marx as an index to its continuing strength, since this ability siphoned off potentially dissident elements. It is a bulwark of state stability, beginning with the strengthening of the capitalist class itself. Marx makes this point in an unexpected context: the credit system makes it possible for new men with energy to become capitalists—a circumstance "greatly admired by apologists of the capitalist system."

Although this circumstance continually brings an unwelcome number of new soldiers of fortune into the field and into competition with the already existing individual capitalists, it also reinforces the supremacy of capital itself, expands its base and enables it to recruit ever new forces for itself out of the substratum of society. In a similar way, the circumstance that the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages formed its hierarchy out of the best brains in the land, regardless of their estate, birth or fortune, was one of the principal means of consolidating ecclesiastical rule and suppressing the laity. The more a ruling class is able to assimilate the foremost minds of a ruled class, the more stable and dangerous becomes its rule.¹²

6. *Corruption.* In the modern bourgeois democracy, as in previous societies where the rights of citizens were openly proportional to their wealth, it is still true that

wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely. On the one hand, in the form of the direct corruption of officials, of which America provides the classical example; on the other hand, in the form of an alliance between government and Stock Exchange, which becomes the easier to achieve the more public debt increases and the more joint-stock companies concentrate in their hands not only transport but also production itself, using the stock exchange as their center.¹³

So Engels, in more than one place.¹⁴

Marx had the same to say about the United States¹⁵ as well as about England. Recent investigations, he wrote, confirm "the saying . . . that the real Constitution of the British House of Commons might be summed up in the word *Corruption*."¹⁶ But in this corruption he did not see mere evil-doing. The capacity to corrupt is the modern way of making rights proportional to wealth:

The traditional bribery of British elections, what else was it, but another form, as brutal as it was popular, in which the relative strength of the contending parties showed itself? Their respective means of influence and of dominion, which on other occasions they used in a *normal* way, were here enacted for a few days in an abnormal and more or less burlesque manner.¹⁷

In any case, bourgeois politics is inseparable from the manipulation of huge masses of money. Engels seized an occasion to hammer this home. After the Panama scandal in France, and the news of Bismarck's Guelphic Fund in Germany, a bank scandal in Italy ("little Panama" or Panamino) revealed the wholesale bribery of government leaders and deputies on an enormous scale.

And what is the moral of the story? That Panama and Panamino and the Guelphic Fund show that the whole of present-day bourgeois politics—the pleasant squabbling of the bourgeois parties among themselves as well as their collective resistance against the pressure of the working class—cannot be carried on without a colossal mass of money; that these masses of money are associated with aims that must not be publicly admitted; and that the governments see themselves more and more compelled by the greediness of the bourgeois to get hold of the wherewithal for

these untold aims by untold means. "We take money where we find it," said Bismarck, who must know. And "*where* we find it" we have just seen.¹⁸

Lying at the root of the system of corruption is a characteristic of civilized society which takes us a bit out of our field but deserves mention. Marx affords glimpses of it. Corruptibility in general no doubt has its sources in human nature, but a specific type of corruptibility arises out of a money system. Marx argues that the exchangeability of everything with money and money with everything, this characteristic of money as generalized wealth, translates historically into "universal venality, corruption. General prostitution makes its appearance as a necessary phase in the development of the social character of personal talents, faculties, abilities, activities." The passionate pursuit of riches—not simply to gain particular objects or goods, but enrichment in general—becomes possible only with a money system.

Money is therefore not only the object but equally the wellspring of the rage for riches. Greed is possible even without money; [but] the rage for riches is itself the product of a definite social development—not *natural* as opposed to *historical*. Hence the ancients' laments about money as the root of all evil.¹⁹

"Can one escape dirt in bourgeois intercourse or trade?" Marx asked. No, he answered, this is "its natural habitat."^{19a}

2. ECONOMIC ROOTS OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

The examples above are all relevant to methods of state domination which (in different ways) operate in any class-exploitative society, regardless of the governmental forms. Indeed, such methods are especially important in despotic states, simply because these do not have the methods of democratic manipulation at their disposal. The coming of bourgeois-democratic forms of government provided the ruling class, now the bourgeoisie, with indirect means of class domination which are very versatile and economical.

Developing capitalism gives rise to democratic institutions as a consequence of its inherent economic drives, which then take a political form. The essential economic basis is the formal, or apparent, equalitarianism of the capitalist relation:

The exchange of commodities of itself implies no other relations of dependence than those which result from its own nature. On this assumption, labor-power can appear upon the market as a commodity only if, and so far as, its possessor, the individual whose labor-power it is, offers it for sale, or sells it, as a commodity. In order that he may be able to do this, he must have it at his disposal, must be the untrammelled owner of his capacity for labor, *i.e.*, of his person. He and the owner of money meet in the market, and deal with each other as on the basis of equal rights, with this difference alone, that one is buyer, the other seller; both therefore equal in the eyes of the law.²⁰

The laborer must therefore be free

in the double sense, that as a free man he can dispose of his labor-power as his own commodity, and that on the other hand he has no other commodity for sale, is short of everything necessary for the realization of his labor-power. . . . Free laborers, in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves, bondsmen, &c., nor do the means of production belong to them, as in the case of peasant-proprietors; they are, therefore, free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own.²¹

While a slave has value (exchange value), a free worker has none—it is only his labor power that has value. “The fact that he has *no value*, that he is *stripped of all value*,” says Marx, “is the presupposition for capital and the precondition for *free* labor in general.”²² The worker is juridically free *because* he is valueless, economically speaking; and this is also why the capitalist is equally free—to scrap him as necessary, more freely than he can scrap his machines.

The commodity relationship is “a born leveler.”²³ This relationship in the buying and selling of labor power, then, appears to be “a very Eden of the innate rights of man.”

There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property, and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, say of labor-power, are constrained only by their own free will. They contract as free agents, and the agreement they come to is but the form in which they give legal expression to their common will. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent.²⁴

This formal equalitarianism of the capitalist-proletarian relationship is, to be sure, only "the surface of bourgeois society, obliterating the deeper operations from which it arises."²⁵

Both sides are persons vis-à-vis one another. *Formally* their relationship is the free and equal one of persons engaged in exchange in general. The fact that this form is a mere *semblance*, and a *deceptive semblance*, emerges as we look at the relations *outside* the juridical relation. . . . [The free worker] sells a particular expenditure of energy to a particular capitalist, whom he confronts independently as an *individual*. It is clear that this is not his relationship to the existence of capital as capital, *i.e.*, to the capitalist class. However, as far as the actual individual person is concerned, he is thus allowed a wide field of choice and discretion, and therefore of formal freedom.²⁶

The reality is quite different from the semblance; as the contradictions of the system develop, "freedom and equality . . . shift into their opposites at times," and the same equality and freedom, when realized, "turn out to be inequality and unfreedom."²⁷

For what is "free" under the free competition of capitalism? Not the individual; it is capital that is free. Free development is possible only within the narrow framework set by the dominance of capital.*

This kind of individual freedom is therefore at the same time the most complete abolition of all individual freedom and the complete subjugation of individuality to social conditions which take the form of objective forces. . . .²⁹

* The relevant passages, in this case from the *Grundrisse* manuscript, go as follows: Competition, writes Marx, has been foolishly represented as

the absolute form of existence of free individuality in the sphere of production and exchange. Nothing can be falsier. . . . It is not the individuals that are set free in free competition, but rather capital. . . . The dominance of capital is the presupposition for free competition, just as the Roman imperial despotism was the presupposition for the free Roman 'civil law.'

When capitalism begins to curb free competition, continues Marx, it heralds its own dissolution.

Hence, for one thing, the ineptness of regarding free competition as the final development of human freedom, and negation of free competition as equivalent to negation of individual freedom and of social production based on individual freedom. It is nothing more than free development on a narrowly limited basis, on the basis of the dominance of capital.

This is followed by the next sentence quoted above.²⁸

The "freedom" of free trade has exactly the same content. Marx had pointed this out in 1848:

To sum up, what is free trade under the present condition of society? It is freedom of capital. . . .

He [the worker] will see that capital become free will make him no less a slave than capital trammelled by customs duties.

Gentlemen! Do not allow yourselves to be deluded by the abstract word *freedom*. Whose freedom? It is not the freedom of one individual in relation to another, but the freedom of capital to crush the worker.³⁰

The "free" laborer sells himself under the coercion not of law but of the blind forces of the system:

It takes centuries ere the "free" laborer, thanks to the development of capitalist production, agrees, *i.e.*, is compelled by social conditions, to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessities of life, his birthright for a mess of pottage.³¹

There was a historical road which led from the *economic claim* of freedom and equality to the *political struggle* to make this come true. In *Anti-Dühring* Engels starts with the exposition of the foregoing ideas in *Capital*.³² Then:

The demand for liberation from feudal fetters and the establishment of equality of rights by the abolition of feudal inequalities was bound soon to assume wider dimensions, once the economic advance of society had placed it on the order of the day. If it was raised in the interests of industry and trade, it was also necessary to demand the same equality of rights for the great mass of the peasantry who, in every degree of bondage, from total serfdom onwards, were compelled to give the greater part of their labor-time to their gracious feudal lord without compensation and in addition to render innumerable other dues to him and to the state. On the other hand, it was inevitable that a demand should also be made for the abolition of the feudal privileges, of the freedom from taxation of the nobility, of the political privileges of the separate estates. And as people were no longer living in a world empire such as the Roman Empire had been, but in a system of independent states dealing with each other on an equal footing and at approximately the same level of bourgeois development, it was a matter of course that the demand for equality

should assume a general character reaching out beyond the individual state, that freedom and equality should be proclaimed *human rights*.

The rise of the bourgeoisie brought with it the development of its shadow, the proletariat:

And in the same way bourgeois demands for equality were accompanied by proletarian demands for equality. From the moment when the bourgeois demand for the abolition of class *privileges* was put forward, alongside it appeared the proletarian demand for the abolition of the *classes themselves*—at first in religious form, leaning towards primitive Christianity, and later drawing support from the bourgeois equalitarian theories themselves. The proletarians took the bourgeoisie at its word: equality must not be merely apparent, must not apply merely to the sphere of the state, but must also be real, must also be extended to the social, economic sphere.

From the French Revolution on, the bourgeoisie put civil equality in the forefront, the proletariat social and economic equality.

The demand for equality in the mouth of the proletariat has therefore a double meaning. It is either—as was the case especially at the very start, for example in the Peasant War—the spontaneous reaction against the crying social inequalities; . . . as such it is simply an expression of the revolutionary instinct, and finds its justification in that and in that only. Or, on the other hand, this demand has arisen as a reaction against the bourgeois demand for equality, drawing more or less correct and more far-reaching demands from this bourgeois demand, and serving as an agitational means in order to stir up the workers against the capitalists with the aid of the capitalists' own assertions; and in this case it stands or falls with bourgeois equality itself. In both cases the real content of the proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the *abolition of classes*.³³

In this way, "the notion of human equality has already acquired the fixity of a popular prejudice" (as Marx put it),³⁴ starting with the pretense of equality built into capitalism and going on to the political struggles for equality awakened by bourgeois aspirations.

3. LIBERALIZATION AND CONSTITUTIONALISM

The workers' struggles for the freedom and equality which the bourgeoisie had proclaimed had to take the form of political struggles, not merely ad hoc struggles at the point of production, insofar as the state was involved; and the state necessarily became involved every time the workers started moving *as a class*, if not before. Capitalism as a social system needed workers who were juridically free—free to sell their labor power to the capitalist, man to man, one to one, in all “equality”—but as soon as workers began organizing to exert collective pressures on the capitalist, they impaired the only freedom the capitalist recognized. Just as freedom of competition (in this case, freedom for all workers to compete among themselves for the available jobs) was damaged by workers' organization, so also was the principle of pure equality; for if even a dozen workers ganged up against one lone capitalist, was it not unequal? One could then argue the merits of the different interpretations of freedom and equality, with appropriate citations and arguments from the Bible, Rousseau, Plato, or other revered authorities; but since the interpretations were rooted not in mere ideologies but in class interests, they were irreconcilable in practice. The social questions at issue could be resolved only by the exertion of power, and the central reservoir of power in society lies in the state power.

The social question (the common label for the workers' aspirations and struggles for a better life) had to be fought out, sooner or later, on a large scale or small, in terms of control or influence over the state. Control, in the full-blown sense of *dominance* in the state, was of course an ultimate conclusion, which might or might not be consciously set: this bears on the level of consciousness which the political struggle reaches. But whatever the consciousness, the political struggle means that the classes below (that is, below the ruling classes) are striving to exert influence or pressure on the political power represented by the state.

The political forms of the struggle are, therefore, the means; the ends are the social (including economic) aspirations of the movement from below. It cannot be otherwise, no matter what the formal ideology states, since the state is normally not an end in itself but a means of ensuring class (social) power.

The mass pressure from below for channels of influence over the decisions of the state power breaks through in various forms, historically speaking. Let us distinguish two of them—liberalization and constitutionalism—from democratization as such.

Liberalization

This refers not to *liberalism* in its two modern senses but to the oscillation toward a “soft” internal policy instead of a “hard” one on the part of a despotic government which does not thereby give up its power to decide on one or the other.

There is no diffusion of political power necessarily involved; none institutionalized. Concessions (liberalizations) are handed down from above and can be retracted the same way. The concept often involves a distinction between good and bad rulers, or between the good ruler and his bad advisors. The good ruler *permits* previously impermissible activities, *tolerates* dissent within wider boundaries, deigns to oppress his subjects less; in short, takes a more liberal or tolerant line toward the employment of powers which are themselves not in question.

We have already seen that this was the political question confronting the young Marx at twenty-two, when the accession of Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1840 was expected to mean a more liberalized monarchy.³⁵ Here, as in other cases, the events showed how the role of the pattern was to ensure that aspirations for political change were channeled into hope in reforms from above.

The uses of liberalization, as a means of introducing an element of flexibility or “play” especially into formally rigid despotic regimes, were especially plain to Engels in the case of autocratic Russia. Particularly in the 1870s Russia seemed to be on the eve of an upheaval, as its problems multiplied. The pattern that invited the liberalization solution was characterized, on the one hand, by “an Oriental despotism whose arbitrariness we in the West simply cannot imagine,” and on the other hand, by the fact that this despotism “from day to day comes into more glaring contradiction with the views of the enlightened classes and in particular with those of the rapidly developing bourgeoisie of the capital.” In this situation, the autocracy,

in the person of its present bearer, has lost its head, one day making concessions to liberalism and the next, frightened, cancel-

ing them again and thus bringing itself more and more into disrepute.

Liberalization tends to become oscillatory because this kind of concession to mass pressure from below always points beyond itself. In the present case, there was

a growing recognition among the enlightened strata of the nation concentrated in the capital that this position is untenable, that a revolution is impending, and the illusion that it will be possible to guide this revolution into a smooth, constitutional channel.³⁶

Three years later, still on the Russian autocracy, Engels wrote a classic description of the pattern of liberalization:

°°During the first years of Alexander's reign, the old imperial despotism had been somewhat relaxed; the press had been allowed more freedom, trial by jury established, and representative bodies, elected by the nobility, the citizens of the towns, and the peasants respectively, had been permitted to take some share in local and provincial administration. Even with the Poles some political flirtation had been carried on. But the public had misunderstood the benevolent intentions of the government. The press became too outspoken. The juries actually acquitted political prisoners which [*sic*] the government had expected them to convict against evidence. The local and provincial assemblies, one and all, declared that the government, by its act of emancipation [of the serfs], had ruined the country, and that things could not go on in that way any longer. A national assembly was even hinted at as the only means of getting out of troubles fast becoming insupportable. And finally, the Poles refused to be bamboozled with fine words, and broke out into a rebellion which it took all the forces of the empire, and all the brutality of the Russian generals, to quell in torrents of blood. Then the government turned round again. Stern repression once more became the order of the day. The press was muzzled, the political prisoners were handed over to special courts, consisting of judges packed [*sic*] for the purpose, the local and provincial assemblies were ignored.

Again, Engels describes how liberalization, and oscillations from liberalization, brought other consequences in train. He continues:

But it was too late. The government, having once shown signs of fear, had lost its prestige. The belief in its stability, and in its

power of absolutely crushing all internal resistance, had gone. The germ of a future public opinion had sprung up. The forces could not be brought back to the former implicit obedience to government dictation. Discussion of public matters, if only in private circles, had become a habit among the educated classes. And finally, the government, with all its desire to return to the unbridled despotism of the reign of Nicholas, still pretended to keep up, before the eyes of Europe, the appearances of the liberalism initiated by Alexander. The consequence was a system of vacillation and hesitation, of concessions made to-day and retracted to-morrow, to be again half-conceded and half-retracted in turns, a policy changing from hour to hour, bringing home to everybody the intrinsic weakness, the want of insight and of will, on the part of a government which was nothing unless it was possessed of a will and of the means to enforce it. What was more natural than that every day should increase the contempt felt for a government which, long since known to be powerless for good and obeyed only through fear, now proved that it doubted of its power of maintaining its own existence, that it had at least as much fear of the people as the people had of it?³⁷

In both of the passages we have just quoted, it is clear that the first danger of liberalization is that it sharpens the people's appetite for the next obvious step: the legal institutionalization of the concessions, especially *constitutionalism*; and this in turn points to *democratization*.

About twenty years before, still in connection with Russia, Engels had described another aspect of the liberalization pattern: its use to balance class against class, for a temporary objective. Alexander II, aiming to put through some sort of emancipation of the serfs in order to shore up the long-range interests of the autocracy, naturally fell afoul of the social strata on which he directly based his rule: "the nobility and that very bureaucracy which he intended to reform against its own will, and which at the same time was to serve as the instrument of his designs." How could he counterbalance the antagonistic pressure of these two ruling strata?

°°To support him [explains Engels], he had nothing but the traditionary passive obedience of that inert mass of Russian serfs and merchants which had hitherto been excluded from the right even of thinking about their political condition. To make their support available, he was compelled to create a kind of public opinion, and at least the shadow of a press. Accordingly, the

censorship was relaxed, and civil, well-intentioned and well-behaved discussion was invited; even slight and polite criticisms of the acts of public officers were permitted. The degree of liberty of debate now [1858] existing in Russia would seem ridiculously small in any country of Europe except France [under Bonaparte]; but still, to people who knew the Russia of Nicholas, the step in advance appears enormous, and, combined with the difficulties necessarily arising from the emancipation of the serfs, this awakening to political life of the more educated classes of Russia is full of good omens.

In this connection, Engels thinks back to the Europe before 1848, when there was a political revival of bourgeois-democratic opposition. The year 1846 "was also distinguished by a number of reforming princes, who, two years afterward, were carried away helplessly by the rush of the revolutionary torrent which they had let loose."³⁸

Liberalization, as one side of the hard-soft oscillation, is typically a recourse of autocracies and authoritarian regimes; since there is only one organized political center, at the summit of the state, only it can oscillate. But in bourgeois democracies, the hard-soft oscillation can be acted out as a division of labor by different parties of the establishment. This points to the connection between the liberalization phase of autocracies and the liberal wing of democracies.

Marx discussed this especially in terms of the English party system. Writing in mid-nineteenth century, when the Tory-Whig division was breaking up in the process of giving way to the oncoming Conservative-Liberal duality, Marx posed the question: what had been the historical difference between Tories and Whigs? Both were clearly controlled by the aristocracy, the Tories by the "squirearchy," the Whigs by the "great families." Yet it was the latter, whose nucleus was "the oldest, richest, and most arrogant portion of English landed property," that radiated the liberal aura.

Marx saw the traditional Tory party (leaving aside here its subsequent remodeling) as the benighted, backward-looking, reactionary or troglodyte sector of the aristocracy, blinkered by short-sighted interest; and the Whigs as the "enlightened" sector—that is, those who understood that the aristocracy could still hang on to the helm of the state and keep the bourgeoisie out of governmental power only by *itself* appearing as the representative of bourgeois interests to the extent necessary to keep the bourgeoisie docile. Thus the Whigs could take over when there was danger of the bourgeois hotheads getting out of

hand, for example, backing a party of their own against both wings of the aristocracy.*

The Whigs, the oligarchs, are *enlightened* and have never hesitated to cast off prejudices which stand in the way of their hereditary tenure of state office. The Whigs have always prevented any movement within the middle classes by offering their friendship; the Tories have always driven the mass of the people into the arms of the middle classes with their friendship, having already placed the middle classes at the disposal of the Whigs. . . . If one reviews the whole of English history since the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, one finds that all the laws directed against the mass of the people have been initiated by the Whigs. . . . But Whig reaction has always been in harmony with the middle classes. Tory reaction has been directed even more against the middle classes than against the mass of the people. Hence the liberal reputation of the Whigs.⁴⁰

In the later version, the bipartisan oscillation took the working class as its client, or target.

In sum: liberalization is a reflection, a distorted reflection, of popular pressures from below; but it is not a form in which these pressures express *themselves*—it is, rather, a form for containing these pressures. If that effort is unsuccessful, then, from historical hindsight, a stage of liberalization may appear as a step in the direction of a subsequent democratization. But precisely because it is a form for containing pressures rather than expressing them, liberalization is typically the objective result not of a movement which sets liberalization as its goal, but of a movement which threatens the state power itself. For unless such a threat is operative, the state power will not consider liberalization as a lesser evil or a temporary holding action.

What follows is an apparently paradoxical principle of politics: *a movement which is merely for liberalization can never attain its goal without going beyond itself*. We will see this pattern apply in other types of cases too.

Constitutionalism

If the liberalizing despot offers no guarantee of political rights, the

* This question will be pursued somewhat more fully, and from a different angle, in Chapter 14. The summary of Marx's view above is from an article published in 1852.³⁹

answer must be sought in laws; but as we have seen, the liberalizer may also offer liberalized laws, which are as uncertain as their source. The answer is the demand for a constitution, which, to be meaningful, must be formally *above* the governing power, not subject to change by its laws or decrees.

Even in 1840, when the young Marx was first involved in the hopes for a liberalized monarchy under Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the real hope was that the new king would eventually grant a constitution—that is, wax so liberal as to voluntarily give up his absolute powers. Though this illusion was quickly destroyed, the bourgeois democrats' aspiration still remained a constitution—any kind of constitution, to begin with. As editor of the democratic *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842, Marx wrote what every good democrat believed:

In general I do not believe that persons should be guarantees against laws; rather I believe that laws must be guarantees against persons. . . . But no one, not even the best legislator, ought to put his own person above his law.⁴¹

A government of laws, not men, is, to be sure, an elementary principle of freedom; for the bourgeois-democratic constitutionalists it was an end-aim in itself, rather than merely a step toward a more basic democratization. This was the counterposition in the revolutionary period of 1848–1849. The “Marx party” around the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* fought for a constitution, but refused to be satisfied with a caricature of a constitution which, furthermore, was “octroyed” by the king—that is, handed down from above, hence retractable from above. On the other hand, the constitutional liberals in the National Assembly were too flabby to fight for the constitution they desired. When it did come to an armed struggle in the 1849 German campaign for a Reich Constitution, Engels took up the gun too.

A constitutional (bourgeois-liberal) government would raise the social struggle to the next higher level. Thus Marx said on the eve of 1848 that “One declares oneself an enemy of the constitutional regime without thereby declaring oneself a friend of the old regime,”⁴² for the struggle against the former could be carried on all the more clearly once the latter was wiped off the agenda.

But there are constitutions and constitutions. Constitutionalism of any sort is only an elementary step toward democratization of political life, and democracy in turn is a goal not only in constitutional terms but also outside the framework of constitutional forms.

13 | THE STATE AND DEMOCRATIC FORMS

In Part I we saw how the development of Marx's political views intertwined a number of key problems. Prominent among them was the problem of democracy in all its shifting meanings. This will continue to be true throughout the ensuing chapters, for democracy is not a single problem but a complex of problems that permeates many other subjects.

Indeed, in a general way, Marx's socialism (communism) as a political program may be most quickly defined, from the Marxist standpoint, as *the complete democratization of society*, not merely of political forms.* But the democratic movement of the nineteenth century began by putting the struggle for advanced political forms in the forefront; and so did Marx, in a different programmatic context. For Marx, the fight for democratic forms of government—democratization in the state—was a leading edge of the socialist effort; not its be-all and end-all but an integral part of it all.

Throughout the history of the socialist and communist movements, one of the persistent problems has been establishing the relation, in theory and practice, between the struggle for socialism and for democracy (or democratic rights), between socialist issues and democratic

* As a liberal critic of Marx, A. D. Lindsay, put it from his own viewpoint:

the Liberal, if to be a Liberal is to believe in democracy, must explain why he will not extend democracy to the government of the collective labourer and become a socialist. Socialism is for Marx essentially the democratization of the collective labourer. Because it was that, he regarded it as inevitable; for a society in which "the notion of human equality has already acquired the fixity of a popular prejudice," and in which the prevailing form of production is social and involves government, is already in principle committed to it.¹

issues. Every distinctive socialist current or school has had its own characteristic answer to this problem. On one extreme end of the spectrum is the view (held consciously in theory or expressed in practice) that puts the advocacy of democratic forms in the forefront, for their own sake, and subjoins the advocacy of socialistic ideas as an appurtenance. (From the Marxist standpoint, this is merely the leftmost wing of bourgeois-democratic liberalism extruding into the socialist spectrum.) On the other extreme is the type of radical ideology that *counterposes* socialistic ideas—in the sense of anticapitalist views—against concern with democratic struggles, considering the latter as unimportant or harmful. Every conceivable mixture of the two approaches has cropped up too, but they all form a single family insofar as they are *mixtures*.

Marx's approach is qualitatively different from this sort of eclecticism, and does not attempt to establish a sliding scale of *concern* with the two sides of the duality. For him, the task of theory is to integrate the two objectively. The characteristic answer to the problem emerging from Marx's theory was already heralded in his notebook critique of Hegel's philosophy of right,² where he sought to show that "true democracy" requires a new social content—socialism; and it will be rounded off with his analysis of the Paris Commune, which showed that a state with a new social content entailed truly democratic forms. Marx's theory moves in the direction of *defining consistent democracy in socialist terms, and consistent socialism in democratic terms*. The task of theory, then, is not to adjudicate a clash between the two considerations (a hopeless job once the problem is seen in that light), but rather to grasp the social dynamics of the situation under which the apparent contradiction between the two is resolved.

Marx did not simply work this out within his skull; progress toward a solution came only in the course of the first historical experience which he went through in which this problem was concretely posed. This was the period of the 1848–1849 revolution, when democratic demands and socialist aims seemed to be at sword's point. One of the results was his so-called theory of permanent revolution: we will follow this process in some detail in the next volume, and the problem will remain with us throughout.

The present chapter makes only a beginning by examining some of the more elementary aspects of the question.

J. AGAINST "THE OLD THESIS"

From the start there was the problem of self-styled radicals who held the same attitude of hostility and contempt for democratic forms that emanated from the old regime, though presumably from an opposite direction. This is an aspect of the almost unanimous antidemocracy of pre-Marxist socialism.³ When Marx referred to it in *The German Ideology*, he already called it contemptuously "the old thesis": "The old thesis, which has often been put forward both by revolutionaries and reactionaries, that in a democracy individuals only exercise their sovereignty for a moment, and then at once retreat from their rule. . . ."⁴ (The polemic here is against the anarchoid Stirner.) This was only one favorite antidemocratic argument among many, one which flourishes today as lustily as two centuries ago. Marx gave them all short shrift, in the apparent belief (wrong, as it turned out) that they were simply vestiges of the past and had no future.*

This rejection of anything connected with bourgeois democracy would later become associated mainly with ultraleft radicalism, but its beginnings were another matter. Engels described a case in a letter to Marx from Paris, where he was trying to work with one K. L. Bernays, an editor of the Paris *Vorwärts*, the German émigré paper. Bernays insists on writing antibourgeois articles for a Berlin paper which is antibourgeois from a reactionary (absolutist) standpoint.

He writes in the *Berliner Zeitungs-Halle* and rejoices like a child to see his *soi-disant* communist expectorations against the bourgeoisie printed there. Naturally the editors and the censorship let

* An example: Among the backward-looking antidemocrats that Marx ran into was the maverick David Urquhart, against whom Marx warned in an article:

There is another clique of "wise men" emerging in England who are discontented with the Government and the ruling classes as much as with the Chartists. What do the Chartists want? they exclaim. They want to increase and extend the omnipotence of Parliament by elevating it to people's power. They are not breaking up parliamentarism but are raising it to a higher power. The right thing to do is to break up the representative system! A wise man from the East, *David Urquhart*, heads that clique.⁵

Marx goes on to explain that Urquhart wants to turn the clock back on civilization, to return to the old Anglo-Saxon conditions, "or, better still, to the Oriental state," to localism, to economic conditions prior to the modern division of labor and concentrated capital. The subject of social tendencies hostile to both capitalism and the proletariat is reserved for separate consideration.

stand whatever is simply against the bourgeois and strike out the few allusions that could be offensive to themselves too. He rails against the jury system, "bourgeois freedom of the press," the representative system, etc. I explain to him that this means working literally *pour le roi de Prusse* and indirectly against our party. . . . I make clear that the *Zeitungs-Halle* is in the pay of the government. . . .⁶

"Working *pour le roi de Prusse* [for the king of Prussia]" meant, in French idiom, working for nothing; but Engels argued that Bernays was unwittingly working for the Prussian regime *literally*, since publishing attacks on democratic institutions in absolutist Prussia only helped the regime discredit the democratic movement. But, continued Engels, Bernays, agush with sentimentality, could understand none of this; he could not comprehend, he said, an approach that went easy on people he had always hated, namely the bourgeoisie. Engels added:

I have read umpteen of these Paris-dated articles [by Bernays]; they are *on ne peut plus* [to the fullest extent possible] in the interest of the government and in the style of True-Socialism.

Marx's and Engels' approach to the question of democratic forms (rights, liberties, institutions, and so on) was completely different. The reason a type like Bernays could not comprehend their approach was that his socialism, such as it was, was merely anticapitalist and not proletarian; it was not a theory about a class movement but simply a predilection for a certain social reorganization. It had nothing to do with putting power in the hands of the masses of people, but rather looked to any men of good will who wanted to make the changes envisaged. For such a man, popular control over government could be a danger, since the stupid masses might well be more hostile to his schemes than enlightened souls.

Popular control over government: in the middle of the nineteenth century it was much clearer than it is today that the problem of democracy was the effective establishment of full popular control over government, for the simple reason that no government (except perhaps the American) pretended that this happy state of affairs already existed. It had not yet become necessary or fashionable to redefine democracy out of existence; it was therefore quite common, in those benighted days, for enemies of popular sovereignty to attack the

democratic idea openly and forthrightly, instead of embracing it in a crushing vise. For the democratic extremist, popular control meant *unlimited* popular control, the elimination of all juridical, structural and socioeconomic restraints on or distortions of popular control from below. For Marx, this is why popular control pointed to socialism.

But in a country which had not yet had its 1789, like Germany, the extension of popular control still had to pass through its bourgeois phase; under semifeudal absolutism, the bourgeoisie was a part of the popular masses too, even if a limited and privileged part. For Marx, the problem resolved itself into this: how to pass through this phase—through and *out*—in such a way as to shift power to the underlying working strata of the population as expeditiously as possible. This is what will define the problem of the “permanent revolution.”

At any rate, from the standpoint of this theoretical approach Bernays’ inability to see more than his hatred of the bourgeois system did not mean that he hated the bourgeoisie more than Marx; it was a reflection of his nonclass point of view. Marx did not have to weigh hatred of the bourgeoisie against the advantages of bourgeois democracy—an impossible calculus. It was rather a matter of making a class analysis of the elements of bourgeois democracy: sorting out what was specifically bourgeois (for example, property qualifications for voting) from what furthered the widest extension of popular control.*

In this chapter we will be concerned with some aspects of democratic *forms* in government—the state forms of democracy—leaving more basic problems for later treatment.

2. FOR REVOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY

The revolutions of 1848–1849 temporarily established bourgeois-democratic governments in both France and Germany, the two coun-

* In this explanation we have used *democracy* and *democratic* in their modern sense; but in mid-nineteenth century, especially on the Continent before 1848, the democratic forms involved were more commonly labeled “liberties,” specific freedoms (freedom of press, expression, and so on), specific rights (right of organization or association), “popular” institutions, including popular sovereignty, and so on. The variable meaning of the word *democracy* was discussed in Chapter 3.

tries with which Marx was mainly concerned. These governments were bourgeois and more or less democratic as compared with the previous regimes; they therefore raised innumerable concrete problems of what political forms should clothe democratization. In the case of Germany, Marx's and Engels' articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (NRZ) had to deal with many problems day by day, not merely in historical hindsight; hence they took up smaller-scale questions than are usually found in their synoptic analyses of the events in France.

The overall criterion is: What will maximize the influence exercised from below, by the masses in movement, on the political forces above? These political forces were two above all: the monarchist regime and its government, which was still the executive, though now on the defensive; and the representatives of the people in the assemblies established by the revolutionary upsurge. The latter represented the potentiality of popular sovereignty, that is, democratic control by the people. But when the National Assembly, elected from the various German states, met in Frankfurt on May 18, it showed that the bourgeois-democratic delegates shrank from a clash with the monarchy. In the first issue of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, on June 1, Engels summarized the situation:

Since two weeks ago, Germany has a national constituent assembly which is the product of a vote by the whole German people.

The German people had won its sovereignty in the streets of almost all the big and little cities of the country, especially on the barricades of Vienna and Berlin. It had exercised this sovereignty in the elections for the National Assembly.

The first act of the National Assembly had to be to proclaim this sovereignty of the German people loudly and publicly.

Its second act had to be to work out a German constitution on the basis of the sovereignty of the people, and to get rid of everything in the actually existing state of affairs in Germany which contradicts the principle of the sovereignty of the people.

All during its session it had to take the necessary measures to thwart all efforts by the reaction, to maintain the revolutionary grounds on which it stands, to secure the revolution's conquest, the sovereignty of the people, against all attacks.

The German National Assembly has now already held a dozen sessions and has done nothing of all this.⁷

Instead, continued Engels, the authorities still violate the rights of citizens with impunity, while the Assembly pays more attention to its dinner hours than to its democratic tasks.⁸

As the year wore on, even the Frankfurt left, the consciously liberal wing, showed what little stomach it had for a fight with the real state power headed by the Crown. In a later article on the assembly's deliberations, Engels quotes the liberal deputy Ruge* as an example of empty rhetoric: "We do not want to quarrel, gentlemen," Ruge told the Assembly, "over whether we aim at a democratic monarchy, a democratized monarchy [!] or a pure democracy; *on the whole we want the same thing*, liberty, popular liberty, the rule of the people!" (The emphasis and interpolated exclamation are by Engels.) With much disgust Engels comments that this speaks volumes about a so-called left which says it wants the same thing as the right, and "which forgets everything as soon as it hears a couple of hollow catchwords like *popular liberty and rule of the people*."¹⁰

As the government tried "to cheat the revolution of its democratic fruits,"¹¹ the NRZ was the loudest voice raised in Germany. In July the government suppressed the club movement in two cities; Engels warned:

You believe you have finished with the police state? Delusion!— You believe you possess the right of free assembly, freedom of the press, arming of the people, and other fine slogans that were shouted from the March barricades? Delusion, nothing but delusion!¹²

As the government was in process of chopping off the "democratic fruits" of the revolution, a militia bill was proposed which would restrict the rights of its citizen members to nearly nothing. Marx asked: What does this mean for the citizen militiaman?

The worthy man has gotten arms and uniform on the condition of renouncing above all his prime political rights, the right to organize, etc. His task of protecting "constitutional liberty" will be fulfilled in accordance with the "spirit of his destiny" when he

* This is the same Arnold Ruge who, five years before, had been Marx's coeditor of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, complaining that the German people were hopelessly apathetic and could never make a revolution (see Chapter 6). He was prominent among those who helped to fulfill his prophecy. By the 1870s he wound up on the pension rolls of the far-from-apathectic Bismarck.⁹

blindly executes the orders of the authorities, when he exchanges the customary civil liberty that was tolerated even under the absolute monarchy for the passive, will-less and self-less obedience of the soldier. A fine school in which to bring up the republicans of the future! . . . What has our *citizen* been made into? A thing somewhere between a Prussian gendarme and an English constable. . . . Instead of disbanding the army into the people, wasn't it an original idea to disband the people into the army?

It is truly a bizarre spectacle, this *transformation of constitutional phrases into Prussian realities*.¹³

The NRZ carried on other campaigns for democratic rights against government pressure, including the Frankfurt left's program for "immediate establishment, proclamation, and guarantee of the fundamental rights of the German people against all possible attacks by the individual governments [of the German states]." It criticized the Assembly liberals for being too vague on the issue of direct suffrage versus indirect suffrage, and denounced all antidemocratic forms of elections.¹⁴

For Marx and Engels, the right of assembly also meant the right of the people to exercise pressure against their "own" representatives. This came into question when the right-wing press denounced the pressure put on the Prussian Assembly in Berlin by the presence of thousands at its deliberations. Marx wrote:

The right of the democratic mass of the people to exert a moral influence on the attitude of the constituent assembly is an old revolutionary right of the people which, since the English and French revolutions, could not be dispensed with in any period of stormy action. It is to this right that history owes almost all energetic steps taken by such assemblies. If . . . the fainthearted and philistine friends of "freedom of deliberations" wail against it, the only basis they have is that they don't want any energetic decisions taken anyway.

This alleged "freedom of deliberations" is infringed, argued Marx, on the one side by the pressures from the existing state and its army, courts, and so on. And likewise "The 'freedom of deliberations' is infringed by freedom of the press, by freedom of assembly and speech, by the right of the people to bear arms" on the other side, since these too exercise unwanted pressure on the representatives. Between the two

species of intimidation, the representatives have only this choice: "Intimidation by the unarmed people or intimidation by the armed soldiery: let the Assembly choose."¹⁵

In March 1849 the Crown was emboldened to put forward a brace of new bills to throttle democratic rights. They provide an early handbook of devices to stifle democracy by indirection; and Marx's denunciation ticked them off down to seemingly trivial details. Here is a partial list of what especially excited his indignation:

- Twenty-four-hour advance notice was required for meetings. "Thus," wrote Marx, "meetings called quickly when important events suddenly take place are suppressed—and such meetings are precisely the most important ones."

- Charging admission to defray the cost of a meeting was banned (thereby making it harder for workers to finance their activity) and nonmembers were guaranteed a quarter of the seats (to enable police agents to create disturbances, explained Marx).

- Police got the right to dissolve a meeting immediately on any pretext.

- The red-tape weapon: clubs "have such a mass of advance notices and formalities to fill out with the local authorities that for this reason alone their existence is made half-impossible."

- Out-of-doors meetings required advance approval by the police.

- Political posters were banned.

- Jail was decreed for a number of new crimes of simple speech: attacks on "the foundations of bourgeois society based on property or the family"; incitement to "hatred" among citizens; motivating "hatred or contempt against institutions of the state or government" by "untrue" statements; lèse majesté, including offenses against the "respect" due to royalty and princes; even "true" statements if used as "intentional" insults against members of the government or armed forces; even "insults or slanders" made in privacy.¹⁶

Marx summed this pattern up: "We are to become *Prussians* at all costs—Prussians after the heart of His Most Gracious Majesty, replete with the Prussian civil code, aristocratic arrogance, bureaucratic tyranny, the rule of the saber, floggings, censorship, and obedience to orders."¹⁷

3. FREE PRESS AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The difference between hollow rhetoric about liberty and a real revolutionary democratic struggle could only be spelled out in terms of concrete issues. One of the most elementary and basic was the issue that had been the first subject of Marx's political pen, freedom of the press. From the first number of the *NRZ*, Marx and Engels made this a major battle cry.¹⁸

The government, wrote Marx, is trying to apply the penal code provisions against so-called slander in order to prevent any criticism of the regime. Indeed, if a paper protests that the government is curbing freedom of the press, *that* is punishable as a slander even if it is true.* This application of the penal code means

the real, definitive finish-blow to the 19th of March [the revolution], to the clubs, and to freedom of the press! What is a club without freedom of speech? And what is freedom of speech with Sections 367, 368, 370 of the Penal Code? And what is the 19th of March without clubs and freedom of speech?²⁰

As this already indicates, freedom of the press could hardly be separated from freedom of expression in all its forms. The whole existence of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was a battle for survival against government suppression. Haled into court, Marx, Engels, and others of the group were acquitted by a Cologne jury, after defense speeches that were mainly political expositions; but when the counter-revolution gained confidence, the paper was suppressed by simple decree. In the court case—as Engels wrote much later—they attacked “the monstrous notion that anyone can place himself outside the common law by maintaining an opinion. This is the pure police state. . . .”²¹

As the *NRZ* began its third week, Engels asked what the revolution

* Marx was also acquainted with the government device of allegedly suppressing only “false” statements by the press. This became prominent under the Bonaparte dictatorship in France, which claimed to be for freedom of the press to tell the truth but not its freedom to tell lies. In an 1858 article Marx derisively quoted the Bonapartist press: “The duty of the press is to enlighten the public, and not deceive it,” and demonstrated that this was only a façade for the principle that the duty of the press is to obey the government's orders on how to deceive the public.¹⁹

had won, besides bringing the big bourgeoisie to governmental power: "It gave the people the weapon of freedom of the press without security bonds, the right of organization,* and partly at least also the material weapon, the musket," he answered.²² Marx and Engels saw freedom of the press as a barometer of governmental arbitrariness, among other things. When the Hansemann ministry submitted an interim law to regulate the press, that is, to muzzle criticism, Marx wrote that "in short, we again meet the most classic monuments to the Napoleonic despotism over the press," and

From the day this law goes into effect, government officials can with impunity commit any arbitrary act, any tyranny, any illegality; they can calmly administer or permit floggings, or make arrests, or hold without trial; the only effective control, the press, is rendered ineffectual. On the day this law goes into effect, the bureaucracy can hold a celebration: it becomes more powerful and unrestrained, stronger than it was before March.²³

When the Crown unleashed a new attack on freedom of the press in March 1849, Marx's paper published an important statement by Engels on the relation of democratic freedoms to the class struggle. It explained why the government found itself compelled to suppress freedom of the press:

The existing government and the constitutional monarchy in general cannot maintain themselves nowadays in civilized countries if the press is free. Freedom of the press, the free competition of opinions—this means giving free rein to the class struggle in the field of the press. And the [Law and] Order that they crave so much—this means precisely stifling the class struggle and muzzling the oppressed class. This is why the party of Quiet and Order must abolish the free competition of opinions in the press; it must assure itself as much as possible of the monopoly of the marketplace, by press laws, interdictions, etc.; particularly must it directly suppress, wherever possible, the cost-free literature of the wall posters and giveaway leaflets.²⁴

In the marketplace of freely competing opinions, argued Engels, the oppressors will lose; therefore they must establish their own monopoly to replace free competition. (It follows, contrariwise, that suppression of the free press is a confession of political bankruptcy.)

* Literally, the right of association; so throughout.

As the above passage indicates, Engels made a special point of a freedom not often spotlighted: the revolutionary and class meaning of the wall poster as a channel of communication with the masses. The liberals who opposed the poster ban, reported Engels, shied away from making a forthright defense of this "street literature," and of the right of workers to this cost-free forum. But the authorities considered the poster form of communication as inherently inflammatory in the urban situation where it spoke to a concentrated proletariat:

The posters [explained Engels] are a principal means of affecting the proletariat; the proletariat is revolutionary by virtue of its total situation; the proletariat—the oppressed class under the constitutional regime as well as under the absolutist regime—is only too ready to take up arms once again; it is precisely from the side of the proletarians that the main danger threatens; and therefore away with everything that could keep revolutionary passion alive in the proletariat!

And what contributes more to keeping revolutionary passion alive among the workers than precisely the posters, which transform every street corner into a big newspaper in which the workers passing by find the events of the day recorded and interpreted and the various viewpoints presented and debated, where they simultaneously meet people of all classes and opinions brought together and can discuss the posters with them; in short, where they possess a newspaper and a club in one, and all this without it costing them a penny.²⁵

In the marketplace of opinions, posters were the working class's special medium, hence a special anathema to "the dictatorship of the saber" that Engels saw behind the new Crown measures.

4. THE MAXIMIZATION OF DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

But should a government permit activities, even such as are sanctified by democratic rights, which may result in its own overthrow? Marx's and Engels' answer was: If the exercise of the people's rights endangers the government, then so much the worse for the government. Governments have a habit of believing that activities dangerous to them are infringements on liberty—namely, their own liberty to exist. Marx

did not believe that the people were called on to sacrifice their own rights in order to relieve the government's problem:

The "*Ministry of Action*" [Hansemann ministry] seems to espouse peculiar oriental-mystical notions, a kind of *Moloch cult*. In order to protect the "constitutional liberty" of presidents, burgomasters, police chiefs [a long list of government officials follows here] . . . in order to protect the "constitutional liberty" of this élite of the nation, all the rest of the nation must let its constitutional liberties, up to and including personal liberty, die a bloody death as a sacrifice on the altar of the fatherland. *Pends-toi, Figaro! Tu n'aurais pas inventé cela!**²⁶

The next day's *NRZ* had a similar comment by Engels on another issue. A motion by the left liberal deputy Jacoby had proposed that the Assembly's decisions have the force of law without anyone else's consent: a crucial issue of the revolution. Deputy Berg had denounced this as the attempt by a parliamentary minority to win outside support, an attempt whose consequences "must lead to civil war." But, replied Engels, the "outsiders" who must not be appealed to—who were they? "The voters, that is, the people who *make* the legislative body."

In a word: Herr Berg's principle would lead to the abolition of all political agitation. Agitation is nothing more than the application of representatives' immunity, freedom of the press, right to organize—that is, the liberties now juridically in existence in Prussia. Whether these liberties do or do not lead to civil war is not our concern; it is enough that they exist, and we shall see where it "leads" if the attack on them continues.²⁷

A week later, the question came up again, on an even more fateful issue. Local Democratic Associations were being suppressed by the governments, first in Stuttgart and Heidelberg, now in Baden; this made a mockery of the Assembly's phrases about the right to organize.

The basic condition [wrote Engels] of the free right of organization is that no association or society can be dissolved or prohibited by the police, that this can take place only as a result of a judicial verdict establishing the illegality of the association or of its acts and aims and punishing the authors of these acts.²⁸

What was the government's ground?

* This catchline, adapted from Beaumarchais, amounts to a sarcastic "What a brilliant idea!"

The motivations given for this new act of police violence are extremely edifying. The associations wanted to affiliate to the organization of Democratic Associations for all Germany, set up by the Democratic Congress at Frankfurt. This congress "set a democratic republic as its goal" (as if that is forbidden!) "and the means envisaged to attain this goal flow, among other things, from the sympathy expressed in those resolutions in favor of the agitators" (since when is "sympathy" an illegal "means"?). . .

According to Herr Mathy [liberal Baden politician], the associations in Baden are therefore responsible for the resolutions of the Central Committee [of the Democratic Associations] *even if they have not put them into practice.*

Mathy had argued further that it "seems inadmissible and pernicious for the foundation of the constitution to be undermined and thus the whole state structure shaken by the associations' power." Engels commented:

The right to organize, Herr Mathy, exists precisely so that one can "undermine" the constitution with impunity—in legal form, of course. And if the associations' power is greater than that of the state, so much the worse for the state!²⁹

Another vital issue on which the *NRZ* hit hard was a corollary of the sovereignty of the people, namely the sovereignty of the Assembly elected by the people, as against the power of the government set up by the Crown. The revolution had given rise to two lines of power which were diverging, wrote Engels:

The results of the revolution were, on one hand, the arming of the people, the right of organization, the de facto achievement of popular sovereignty; on the other, the maintenance of the monarchy and the Camphausen-Hansemann ministry, that is, the government of the representatives of the big bourgeoisie.

The revolution thus had two series of results which necessarily had to diverge. The people had been victorious, they had won freedoms of a decisively democratic nature; but the immediate ruling power passed not into their hands but into the big bourgeoisie's.

In short, the revolution was not completed.³⁰

Marx's and Engels' line was strongly for all power to the Assembly as the representation of popular sovereignty, as against the Assembly majority's goal of a deal with the Crown. The Jacoby motion, previously mentioned, that the Assembly's decisions should have the force

of law without further ado, was a *sine qua non*. It would be incredible to other peoples, wrote Engels, that the German assembly had to debate a motion asserting that it is sovereign with respect to the government. "But we are in the land of the oak and linden, and so we should not be easily astonished by anything." The Assembly was "irresolute, flabby, and lackadaisical."³¹

Marx presented the revolutionary-democratic proposal in terms of the concentration of both legislative and governmental (executive) power in the hands of the people's elected representatives. The Radical wing of the Assembly, he wrote, was calling for a governmental executive "elected for a period determined by the National Assembly and responsible to it." But that was not enough. This executive power must be selected out of the ranks of the Assembly itself, as was demanded by the left-wingers among the Radicals. Since the National Assembly was a constituent body—that is, no constitution as yet existed—there could be no government except the Assembly itself: "it is the National Assembly itself that must govern."³² Above all, it must take the initiative away from the governments of the German states:

A national constituent assembly must above all be an *activist*, revolutionary-activist assembly. The assembly in Frankfurt does parliamentary school-exercises and lets the governments act. Supposing that this learned council succeeds after the maturest deliberations in figuring out the best agenda and the best constitution, what were the good of the best agenda and the best constitution if in the meantime the governments put the bayonet on the agenda?³³

This course was driven home as the *NRZ* analyzed the Assembly debates.³⁴ If the Assembly declined to take over all the powers of the state, if in particular it was even deprived of the right to exercise control over the executive through its commissions of inquiry, then this amounted to "a renunciation of the sovereignty of the people."³⁵ The issue of the deputies' immunity from arrest by the government was one very concrete aspect of the question of sovereignty: the *NRZ* campaigned for full and unabridged immunity with no loopholes.³⁶

But in fact, instead of the Assembly's taking over executive power, it was the governmental power that used every means to strengthen itself. Marx used the Militia Bill as an example: the idea of a popular militia was converted into a plan for a bureaucratic force.

Prussian perspicacity has nosed out that every new constitutional institution offers a most interesting occasion for new penal laws, new regulations, new disciplinary measures, new surveillance, new chicanery, and a new bureaucracy.³⁷

This reflects a leitmotiv of Marx's attitude toward the problems of democratization: minimization of the executive power, the state bureaucracy—maximization of the weight in the governmental structure of the representative system. And not only in the period of revolution.

5. ANALYSIS OF A CONSTITUTION

It was in the decade following the defeat of the 1848-1849 revolutions that Marx wrote most extensively on specific problems of constitutional democratic forms. What emerged particularly was this principle: one of the chief marks of a truly democratic constitution was the degree to which it *limited and restrained the independent scope of the executive power*.

This follows naturally from the view that democracy is genuine insofar as it means popular control from below. Let us see how the point is made in a number of rather detailed criticisms which Marx made of particular constitutions.

The first such constitutional analysis by Marx, written in 1851, dealt with "The Constitution of the French Republic Adopted November 4, 1848."* The main fraud in this constitution, repeatedly pointed out by Marx, is that it leaves room for its alleged democratic guarantees to be nullified by subsequent laws put through by the governmental power.

Here is his first example of the type of provision which pretends to establish a democratic right but vitiates itself by allowing for "exceptions made by law":

* This article was written by Marx for Ernest Jones's paper as part of a series on "The Constitutions of Europe." It is therefore very specifically concerned with the exact provisions of the document, thus providing a supplement to the broader political analysis of this constitution which Marx had written the year before, in his *Class Struggles in France*.³⁸ A year later, Marx, reviewing the same history in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, included the constitutional points too, as discussed below.

°°“Sec. 3. The residence of every one on French territory is inviolable—and it is not allowed to enter it otherwise than in the forms prescribed by law.”

Observe here and throughout that the French constitution guarantees liberty, but always with the proviso of *exceptions made by law*, or which may STILL BE MADE!³⁹

Another provision ensures freedom of association, opinion, press, and so on, but adds, “The enjoyment of these rights has no other limit, than the equal rights of others, and the public safety.” Marx points to the last phrase as the joker: “That the limitation made by the public safety, takes away the enjoyment of the right altogether, is clearly shewn by the following facts. . . .” Marx then cites what actually happened in France.

Again, the constitution says “The right of tuition is free.” Marx comments: “Here the old joke is repeated. ‘Tuition is free,’ but ‘under the conditions fixed by law,’ and these are precisely the conditions that take away the freedom altogether.”⁴⁰

And so on. Marx sums up the character of this constitution:

. . . from beginning to end it is a mass of fine words, hiding a most treacherous design. From its very wording, it is rendered *impossible* to violate it, for every one of its provisions contains its own antithesis—utterly nullifies itself. For instance: “the vote is direct and universal,”—“*excepting* those cases which the *law* shall determine.”

The repeated formula is that this or that freedom shall be determined by an “organic law” to be adopted—“and these ‘organic laws’ ‘determine’ the promised freedom by destroying it.”⁴¹

The following year Marx incorporated the substance of this review of the French constitutional device in his *Eighteenth Brumaire*. After making the point and giving some examples, Marx writes that the “organic laws” regulated all the liberties granted “in such manner that the bourgeoisie in its enjoyment of them finds itself unhindered by the equal rights of the other classes.” For anything that contravenes its own safety is obviously not “in the interest of public safety.”

In the sequel, both sides accordingly appeal with complete justice to the Constitution: the friends of order, who abrogated all these liberties, as well as the democrats, who demanded all of them. For each paragraph of the Constitution contains its own anti-

thesis, its own Upper and Lower House, namely, liberty in the general phrase, abrogation of liberty in the marginal note. Thus, so long as the *name* of freedom was respected and only its actual realization prevented, of course in a legal way, the constitutional existence of liberty remained intact, inviolate, however mortal the blows dealt to its existence *in actual life*.⁴²

In the 1851 article, Marx also included a powerful denunciation of another device by which the government bureaucracy exercised de facto control over the liberties of the individual regardless of constitutional or other facades. This device is the internal passport and "labor book."

^{oo}The excess of despotism reached in France will be apparent by the following regulations as to working men.

Every working man is supplied with a book by the police—the first page of which contains his name, age, birthplace, trade or calling, and a description of his person. He is therein obliged to enter the name of the master for whom he works, and the reasons why he leaves him. But this is not all: the book is placed in the master's hands, and deposited by him in the bureau of the police with the character of the man by the master. When a workman leaves his employment, he must go and fetch this book from the police office; and is not allowed to obtain another situation without producing it. Thus the workman's bread is utterly dependent on the police. But this again, is not all: this book serves the purpose of a passport. If he is obnoxious, the police write "bon pour retourner chez lui" in it, and the workman is obliged to return to his parish! No comment is needed on this terrific revelation! Let the reader picture to himself its full working, and trace it to its actual consequences. No serfdom of the feudal ages—no pariahdom of India has its parallel. What wonder if the French people pant for the hour of insurrection. What wonder if their indignation takes the aspect of a storm.⁴³

Twenty years later Marx denounced the use of the same system by the Versailles government; one of his counts against the police state methods of the Thiers regime was "The reintroduction of passports for traveling from one place to another."⁴⁴ In both cases the French government used the internal passport system for population control in the wake of a revolutionary upsurge.

6. MINIMIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER

In 1853 Marx analyzed the provisions in the new draft constitutions for Schleswig and Holstein, noting their undemocratic character. In addition, he notes that one of the "most remarkable paragraphs . . . deprives the courts of law of their ancient right of canceling administrative decrees. . . ." ⁴⁵

Such provisions are bad because it is the "power of the bureaucracy" which has to be kept down: this is also spelled out in Marx's analysis, written in 1858, of the Prussian constitution of 1850. Once again he sees constitutional rights nullified by the freedom of action accorded to the executive power:

°°The question of ministerial responsibility possesses in Prussia, as it did in the France of Louis Philippe, an exceptional importance, because it means, in fact, the responsibility of bureaucracy. The ministers are the chiefs of that omnipotent, all-intermeddling parasite body, and to them alone, according to article 106 of the Constitution, have the subaltern members of the administration to look, without taking upon themselves to inquire into the legality of their ordinances, or incurring any responsibility by executing them. Thus, the power of the bureaucracy, and by the bureaucracy, of the executive, has been maintained intact, while the constitutional "Rights of the Prussians" have been reduced to a dead letter. ⁴⁶

The Prussian reality, writes Marx, shows the gulf between constitutional theory and actual practice:

°°Every step of yours, simple locomotion even, is tampered with by the omnipotent action of bureaucracy, this second providence of genuine Prussian growth. You can neither live nor die, nor marry, nor write letters, nor think, nor print, nor take to business, nor teach, nor be taught, nor get up a meeting, nor build a manufactory, nor emigrate, nor do any thing without "*obrigkeitliche Erlaubnis*"—permission on the part of the authorities. As to the liberty of science or religion, or abolition of patrimonial jurisdiction, or suppression of caste privileges, or the doing away with entails and primogeniture, it is all mere bosh.

Marx explains why this is so in the same way as he explained the self-vitiation of the French constitution of 1848: all the liberties are granted only within "the limits of the law," which in this case means the absolutist law predating the constitution.

Thus there exists a deadly antagonism between the law of the Constitution and the constitution of the law, the latter reducing, in fact, the former to mere moonshine. On the other hand, the Charter in the most decisive points refers to organic laws. . . . They [the organic laws now adopted] have done away with guaranties even existing at the worst times of the absolute monarchy, with the independence, for instance, of the Judges of the executive Government. Not content with these combined dissolvents, the old and the new-fangled laws, the Charter preserves to the King the right of suspending it in all its political bearings, whenever he may think proper.⁴⁷

This is the second time that we have seen Marx upholding the independence of the courts against the executive power. It is clear, however, that this is only one aspect of his advocacy of every possible means of minimizing the autonomous power of the executive. In 1859 Marx wrote an analysis of the Hessian constitution of 1831 which praised it as "the most liberal fundamental law ever proclaimed in Europe," except for its undemocratic method of electing representatives. Naturally, this praise was relative to the times; but what stirred this enthusiastic description?

°°There is no other Constitution which restrains the powers of the executive within limits so narrow, makes the Administration more dependent on the Legislature, and confides such a supreme control to the judicial benches.⁴⁸

The article spells out the detailed reasons for this tribute, including the fact that "the Courts of law, empowered to decide definitively upon all the acts of the Executive, were rendered omnipotent." The courts also have the final say "in all questions of bureaucratic discipline." The representatives can remove any minister declared guilty of misinterpreting its resolutions; the Prince's "right of grace" is shorn, and also his control over members of the administration. "The Representative Chamber selects out of its members a permanent committee, forming a sort of Areopagus, watching and controlling the Government, and impeaching the officials for violation of the Constitution, no

exception being granted on behalf of orders received by subalterns from their superiors in rank. In this way, the members of the bureaucracy were emancipated from the Crown." Military officers are similarly bound to the Constitution, not to the Crown. "The representation, consisting of one single Chamber, possesses the right of stopping all taxes, imposts and duties, on every conflict with the executive." Later, mentions Marx, the revolution of 1848-1849 democratized the election forms and made two other improvements. Both of the latter were likewise directed against the power of the executive: "by putting the nomination of the members of the Supreme Court into the hands of the legislature, and, lastly, by taking out of the hands of the Prince the supreme control of the army, and making it over to the Minister of War, a personage responsible to the representatives of the people."

In the same article Marx points to another democratic feature of this constitution: "Communal councillors, nominated by popular election, had to administer not only the local, but also the general police." Over a decade later, Marx pointed to the Paris Commune's system of community control of the police as a democratic achievement.⁴⁹ In general, Marx's views on the minimization, or thorough subordination, of the executive power reached fullest expression in his analysis of the Paris Commune, which will be taken up in a later volume.

7. SAFETY VALVES FOR THE BOURGEOISIE

Comments on various aspects of democratic rights are, of course, scattered through the later writings of Marx and Engels, though not the subject of any systematic work. Examples of aspects not yet mentioned may have some interest:

1. *Freedom of opinion.* Discussing the Bonapartization of France in 1851, even before the coup d'état, Marx commented that the very last straw was the 1850 law that restored censorship of the drama. "Thus freedom of opinion was banished from its last literary refuge."⁵⁰

2. *Restrictions on voter eligibility.* In the same connection—the antidemocratic swing in France after the 1848 defeat—Marx noted two infringements dealing with voting limitations. The law of May 31, 1850, not only excluded political offenders "but it actually established domi-

ciliary restrictions, by which TWO-THIRDS of the French people are incapable of voting!" A little further there is a related point: "By the law of August 7, 1848, all those who cannot read and write are erased from the jury list, thus disqualifying two-thirds of the adult population!"⁵¹

In his article on the Schleswig and Holstein constitutions, Marx also noted a related question: among the undemocratic restrictions is the provision "making the right of election dependent on the holding of landed property, and limiting its exercise by the condition of 'domicile' in the respective electoral districts."⁵² In his already mentioned article on the Prussian constitution of 1850, he remarked that although it allows payment of deputies and voting rights from the age of twenty-five, "The electoral rights, however, and the machinery of election, have been managed in such a way as to exclude not only the bulk of the people, but to subject the privileged remnant to the most unbridled bureaucratic interference. There are two degrees of election."⁵³

3. *Gerrymandering*. The "unbridled bureaucratic interference" in the Prussian electoral system included more than the complicated system of grouping voters by the amount of tax paid, and so on.

°°As if this complicated process of filtering was not sufficient, the bureaucracy has, moreover, the right to divide, combine, change, separate and recompose the electoral districts at pleasure. Thus, for instance, if there exists a town suspected of liberal sympathies, it may be swamped by reactionary country votes, the Minister, by simple ordinance, blending the liberal town with the reactionary country into the same electoral district.

Marx concludes: "Such are the fetters which shackle the electoral movement, and which, only in the great cities, can exceptionally be broken through."⁵⁴

4. *Unicameralism*. In general, Marx was for a single representative assembly, not the bicameral system devised to check the exuberance of popular sovereignty. In his article on the Hessian constitution, he noted approvingly that "The representation, consisting of one single chamber, possesses the right of stopping all taxes, imposts and duties, on every conflict with the executive."⁵⁵

5. *Right to demonstrate*. The following case in point has a special interest. In 1872 a Hyde Park demonstration was organized by Irish

members of the International, to demand a general amnesty. But at the last session of Parliament the government had put through a law regulating public meetings in parks: it required two days' prior notification to the police, including the speakers' names. Engels wrote:

This regulation carefully kept hidden from the London press destroyed with one stroke of the pen one of the most precious rights of London's working people—the right to hold meetings in parks when and how they please. To submit to this regulation would be to sacrifice one of the people's rights.

The Irish, who represent the most revolutionary element of the population, were not men to display such weakness. The committee unanimously decided to act as if it did not know of the existence of this regulation and to hold their meeting in defiance of the Government's decree.⁵⁶

The police decided not to intervene after all.

6. *The informer system.* The use of informers, spies, and stool pigeons (*mouchards* in French and also in Marx and Engels most of the time) was, of course, the common instrument of the governments and a constant plague in the radical and labor movements. Here, however, is an important variant.

The Austrian commander in Milan, after suppressing an insurrection, decreed that anyone who failed to denounce another's illegal act was himself guilty. Marx reported this bitterly:

°°Whoever will not become a spy and informer for the Hapsburg shall be liable to become the lawful prey of the Croats [Austrian troops]. In a word, Radetsky proclaims a new system of whole-sale plunder.⁵⁷

7. *Freedom in wartime.* After the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, Bebel and Liebknecht were arrested by the Bismarck government on charges of high treason,

°°simply because they dared to fulfil their duties as German national representatives, *viz.* to protest in the Reichstag against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, vote against new war subsidies, express their sympathy with the French Republic, and denounce the attempt at the conversion of Germany into one Prussian barrack.

So Marx, in a protest published in the London press. His letters also

described the governmental repression of other antiwar socialists, and added:

The few independent German journals existing outside Prussia are forbidden admission into the Hohenzollern estates. German workmen's meetings in favour of a peace honourable for France are daily dispersed by the police. According to the official Prussian doctrine . . . every German "trying to counteract the prospective aims of the Prussian warfare in France," is guilty of high treason.⁵⁸

He compares the liberty existing in France (where the Empire had just been overthrown—it is the interlude between Sedan and the Paris Commune):

The French soil is infested by about a million German invaders. Yet the French Government can safely dispense with that Prussian method of "rendering possible the free expression of opinion." Look at this picture and at that!⁵⁹

In truth, the French republican government could hardly do otherwise; it had come into being through a mass upsurge in the streets after Sedan, and a revolution loomed before it. Revolutionary pressures ensured its democratic distinction from Prussianism.

In England, pressure against freedom in wartime was political. During the Crimean war, John Bright accused the government of undermining "the Parliamentary system of this country" by its intolerance of criticism. Marx commented:

°°It may be asked of what use this system is? Domestic questions must not be agitated because the country is at war. Because the country is at war, war must not be discussed. Then why remains Parliament? Old [William] Cobbett has revealed the secret. As a safety-valve for the effervescing passions of the country.⁶⁰

It could be put more generally: for bourgeois democracy, not only a parliament but the whole structure of democratic rights and institutions was, in good part, "a safety valve for the effervescing passions of the country." Or, as we put it in another connection in the previous chapter, it was used as a means of containing popular pressures, not expressing them.

8. THE "DEMOCRATIC SWINDLE"

As in the case of most political problems, it is not possible to extract from Marx's and Engels' writings a systematic account of what Marx called "the democratic swindle"—the methods whereby the bourgeoisie utilized (used and abused) democratic forms for the purpose of stabilizing its socioeconomic rule; besides the present and preceding chapters, aspects of the subject will emerge subsequently. But a couple of basic points may be made here.

The "democratic swindle" was a swindle not insofar as it was democratic but, on the contrary, insofar as it utilized democratic forms to frustrate genuine democratic control from below. The phrase itself comes from a reference by Marx to the country which, he well understood, was the *most* democratic in constitutional form at this time: the United States. It was, indeed, "the model country of the democratic swindle"⁶¹ not because it was less democratic than others but for precisely the opposite reason. It is to be distinguished from the case of demagogic Bonapartism, with "its real despotism and its mock democracy."⁶² The fact that the United States had developed the formal structure of the constitutional republic in the most democratic forms meant that its bourgeoisie likewise had to develop to its highest point the art of keeping the expression of popular opinion within channels satisfactory to its class interests.

In Marx's time there was no problem about putting the finger on the main method of this enterprise: the system of rank political corruption mentioned in the preceding chapter. As long as it was possible to work it, within the cadre of a country that was expanding economically and geographically, social explosions could be avoided. The expense was worthwhile to gain "a safety valve for the effervescing passions of the country."

The expense of buying up public opinion, however, should not be confused with the expensiveness on a social scale of a democratic structure as against an authoritarian one. Other things being equal, a democratic state form is cheaper to operate than a despotism; as long as it is possible, it is a bargain for a ruling class interested in keeping down overhead costs. This is true not only in terms of hard cash outlay (necessary for any swollen state apparatus) but also in terms of intan-

gibles, such as the willing interest of the mass of the population in cooperating in their own exploitation. Marx pointed to the difference in his polemic against the liberal Heinzen:

The monarchy involves great expense. No doubt. Just take a look at government finances in North America and compare them with what our thirty-eight duodecimo fatherlands [the German states] have to pay for being administered and kept under discipline!⁶³

In England the main representatives of the bourgeoisie in politics aim ideally at bargain-rate government, and therefore

°°to these champions of the British Bourgeoisie, to the men of the Manchester School, every institution of Old England appears in the light of a piece of machinery as costly as it is useless, and which fulfills no other purpose but to prevent the nation from producing the greatest possible quantity at the least possible expense, and to exchange its product in freedom. Necessarily, their last word is the Bourgeois Republic, in which free competition rules supreme in all spheres of life; in which there remains altogether that *minimum* only of government which is indispensable for the administration, internally and externally, of the common class interest and business of the Bourgeoisie; and where this minimum of government is as soberly, as economically organized as possible. Such a party, in other countries, would be called *democratic*.⁶⁴

Time and again Marx or Engels analyzed bourgeois-democratic politics as an exercise in convincing a maximum of the people that they were participating in state power, by means of a minimum of concessions to democratic forms. On the eve of the 1848 revolution—the preceding November, to be exact—Engels took up the programmatic manifesto issued by Lamartine, the poet-politician who headed the moderate republican party.

°°What, then, is the meaning of the political measures proposed by M. de Lamartine? To give the government into the hands of the inferior *bourgeoisie*, but under the semblance of giving it to the whole people (this, and nothing else, is the meaning of his universal suffrage, with his double system of elections).⁶⁵

The century saw a plethora of clever electoral systems devised to insert a manipulative factor into the forms of a more or less universal

suffrage, beginning with the American constitution. As Engels indicated in the case of Lamartine, the mechanisms were calibrated to achieve a single type of effect: *How far down in the social scale, in the hands of what class or class stratum, was political power expected to reside?* This was the link between the class struggle and often technical-sounding questions of constitutional forms; that is, between a political program in the narrow sense and a social program. A movement that aimed to place political power in the hands of the working-class masses could afford to press for complete democratization with no twists.

9. TOWARD THE SOCIALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY

Lamartine, wrote Engels, might be able to inspire poets and philosophers with enthusiasm for "his system of graduated election, poor rate, and philanthropic charity," but not the people.

The principles, indeed, of social and political regeneration have been found fifty years ago. Universal suffrage, direct election, paid representation—these are the essential conditions of political sovereignty. . . . What we want, is not English middle-class expediency, but quite a new system of social economy, to realize the right and satisfy the wants of all.⁶⁶

This was published in a Chartist paper and written for the eyes of Chartist workers, who were indeed already battling for what was then the political program of the democratic extremists. But Engels' friends in the left wing of Chartism, Harney and Jones above all, were fighting for "the Charter and Something Else," that is, for the extension of the democratic idea to a social program. Harney himself had written Engels his opinion that "henceforth mere Chartism will not do; ultra-democracy, social as well as political, will be the object of our propaganda."⁶⁷ This, of course, had been what Engels had also urged since his arrival in England. As we have seen,⁶⁸ he began by counterposing communism *against* democracy, in the wake of Proudhon and Weitling. By 1844 he had corrected this to advocating going over from mere political democracy to a more basic social transformation.

In an 1844 article that Engels wrote for a German paper in Paris, he

analyzed the constitutional forms of British democracy in this spirit.* Conceding that "England is undoubtedly the freest, that is, the least unfree country in the world, North America not excepted," he undertook an examination of the methods and forms of the political system "on purely empirical lines," to show how the structure is designed toward "making concessions merely in order to preserve this derelict structure as long as possible," and maintaining the rule of the middle class in partnership with the progressive-minded aristocracy.⁶⁹ Since the representative chamber, the House of Commons, wielded all power (he thought), it followed that "England should be a pure democracy, if only the democratic element itself were really democratic." It is the latter condition that he subjects to detailed analysis, measuring constitutional and formal pretensions against the empirical facts of class power. His conclusion is that "The Englishman is not free because of the law, but despite the law, if he can be considered free at all,"⁷⁰ for it is the constant threat from below that ensures the recognition of democratic rights in practice.

It is, he argues, likewise the struggle of classes that will move matters still further:

The struggle is already on. The constitution has been shaken in its foundations. How things will turn out in the near future can be seen from what has been said. The new alien elements in the constitution are of a democratic nature; public opinion too, as time will show, develops in accordance with the democratic side; England's near future is democracy.

But what a democracy! Not that of the French Revolution, whose antithesis was the monarchy and feudalism, but that democracy whose antithesis is the middle class and property. This is evident from the entire preceding development. The middle class and property are in power; the poor man is bereft of rights, oppressed and sweated; the constitution disowns him, the law maltreats him; the struggle of democracy against the aristocracy in England is the struggle of the poor against the rich. The democracy which England is heading for is a *social* democracy.

But mere democracy is unable to remedy social evils. Democratic equality is a chimera, the struggle of the poor against the

* This was *before* Engels teamed up with Marx, and while he was still denouncing "all state forms" in principle, in anarchoid language which can be found in the same article. The contradiction is striking.

rich cannot be fought on the ground of democracy or politics in general. Hence this stage too is only a transition, the last purely political measure that still is to be tried and from which a new element must immediately develop, a principle transcending everything political.

This principle is the principle of socialism.⁷¹

"Mere democracy" is *merely political* democracy, democracy that stops with governmental forms and does not extend to the social question, to the democratization of socioeconomic life.

In sum: Marx and Engels always saw the two sides of the complex of democratic institutions and rights which arose under bourgeois democracy. The two sides corresponded to the two classes which fought it out within this framework. One side was the utilization of democratic forms as a cheap and versatile means of keeping the exploited masses from shaking the system, of providing the illusion of participation in the state while the economic sway of the ruling class ensured the real centers of power. This was the side of the "democratic swindle." The other side was the struggle to give the democratic forms a new *social* (class) content, above all by pushing them to the democratic extreme of popular control from below, which in turn entailed extending the application of democratic forms out of the merely political sphere into the organization of the whole society.

In any case, the key was popular control from below. This phrase was best translated by Marx in a comment on a slippery slogan, the Lassalleian catchword of a "free state." Taking it literally, Marx replied that we do not want a *state* that is free, but rather a state that is completely subordinate to society.

Free state—what is this?

It is by no means the aim of the workers, who have got rid of the narrow mentality of humble subjects, to set the state free. In the [Bismarckian] German Empire the "state" is almost as "free" as in Russia. Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it, and today, too, the forms of state are more or less free to the extent that they restrict the "freedom of the state."⁷²

This proposes a basic test for, and measure of, freedom in the sense of popular control from below, and it applies equally before and after the social revolution.

14 | THE TENDENCY TOWARD STATE AUTONOMY

It follows from the preceding chapter that in Marx's view democratic forms are both an instrument and a danger for the bourgeoisie. They shift from one to the other depending on the course of social struggles taking place under those state forms.

Whenever democratic forms become inconvenient for ruling-class hegemony, making the state institutions of the status quo precarious, there is a tendency for the ruling class to sanction a shift to more authoritarian and despotic forms. The film of bourgeois development unwinds in a reverse direction: the freedoms that the liberal bourgeoisie once demanded are cut back; popular institutions are doctored so as to interpose a maximum of impediments between the institutions and popular pressures from below. Democracy so-called becomes less and less a "massy" institution (to use the Bauerite term which Marx made so much of in *The Holy Family*) and more and more a complex of sifting-screens to filter out popular elements and substitute devices of control from above; until, finally, if the term *democracy* is retained at all, popular elements are redefined out of it, and it is converted into a technical term for an authoritarianism purporting to serve the people whether they wish to be served up or not.

Structurally, the most prominent feature of this transmogrification is likewise a return to a prebourgeois pattern, though in new forms: *the tendency toward a shift back to the dominance of the executive and its bureaucracy.*

This tendency has two interrelated sides, which stimulate each other: (1) the autonomy of the executive *within* the state, with respect to the other departments of the state; and (2) the autonomy of the

state with respect to the rest of society, including the ruling class.*

This process first came under Marx's close scrutiny as a result of the political developments initiated by the victory of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in France, leading to the establishment of the Second Empire, with Bonaparte crowned as Napoleon III. This original "Bonapartism" forms the subject of the next chapter. In this chapter we present some preliminary considerations which will facilitate an understanding of what is to come.

1. HYPERTROPHY OF THE EXECUTIVE

If, as we saw in the previous chapter, Marx laid great stress on combating the sway of the executive governmental apparatus in society, and minimizing its power, he was led to this emphasis by the ever-present tendency of the executive to extend its authority over all other organs of society, and to enlarge itself.

The tendency toward the hypertrophy of the bureaucracy was not discovered by the humorist Parkinson but was already a platitude in Marx's day, and for Marx. In an article on "The Government of India," Marx expatiated on the proliferation of the English bureaucratic apparatus in a particular case. We omit here his preliminary description of how the seven veils of the governmental structure supposedly governing India were intertwined with the financiers of the East India Company, how both were dominated by money-grubbing corruption, and how the company's Court of Directors was itself "nothing but a *succursale* to [a

* We use the word *autonomy* here because we have already used *independence* in Chapter 11 for a different idea, which must be kept distinct. In discussing the origin of the state, we followed Engels and spoke of the fact that the prestate institutions (protopolitical authorities) became independent, or apparently independent, of society as a whole; they escaped from the control of society as a whole precisely in order to come under the control of a section of society only.¹ This independence of the state vis-à-vis society was equivalent to its dependence on the ruling-class section of society. It is in this sense that Engels wrote, "Hardly come into being, this organ [the state power] makes itself independent vis-à-vis society; and, indeed, the more so, the more it becomes the organ of a particular class, the more it directly enforces the supremacy of that class."² But now we will be concerned with a different phenomenon: the degree to which the state is capable of cutting loose from, or loosening its dependence on, *every* other section of society including those that are or have been dominant economically.

branch of] the English moneyocracy.”³ But not even the directors were competent to carry on the actual work of governing:

°°Who, then, govern in fact under the name of the Direction? A large staff of irresponsible secretaries, examiners, and clerks at the India House, of whom . . . only one individual has ever been in India, and he only by accident. Apart from the trade in patronage, it is therefore a mere fiction to speak of the politics, the principles, and the system of the Court of Directors. The real Court of Directors and the real Home Government, &c., of India are the permanent and irresponsible *bureaucracy*, “the creatures of the desk and the creatures of favor” residing in Leadenhall St. [location of the company]. We have thus a Corporation ruling over an immense Empire, not formed, as in Venice, by eminent patricians, but by old obstinate clerks, and the like odd fellows.

This bureaucratization of the state in a civil service later became, for Webbian Fabianism, the revelation of a new socialist road to power; for Marx, it is evidence of how the bureaucratized state machine takes on a life of its own, alien to the people. One result is the well-known propensity to produce paper: the East India Company naturally had a system of reports by its managers, but

When the factories grew into an Empire, the commercial items into ship loads of correspondence and documents, the Leadenhall clerks went on in their system, which made the Directors and the Board their dependents; and they succeeded in transforming the Indian Government into one immense writing machine.

Another result was sheer time-killing inefficiency and swollen expenditures. For another, Marx quotes Burke, a meeting of minds that deserves to be recorded here:

The close and abject spirit of this bureaucracy deserves to be stigmatised in the celebrated words of Burke:

“This tribe of vulgar politicians are the lowest of our species. There is no trade so vile and mechanical as Government in their hands. Virtue is not their habit. They are out of themselves in any course of conduct recommended only by conscience and glory. A large, liberal and prospective view of the interests of States passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it, for the wanderings of disordered imagination. The calculators compute them out of everything grand and elevated. Littleness in object and in means to them appears soundness and sobriety.”

And besides the costly upkeep of the bureaucratic establishment,

The oligarchy involves India in wars, in order to find employment for their younger sons; the moneyocracy consigns it to the highest bidder; and a subordinate Bureaucracy paralyse its administration and perpetuate its abuses as the vital condition of their own perpetuation.⁴

2. AUTONOMIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE

But more important, if less entertaining, than bureaucratic proliferation was the threat of bureaucratic encroachment on popular representation, that is, of the dominance of the executive power over the legislative.*

Marx and Engels formed their political ideas in a milieu which saw the executive as the paramount enemy, for the executive meant the absolute monarchy and its bureaucracy, whereas the popular assembly, or the fight for it, represented the potentialities of the future control from below, which meant democracy. But having gained this insight with the help of Prussian conditions, they found no reason to make any essential change under conditions of bourgeois democracy. We saw in the previous chapter that their view was, as it were, "*all power to the popular representation*" as against the executive authority, and that, in terms of forms, they implemented this by advocating that the executive agency be derived directly out of the membership of the representative assembly and immediately subject to its control.

This position they maintained not only against the opposite extreme of "all power to the executive" (bureaucratic absolutism) but also against the liberal *juste milieu* of the "separation of powers" doctrine made famous by Montesquieu and taken up by most bourgeois-democratic constitutionalists. The contemporary function of this doctrine was plain enough. To the old regime and its ruling class, whose

* To be sure, at bottom the first is often an aspect of the second; for as the bureaucracy swells, more and more of the real business of the state is concealed in its interstices, instead of being subject to legislative control and popular scrutiny. This only underlines that it is the second threat which is basic from the Marxist standpoint. From the bourgeois standpoint it is the expensiveness of bureaucratization which is objectionable in itself; the antipopular effect is seen as a more tolerable evil or a positive boon.

grasp on the state power was still eager though failing, it said: "Compromise, please; we are not asking for everything, we will share power with you." The first significance of the separation of powers was the dividing up of state power between classes.

This was the point made by Marx in *The German Ideology*. In the important passage which begins with the proposition that "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas," the first example given is this:

For instance, in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy and bourgeoisie are contending for mastery and where, therefore, mastery is shared, the doctrine of the separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an "eternal law."⁵

It was this kind of deal (*Vereinbarung*) between the Crown and the bourgeoisie that the Frankfurt National Assembly sought in the 1848 revolution, a goal that Marx made the central target of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s denunciations against the fainthearted liberals who refused to demand all power for the people's representatives. Here the separation of powers, with its accompanying checks and balances, would have meant that the old regime kept its base in the governmental machinery and bureaucracy while the bourgeoisie gained a bridgehead in the form of a representative assembly; in this separation of powers, the former would wield the executive power, that is, the real power, while the latter would be separated from power as a legislative talking-shop.

The issue came up explicitly when Interior Minister Kühlwetter argued that the Assembly had no right to set up an investigatory commission with real powers, because of the separation of powers doctrine. In reply, Engels pointed out that the minister could hardly appeal to a constitutional principle which did not exist as yet, since there was no constitution. But beyond this debating level, his article implied a view of the doctrine more superficial than Marx's:

The separation of powers, which Herr Kühlwetter and other great political philosophers regard with the deepest reverence as a sacred and inviolable principle, is at bottom nothing but the mundane division of labor in industry applied to the mechanism of the state for the purpose of simplification and control. Like all other sacred, eternal, and inviolable principles, it is applied only to the extent conformable to existing circumstances.⁶

This approach agrees with Marx's in regarding the separation of powers as a doctrine with limited historical applicability, but otherwise it is quite different. If the separation of powers is a form of the division of labor, then the necessity for it is technical, not class-ideological. Its only drawback is that it has to give way to immediate revolutionary considerations: "the revolutionary provisional situation consists precisely in the fact that the separation of powers is provisionally *abolished*, that the legislative authority temporarily usurps the executive power or the executive authority the legislative power."⁷

However, this reply to Kühlwetter, written one day for a daily newspaper in the midst of hectic times, is mainly interesting as an example of the difficulty of thinking through state theory in a hurry. It was Marx's view that the abolition of the separation of powers, far from being a temporary or provisional expedient, was a basic necessity of a truly democratic government. He reiterated this view in his 1851 article on the French constitution, after quoting its statement that "the division of powers is the primary condition of a free government."

Here we have the old constitutional folly. The condition of a "free government" is not the *division* but the UNITY of power. The machinery of government cannot be too simple. It is always the craft of knaves to make it complicated and mysterious.⁸

This viewpoint is put more strongly in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, which again attacks the constitution's built-in cleavage between the legislative power and the executive power, as a device to free the executive from effective popular control.

Marx points accusingly at "The *play of the constitutional powers*, as Guizot termed the parliamentary squabble between the legislative and executive power" in the constitution. "On one side are 750 representatives of the people, elected by universal suffrage," forming "a National Assembly that enjoys legislative omnipotence" in theory. "On the other side is the President, with all the attributes of royal power . . . with all the resources of the executive in his hands . . . all posts . . . officials and officers . . . the armed forces," and so on. Moreover, each legislator is elected by this or that splinter of the people, whereas the President is elected directly from the people as a whole: "*he* is the elect of the nation and the act of his election is the trump that the sovereign people plays once every four years," says Marx ironically. Thus "the Constitution here abrogates itself once more by having the President elected by

all Frenchmen through direct suffrage." For this means the President is not responsible to the elected representatives of the people but to a metaphysical "national spirit"—the one which takes on a body only one day every four years. In effect, then, "the Constitution assigns actual power to the President," to the executive power which holds the state machine in its own hands while the National Assembly talks.⁹

The "unity of power," in Marx's view, had to reside in the representative assembly, which would directly control both the legislative and executive powers, the latter being derived from its own body rather than constitutionally established as a separate body confronting it. When the Paris Commune took this course, Marx hailed it as one of the forms of government needed by a workers' republic: the representative assembly called the Commune "was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."¹⁰ The judiciary, whose complete independence from the *executive* had been hailed by Marx in the 1850s,¹¹ "were to be divested [by the Commune] of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subservience to all succeeding governments," and were to become truly independent by being made "elective, responsible, and revocable."¹² It should be noted, then, that the judicial function was *not* to be subordinated to the representative assembly; in this respect Marx did recognize a separation of powers in a certain form, if that term is insisted on.

It was, then, not the separation of powers in the abstract that constituted the main danger, but rather the over-large and independent role which this doctrine assigned to the executive and its bureaucracy. *Voilà l'ennemi!*

However, the degree to which the bureaucracy assumes an independent and even sacrosanct position may vary under different national conditions. During the revolution of 1848–1849 Marx had occasion to attack the Prussian legal system before a jury; he argued that even the "Napoleonic despotism" that emerged from the French Revolution was "poles apart from the patriarchal-schoolmasterish despotism of Prussian law," in this respect. The French variety gave special status to an official only while executing his official duties, but

Prussian despotism, on the contrary, confronts me with an official who is a superior, sanctified being. His character as an official is interwoven into him like consecration in a Catholic priest. The Prussian official always remains a priest for the Prussian layman, that is, the nonofficial. Offending such a priest—even one who is

not exercising his post, who is away from home, who has retired into private life—remains a religious profanation, a desecration. The higher the official, the more serious the profanation. The highest offense against the state-priest is therefore against the king, lèse-majesté. . . .¹³

The “state-priest” pattern represents a higher degree of bureaucratic autonomization, of the elevation of the bureaucracy as a stratum out of and above civil society.

3. THE STATE AS CALIBAN

Insofar as the autonomization of the executive goes forward, insofar as the executive frees itself from vestigial control by a representative assembly, it also becomes freer to assert its autonomy from any other arm of society; and conversely, insofar as the state moves toward autonomy in society at large, it will also tend to exalt and fortify the executive as the organ of autonomization. For in spite of what is taught in civics classes, the executive is not just another department of the government: it is typically the operative heart of the state, directly controlling the repressive forces of political power.

But does not the Marxian formula in the *Communist Manifesto* assert that the state is but the executive committee of the ruling class, or, more accurately, that “The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie”?* If so, can one speak of the autonomy of the state from the “whole bourgeoisie,” or in general, its autonomy from the ruling class or classes of society? And in that case, what does this autonomy mean? How far can it go?

This is precisely the question that Marx grappled with in his analysis

* For the *but* or *merely*, see the comment in Chapter 11, p. 257 fn. There is a revealing point to be made by noting that this sentence, as quoted above, is Engels’ edited version of 1888 (the Moore-Engels standard English translation). The original German did not refer specifically to the *executive* of the state; it said: “The modern state-power is but a committee [*Ausschuss*] which manages the common affairs of the whole bourgeois class.”¹⁴ By his change Engels put the emphasis on the executive: it is the executive which forms the “managing committee” while other state agencies are its arms.

of Bonapartism and allied phenomena. The reader must be warned that we are entering an area which is a favorite habitat of that mechanical or fossilized Marxism which has approximately the same relation to Marx himself as the Nicene Creed has to the Sermon on the Mount.

Our account of the rise of the state in Chapter 11 already shows that Marx and Engels did not make the state out to be merely an extrusion of the ruling class, its tool, puppet, or reflection in some simplistic, passive sense. Not *merely*, and certainly not *simply*, for the actuality can be complex indeed, as Marx's study of Bonapartism showed. Rather, the state arises from and expresses a real overall need for the organization of society*—a need which exists no matter what is the particular class structure. But as long as there is a ruling class in socioeconomic relations, it will utilize this need to shape and control the state along its own class lines.

The metaphor of tool, reflection, and so on may well be of use as a suggestive figure of speech, a first approximation, a pedagogical simplification, or a legitimate "forceful overstatement" or interpretative exaggeration.** But it is perhaps more enlightening to think of the state, in many cases, as the Caliban to the ruling class's Prospero. Caliban is "in service" to his master, as his slave, but nonetheless has his own independent aspirations, which he can give rein depending on Prospero's condition. He can look forward to tearing himself free from servitude, and meanwhile mouth insults against the power he submits to: "I must obey: his art is of such power. . . ." But still he mutters to himself: "A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!" And the bourgeoisie is equally suspicious and apprehensive of its "slave." Prospero introduces

. . . Caliban, my slave, who never
Yields us kind answer.

* As Marx wrote in an early article: "The *state* and the *organization of society* are not, from the *political* standpoint, *two* different things. The state is the organization of society."¹⁵ This was written before *The German Ideology*, hence before Marx integrated this thought with a class theory of the state; but the idea was not abandoned, it was incorporated.

** I am referring here to Richard Hofstadter's approval of "the soundness of [F. J.] Turner's instincts" in understanding that "if a new or heterodox idea is worth anything at all it is worth a forceful overstatement, and that this is one of the conditions of its being taken seriously"; and his agreement, touching both Turner and Charles Beard, that "a certain measure of exaggeration, especially among writers who have a new and heterodox thesis, is almost a necessity of interpretative historical argumentation. . . ."¹⁶

Miranda. 'Tis a villain, sir,
I do not love to look on.

Prospero. But, as 'tis,
We cannot miss him: he does make our fire,
Fetch in our wood; and serves in offices
That profit us.¹⁷

The ruling class "cannot miss" (cannot do without) its "slave," and the latter is bent to its profit. This is all the relationship that is necessary "as a rule" (to use Engels' qualification).

A relationship of this type, one of bilateral tension, is characteristic not only of the state but of all the superstructural elements of society, in Marx's mature view of historical dynamics. All these elements tend to take on a life of their own; that is, to manifest a certain amount of autonomy. With respect to the state "as a rule," the fullest exposition of this relationship was given by Engels in a letter right after a passage which we have already quoted in Chapter 11.¹⁸

And now things proceed in a way similar to that in commodity trade and later in money trade: the new independent power [the state], while having in the main to follow the movement of production, reacts in its turn, by virtue of its inherent relative independence—that is, the relative independence once transferred to it and gradually further developed—upon the conditions and course of production. It is the interaction of two unequal forces: on the one hand, the economic movement, on the other, the new political power, which strives for as much independence as possible, and which, having once been established, is endowed with a movement of its own. On the whole, the economic movement gets its way, but it has also to suffer reactions from the political movement which it itself established and endowed with relative independence,* from the movement of the state power, on the one hand, and of the opposition simultaneously engendered, on the other.²¹

* This, indeed, is exactly Prospero's complaint against Caliban: "I pitied thee, took pains to make thee speak. . . ." and so on; to which Caliban replies, like any grateful politician: "You taught me language; and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse: the red plague rid you, / For learning me your language!"¹⁹ There is much else that is relevant in this same letter of Engels', as well as others of his letters on the theory of historical materialism,²⁰ but we remind the reader that this question of historical theory is assumed to be antecedent to our discussion.

All this applies to "normal times," that is, periods of relatively stable social relations, historical events "as a rule." What *never* exists is the woodenheaded ideal of a constant one-to-one correspondence from moment to moment between the basic socioeconomic relations of society and the attendant political and ideological superstructure: otherwise any simpleton could be an infallible social analyst once he had memorized a few "Marxist" formulas.

When we leave normal times and deal with periods of rapid social change (whether revolutionary or retrogressive), we are bound to expect even greater dislocations between the changing socioeconomic base and the political-ideological superstructure. It is virtually a defining characteristic of such periods that all social relations become upset, volatile, fluid. Formulas that worked "as a rule" in stable times now become more variable approximations; it is necessary to go *behind* the formulas to keep close watch on the concrete patterns of change. What this means will be exhibited in the next chapter in connection with Marx's work *The Eighteenth Brumaire*.

4. THE POLITICAL INAPTITUDE OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS

So much for a general theoretical consideration, at this point. But this much applies across the board to historical change at large. The phenomenon of state autonomization arises also because of a specific characteristic peculiar to the capitalist class:

● *f all the ruling classes known to history, the membership of the capitalist class is least well adapted, and tends to be most averse, to taking direct charge of the operation of the state apparatus.* The key word is: *direct*. It is least suitable as a governing class, if we use this term in its British sense to denote not a socioeconomic ruling class but only the social circles from which the state machine tends to derive its personnel.

This characteristic of the bourgeoisie is not altogether new to our discussion. It is the political side of some features of the system that we have already had occasion to mention.

1. There is the fact that capitalism enjoys the deepest separation between its economic and political institutions. As early as 1843 Marx

was plainly struck by the change that had taken place from feudalism, where economic and political rule were systematically *fused* in the same personnel.²² As for the ancient slave states: a Roman patrician, to be sure, *could* retire to his estates and ignore political life if he chose, but normally membership in this ruling class entailed a felt obligation to participate in political life as well as an automatic status in the political system.

The capitalist class is different in this respect, basically because its mode of exploitation depends characteristically on the processes of the market, not on politics, which is ancillary and supportive. The capitalist needs a state that will give political backing to his economic activities, a Caliban that "serves in offices that profit us." But in his own activity as a *capitalist* he is concerned with nonpolitical preoccupations. In his capacity as a capitalist, he wants to make money, not run the government himself. He needs "free workers," as Marx explained, because he is not their lord, but only their boss; that is, his relationship of mastership is not directly political but economic.

It is this side of capitalism, transmuted into a one-sided ideology, that appears first as the *laissez-faire* illusion—"the best government is the least government"—and even reaches the rarefied extreme of "bourgeois anarchism." To be sure, *laissez-faire* never meant that the state's relationship to economics was to leave it alone; it merely meant that the state should remain as unobtrusive and unintruding as possible, also as inexpensive as possible, while the Invisible Hand of the market took care of the main operation; just as the campaign rhetoric of Republican candidates in the United States about "keeping government out of business" still reflects a very powerful aspect of the social psychology of the capitalist class, rooted in the nature of the system itself, which hangs on long after it is functionally obsolete.

2. Another characteristic of the capitalist class reinforces this tendency. Historically the capitalist class does not develop as a class of idlers but rather of very busy and hard-working men, working hard at exploiting the productive labor of others. "The industrial capitalist is a worker, compared to the money-capitalist, but a worker in the sense of capitalist, *i.e.* an exploiter of the labor of others," noted Marx.* The contrast

* Marx does not neglect to point out, naturally, that there is a difference between his work as a manager (which could be done by a salaried superintendent) and his work as a profit-making enterpriser (capitalist), arguing that "co-operative factories furnish proof" that he is redundant in the latter capacity just as he is replaceable in the former.²³

between the landowning nobility as an idle ruling class and the rising bourgeoisie as a productive class runs all through social thought in the transitional epoch of the bourgeois revolution, and is found very extensively in the non-Marxist socialist movements, from Saint-Simonism through Fabianism.

This very old and deep-rooted distinction between the "idlers" and the "producers" (the latter embracing both bourgeoisie and proletariat) reflects the peculiarity of capitalism which we are spotlighting. The capitalist class likes to boast of its closer involvement with the productive process and its greater detachment from the "political game," as justification for its existence. The exceptions which literally prove the rule are, in the United States, some long-established bourgeois families which have accumulated their wealth in previous generations and whose scions adopt "public service"—direct participation in state management—as a high-minded alternative to pure parasitism.

3. Still another built-in characteristic of capitalism, previously mentioned, minimizes the functioning of capitalists themselves as state administrators or managers. No other ruling class is so profusely criss-crossed internally with competing and conflicting interest groups, each at the other's throat—the dog-eat-dog pattern. Competing national groups (countries) are split by regional group interests, different industrial interests, antagonisms within an industry, rivalry between producers of consumers' and producers' goods, light and heavy industry, and so on, aside from religious, political, and other ideological differences. Internally, capitalism is a snake-pit. By comparison, the incessant feuding of medieval barons was a marshmallow-throwing contest, just as the doughty deeds of medieval warriors were tea-party gallantries compared with the conditions of modern war.

This exuberance of internal hostilities makes it more difficult for any individual capitalist to be trusted as executor for the class as a whole. For example: especially in critical times, concessions may have to be made to the class enemy below, the working classes. At whose expense? whose interests are to be shaved for the sacrifice? If an economic depression drives small businesses to the wall, how enthusiastic will representatives of big business become about saving them? If there are anti-imperialist threats against our capital abroad, how important is it to capitalist interests as a whole to save the investments of one corporation in Chile or Guatemala? So it goes.

All of these considerations underline the question, important for any

ruling class: who—which elements—can best be trusted with the direct levers of political power? Historically, a common answer has been: the most successful members of the ruling class. This answer works far less well for capitalism than for previous social systems. The special characteristics of capitalism put a premium on finding political leaders who can take, and stick to, an overall and farsighted view of the interests and needs of the system as a whole, rather than the shortsighted, close-up-blurred vision characteristic of the busy profit-seeker.

5. CONSEQUENCES FOR THE STATE

The consequences for the political history and patterns of capitalist society have been considerable.

1. To begin with, there arises a need for what is aptly called the professional politician. The bourgeoisie, individually and collectively, is accustomed to hiring whatever specialist services it needs, for a number of tasks: managers, engineers, professors, publicists, tax lawyers, journalists, etc. The professional politician is the specialist required to manage its common affairs through the state under the complications of bourgeois democracy.

It would be misleading and unjust to suggest that this is necessarily a cynical arrangement; on the contrary, professional politicians who are merely ward-heeler types are likely to remain small fry. The society needs "statesmen" who are above petty larceny; they will be all the more effective insofar as they are sincere and even idealistic, provided they possess the right sort of ideals.

It is natural for these specialists to be "mouthpiece" types—hence the high incidence of lawyers.* It is useful for them to be trained ideologists—hence professorial and journalist mouthpieces are not unknown in the field, depending on national traditions and the times, though they may be more prominent in the administrative corridors of the state. But the professional politician may be an upward-climbing spinoff from any class (like bullfighters in Spain) as long as he is

* Marx was struck by the increase in the number of lawyers elected to Parliament in 1852. "The House of Commons will count above a hundred lawyers in its ranks, and this number of jurisconsults is perhaps no favorable augury. . . ." ²⁴

amenable to the service required, that is, to operate within the ring of interests set by the system. His is still one of the few trades where a self-made man can rise to the top, from log cabin to logrolling.

2. Effective political service, however, requires something more than the complaisant pliability of spirit known as political pragmatism. The system needs statesmen who qualify precisely by holding a farsighted, overall vision of its interests; and it resents them for the same reason. This has been the crux of a great many political conflicts.

It is difficult enough for an aspirant to the mantle of statesmanship to decide for himself what is *really* in the best long-range interests of "society," that is, capitalist society. The second difficulty is: imposing this solution on a ruling class which, taken individually, is inherently nearsighted about its own class interests. It has been quite common for measures absolutely essential to the health and safety of the system to be put over on the capitalist class itself only against the vicious opposition of many or even most practicing capitalists themselves, or in less acute cases, only after violent internecine struggles among interest groups within the class. This pattern, sometimes regarded as a confutation of the Marxist theory of the state, follows from the specific nature of the capitalist class, as we have seen.

It is the professional function of the bourgeois statesman to take the Long, High View of the system as distinct from the approach of the myopic money-grubber. Some of the differences cutting through the capitalist class have a direct bearing on ability to do this. For example, far-flung monopoly capital naturally has a broader, more encompassing viewpoint than, say, a small-town shopkeeper. Sheer size can make the difference. Similarly, capital that is nation-wide in operation is more likely to take a hawk's-eye view than regional or local capital. The same applies to capital that is diversified through different branches. Time is another dimension that influences viewpoint. The first generation of capitalist wealth tends to be the most nearsighted. Succeeding generations may form a simulated aristocracy, dividing between degeneracy or parasitism on the one hand, and "dedication to public service" on the other. There is also a more general sense in which a ruling class matures with experience and time. During most of its existence, American capitalism has been relatively raw and inelegant as compared with its British counterpart, as far as class relations are concerned.

3. We have not yet mentioned one of the most important of the internal strains of the system: the tendency toward the concentration

and centralization of economic power, which entails monopoly profits for a top stratum at the expense of the lower echelons of the class. This is not simply just another one of the criss-crossing internal conflicts that we have already remarked; it acts unidirectionally to focalize social power itself in the top strata.

What happens to the proposition that the state manages the common affairs of the ruling class if, as power concentrates, the affairs become less and less common? One of the consequences of the relative autonomy of the state is to permit the dominant sectors *within* the capitalist class to secure the main levers of power. The state, it would seem, becomes less the executive committee of the ruling class as a whole, and more the executive committee of monopoly capital. Its social base narrows.

Yet, in reality, the state still remains the "committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" in spite of and through this development. Under conditions of advanced capitalism, the interests of the top strata really *are* the basic interests of the capitalist class as a whole, not in the sense that the fruits of dominance are evenhandedly and fairly distributed, but in the sense that capitalism cannot continue at all on any other basis. This is a sense, however true, that is not likely to cheer a small businessman who is forced into bankruptcy by monopoly conditions; but then, after all, the man who is left out of a lifeboat because he would overload it may also have a minority view of the issue. The interests of the capitalist class as such are still loyally represented, since these interests lie first and foremost in the preservation of the system, and not in the preservation of this or that sector of the system.

4. One of the most paradoxical consequences for the political leadership of modern capitalism arises directly out of the inaptitude of the bourgeoisie as a governing class. In more than one country, when capitalism has faced its most critical problems, the most farsighted and socially sophisticated political leadership has come to the rescue from elements *outside* the capitalist class itself. Outstanding examples, to which Marx and Engels paid particular attention, come from Germany and Britain.* Let us turn to them.

* The American reader is invited to consider the case, outside our present purview, of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was brought up in the social milieu which is the nearest thing in the United States to a hereditary landed gentry, namely the old patroon families of the Hudson valley, and whom history counterposed to Herbert Hoover, a self-made capitalist, the most blinkered kind in existence.

6. THE AUTONOMIZED STATE IN GERMANY

In Germany, after bourgeois democracy funkcd its chance in 1848 while the imperatives of modernization demanded the forced development of capitalist industry, the job was done by a political leader, Bismarck, whose outlook and Junker class ties were distinctly *pre-bourgeois*, scornful and suspicious of the bourgeois spirit. With "blood and iron" Bismarck forced Germany through the meatgrinder of modernization—which, economically speaking, meant bourgeoisification—without any need to be tender of this or that section of the bourgeoisie itself. He did the job that capitalism could not do for itself.

Bismarck was able to do this *because* he was an outsider. German capitalism was raised to maturity with a whip. As Engels noted:

Neither the Junkers nor the bourgeoisie possessed even average energy. The Junkers had proved this in the past sixty years, during which the state had constantly done what was best for them despite the opposition of these Don Quixotes.²⁵

Bismarck, seeking to save as much as possible for an obsolete class—his own, the Junkers—which was standing in the way of modernization, had to act in the face of constant opposition from the main body of that same class. For modernization was also in the basic interest of the Junkers and not only of the bourgeoisie, since it was a necessity for the state and society in which they retained a dwindling share of power and pelf. If modernization meant bourgeoisification, this was a fact of life that could not be changed by class will; and so "a man like Bismarck was indeed dependent on a policy of maneuvering between the various classes."²⁶

How did the outsider pull this off against the opposition of his own class and without allowing the bourgeoisie itself to take the reins of state power? The basic tactic was to balance class against class, the Junkers against the bourgeoisie, as long as possible; then to threaten proletarian discontent against the bourgeoisie; and thus to play them against each other, imposing the autonomized state's solution on all and thereby gaining time to demonstrate to the bourgeoisie that its interests were in good hands and to the Junkers that they had no better alternative. (More about this in Chapter 16.) It was the Junker Bismarck who "gave" the workers a system of universal suffrage—one

of the most paradoxical events in political history—in order to set them up as a political counterweight to the liberal bourgeoisie in a period when he could hope that the boon would not get out of hand.

The autonomy exhibited by this exploit of the Bismarckian state was strictly relative. For its success was conditioned on the fact that its policy was *really* in the basic interests of the ruling classes, and that this fact could be demonstrated before too long. It is quite different, therefore, from the absolute autonomy which would permit a state to pursue its own interests, as it saw them, even in long-term contradiction with those of economically dominant classes.

The pattern necessarily involved an element of uneasy tension, of countervailing pulls—so Engels emphasized in a letter to the German party leader Bebel. In 1892 he noted signs of oppositional organization among the liberal bourgeoisie, and commented:

Capitalist society, which has not yet formally subordinated the state to itself, has to leave the actual government to a monarchic-bureaucratic-Junker hereditary caste and has to content itself with the fact that by and large its own interests are finally decisive after all. This society, in view of its situation in Germany, wobbles between two trends: on the one hand, alliance of all official and property-owning strata of society as against the proletariat. . . . On the other hand, there is a trend which keeps continually placing the old conflict on the order of the day—the old conflict, which was not fought out because of cowardice, between the monarchy with its absolutist reminiscences, the landed aristocracy, and the bureaucracy which thinks itself elevated above all parties, and, counterposed to all of these, the industrial bourgeoisie, whose material interests are harmed daily and hourly by these outlived elements. Which of these two trends has the upper hand at any moment is determined by accidental personal, local, &c factors.²⁷

And there was one more condition behind Bismarck's strategy.

While the mentality of the Junkers, and of Bismarck himself, was subjectively antibourgeois, they had this in common with the bourgeoisie they scorned: they constituted a property-holding, labor-exploiting, possessing class. And in the course of the bourgeoisification of society, this prebourgeois owning and exploiting class was capable of being partly assimilated to the economic patterns of bourgeois accumulation and even bourgeois habits. This was a course in which the Germans had been preceded and outdone by the English aristocracy.

There was an occasion on which Engels was led to note the similarities between Bismarck's and the bourgeois mentality. This was in 1867 when a letter from Marx informed him of a veiled bid by an agent of Bismarck's to buy him up.²⁸ Engels commented in reply:

It is indicative of the mentality and mental horizon of the fellow [Bismarck] that he judges everyone by himself. The bourgeoisie may well admire the great men of today: it sees itself mirrored in them. All the qualities contributing to the successes of Bonaparte and Bismarck are businessmen's qualities: pursuit of a definite goal by biding one's time and making tentative moves till the right moment is found; diplomatic maneuvering with a back door always open; bargaining and haggling; swallowing insults if self-interest demands it; the business of "now let's not be thieves"; in short, the businessman all over. Gottfried Ermen [the other partner in the Ermen & Engels firm] in his own way is just as great a statesman as Bismarck, and if you follow up these great men's tricks, you always wind up on Manchester exchange. Bismarck thinks: if only I keep after Marx, some day I will finally hit on the right moment and then we will do business together. Pure Gottfried Ermen.²⁹

The Bismarckian state, then, was managed by an alien class element (from the bourgeoisie's viewpoint), but it was not so alien as to be unappreciative of what an exploitative society needed in the interest of property.

7. THE CASE OF THE ENGLISH BOURGEOISIE

The country in which this pattern had been pioneered was England. Marx discussed it several times in the 1850s.*

He began by posing the question of the class nature of the Whig party. They "form a fraction of the large landed property of Great Britain," indeed "the oldest, richest, and most arrogant portion."

* Already in early 1848 Engels had noted that in England the ruling sections of the bourgeoisie "have left the nominal rule to their dependent debtors, the aristocrats," but he thought this nominal rule was only an "appearance" and that even this appearance would be done away with very soon.³⁰ Marx's later articles showed a greater awareness that a certain sharing of power still existed between bourgeoisie and aristocracy.

°°What, then, distinguishes them from the Tories? The Whigs are the *aristocratic representatives* of the bourgeoisie, of the industrial and commercial middle class. Under the condition that the Bourgeoisie should abandon to them, to an oligarchy of aristocratic families, the monopoly of government and the exclusive possession of office, they make to the middle class, and assist it in conquering, all those concessions, which in the course of social and political development have shown themselves to have become *unavoidable* and *undelayable*. Neither more nor less. . . . The interests and principles which they represent besides, from time to time, do not belong to the Whigs; they are forced upon them by the development of the industrial and commercial class, the Bourgeoisie.³¹

But the Whigs do not play this role in order to serve the bourgeoisie, nor even primarily because, by allying with the "Bankocracy" or "Millocracy" to defeat the Tories, they also secure to themselves "the governmental part of the victory." Like their similars later,* they are still serving their own class in their own way; for example

after 1846 they confined their Free Trade measures so far as was necessary, in order to save to the landed aristocracy the greatest possible amount of privileges. Each time they had taken the movement in hand in order to prevent its forward march, and to recover their own posts at the same time.

It follows that they can exist in this role only as long as the aristocracy retains enough power in the society to make their mediation useful.

* The reference is to the analogous role later played, in England, by the Liberal Party with relation to the working class as constituency, or by the Democratic Party in the United States today—parties definable, in Marx's words, as the bourgeois representatives of the working class, who "make to the [working] class, and assist it in conquering, all those concessions, which in the course of social and political development have shown themselves to have become unavoidable and undelayable." This relationship still gives rise to confusing political types and ambiguous personages, just as Marx wrote of the Whigs:

°°It is evident what a distastefully heterogeneous mixture the character of the British Whigs must turn out to be: Feudalists, who are at the same time Malthusians, money-mongers with feudal prejudices, aristocrats without point of honour, Bourgeois without industrial activity, finality-men with progressive phrases, progressists with fanatical Conservatism, traffickers in homeopathical fractions of reforms, fosterers of family-nepotism, Grand Masters of corruption, hypocrites of religion, Tartuffes of politics.³²

... from the moment when the Tories are definitively overthrown, British history has no longer any room for the Whigs. The aristocracy once destroyed, what is the use of an aristocratic representation of the Bourgeoisie against this aristocracy?³³

When, the following year, a coalition government took shape, Marx interpreted it along the same lines:

°° In a word, the entire Aristocracy agree, that the Government has to be conducted for the benefit, and according to the interests of the middle-class, but they are determined that the bourgeoisie are not to be themselves the governors of this affair; and for this object all that the old Oligarchy possess of talent, influence and authority are combined, in a last effort, into one Administration, which has for its task to keep the bourgeoisie, as long as possible, from the direct enjoyment of governing the nation. The coalized Aristocracy of England, intend with regard to the bourgeoisie, to act on the same principle upon which Napoleon I. professed to act in reference to the people: "*Tout pour le peuple, rien par le peuple.*"³⁴

On the Napoleonic principle, "Everything for the people, nothing by the people," the aristocratic governing class, "the class that rule officially," struck a compromise with the class that rule nonofficially, a compromise

°° by which the general governing power is abandoned to some sections of the middle class, on condition that the whole of the real Government, the Executive in all its details, even to the executive department of the legislative power—or that is, the actual law-making in the two Houses of Parliament—is secured to the landed aristocracy. . . .³⁵

Already in 1855 Marx saw this compromise as superannuated, and in 1858 he thought he saw his 1852 prediction about the fate of the Whigs coming true:

°° The fact is that the two ruling oligarchic parties of England were long ago transformed into mere factions, without any distinctive principles. . . . Till now, the Tories have been aristocrats ruling in the name of the aristocracy, and the Whig aristocrats ruling in the name of the middle class; but the middle class having assumed to rule in their own name, the business of the Whigs is gone. In order to keep the Whigs out of office, the Tories will

yield to the encroachments of the middle-class party until they have worried out Whig patience and convinced these oligarchs that, in order to save the interests of their order, they must merge in the conservative ranks and forsake their traditional pretensions to represent the liberal interest or form a power of their own. Absorption of the Whig faction into the Tory faction, and their common metamorphosis into the party of the aristocracy, as opposed to the new middle-class party, acting under its own chiefs, under its own banners, with its own watchwords—such is the consummation we are now witnessing in England.³⁶

Nor was 1858 actually the end of the English aristocracy, or elements of it, in the role of governing surrogates for the bourgeoisie. So late into the nineteenth century did the bourgeoisie display its backwardness in politically managing its own system.*

8. "BEAT ME, DADDY," SAYS THE BOURGEOISIE

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, thought Engels, the English bourgeoisie did finally exhibit "a certain talent for upholding its position as leading class at least to some degree," but in 1889 he was led to comment that this seemed to be changing. The bourgeoisie once again showed it could not easily act as a class on behalf of its class interests only this time it had to be bailed out not from above (by the aristocracy) but from below (by the working class). His article cited two recent events.

One involved London's antiquated port system, whose absurdity "threatens to stifle the living conditions of all of London," the rest of the bourgeoisie included.

* A by-product of this discussion should be realization of how absurd Marx would have considered the latter-day pseudo-Marxist notion of "one class—one party." The articles quoted in the preceding section, as well as others, provide massive evidence that the one-to-one correspondence of classes and parties is not only not a rule but is in fact unusual. Further material will be found in the next chapter, from *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. Under varying historical circumstances, a given political party may be based on more than one class, and a given class may be represented by more than one party. In the latter case, a party may reflect or stem from a sector of the class, an ideology or political orientation within the class, or simply a clique; or it may itself degenerate into a mere coterie or clique.³⁷ And these do not exhaust the possible complications. The party lineup *may*

'Then the dock workers' strike breaks out. It is not the bourgeoisie being robbed by the dock companies that rebels, it is the workers exploited by them, the poorest of the poor, the lowest layer of the East End proletarians, who fling down the gauntlet to the dock magnates.³⁹

The fact that the challenge to the dock companies was "indirectly also in the interests of the bourgeois class" brought public sympathy for the strike and money contributions; "the workers fought the battle to the end" and stirred public opinion to the point where modernization of the dock system was made inevitable.

This job should have been done by the bourgeoisie long ago. It was unable or unwilling to do it. Now the workers have taken it in hand and now it will be done. In other words, in this case the bourgeoisie has renounced its own part in favor of the workers.

In Lancashire, a speculators' ring sought to corner cotton and hoist prices. The cotton spinners could retaliate only by combining to curtail their consumption of the raw material by large-scale shutdowns. But no common action could be achieved as the individual interests of the cotton spinners were at sixes and sevens. How could all cotton mills be shut down? A wage cut could do it by causing a strike or lockout, in which case all the millowners would discover their class solidarity; but it happened that a wage cut was not feasible. The alternative was "a step which is unique in the history of modern industry":

The mill-owners, through their central committee, "semi-officially" approach the Central Committee of the Workers' Trade Unions with the request that the organized workers should, in the common interest, *force* the obstinate mill-owners to shut down by organizing strikes. Messrs. mill-owners, admitting their own inability to take concerted action, ask the formerly so much hated workers' trade unions, kindly to use coercion against them,

simplify down to match the class lineup insofar as the class struggle polarizes the society. When the ruling English parties moved toward coalition in 1853, as mentioned above, Marx wondered aloud as follows:

Is not the very fact of such a "coalition" the most explicit indication that the time has arrived when the actually grown-up and yet partially unrepresented fundamental classes of modern society, the industrial bourgeoisie and the working class, are about to vindicate to themselves the position of the only political parties in the nation?³⁸

Once again the time coefficient was ahead of itself: the situation envisioned did not take place in England, even approximately, until most of a century later.

the mill-owners, so that the mill-owners, induced by bitter necessity, should finally act in concert, as a class, in the interests of their own class. They have to be forced to do so by the workers, for they themselves are unable to bring this about!

In twenty-four hours the mere threat of a strike smashed the ring.

Thus, here too, in the most modern of all modern large-scale industries, the bourgeoisie proves to be as incapable of defending its own class interests, as it is in medieval London. And what is more, it frankly admits it, and by turning to the organized workers with the request that they should defend a major class interest of the mill-owners themselves, it not only abdicates, but recognizes in the organized working class its successor, who is called upon to rule and is quite capable of doing so.⁴⁰

The moral to be drawn goes beyond Engels' propagandistic conclusion. For one thing, by showing that its class interests could be preserved only by some outside force of coercion, the bourgeoisie invited more candidates for the role of savior than merely the labor movement; and for another, this pattern helps to explain why it took the Social-Democracy to preserve the system during the convulsions that followed the first world war. But more immediately, there is another lesson: *it is a distinct advantage to the bourgeoisie if its own state—the state which assures its interests—is not simply its tool, if indeed this state enjoys sufficient autonomy from the ruling class so that, if need be, the former can even exert coercion on the latter.*

This is the conclusion that Marx drew from the experience of the English factory acts, prototypes of bourgeois labor legislation and welfarism. The capitalist state has to correct for the shortsightedness of the capitalists themselves:

These acts curb the passion of capital for a limitless draining of labor-power, by forcibly limiting the working-day by state regulations, made by a state that is ruled by capitalist and landlord. Apart from the working-class movement that daily grows more threatening, the limiting of factory labor was dictated by the same necessity which spread guano over the English fields. The same blind eagerness for plunder that in the one case exhausted the soil, had, in the other, torn up by the roots the living force of the nation. Periodical epidemics speak on this point as clearly as the diminishing military standard in Germany and France.⁴¹

The Lancashire example was double-barreled: as Engels mentioned, the same results could have obtained, not by deliberate arrangement with the labor movement, but in genuine fear of it. In actuality, both were involved anyway: the deliberate arrangement was only by the more farsighted leadership of the millocracy; it was the fear that whipped the body of the class in line. Historically the bourgeoisie showed itself ever ready to cede the helm of government to alien hands whenever that was necessary to protect it from the danger from below. "In the 1830s," remarked Marx, "the [English] bourgeoisie preferred the renewal of the compromise with the landed aristocracy to a compromise with the mass of the English people."⁴² Of the German bourgeoisie Engels wrote: "it does not know how to rule, it is powerless and incapable of anything. It can do only one thing: savagely attack the workers as soon as they begin to stir."⁴³

It is a peculiarity of the bourgeoisie, in contrast to all former ruling classes, that there is a turning-point in its development after which every further expansion of its agencies of power, hence primarily of its capital, only tends to make it more and more unfit for political rule. "*Behind the big bourgeois stand the proletarians.*" . . . From that moment on, it loses the strength required for exclusive political rule; it looks around for allies with whom to share its power, or to whom to cede the whole of its rule, as circumstances may require.⁴⁴

For all of these reasons, state autonomization represents a valuable element of *flexibility* in the state structure. If the bourgeoisie were capable of keeping the state on a short leash, and always did so, that state would have strangled long ago. On the other hand, while the state needs a long leash, this tends to make capitalists uneasy, especially when the state strains at the leash.

This aspect, like others we have mentioned, gives rise to ambiguous personages in politics. The element of autonomous flexibility was well represented by Disraeli in Marx's time, as he had occasion to note:

°°Whatever be our opinion of the man, who is said to despise the aristocracy, to hate the bourgeoisie, and not to like the people, he is unquestionably the ablest member of the present Parliament, while the flexibility of his character enables him the better to accommodate himself to the changing wants of society.⁴⁵

The role that Disraeli played was conditioned on the degree to which he personally stood apart from the classes: his outsider aspect.

9. CAN THE BOURGEOISIE DO IT?

Could the bourgeoisie ever take the governing power really into its own hands as a class? Engels, who paid a good deal of attention to the question, could not avoid shuttling between a negative and a positive answer, over the decades. The reason for the uncertainty is plain: On the one hand, could the bourgeoisie be so different from previous ruling classes? Wasn't it, rather, merely retarded, but on the way nevertheless? On the other hand, the facts of current history continued to enforce a negative conclusion.

Let us illustrate this zigzag in three scenes.

1. In 1866 Bismarck's universal-suffrage coup, and the bourgeoisie's meek acceptance of it, swung Engels over to one side:

It is becoming clearer and clearer to me that the bourgeoisie doesn't have the stuff to rule directly itself, and that therefore, where there is no oligarchy as there is here in England to take over, for good pay, the managing of state and society in the interest of the bourgeoisie, a Bonapartist semi-dictatorship is the normal form; it carries out the big material interests of the bourgeoisie even against the bourgeoisie, but deprives the bourgeoisie of any share in the ruling power itself. On the other hand, this dictatorship is itself, in turn, compelled to reluctantly adopt these material interests of the bourgeoisie.⁴⁶

But this symbiotic relationship between the socioeconomic ruling class and its autonomized state (which holds the power of government, that is, the immediate reins of the state apparatus) is not confined to the case of Bonapartism; we have seen that it holds true in less extreme form also.

2. In 1889, writing to Laura Lafargue (Marx's daughter), Engels thought that the elections just held in France would at last bring about a totally bourgeois government. The rightist danger apparently ended, politics shifted toward the bourgeois liberal end of the spectrum.

°°Now, for the first time, you will get a real government of the *entire* bourgeoisie. In 1849/51, the rue de Poitiers [political club] under Thiers, too, formed a government of the whole bourgeois class,⁴⁷ but that was by the truce between two opposing monarchical factions, and by its very nature *passager* [short-lived]. Now you will get one based upon the despair to upset the republic, upon its recognition as an unavoidable *pis-aller* [last resort], and therefore a bourgeois government which has the stuff to last until its final smash-up.⁴⁸

At last, he thought, the various warring sectors of the bourgeoisie would “act as a *bourgeoisie une et indivisible*” (the phrase echoes the “unitary and indivisible republic” slogan). Later the same month he explained that this did not necessarily entail party coalition governments. Rather, “the impending rule of the French bourgeoisie as a class” meant that

you have the real conditions of the rule of the whole bourgeois class, of parliamentarism in full blossom: two parties struggling for the majority and taking in turns the parts of Ins and Outs, of government and opposition. Here, in England, you have the rule of the whole bourgeois class; but that does not mean that Conservatives and Radicals coalesce; on the contrary, they relieve each other.⁴⁹

But in these two letters Engels’ discussion, focused on the removal of the danger from the right, does not take account of the bourgeoisie’s fear from the left. Would not this make “the rule of the whole bourgeois class” a transitory one also in the Third Republic?

3. In 1892, in his English introduction to *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, a more rounded discussion pointed once again to an essentially negative conclusion. This discussion occurs in the context of the bourgeoisie’s fear of working-class revolt:

It seems a law of historical development that the bourgeoisie can in no European country get hold of political power—at least for any length of time—in the same exclusive way in which the feudal aristocracy kept hold of it during the Middle Ages. Even in France, where feudalism was completely extinguished, the bourgeoisie, as a whole, has held full possession of the Government for very short periods only. . . . It is only now, in the Third Republic, that the bourgeoisie as a whole have kept possession of the helm

for more than twenty years;* and they are already showing lively signs of decadence. A durable reign of the bourgeoisie has been possible only in countries like America, where feudalism was unknown, and society at the very beginning started from a bourgeois basis. . . .

In England, the bourgeoisie never held undivided sway. Even the victory of 1832 left the landed aristocracy in almost exclusive possession of all the leading Government offices. . . . The English bourgeoisie are, up to the present day, so deeply penetrated by a sense of their social inferiority that they keep up, at their own expense and that of the nation, an ornamental caste of drones. . . .

The industrial and commercial middle class had, therefore, not yet succeeded in driving the landed aristocracy completely from political power when another competitor, the working class, appeared on the stage.⁵⁰

It is the threat from below, from the working class, that represents the potentialities of the future, hence reinforces the inaptitude of the bourgeoisie to take direct control of the state machine and the consequent tendency toward state autonomization.

But autonomization can take many forms, and extend to different degrees. The experience that was decisive for Marx's thinking on this subject took place in France: it was what Engels (in his 1866 remark cited above) had called "the normal form"—Bonapartism.

* This reckoning is obviously at odds with Engels' 1889 letter; the difference is a matter of estimation—estimation of the degree to which the whole bourgeoisie participated in the governing power at one time or another. For that matter, further on in this passage, the reference to England also reflects a different estimate from that in the second 1889 letter. The important thing for present purposes is not the specific estimation of just when, if ever, a bourgeoisie wields "undivided sway," but the theoretical considerations behind the problem.

15 | THE BONAPARTE MODEL

The tendency of the bourgeois state under pressure to revert back to more authoritarian and despotic forms of government does not arise only from a working-class threat from below. Another factor imparting the same tendency is one of the characteristics making for the political inaptitude of the capitalist class (as summarized in the preceding chapter): namely, the “exuberance of internal hostilities”—the fact that “no other ruling class is so profusely criss-crossed internally with competing and conflicting interest groups—the dog-eat-dog pattern.”¹

It may be helpful to think of these two factors as being, respectively, the vertical and horizontal components of social struggle in the system, without necessarily equating them in importance. The horizontal struggle takes place among sectors of the ruling classes themselves, not only between different blocs of the bourgeoisie but also pitting landowning interests (however bourgeoisified) against various bourgeois interests.

In practice, to be sure, such horizontal social struggles can rarely take place without involving the vertical class struggle of the exploited classes against the tops. Conflicts within the ruling circles tend to stimulate or unleash intervention from below, and conversely, the threat of subversion from below may divide the tops either on how to deal with the problem or in terms of whose interests are mainly endangered. In practice, therefore, these components of the historical social struggle tend to interpenetrate, with the driving force coming from below (vertically).

But whatever their source, if the internal conflicts become so unmanageable as to threaten the stability of the system, the resolution of the conflict by authoritarian means becomes the lesser evil for *every*

stratum that shares in the benefactions of the status quo.*

If the bourgeoisie can no longer control the social jolts and tremors within the framework of democratic forms, its own preservation demands that, as a class, it yield up *direct* political power to other and firmer hands, the better to safeguard its socioeconomic rule. For Marx, the classic case that acted out this proposition was the situation in France leading from the February revolution of 1848 to the military dictatorship established by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in a coup d'état on December 2, 1851. The analysis of this original "Bonapartism" was the subject of his work written directly after the events, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, which was perhaps his most brilliant historical study.** Its pervasive theme is the relations between the state power and the various social groups thereof; and an outstanding characteristic is its painstaking dissection of the *complexity* of the historical situation, to which we will not be able to do justice here. justice here.

1. THE PROBLEM POSED

Today's reader has to recapture the contemporary historical background of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, for it is not an abstract treatise but an analysis of the news of the day as it happened. In July 1830 the Restoration monarchy had been brought down by a timid bourgeois-republican effort at revolution which succeeded only in replacing the

* For a broader view of the historical pattern, this proposition should be linked with the explanation (in Chapter 11, section 7) of the three subsidiary tasks of the state. The third of these subsidiary tasks is precisely the resolution of internecine disputes that might otherwise disrupt the social fabric. This suggests that the other two subsidiary tasks may also play a role in the tendency of the state toward autonomization (and authoritarianism); and I believe they do—though to a lesser extent. From a basic standpoint, then, the present discussion could be derived directly from the statement about the tasks of the state.

** This was obviously Engels' opinion, judging by his many recommendations to students of Marxism. The present chapter will be devoted mainly to this work; it is the source of all quotations not otherwise ascribed. The title refers to the analogous coup d'état of November 9, 1799 (the 18th Brumaire in the calendar of the French Revolution) by which the first Napoleon established his military dictatorship. The analogy with the 18th Brumaire, and even the content of Marx's first paragraph, were given in Engels' letter to Marx the day after the coup.²

Bourbons with a constitutional monarchy headed by Louis Philippe, a bourgeoisified royalty. Never a very strong regime, the July monarchy of Louis Philippe hit the rocks with the industrial depression of 1847. The following year saw the outbreak of the first Europe-wide revolutionary upsurge; in France the Second Republic was proclaimed in February.

Louis Philippe's bourgeois monarchy, in which "a limited section of the bourgeoisie ruled in the name of the king," was now replaced by a bourgeois republic, in which "the whole of the bourgeoisie will now rule"—or so they thought.³ The Constituent Assembly which was elected with the help of peasant and clerical support was thoroughly bourgeois, and set out to settle accounts with the main class danger from below, the Paris proletariat. The liberal Tocqueville reported: "I saw society split in two: those who possessed nothing united in a common greed [*sic*]; those who possessed something in a common fear. No bonds, no sympathies existed between these two great classes, everywhere was the idea of an inevitable and approaching struggle."⁴ In the face of mass starvation among the workers, the bourgeois republicans provocatively cut down on the welfare program.

The workers' response was the "June insurrection, the most colossal event in the history of European civil wars"—up to then.

The bourgeois republic triumphed. On its side stood the aristocracy of finance, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, the petty-bourgeois, the army, the lumpenproletariat organized as the Mobile Guard, the intellectual lights, the clergy and the rural population. On the side of the Paris proletariat stood none but itself. More than 3000 insurgents were butchered after the victory, and 15,000 were transported without trial. With this defeat the proletariat passes into the *background* of the revolutionary stage.⁵

At this point, all other social strata and their political representatives were united against the vanguard proletariat of Paris. The savage (because terror-stricken) slaughter of the rebel movement eliminated the threat of proletariat revolution for more than two decades. But, as Marx stressed, the threat still remained in the background.

The foreground of the picture is going to concern the tug-of-war among the various strata of "those who possessed something"—the property-owning classes and their hangers-on. The problem which *The*

FROM FEBRUARY TO THE COUP D'ÉTAT

To aid the reader in following Marx's analysis of events in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, here is a chronological table of the main developments that took place between the February revolution and Bonaparte's coup d'état. In this work Marx divides the story into three main periods or phases as follows: (1) the "February period," headed by a provisional government; (2) the "period of the constitution of the republic," headed by the Constituent National Assembly; and (3) the "period of the constitutional republic," headed by the Legislative National Assembly, and brought to an end by the coup d'état.

FIRST PERIOD

- 1848 Feb. 22 Uprising in Paris.
 Feb. 24 Louis Philippe abdicates; Second Republic proclaimed.
 Apr. 23 Elections to Constituent National Assembly; victory of bourgeois republicans.
 May 4 Constituent Assembly meets.

SECOND PERIOD

- May 15 Workers' demonstration invades Assembly; proclaims a revolutionary government; Blanqui, Barbès, others arrested.
 June 23-26 The June uprising: workers' rebellion in Paris suppressed by terror and Cavaignac dictatorship.
 Nov. 4 New constitution completed.
 Dec. 10 Louis Napoleon Bonaparte elected president of republic.
 Dec. 20 President Bonaparte installed, forms cabinet.
 1849 Jan. 29 Constituent Assembly votes its own dissolution under pressure of troops in Paris.
 April French begin attack on the Roman Republic.
 May 28 Legislative National Assembly meets.

THIRD PERIOD

- June 13 Suppression of demonstration (abortive revolt) by Ledru-Rollin's radicals.
 Oct. 31 President Bonaparte installs cabinet of his own men (D'Hautpoul cabinet).
 1850 Mar. 10 Assembly by-elections: swing to left.
 1851 July 15 Assembly rejects constitutional revision permitting second term for President Bonaparte.
 Dec. 2 Coup d'état: Bonaparte seizes power with help of army.

AFTERMATH

- Dec. 21 Plebiscite held by Bonaparte to sanction coup.
 1852 Nov. 2 Empire ("Second Empire") proclaimed with Bonaparte as Napoleon III.

Eighteenth Brumaire addressed mainly was not the role of the state with respect to the proletariat, a role which had been amply demonstrated by the June Days: "It had revealed that here *bourgeois republic* signifies the unlimited despotism of one class over other classes."⁶ (This class despotism is what Marx elsewhere called the "class dictatorship" of the bourgeoisie.)

The problem which Marx set himself to unravel was, rather, the subsequent role of the state with respect to the criss-crossing conflicts among the property-owning classes themselves, which had united to crush the June rising. The immediate subject is the role of the state with respect to the ruling classes themselves.

After June, the wide united front of the righteous upholders of "property, family, religion, order"⁷ was going to narrow down, as one slice of it after another was cut off from political rule (like the famous salami). After the June scare, the simplest bourgeois-reform demand was going to be stigmatized as a subversive "attempt on society" and as "socialism," until the very heroes of law and order who had suppressed the proletarian insurgents were themselves cast aside like squeezed lemons. It is this process which we are now going to follow for the light it casts on the phenomenon of state autonomization.

2. BANKRUPTCY OF BOURGEOIS LIBERALISM

The next months marked the political rule, and then collapse, of the "pure" bourgeois republicans, one of whose leaders was General Cavaignac, the executioner of the June Days.

It was not a faction of the bourgeoisie held together by great common interests and marked off by specific conditions of production.* It was a clique of republican-minded bourgeois, writers, lawyers, officers and officials that owed its influence to the personal antipathies of the country against Louis Philippe, to memories of the old republic, to the republican faith of a number of enthusiasts, above all, however, to *French nationalism*, whose

* Note that here as elsewhere Marx repudiates the latter-day pseudo-Marxist notion that every party necessarily represents a separate class or social-group interest. This party reflected an *ideological* current within a class. (For the general issue, see the preceding chapter, p. 332 fn.)

hatred of the Vienna treaties and of the alliance with England it stirred up perpetually. . . . The industrial bourgeoisie was grateful to it for its slavish defence of the French protectionist system . . . the bourgeoisie as a whole, for its vicious denunciation of communism and socialism.⁸

This bourgeois party came to power not "through a liberal revolt of the bourgeoisie . . . but through a rising of the proletariat against capital, a rising laid low with grapeshot." Its ascendancy did not come about through an ascending line of progressive struggle, as it had once dreamed when it opposed the monarchy; its accession to power was not a "revolutionary event" but rather "the most counter-revolutionary."

It was this liberal bourgeois party which presided over the drafting of the constitution for the new republic. On the one hand, it wanted to extend the vote to the mass of the bourgeoisie itself; on the other hand, it was afraid of universal suffrage which went beyond bourgeois bounds. Still feeling the heat generated by the February revolution, it had to twist and turn:

The narrow electoral qualification of the July monarchy [of Louis Philippe], which excluded even a large part of the bourgeoisie from political rule, was incompatible with the existence of the bourgeois republic. In lieu of this qualification, the February Revolution had at once proclaimed universal suffrage. The bourgeois republicans could not undo this event. They had to content themselves with adding the limiting proviso of a six months' residence in the constituency. The old organization of the administration, of the municipal system, of the judicial system, of the army, etc., continued to exist inviolate. . . .⁹

There were two consequences relating to state forms: (1) as Marx mentions later in the work, the old state apparatus was not smashed, it was merely taken over; and (2) the democratic liberties apparently guaranteed in the constitution were turned into frauds, and the executive power was separated from and counterposed to the legislative (representative), in the manner which we detailed in preceding chapters.¹⁰ "Such was the Constitution of 1848" which collapsed before Bonaparte at a mere touch, Marx concludes.

While this constitution was being fabricated, the bourgeois-republican general Cavaignac was maintaining the "state of siege" (martial law) in Paris:

If the Constitution is subsequently put out of existence by bayonets, it must not be forgotten that it was likewise by bayonets, and these turned against the people, that it had to be protected in its mother's womb and by bayonets that it had to be brought into existence.

Thus these "respectable republicans," says Marx bitterly, "produced . . . a splendid invention, periodically employed in every ensuing crisis," eagerly adopted by other Continental powers: the "state of siege" device to keep the masses under military control at critical points.

But the military learned from this. If the armed forces of the state were "periodically laid on French society's head to . . . render it quiet," if they were periodically allowed to act as judge, censor, and policeman "as the highest wisdom of society and as its rector," then were not these same armed forces "bound to hit upon the idea of rather saving society once and for all by proclaiming their own regime as the highest and freeing civil society completely from the trouble of governing itself? . . . all the more as they might then also expect better cash payment for their higher services. . . ." ¹¹

Thus, by giving the armed forces their head to suppress the masses, "the respectable, the pure republicans" also prepared the ground for the coup d'état of Bonaparte's praetorians.

Having exhausted its role, this liberal bourgeois party was given its quietus when Bonaparte got himself elected president in December 1848: the squeezed-lemon syndrome. (Marx here refers readers to the analysis of this period which he had made in his earlier *Class Struggles in France*.) ¹²

In sum: the liberals were defeated mainly by the massive peasant vote. But the result was also greeted by the army (which had garnered neither pay nor glory from the liberals in exchange for the dirty work it had done), by "the big bourgeoisie, which hailed Bonaparte as a bridge to monarchy," and also by the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat, who saw in the vote a revenge on the hated party of Cavaignac for their own slaughter in June. (This is the famous pattern of "The enemy of my enemy is my friend" which has helped more than one despot to power.)

3. THE PATTERN OF PERMANENT COUNTERREVOLUTION

Now to the fore came "the mass of the bourgeoisie," especially the big bourgeoisie, the main body of the property-owning classes, as distinct from the ideological current which had been represented by the bourgeois liberals.

This bourgeois mass was, however, *royalist*. One section of it, the large landowners, had ruled during the [Bourbon] Restoration and was accordingly *Legitimist*. The other, the aristocrats of finance and big industrialists, had ruled during the July Monarchy [of Louis Philippe] and was consequently *Orleanist*. The high dignitaries of the army, the university, the church, the bar, the academy and of the press were to be found on either side, though in various proportions. Here, in the bourgeois republic, which bore neither the name *Bourbon* nor the name *Orleans*, but the name *Capital*, they had found the form of state in which they could rule *conjointly*.¹³

This united front of the two kinds of royalists was the Party of Order, that is, the flag-wavers of the slogan of Law and Order, meaning systematic repression of even mild bourgeois-democratic reformers. The liberal republicans slunk out of effective existence "just as cowardly, mealy-mouthed, broken-spirited, and incapable of fighting" as they had been brutal in shooting down workers; they were through.¹⁴ The Party of Order had helped Bonaparte to hound them and their Constituent Assembly out of existence, thereby helping to make parliamentarism a hollow shell, a shell which Bonaparte could easily crack later when he in turn had to get rid of his allies.*

With this turn in the situation, Marx pauses for an interim generaliza-

* Two decades later, Marx made the point more broadly:

In their uninterrupted crusade against the producing masses they [the bourgeois parliamentarians] were, however, bound not only to invest the executive with continually increased powers of repression, but at the same time to divest their own parliamentary stronghold—the National Assembly—one by one, of all its own means of defense against the Executive. The Executive, in the person of Louis Bonaparte, turned them out. The natural offspring of the Party-of-Order Republic was the Second Empire [of Bonaparte].¹⁵

tion. In the first French Revolution, the shift of political dominance from the Constitutionalists to the Girondins and then to the Jacobins followed an "ascending line": that is, as each political tendency brought the revolution as far as it itself could go, it was "thrust aside by the bolder ally that stands behind it." Now we have the reverse process; we are watching a revolution as it follows a descending line:

The proletarian party appears as an appendage of the petty-bourgeois democratic party. It is betrayed and dropped by the latter on April 16, May 15, and in the June days. The democratic party, in its turn, leans on the shoulders of the bourgeois-republican party. The bourgeois-republicans no sooner believe themselves well established than they shake off the troublesome comrade and support themselves on the shoulders of the party of Order. The party of Order hunches its shoulders, lets the bourgeois-republicans tumble and throws itself on the shoulders of armed force. . . . Each party kicks back at the one behind, which presses upon it, and leans against the one in front, which pushes backwards. . . .¹⁶

In this situation, Marx explains, the period "comprises the most motley mixture of crying contradictions," contradictions which he proceeds to list in a brilliant vein of black humor.¹⁷

Among these contradictions was one which also provides the key for the next period. We have already mentioned it: the fact that the united royalists of the Party of Order could remain united only on the terrain of the republic which they both detested; for as soon as restoration of monarchy came on the agenda, they split on the royal house to be restored. Monarchism, which they shared, divided them; republicanism, which they hated, united them. This split among the royalists reflected more than simply the opposition of lily to tricolor:

Under the Bourbons, *big landed property* had governed, with its priests and lackeys; under the Orleans, high finance, large-scale industry, large-scale trade, that is, *capital*, with its retinue of lawyers, professors, and smooth-tongued orators. The [Bourbon] Legitimate Monarchy was merely the political expression of the hereditary rule of the lords of the soil, as the [Orleanist] July Monarchy was only the political expression of the usurped rule of the bourgeois parvenus. What kept the two factions apart, therefore, was not any so-called principles; it was their material conditions of existence, two different kinds of property; it was the old

contrast between town and country, the rivalry between capital and landed property.¹⁸

Marx adds an important note on the relationship between these two rival forms of property, which qualifies the rivalry:

Orleanists and Legitimists found themselves side by side in the republic, with equal claims. If each side wished to effect the *restoration* of its *own* royal house against the other, that merely signified that each of the *two great interests* into which the *bourgeoisie* is split—landed property and capital—sought to restore its own supremacy and the subordination of the other. We speak of two interests of the bourgeoisie, for large landed property, despite its feudal coquetry and pride of race, has been rendered thoroughly bourgeois by the development of modern society. Thus the Tories of England long imagined that they were enthusiastic about monarchy, the church, and the beauties of the old English Constitution, until the day of danger wrung from them the confession that they are enthusiastic only about *ground rent*.

Under the corporate business title of the Party of Order, this united front of royalists “exercised more unrestricted and sterner domination” over the rest of society than had ever been possible for it under either the Bourbons or Louis Philippe. Only “under the form of the parliamentary republic” could these two royalist divisions of the bourgeoisie pool their strength, and thus establish “the rule of their [whole] class instead of the regime of a privileged faction of it.”¹⁹

But it was not only royalist sentiments which made these “republicans” hate and fear the republic:

Instinct taught them that the republic, true enough, makes their political rule complete, but at the same time undermines its social foundation, since they must now confront the subjugated classes and contend against them without mediation, without the concealment afforded by the crown. . . . It was a feeling of weakness that caused them to recoil from the pure conditions of their own class rule and to yearn for the former more incomplete, more undeveloped and precisely on that account less dangerous forms of this rule [that is, monarchist forms].²⁰

We pass over the section in which Marx summarizes how the Party of Order next proceeded to smash its remaining adversary in parliament,

the party to the left of it, previously called the petty-bourgeois democracy or Social-Democracy—the pinkish reformers led by Ledru-Rollin.* Suffice to say that in this way the Party of Order also tore down the Constitution and parliamentary prestige, facilitating Bonaparte's subsequent operation. With the reformist left put out of action, the Party of Order remained alone as the dominant force in parliament, and thus isolated, confronted the executive power which was named Bonaparte.

4. STATE GIGANTISM VERSUS DEMOCRACY

As an individual, Louis Bonaparte was a political adventurer. He was neither the first nor the last such type to make his adventure successful by gearing it to the historical need of the moment. Up to this point, the dominant politicians had tended to scorn him as a nonentity, as unnecessary; but these same politicians were now in process of making themselves not only unnecessary but impossible. A vacuum was being created by their inability to rule, that is, by the inability of the bourgeoisie to rule as a class, which they reflected. The adventurer's game was to move into this vacuum, thereby making himself useful, and finally necessary, to a class which could not rule in any other form.

There was no doubt that the two-headed bourgeoisie ruled the socioeconomic domain (civil society); but it was paralyzed in the attempt to develop the state forms through which it could effectively wield the reins of power in the political domain. When civil society is paralyzed, there is only the state power to take hold of things and keep them working. At the given moment, this meant Bonaparte.

Bonaparte's next step was to detach the cabinet (ministry) itself from parliamentary control, and convert it into an agency of the executive. The Party of Order lost every "lever of executive power." Marx explains the significance of this step in a passage of great importance:

It is immediately obvious that in a country like France, where the executive power commands an army of officials numbering more than half a million individuals and therefore constantly maintains

* Besides this section in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*,²¹ the same ground had been covered in even greater detail in *The Class Struggles in France*.²² This material will be important for another subject, the nature of social-reformism.

an immense mass of interests and livelihoods, in the most absolute dependence . . .

We interrupt to note that, while Marx wrote this passage in 1852 and of "a country like France," the picture he painted is increasingly true of both the capitalist and "Communist" states in our own time; hence this passage should be read with contemporary eyes. To continue:

. . . where the state enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends, and tutors civil society from its most comprehensive manifestations of life down to its most insignificant stirrings, from its most general modes of being to the private existence of individuals; where through the most extraordinary centralization this parasitic body acquires a ubiquity, an omniscience, a capacity for accelerated mobility and an elasticity which finds a counterpart only in the helpless dependence, in the loose shapelessness of the actual body politic—it is obvious that in such a country the National Assembly forfeits all real influence when it loses command of the ministerial posts, if it does not at the same time simplify the administration of the state, reduce the army of officials as far as possible and, finally, let civil society and public opinion create organs of their own, independent of the governmental power.²³

Marx's remedy for this gigantism of the state was going to be even more drastic later; the point now is his diagnosis of the condition. The bourgeoisie (he goes on to explain) was incapable of opposing this development; its contradiction was that it was simultaneously disarmed and defended by one and the same process, cured and castrated by the same operation:

But it is precisely with the maintenance of that extensive state machine in its numerous ramifications that the *material interests* of the French bourgeoisie are interwoven in the closest fashion. Here it finds posts for its surplus population and makes up in the form of state salaries for what it cannot pocket in the form of profit, interest, rents, and honorariums. On the other hand, its *political interests* compelled it to increase daily the repressive measures and therefore the resources and the personnel of the state power, while at the same time it had to wage an uninterrupted war against public opinion and mistrustfully mutilate, cripple, the independent organs of the social movement, where it did not succeed in amputating them entirely. Thus the French bourgeoisie was compelled by its class position to annihilate, on

the one hand, the vital conditions of all parliamentary power, and therefore likewise of its own, and to render irresistible, on the other hand, the executive power hostile to it.²⁴

The bourgeoisie suffered from another contradiction. It could hope to stand up politically to Bonaparte's state apparatus not just by mobilizing moneybags but by mobilizing the people behind it. Yet "never did it display more ostentatiously the insignia of domination" in its capacity as an exploiting class. A symbol was its reestablishment of the wine tax, which hit the peasantry, already burdened by low grain prices. Out of social fear, the bourgeoisie leaned on the clergy for "the superintendence of the French mind," on the gendarme for the superintendence of action, and on bureaucratic prefects and spies to forestall subversion.²⁵

And the slightest reform was denounced as "*Socialism!*" (This is 1850, not the 1950s.) "Even bourgeois liberalism is declared *socialistic*. . . ." There was class logic for this apparent silliness, as usual:

The bourgeoisie had a true insight into the fact that all the weapons which it had forged against feudalism turned their points against itself, that all the means of education which it had produced rebelled against its own civilization, that all the gods which it had created had fallen away from it. It understood that all the so-called bourgeois liberties and organs of progress attacked and menaced its *class rule* at its social foundation and its political summit simultaneously, and had therefore become "*socialistic*." In this menace and this attack it rightly discerned the secret of socialism, whose import and tendency it judges more correctly than so-called socialism knows how to judge itself. . . .²⁶

Along this road there followed "the logical conclusion that its [the bourgeoisie's] *own parliamentary regime*, that its *political rule* in general" must also be condemned as "socialistic." For its political rule under democratic forms opened the door to the use of these same weapons against its social rule, against capitalism. The parliamentary regime created "unrest" where the bourgeoisie needed tranquillity (apathy).

The parliamentary regime lives by discussion; how shall it forbid discussion? Every interest, every social institution, is here transformed into general ideas, debated as ideas; how shall any interest, any institution, sustain itself above thought and impose itself as an article of faith? . . . [T]he debating club in parliament is

necessarily supplemented by debating clubs in the salons and the pothouses. . . . The parliamentary regime leaves everything to the decisions of majorities; how shall the great majorities outside parliament not want to decide? When you play the fiddle at the top of the state, what else is to be expected but that those down below dance?²⁷

Here Marx is making his first detailed analysis of the basic incompatibility of capitalism with democracy; the analysis will be supplemented later when he works out the revolutionary alternative to parliamentarism.

5. THE KEY TO BONAPARTISM

Marx comes to the following conclusion:

Thus . . . the bourgeoisie confesses that its own interests dictate that it should be delivered from the danger of its *own rule*; that, in order to restore tranquillity in the country, its bourgeois parliament must, first of all, be given its quietus; that in order to preserve its social power intact, its political power must be broken . . .

Here we come to the key to Bonapartism: *In order to preserve the bourgeoisie's social power, its political power must be broken. . . .*

. . . that the individual bourgeois can continue to exploit the other classes and to enjoy undisturbed property, family, religion, and order only on condition that their class be condemned along with the other classes to like political nullity; that in order to save its purse, it must forfeit the crown, and the sword that is to safeguard it must at the same time be hung over its own head as a sword of Damocles.²⁸

So Bonaparte was able to get away with breaking the political rule of the bourgeoisie as a class, expressed through its parliamentary domination. He wooed the workers with demagogic if empty reform schemes, with the help of Saint-Simonian "socialists," at the same time that he allied himself with high finance in the cabinet. He let the parliamentarians lull themselves with electoral "victories" while he gathered the police powers into his own hands. When the bourgeois parliamentarians

showed their hand by outlawing universal suffrage, he came out for the suffrage, knowing that the levers to manipulate it were in his hands alone. And he organized his storm troops (called the Society of December 10) mainly out of the disintegrating "scum of all classes," the lumpenproletariat.

While he usurped the political power of the Assembly, he shouted that "France demands tranquillity." And the bourgeoisie did demand tranquillity. The Assembly was afraid to fight back: "By so doing it would give the nation its marching orders, and it fears nothing more than that the nation should move."²⁹ The danger of being defended from below is worse than that of being defeated from above: such is the principle of the Kerenskys in every epoch.

This socially determined cravenness of the bourgeoisie allowed Bonaparte to take over control of the army unchallenged; and thus "the Party of Order declares that the bourgeoisie has forfeited its vocation to rule."³⁰ The parliamentary majority opposed to Bonaparte fell apart, as desertions from its camp multiplied—"out of sheer egoism, which makes the ordinary bourgeois always inclined to sacrifice the general interest of his class for this or that private motive." The Assembly became a mere talking-shop, but the deputies went through the motions of winning meaningless parliamentary victories. This is "that peculiar malady . . . *parliamentary cretinism*"³¹—that is, the illusion that activity in parliament has a meaning independent of the social struggle outside.

Even now, with economic discontent growing among the lower classes, the Party of Order could have won back some mass support, thereby possibly throwing Bonaparte into its arms; but all Bonaparte's puppets had to do to stop this was "to conjure up the red specter."

Instead of letting itself be intimidated by the executive power with the prospect of fresh disturbances, it ought rather to have allowed the class struggle a little elbowroom, so as to keep the executive power dependent on itself. But it did not feel equal to the task of playing with fire.³²

By a maneuver threatening revision of the constitution, Bonaparte further set the two royalist factions of the Party of Order against each other, the split weakening both. Outside parliament, the mass of the bourgeoisie now yearned only for a "strong government," one which would ensure tranquil conditions for business and security against economic discontent. The leaders of high finance had gone over to

Bonaparte even before this. The *London Economist* declared: "The President is the guardian of order, and is now recognized as such on every Stock Exchange of Europe."

By the aristocracy of finance must here be understood not merely the great loan promoters and speculators in public funds, in regard to whom it is immediately obvious that their interests coincide with the interests of state power. All modern finance, the whole of the banking business, is interwoven in the closest fashion with public credit. A part of their business capital is necessarily invested and put out at interest in quickly convertible public funds. Their deposits, the capital placed at their disposal and distributed by them among merchants and industrialists, are partly derived from the dividends of holders of government securities. If in every epoch the stability of the state power signified Moses and the prophets to the entire money market and to the priests of this money market, why not all the more so today, when every deluge threatens to sweep away the old states, and the old state debts with them?

Thus the growing interpenetration of finance capital and the state power was a weapon in Bonaparte's hands.

The industrial bourgeoisie also demanded tranquillity and strong government especially with the onset of business depression: "It proved that the struggle to maintain its *public* interests, its own *class interests*, its *political power*, only troubled and upset it, as it was a disturbance of private business."³³ Above all, the bourgeoisie demanded stability, and turned against its own parliamentary mouthpieces and ideologists, whose very squirmings were now upsetting to the status quo. By such servility to Bonaparte, "It declared unequivocally that it longed to get rid of its own political rule in order to get rid of the troubles and dangers of ruling."

At the same time, "This bourgeoisie, which every moment sacrificed its general class interests, that is, its political interests, to the narrowest and most sordid private interests," had the gall to denounce "the stupidity of the masses, the vile multitude" for the state of affairs³⁴—the same masses it had helped shoot down every time they raised their head.

"Now picture to yourself the French bourgeois, how in the throes of this business panic his trade-crazy brain is tortured, set in a whirl and stunned by rumors of coups d'état and the restoration of universal

suffrage" until he "madly snorts at his parliamentary republic: '*Rather an end with terror than terror without end!*'"³⁵ Under all these conditions, Bonaparte could finally pull off his coup d'état of December 2, 1851 without successful opposition.

6. THE AUTONOMIZED STATE AND THE CLASSES

Now the executive power had smashed the legislative power; now it seemed that "all classes, equally impotent and equally mute, fell on their knees before the rifle butt." In this way the executive power was reduced "to its purest expression," it was set up "as the sole target," against which the subsequent forces of revolution would concentrate.³⁶

"This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization . . . this appalling parasitic body," summarizes Marx, had been created by the absolute monarchy and then proliferated into "a state authority whose work is divided and centralized as in a factory." It had been strengthened as a centralized repressive power by the parliamentary republic in struggle against revolution. "All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it," notes Marx, in an early reference to the revolutionary task of dismantling the old state machine.* "The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor."³⁸

Under the previous French regimes, the state bureaucracy, "however much it strove for power of its own," had been only the means through which the bourgeoisie prepared or carried out its class rule. "Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made itself completely independent." But this apparent independence of the state was conditional: "... And yet the state power is not suspended in mid-air. Bonaparte represents a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, *the smallholding peasants*."³⁹ Represents here meant that Bonaparte presented himself as the defender of the peasantry and thus based his power on them, a class "incapable of enforcing

* Four years after Marx, Tocqueville noted the same pattern—with approbation: "... since '89 the administrative system has always stood firm amid the debacle of political systems. . . . For though in each successive revolution the administration was, so to speak, decapitated, its body survived intact and active. The same duties were performed by the same civil servants. . . ."³⁷

their class interest in their own name.”* This, qualified Marx, was true only of the conservative bulk of the peasantry, not of its radicalized elements who were able to look beyond their small land-parcels.⁴¹ But it was the conservative bulk of the peasantry that provided both the votes and the armed force for the establishment of the military dictatorship; as Engels later summarized it, “Louis Napoleon founded the Empire . . . on the votes of the peasants and on the bayonets of their sons, the soldiers of the army.”⁴²

Resting on this backward mass, the executive power manipulated a simulacrum of universal suffrage as a plebiscitary device. Using the state power, Bonaparte nourished “an enormous bureaucracy, well-gallooned and well-fed . . . an artificial caste, for which the maintenance of his regime becomes a bread-and-butter question.”⁴³ But while the broad butt of this autonomized state rested on the peasant mass as its support, Bonaparte knew well where economic power lay:

As the executive authority which has made itself an independent power, Bonaparte feels it to be his mission to safeguard “bourgeois order.” But the strength of this bourgeois order lies in the middle class. He looks on himself, therefore, as the representative of the middle class and issues decrees in this sense.

But there was a permanent contradiction in Bonapartism:

Nevertheless, he [Bonaparte] is somebody solely due to the fact that he has broken the political power of the middle class and daily breaks it anew. Consequently, he looks on himself as the adversary of the political and literary power of the middle class. But by protecting its material power, he generates its political power anew.⁴⁴

And in fact, as we know, the political power of the bourgeoisie *was* going to regenerate itself eventually under the protection which Bonapartism gave to its socioeconomic power. “Industry and trade, hence the business affairs of the middle class, are to prosper in hothouse fashion under the strong government.”⁴⁵ At this point, it was Marx’s prediction; when Engels looked back after four decades, it was possible merely to report:

* Looking back in 1871, Marx put it this way: “The peasants were the passive economical basis of the Second Empire”; or again, the Second Empire was “supported by the passive adherence of the peasantry. . . .”⁴⁰ (See Chapter 20, pp. 499 and 501, for additional comment on the phrase, “the state power is not suspended in mid-air.”)

Louis Bonaparte took the political power from the capitalists under the pretext of protecting them, the bourgeois, from the workers, and on the other hand the workers from them; but in return his rule encouraged speculation and industrial activity—in a word, the upsurge and enrichment of the whole bourgeoisie to an extent hitherto unknown.⁴⁶

7. BONAPARTISM: THE CLASS EQUILIBRIUM

On December 2, 1851, when the adventurer Bonaparte established his dictatorship over France, no political observer or thinker understood that something new and different of world-historic importance had just occurred in the modern world, whatever analogues existed in the past. That applied to Marx and Engels like everyone else—for at least one week.

Engels' next-day letter to Marx was punctuated by words like *comedy*, *farce*, *silly*, *infantile*, *stupid*, and never left this superficial level; there was no hint of an insight into what had taken place.⁴⁷ As we have mentioned, this common contemporary reaction left its mark in the first sentence of Marx's great essay, a sentence which is as undeservedly famous as it is shallow. Leaving aside Hegel's inflated generalization that "all" great historical events occur twice, "the first time as tragedy, the second as farce,"⁴⁸ and granting the comedic elements in Bonaparte's rise to power, as in Hitler's, it was a concession to the shortsighted punditry of the time to view the advent of Bonapartism as a farce. This initial reaction was refuted by the rest of the work.*

Marx's first letter to Engels about the event avows frankly that he is "quite bewildered" by these tragicomic events in Paris.⁴⁹ He ventures the suggestion that

At any rate it seems to me that the situation has been improved rather than deteriorated by the coup d'état. It is easier to cope with Bonaparte than would have been possible with the National Assembly and its generals. And the dictatorship of the National Assembly was standing at the gate.⁵⁰

* It appears that Marx wrote Chapter 1 in about three weeks after the coup d'état and sent it off for publication. Chapter 2 seems to have been written in January; Chapters 3–5 in February; the whole was not finished until March.⁴⁹ It is not until Chapters 3–4 that Marx's essential theory of Bonapartism is set down.

This was a week after the coup. The letter underlines how much Marx had to learn, very fast, about the nature of the state and revolution as illuminated by the phenomenon of Bonapartism.

What did he learn? Let us sum up the French experience on how the state machine achieved a formal autonomy from political control by the bourgeoisie or any other class of society, while the bourgeoisie surrendered all forms and channels of its political rule in exchange for the preservation of its socioeconomic dominance.

1. *The state moves toward autonomization insofar as an unresolved class struggle balances the power of contending classes against each other.*

The "secret" of Bonaparte's victory, wrote Marx in 1858, lay "in the mutual prostration of the antagonist parties," with the help of the onset of a period of prosperity following his coup. "It was the total apathy—the politically used-up, blasé state of mind—of these classes [the middle classes] which allowed Louis Napoleon to establish his power," wrote Engels the same year.⁵¹ The precondition was mutual exhaustion of the contending classes in a struggle without issue.

The state power's balancing act could be effective because it could demagogically appeal to each class against the others in a situation that offered no good alternative to demagogy. Bonaparte, wrote Marx in 1856, "made his coup d'état on two diametrically opposite pretenses: on the one hand proclaiming it was his mission to save the bourgeoisie and 'material order' from the Red anarchy to be let loose in May 1852 [when elections were due]; and on the other hand, to save the working people from the middle-class despotism concentrated in the National Assembly."⁵² But the class resentments whipped up could not be fought out:

As against both the workers and the capitalists [wrote Engels in a pamphlet closely checked by Marx] Bonapartism distinguishes itself by preventing them from coming to blows. That is, it protects the bourgeoisie from forceful attacks by the workers, promotes a little peaceful skirmishing between the two classes, and, for the rest, deprives both of them of any trace of political power. No right to organize, no right to assemble, no freedom of the press; universal suffrage under such bureaucratic pressure that opposition votes are almost impossible; a police-economy which was unheard of up to now even in police-ridden France. Moreover, a section of the bourgeoisie as well as of the workers is

directly *bought*: the former through a colossal credit swindle, whereby the money of the small capitalists is lured into the pockets of the big capitalists; the latter through colossal state works, which, alongside the natural, independent proletariat, concentrate an artificial pro-Empire proletariat, dependent on the government, in the big cities. Finally, national pride is flattered by apparently heroic wars. . . . [This regime] exists only to keep the workers under a tight rein with respect to the bourgeoisie.⁵³

In an article written about the same time that Marx was finishing *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Engels explained for Chartist readers the "Real Causes Why the French Proletarians Remained Comparatively Inactive in December Last," that is, in face of Bonaparte's coup. First of all he explains that "whatever Louis Napoleon took from others, he took it not from the working-classes" but from the middle classes.

°°Not that Louis Napoleon would not, quite as gladly, have robbed the working-classes of anything that might appear desirable to him, but it is a fact that in December last [1851] the French working-classes could not be robbed of anything, because everything worth taking had already been taken from them during the three years and a half of middleclass parliamentary government that had followed the great defeats of June 1848. . . .

Thus the working-classes had, at the moment of the late coup d'état, very little, if anything to lose in the chapter of political privileges. But, on the other hand, the middle and capitalist class were at that time in possession of political omnipotence. . . . And for them it was indeed a hard case to be robbed of all this . . . and to be reduced at once to the state of political nullity to which they themselves had reduced the working people. . . .

The struggle, then, on the 2nd of December lay principally between the middle-classes and Louis Napoleon, the representative of the army.

But while the workers could hardly be moved to shed their blood in order to fight the enemy of their enemy, that did not mean they had no interest in the outcome, even if they had no "direct political privilege" to lose. What they had to lose were opportunities to struggle for power.

Thus, they could not let the occasion pass without showing the two opposing forces that there was a third power in the field, which, if momentarily removed from the theatre of official and parliamentary contentions, was yet ever ready to step in as soon

as the scene was changed to its own sphere of action,—to the street.

The workers' problem was this: If they rose against Bonaparte, wouldn't they simply be helping to restore the rule of the bourgeois class enemy which had slaughtered their militants? "And if they at once declared for a revolutionary government, would they not, as was actually the case in the provinces, frighten the middle-class so much as to drive them to a union with Louis Napoleon and the army?"⁵⁴

Thus the working class was in no position to strike out for itself, and declined to go into the streets on behalf of one or the other enemy. Under these conditions, the class struggle was not abolished but immobilized in equilibrium.

The whole secret of Louis Napoleon's success is this, that by the traditions of his name he has been placed in a position to hold, for a moment, *the balance of the contending classes of French society*. For it is a fact that under the cloak of the state of siege by military despotism which now veils France, the struggle of the different classes of society is going on as fiercely as ever.

Though not by *forcible* means at the moment.

Engels emphasizes that Bonaparte's opportunity came only after *all* the social classes had demonstrated their incapacity to rule, and thus exhausted not only themselves but their credit. After the February Revolution had upset the power of the "large bankers and stock-jobbers," each class had a shot at power: first, the workingmen "during the days of the first revolutionary excitement"; then the republican petty bourgeoisie under Ledru-Rollin; then the bourgeois republicans under Cavaignac; lastly the bourgeois royalists of the National Assembly majority. "None of these classes had been able to hold fast the power they for a moment possessed. . . ." The royalists, uniting the landed interest and the "moneyed interest," feared lest power return to the hands "of the working-class, who themselves might be expected to have become fitter to turn it to account." Making use of all these divisions, Bonaparte used the peasant vote, the lumpen-demonstrators, and the army's force "to step in and assume a more or less absolute sway over those classes, none of which, after a four years' bloody struggle, had proved strong enough to seize upon a lasting supremacy." Hence the success of the coup.

Thus the reign of Louis Napoleon is not superseding the class-war. It merely suspends for a while the bloody outbreaks which mark from time to time the efforts of this or that class to gain or maintain political power. None of these classes were strong enough to venture at a new battle, with any chance of success. The very division of classes favored, for the time being, Napoleon's projects.⁵⁵

In résumé, in the last section of the article:

We repeat: Louis Napoleon came to power because the open war carried on during the last four years between the different classes of French society have [*sic*] worn them out, had shattered their respective fighting armies, and because under such circumstances, for a time at least, the struggle of these classes can only be carried on in a peaceful and legal way. . . . Under these circumstances it is in a manner of speaking in the interest of all contending classes that a so-called *strong government* should exist which might repress and keep down all those minor, local, and scattered outbreaks of open hostility, which without leading to any result, trouble the development of the struggle in its new shape by retarding the recovery of strength for a new pitched battle. This circumstance may in some way explain the undeniable general acquiescence of the French in the present government.⁵⁶

The repeated emphasis on the stalemate of the contending classes may well recall the beginning of the *Communist Manifesto*, which stated the historical generalization that the class struggle has always "ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."⁵⁷ Neither of these dénouements was yet the case, for the process had not ended; it was something in between, for the contending classes were not ruined but exhausted and deadlocked. The "recovery of strength for a new pitched battle" was still ahead.

8. BONAPARTISM: SOCIETY IN A PLASTER CAST

2. *The state moves toward autonomization insofar as there is no other alternative to prevent society from shaking itself apart in inter-necine conflict without issue.*

This summarizes much that we have already seen in Marx's and Engels' discussions. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire* and elsewhere, Marx stressed that the June defeat pushed the working-class threat to the background, but that does not mean it was pushed out of the picture. Behind the impotence of the upper classes to resolve the issue of power was their fear of moving in any direction that might open the way for a renewed proletarian assault.

°°When the volcanic upheavings of 1848 [wrote Marx and Engels] suddenly threw before the eyes of the astonished liberal middle classes of Europe the giant specter of an armed working class, struggling for political and social emancipation, the middle classes, to whom the safe possession of their capital was of immensely higher importance than direct political power, sacrificed this power, and all the liberties for which they had fought, to secure the suppression of the proletarian revolution. The middle class declared itself politically a minor, unfit to manage the affairs of the nation, and acquiesced in military and bureaucratic despotism.⁵⁸

In the following summary view that Marx included in his essay on the Paris Commune, we direct attention to the last sentence:

The [Bonapartist] empire, with the coup d'état for its certificate of birth, universal suffrage for its sanction, and the sword for its sceptre, professed to rest upon the peasantry, the large mass of producers not directly involved in the struggle of capital and labour. It professed to save the working class by breaking down Parliamentarism, and, with it, the undisguised subserviency of Government to the propertied classes. It professed to save the propertied classes by upholding their economic supremacy over the working class; and, finally, it professed to unite all classes by reviving for all the chimera of national glory. In reality, it was the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation.⁵⁹

The autonomized state, then, steps into a vacuum created by the frustration of class power on all sides.

3. *The autonomized state provides the conditions for the necessary modernization of society when no extant class is capable of carrying out this imperative under its own political power.*

In the present case, modernization meant industrialization above all,

and industrialization meant bourgeoisification as long as the working class was still too immature to organize society under its own aegis. The Bonapartist state had to adopt the bourgeoisie's economic aims and interests as its very own: not simply as a concession to a business partner, but in its own interests as well. It needed a modern industrial and economic development to pursue its own aggrandizement too, in this era when imperial and military aspirations had become toothless without an economic capacity to give them bite.

The propertied classes could well afford to be content with the "strong government" which assured their interests along with its own, wrote Marx:

°°When Louis Napoleon ... vaulted to a throne ... the sovereign princes and aristocracies of Europe, the great land-owners, manufacturers, *rentiers*, and stockjobbers, almost to a man, exulted in his success as their own. "The crimes are his," was their general chuckle, "but the fruits are ours. Louis Napoleon reigns in the Tuileries; while we reign even more securely and despotically on our domains, in our factories, on the Bourse, and in our countinghouses. Down with all Socialism! *Vive l'Empereur!*"

And next to the Military, the fortunate usurper plied all his arts to attach the rich and powerful, the thrifty and speculating, to his standard.⁶⁰

The Bonapartist state served the socioeconomic interests of the classes that owned the instruments of production; and these propertied classes, in turn, willingly plied their profit-taking under the political domination of the Bonapartist state, as long as it did not get in their way. In these terms there was a special symbiosis between the socioeconomic ruling classes and the state they did not control directly.

But this arrangement bore the seed of its own dissolution. Accelerated modernization meant, on the one hand, that a maturing bourgeoisie would begin to feel its oats, and on the other, that the Bonapartist state would begin to outlive the value of the services it rendered to the socioeconomic order. In Chapter 18 we will return to the regime of Louis Bonaparte as it reaches the stage of dissolution; but first we must follow Marx and Engels as they broaden their historical conception of the nature of the Bonapartist state itself.

16 | BONAPARTISM: THE BISMARCKIAN EXTENSION

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx worked out the class analysis of a particular historical development taking place in one country. In contrast, consider the following passage by Engels written over thirty years later, in which he succinctly sums up much that both he and Marx had written in the meantime.

Engels had just explained that the state is “as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class.” Only *as a rule*—not always? There are, then, exceptions to the rule that the class which dominates economically also dominates politically, that is, controls the state machinery?

By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires for the moment a certain degree of independence of both. Such was the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which held the balance between the nobility and the class of burghers [*Bürgertum*]; such was the Bonapartism of the First [under Napoleon I] and still more of the Second French Empire [Louis Bonaparte], which played off the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. The latest performance of this kind . . . is the new German Empire of the Bismarckian nation: here capitalists and workers are balanced against each other and equally cheated for the benefit of the decadent Prussian cabbage-Junkers.¹

A few pages later, we are reminded that “The cohesive force of civilized society is the state, which in all typical periods is exclusively

the state of the ruling class": plainly it is not so in atypical periods. But "in all cases [it] remains essentially a machine for keeping down the oppressed, exploited class."² What is in question, then, is not the class-repressive function of the state, which is fundamental to its role, but the variable relationship of the state to the ruling classes.

This applies not only to the regime of the Second Empire but that of Napoleon I, not only to France but Bismarckian Germany, and not only to the modern era but also the era of absolute monarchy. Later we will see still other types of regimes discussed in terms of this pattern.

We are dealing with an extension of the concept of Bonapartism made by Marx and Engels after the original analysis, an extension in which Bonapartism is not merely broadened in application but eventually becomes itself a special case of a still broader concept. These extended concepts of Bonapartism will be the subject of the next four chapters.

The application of the concept of the Bonapartist state to Bismarckian Germany was no great leap in itself. This step was adumbrated by Marx by the end of the 1850s, as the Prussian monarchy showed that it was carrying out certain aims and aspirations of the bourgeoisie while sternly excluding its representatives from political power. At this point the goal involved was the unification of Germany, albeit under Prussian hegemony and without Austria ("Little Germany"): the realization of a progressive aim in a reactionary form.

The Reaction executes the program of the revolution. In this apparent contradiction lies the strength of Napoleonism [Bonapartism], which still today regards itself as the mandatary of the revolution of 1789. . . . To be sure, this program of revolution in the hands of Reaction turns into a satire of the revolutionary strivings involved, and thus into the deadliest weapon in the hands of the irreconcilable foe. The Reaction carries out the demands of the revolution in just the same way as Louis Bonaparte carries out those of the Italian nationalist party.³

Of course, Bonaparte carried out the demands of the Italian nationalists in the sense that he wanted to "liberate" Italy by replacing Austrian rule with his own. The implicit analogy was that Bismarck carried out the demands of the progressive bourgeoisie by unifying Germany—under the aegis of reactionary Prussian Junkerdom. Socially, the analogy was somewhat less than complete, for while the substitution of French oppression for Austrian would change little for Italians,

the unification of Germany *even under reactionary auspices* would and did benefit the bourgeoisie by spurring the modernization of the society.

But the other analogy, between Bismarck's course and Bonapartism, was closer. Writing to Engels in 1862, Marx connected the enthusiasm of the German bourgeois progressives for the Bismarck cabinet with their enthusiasm for Louis Bonaparte: "Now they see what a 'Bonapartist' cabinet means in Prussia."⁴ The Prussian Bonapartism of Bismarck was indeed welcomed by the bourgeoisie, which found its economic benefits more interesting than constitutional aspirations, even though Marx damned their dereliction: "That she [Germany] finds her *unity* at first in the *Prussian barracks* is a punishment she has amply merited."⁵

1. BISMARCK'S COUP

It was Engels who took up and developed the analogy between Bismarck's and Bonaparte's regimes, first in correspondence with Marx and then in a major work.*

For him, the turning point was Bismarck's announcement in April 1866 summoning a German parliament elected by universal suffrage. In preparation for war with Austria, it was the rabidly antidemocratic Junker monarchist who had become the champion of universal suffrage,

* On a couple of occasions Engels referred back to the fact that it was he who had specialized on this question, at least in print: in an 1883 letter he mentioned that the characteristics of the Bonapartist monarchy "were elaborated by Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* and by me in *The Housing Question*, II, and elsewhere. . . ."⁶ On the other hand, in an 1880 article he wrote that the General Council of the International had written "immediately after the war of 1870" that "You, Herr Bismarck, have overthrown the Bonapartist regime in France *only in order to reestablish it at home!*"⁷ This would seem to refer to the council's Second Address on the War (September 1871), written by Marx; but there is no such statement there. Marx's report to the 1872 (Hague) congress contained a passage a little closer but not by much, in any case not related to Bonapartism. Assuming that Engels was acquainted with Marx's drafts for *The Civil War in France*, he may have been thinking of a passage in the Second Draft: "The Prussians who in coarse war exultation of triumph look at the agonies of French society and exploit them with the sordid calculation of a Shylock, and the flippant coarseness of the Krautjunker, are themselves already punished by the transplantation of the [Bonapartist] Empire to the German soil."⁸

not the bourgeois progressives. It was a sort of coup d'état in itself, the 18th Brumaire (or 2nd December) of Otto von Bismarck.

Before this, Engels, like Marx, had been tentative about seeing "Bonapartism" in the Prussian development. In an 1864 letter he had casually represented Bismarck as wanting to emulate the French emperor.⁹ In an 1865 pamphlet on Prussian military and social policy, he had included a direct discussion of Bonapartism as a possible recourse of reaction, though the description of Bonapartism was pitched in French terms only. He had even explicitly raised the question, "what if the government were to . . . decree direct universal suffrage?"¹⁰

Four days after Bismarck's announcement, Engels ventured, in a letter to Marx, a first sketch of Bonapartism as an extended concept bearing on bourgeois development in general, not only locally.

So Bismarck's universal-suffrage coup has been made, even if without his Lassalle [who, now dead, had urged him to this course]. It looks as if the German bourgeois will acquiesce in it after some kicking, for Bonapartism is indeed the real religion of the modern bourgeoisie. It is becoming clearer and clearer to me that the bourgeoisie doesn't have the stuff to rule directly itself, and that therefore, where there is no oligarchy as there is here in England to take over, for good pay, the managing of state and society in the interest of the bourgeoisie, a Bonapartist semi-dictatorship is the normal form; it carries out the big material interests of the bourgeoisie even against the bourgeoisie, but deprives the bourgeoisie of any share in the ruling power itself. On the other hand, this dictatorship is itself, in turn, compelled to reluctantly adopt these material interests of the bourgeoisie. So now here we have Monsieur Bismarck adopting the program of the Nationalverein [the pro-Russian bourgeois liberals].¹¹

The political mechanism was, as in France, an equilibrium of classes, though not necessarily the same balance pattern of classes: Bismarck seeks "to play the Bonaparte as against the bourgeois with the Junkers behind him instead of peasants."¹² (In fact, Bismarck also counted on the Junkers' shepherding the peasant vote and on Prussophile leaders like the Lassalleans doing the same service in the working class.) Moreover, Engels saw that "Bonaparte's pupil, Bismarck" could not act simply as an agent of his own class, the Junkerdom. History had an ironic edge for Bismarck,

who, so as to be able to carry on for a few months an apparently feudal and absolutist rule inside the country, on the outside pursues the policies of the bourgeoisie °with a vengeance,° prepares the way for the rule of the bourgeoisie, enters onto roads where progress can be made only with liberal and even revolutionary methods, and thereby day after day throws their own principles in the faces of his own cabbage-Junkers.

The feudal party, he chuckles, "is now choking over the crap they have to eat by command of their own leader."¹³

Eventually Bismarckism will have to converge with bourgeois aspirations more and more:

Politically speaking, Bismarck will be obliged to base himself on the bourgeoisie, which he needs as against the princes. Perhaps not at this moment, since prestige and the army still suffice right now. But if only to make sure he has the necessary conditions for the central power with respect to parliament, he must give the bourgeoisie something, and the natural course of things will continually force him or his successors to fall back on the bourgeois again and again; so that even if Bismarck possibly avoids giving the bourgeoisie right now any more than he absolutely *has* to, still he is more and more pushed in the bourgeois direction.¹⁴

2. ENGELS' FIRST SKETCH

In 1872 Engels published a first sketch of the Bonapartist interpretation of Bismarckianism in his article on *The Housing Question*.

The context is important, for it comes right after his vigorous reassertion that "The state is nothing but the organized collective power of the possessing classes, the landowners and the capitalists, as against the exploited classes, the peasants and the workers." But, he asks, are the reactionaries right in claiming that in Germany, where the bourgeois do not rule as yet, "the state is still to a certain extent a power hovering independently over society, which for that very reason represents the collective interests of society and not those of a single class"? (One should note that there are two quite separate assertions involved here: one, that the state "hovers independently" over society;

and two, that it represents the collective interests of society.) Engels explains: "In reality, however, the state as it exists in Germany is likewise the necessary product of the social basis out of which it has developed." Whatever conclusions we may come to about this specific situation, the state will still be found explainable only in terms of the class structure of society, not primarily in terms of the "collective interests." In Prussia, Engels continues, the class structure looks as follows:

There exists side by side with a landowning aristocracy, which is still powerful, a comparatively young and extremely cowardly bourgeoisie, which up to the present has not won either direct political domination, as in France, or more or less indirect domination as in England. Side by side with these two classes, however, there exists a rapidly increasing proletariat which is intellectually highly developed and which is becoming more and more organized every day.

This becomes the class basis of the Bonapartist equilibrium:

Therefore, alongside of the basic condition of the old absolute monarchy, an equilibrium between the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, we find here the basic condition of modern Bonapartism, an equilibrium between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But both in the old absolute monarchy and in the modern Bonapartist monarchy the real governmental authority lies in the hands of a special caste of army officers and state officials.¹⁵

Note that, whereas at first (1866) Engels had interpreted the Bismarckian class equilibrium as balancing primarily bourgeois against Junkers, he now sees this relationship as the obsolescent component still hanging on from the era of absolute monarchy. The distinctively modern component of Bonapartism is the bourgeoisie-proletariat equilibrium. This had not been so clearly visible in the French model because the proletariat had been pushed temporarily into the background. As Engels wrote later, Bismarck's "whole Bonapartist game consists in playing off, in turn, the workers against the bourgeois and the bourgeois against the workers, and thereby doing both in the eye."¹⁶

What is this bureaucratic "caste" (a loose term for a social stratum which does not play the role of a separate class)? In Prussia it is

recruited partly out of its own ranks (father to son) and partly from the higher and lower aristocracy, "and least of all from the bourgeoisie." This caste enjoys a certain independence, but that does not mean the *state* is independent of class society: "The independence of this caste, which appears to occupy a position outside and, so to speak, above society, gives the state the semblance of independence in relation to society." But only the semblance. Under Prussian "pseudo-constitutionalism, a form which is at once both the present-day form of the dissolution of the old absolute monarchy and the form of existence of the Bonapartist monarchy," the old state forms are dissolving under the impact of industrial development.¹⁷

What is taking place is the social *fusion* of the governing bureaucracy and aristocracy with the bourgeoisie, through the growing bourgeoisification of the old ruling elements. The titled aristocrats enter "the whirlpool of speculation" in stocks, and the stock speculators enter the titled gentry. The bureaucrats, as well as the nobles, turn away from the traditional bureaucratic industry; embezzlement, in favor of corporation posts. As the elements of the old state decompose, "the non-bourgeois elements are becoming more bourgeois every day," and the transition quickens from the forms of the absolute monarchy to those of the Bonapartist monarchy. "In all economic questions the Prussian state is falling more and more into the hands of the bourgeoisie." The trend is held back only because the bourgeoisie itself is afraid of any of its own demands which also "provides the menacing proletariat with new weapons."

And if the political power, that is, Bismarck, is attempting to organize its own bodyguard proletariat [Lassalleans and other pro-Prussian elements] to keep the political activity of the bourgeoisie in check, what else is that if not a necessary and quite familiar Bonapartist recipe which pledges the state to nothing more, as far as the workers are concerned, than a few benevolent phrases and at the utmost to a minimum of state assistance for building societies à la Louis Bonaparte?¹⁸

The reparations exacted from defeated France (the "French milliards") "have given a new, short reprieve to the independence of the Prussian state machine in regard to society"¹⁹ by giving it an independent source of revenue, but being temporary, this cannot change the course of development.

In short: Engels does not take the wooden course of denying that, under Bonapartism, the state apparatus and the "caste" that operates it enjoy a certain autonomy with respect to the class society which they manage; but first, this autonomy is temporary—or better, conjunctural, that is, the outcome of a certain constellation of forces; and second, this fact does not in the least mean that the *state* is "a power hovering independently over society" or that it merely "represents the collective interests of society" rather than the actual resultant of class forces in a changing equilibrium.

True, this social reality could hardly be fully summed up in the aphorism that the state is "merely" a committee for managing the common affairs of the ruling class; but it illustrates that this aphorism is nothing more than an approximation, like Kepler's Laws of Motion in a far more exact science.

3. THE CLASS SHIFT

This first exposition of Bismarckian Bonapartism did not cover all the angles. In an article the following year, Engels emphasized the impotence and political emasculation of the bourgeoisie under the very regime that carried out its economic aspirations, while the Junkerdom that still seemed to be ruling politically was being undermined socially. For "Every government, including the most despotic, is compelled to govern with an eye on existing [social] relations, under pain of breaking its neck."

Junkerdom, a necessity for old Prussia, was an encumbrance on the "Reich." Just as Bismarck had been obliged to put through freedom of trade, freedom of movement, and other bourgeois reforms—albeit in bureaucratically deformed manner—contrary to his previous views, so also the irony of history finally condemned him, the Junker *par excellence*, to lay the ax to Junkerdom. . . .²⁰

But the bourgeoisie got what it needed, though what it got was bureaucratically deformed:

It took credit for the fact that Bismarck was compelled, by the historical position in which he had put Prussia and by the industrial progress of the last twenty years, to do that which the bourgeoisie itself had been too cowardly to carry through from 1848 to 1850. It did not even have the courage to force its Bismarck to carry out these little reforms in plain and simple bourgeois fashion, without making a police-state mess of it; it loudly exulted over the fact that Bismarck had to deal with its own demands of 1846 by—emasculating them. And, mind you, only its economic demands—things that a thousand Bismarcks could not have kept from being carried out even if they wanted to. As for *political* demands, turning over political power to the bourgeoisie, this sort of thing comes up in talk only as a concession to decency, at the most.

For fear of the class below, the bourgeoisie was happy to surrender political power to stronger hands, in exchange for cash payment:

The Prussian bourgeoisie does not *want* political dominance; it is rotten before attaining maturity; without having ever enjoyed political rule, it has already reached the same stage of degeneration that the French bourgeoisie attained after eighty years of struggle and a longer period of rule. *Panem et circenses*, bread and theatricals—that is what the demoralized Roman plebs asked of their emperor; *panem et circenses*, swindlers' profits and animal-like luxury—this is what is asked of its emperor not by the Prussian people but by the Prussian bourgeoisie. The Roman plebs together with their emperor were swept away by the German barbarians; behind the Prussian bourgeoisie towers the threatening figure of the German workers.²¹

This autonomized state had been strengthened by its military victories of the 1860s followed by the smashing triumph over France; and its very increase in strength made it necessary for it to *shift its class base*. Engels wrote in another essay a year later: "In this way the very victories of the Prussian army shifted the entire basis of the Prussian state structure; the Junker domination became ever more intolerable even for the government." For now a big European power had to be a *modern* power: socioeconomic modernization was a necessity for a Reich, an empire. And economic modernization reinforced another class shift:

At the same time, however, the extremely rapid industrial development caused the struggle between bourgeois and worker to supersede the struggle between Junker and bourgeois, so that internally also the social foundations of the old state underwent a complete transformation.

This brought up the distinction we saw before: the obsolescent component was the class equilibrium held over from the era of absolute monarchy; the modern component was the specifically Bonapartist equilibrium of bourgeoisie against proletariat.

The basic precondition for the monarchy, which had been slowly rotting since 1840, was the struggle between nobility and bourgeoisie, in which the monarchy held the balance. From the moment when it was no longer a question of protecting the nobility against the onrush of the bourgeoisie, but of protecting all propertied classes against the onrush of the working class, the old absolute monarchy had to go over completely to the form of state expressly devised for this purpose: *the Bonapartist monarchy*.²²

Bonapartism, Engels now stressed, is modern—it is “a modern form of state which presupposes the abolition of feudalism.” That is why Junkerdom had to be sacrificed, even by the chief Junker, if he was to be a European power-wielder. “This, naturally, is being done in the mildest possible form and to the favorite tune of: *Immer langsam voran!*” (This echoed an old German song, translated by the U.S. Supreme Court as “with all deliberate speed.”) The Junker was being transformed into something like an English squire, “and need not have offered so much resistance because the one is as stupid as the other.” Thus Prussia was completing its bourgeois revolution in the form of Bonapartism.²³

In exchange for the Bonapartist power’s economic benefactions, the bourgeoisie leaves all actual political power in the hands of the government, votes taxes, loans, and soldiers, and helps to frame all new reform laws in a way as to sustain the full force and effect of the old police power over undesirable elements. The bourgeoisie buys gradual social emancipation at the price of the immediate renunciation of political power. Naturally, the chief reason why such an agreement is acceptable to the bourgeoisie is not fear of the government but fear of the proletariat.²⁴

4. ELEMENTS OF BONAPARTISM

In 1887 Engels began writing a summary account of the Bismarck era for use as an exposition of the relationship between political force and socioeconomic factors. (It was intended as the new fourth chapter, dealing with Germany, of a booklet whose main contents would be a reprint of the three chapters on the force theory in *Anti-Dühring*.) Although *The Role of Force in History* was therefore not focused on the problem of Bonapartism and, being unfinished, lacks whatever summation of the question Engels might have had in mind, let us review what it does contain for its partial recapitulations and special emphases.

1. *The historical role of Bonapartism is modernization of the society.*

In his "best period—up to 1870"²⁵ at any rate, Bismarck was willy-nilly engaged in this course. He realized that the Junkers were not a "viable class," that only the bourgeoisie had a future as a ruling class; and though concern for the bourgeoisie was not his motivation, yet "the existence of his new Reich promised to be so much the more secure, the more he gradually prepared it for the transition to a modern bourgeois state."²⁶ The Junkerdom was mostly past rescue in any case, its downfall imminent. By a policy of gradual and slow political concessions to the bourgeoisie which were anyway inevitable,

the new Reich would at least be guided onto the road where it could fall in with the other West European states that were far ahead of it, finally shake off the last remnants of feudalism as well as the philistine tradition still strongly dominating the bureaucracy. . . .²⁷

It was wise of Bismarck "to steer toward bourgeois rule,"

in short, to cut off Germany's immensely long old pigtail, and guide her consciously and definitely on the road of modern development, to adjust her political to her industrial state of affairs. . . .²⁸

Engels never suspected that such a role would one day be interpreted by self-styled revolutionists as a justification for giving political support to the Bonapartist modernizer. For him, it was objective evidence of

how the old society, in one way or another, prepared the ground for eventual socialist victory. As he wrote in a letter, apropos of the rapid progress of industry in Germany: "in any case the old philistine Germany is finally beginning to become a modern country, and that is absolutely necessary to help us get ahead."²⁹

2. *The bourgeoisie trades its political rights and power in exchange for the insurance of economic expansion.*

This aspect has already been sufficiently brought out. In *The Role of Force in History* Engels is particularly concerned with those economic concerns of the bourgeoisie which required the national unification of Germany; he explains in some detail why the split-up state of Germany "inevitably soon became an unbearable fetter on vigorously growing industry," and therefore why "the desire for a united 'Fatherland' had a very material background."³⁰ National unity was inextricably bound up with foreign policy, and here bourgeois aspirations matched Prussia's.

Bismarck moved in. It was a matter of repeating Louis Napoleon's coup d'état, making the real relationship of forces utterly clear to the German bourgeoisie, forcibly dispelling their liberal self-delusions, but carrying out those national demands of theirs that coincided with Prussian wishes. . . .

In the continuing conflict over the constitution, Bismarck had fought the parliamentary demands of the bourgeoisie to the uttermost. But he burned with eagerness to carry out its national demands: after all they coincided with the deepest-held heart's desires of Prussian policy.³¹

Marx had remarked that Bismarck "began by building up a despotism under the plea of unification,"³² that is, the aim was his "despotism," the means to it, the espousal of national unity. For the bourgeoisie, the aim was unification; the price, Bismarckian "despotism," their surrender of political power to the old state.

3. *The Bonapartist state had to enforce the interests of the class even against the opposition of the class itself or its unenlightened sections.*

Bismarck, remarks Engels, "did the will of the bourgeoisie against its will," that is, carried out what the bourgeoisie really wanted even while the bourgeoisie fought him in the conflict over the constitution.³³ In part, this relationship depended on the previous point, the swapping of

political rights for economic benefits. But in addition, there were different bourgeois elements involved, since the class consisted of disparate parts and individuals.

In particular Engels pointed—as Marx had done in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*—to the split between the practicing bourgeoisie and the ideological wing of the bourgeoisie. The ideological spokesmen in and out of parliament could not be as crudely indifferent as the real economic powers to the demands of political consistency and democratic rhetoric. They sometimes had to be left high and dry, still spouting. There was

a contradiction quite similar to the one in France in 1851 between the bourgeoisie in the Chamber who wanted to keep the power of the President [Bonaparte] in check and the bourgeoisie outside who wanted tranquillity and strong government, tranquillity at any price—a contradiction which Louis Napoleon resolved by dispersing the squabblers in parliament and giving the mass of the bourgeoisie tranquillity. . . .³⁴

Bismarck was equally ready to manhandle the constitution to suit his purposes; the introduction of universal suffrage forms by fiat from above was one means at hand.

Hadn't Louis Napoleon shown there was absolutely no risk—if handled right? And wasn't it precisely this universal suffrage that offered a means of appealing to the great mass of people, and flirting a little with the newly arising social movement, if the bourgeoisie proved refractory?³⁵

For the social movement of the proletariat was green and stumbling, and Bismarck had his "royal-Prussian socialists" (as Marx called them) just as Bonaparte had had his Saint-Simonians at heel.

The case was clearest with respect to the Junkers, who could not understand that the world was changing at all, nor that their own man Bismarck was doing well in letting them down easily; for their saurian mentalities understood only that they were being let *down*. To be sure, they could not get in Bismarck's way, for this class was a living fossil lacking effective energy. "The Junkers had proved this for sixty years during which the state continually did what was best for them against the opposition of these Don Quixotes" themselves.³⁶ Even when Bismarck put through a district ordinance that preserved as far as

possible the Junkers' privileges in exploitation of the rural "helots," they could only rail at the introduction of any change at all:

But what can one say about the stupidity of their excellencies the Junkers, who pulled a tantrum like spoiled children against this district ordinance which had been worked up solely in their own interests, in the interest of prolonging their feudal privileges, only under a somewhat modernized label?³⁷

No more than F. Ebert or F. D. Roosevelt later did Bismarck get any thanks for saving a sickly class from its own shortsighted excesses. As Engels commented in 1890, "The aristocracy Bismarck never could rely on; they always considered him as a traitor to true Conservatism, and will be ready to throw him overboard. . . ."³⁸ Yet Bismarck was in fact trying to save as much of their class privileges as could be saved, just as the agrarian legislation of pre-1848 Prussia had tried "to save as much of feudalism as could be saved" (as Engels had remarked in another connection).³⁹

4. *Bonapartism as a state form does not depend on the personal qualities of the dictator in charge.*

There was a considerable personal element in Marx's analysis of Louis Bonaparte's regime in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* and in his subsequent articles for the *New York Tribune*. On the one hand, Marx's close attention to the personality of the chief actor is a salutary antidote to the myth that Marxism simply negates the role of the individual in history; for it was necessary to explain how this development took place in a specific place at a specific time, and how the individual element became part of the fabric woven by dominant social forces. But there is an inherent difficulty when a scientist can examine only a unique specimen of a given phenomenon: where exactly is the line between the generic and the specific?

Bismarckism, as another case of the Bonapartist pattern, helped to clarify this question. On the personal plane, it was enough to see the difference between the lumpen-Napoleon and the super-Junker. "Bismarck," wrote Engels, "is Louis Napoleon translated from the French adventurer-pretender into the Prussian cabbage-Junker and German student fraternity man [*Korpsbursche*]."⁴⁰

He tried to find common ground between the two: "Like Louis Napoleon, Bismarck is a man with a very practical head and great cunning, a born businessman and a crafty one, who in other circum-

stances would have rivaled the Vanderbilts and Jay Goulds on the New York stock exchange. . . ."41

Had not Louis Napoleon become the idol of the bourgeoisie precisely because he dispersed their parliament but increased their profits? And didn't Bismarck have the same business talents that the bourgeoisie admired so much in the false Napoleon?42

But the indicated characteristics (even if taken to be true of Louis Napoleon) are not really specifically bourgeois; they are generally found among successful organizers and reorganizers of states in difficult situations, including Diocletian and Charlemagne, as well as in corporation manipulators. In the same passage, Engels points out pertinently that Bismarck, although so narrow-minded at bottom that he could not free himself of his specifically Prussian outlook, lacking originality of mind, yet was the artful user of others' ideas, and, unlike the bourgeois leaders, endowed with energy and will.

Each Bonapartism shared a similar sociopolitical content even though details naturally differed: "The bourgeoisie supplied him [Bismarck] the goal, and Louis Napoleon supplied the path to the goal—only the way he carried it out remained Bismarck's own work."43 Also, the two regimes operated under different economic circumstances, which led to different short-range economic effects, and so on.44 It need hardly be added that the two Bonapartes likewise became deadly rivals for supremacy in Europe.

It is not only the personality factor that has to be identified if the various adventitious elements of given Bonapartisms are to be separated from the *specifically Bonapartist* element. For, as in all real historical situations, Bismarck's regime was no more than Louis Napoleon's a chemically pure or laboratory-isolated distillation of Bonapartism—if such a thing can be imagined. Like all social phenomena, it is found in nature only in various admixtures. If the Germans (as Engels remarked in a letter) "are stuck in a mishmash of semifeudalism and Bonapartism,"45 what belonged to the old and what to the new *ism*? What constituted the *differentia specifica* of Bonapartism?

5. *The crux of Bonapartism is the autonomization of the state power with respect to all the classes, including the ruling classes.*

We remind that this use of the term *autonomization* is ours, not Marx's or Engels'; but it represents the conception which Engels develops on Bismarckism's relation to the class structure.

"As things stood in 1871 in Germany," writes Engels, "a man like Bismarck was indeed thrown back on a policy of tacking and veering among the various classes." That in itself was no reproach; the question was, where was he heading? There were three possibilities. Toward eventual bourgeois rule? In that case, his policy would at least be "in harmony with historical development." Toward preserving the old Prussian state? In that case, it would be reactionary. Or was his policy headed in a third direction? "If it headed toward simply maintaining Bismarck's rule, then it was Bonapartist and bound to end like every Bonapartism."⁴⁶ Indeed, events showed that Bismarck's guiding star was the third aim, as he insisted on cutting the Reich constitution "to his own measure."

It was one step further on the road to his personal one-man rule [*Alleinherrschaft*], by balancing the parties in the Reichstag and the particularist states in the Federal Council—one step further on the road to Bonapartism.⁴⁷

Thus the specifically Bonapartist direction is clearly differentiated from a state policy directed either in the interest of the bourgeoisie or of the old Prussian ruling class. Subsequently, Engels made clear, Bismarck did veer in the direction of Junkerdom, reverting to his own class roots—and ensuring his downfall. To follow this line of thought more closely, we have to turn from the manuscript of *The Role of Force in History*, which breaks off soon after this point, and go on to his outline notes on how he planned to finish this chapter. Here his Point I is naturally sketchy but quite clear:

I. Three classes: two rotten ones, of which one [Junkers] is in decay, the other [bourgeoisie] on the rise, and [the] workers, who only want bourgeois "fair play". Thus, tacking and veering between the latter two [would be] right—but no! [This is not Bismarck's course; rather, this is his] Policy: Strengthening the state power in general and *especially* making it financially independent (railway statification, monopoly), police state, and principles of justice of provincial law.⁴⁸

Under Point II, Engels notes the "restoration of the police state and antibourgeois legal system (1876), bad copy of the French." But then comes Bismarck's "complete swing-about toward Junkers," marked by the protective tariff, the "colonial swindle," and so on. Yet, following this "swing-about" is the following note under II.5: "Social policy à la

Bonaparte. (a) Anti-Socialist Law and crushing of workers' organizations and labor funds. (b) Social-reform crap."⁴⁹ The result, in a terse note: "Bismarck at the end—becomes reactionary, foolish. . . . The Junker comes to the fore, for lack of other ideas."⁵⁰ And then "after the war of 1870-71 . . . Bismarck's mission is fulfilled, so that he can now sink back again into the ordinary Junker."⁵¹ There was still something of the "mishmash of semifeudalism and Bonapartism" in the admixture, but with Bismarck's fall the modern elements of bourgeois development asserted themselves more and more.

It is clear, then, that it is not the existence of a class equilibrium, the balancing of countervailing class pressures, which is itself the distinguishing feature of Bonapartism. This condition would confront any statesman under the circumstances, and would necessitate a maneuverist policy by any ruling-class leader. The crux of Bonapartism was the utilization of this condition to maximize the autonomous position of the state with respect to the classes—"strengthening the state power in general and especially making it financially independent"—an autonomization organized under a "personal one-man rule," the one man being an individual who is not functioning as the chairman of *any* class's "executive committee."

6. *Still, the objective historical result is a social transformation, a "revolution from above."*^{*}

The revolution from below had failed in 1848-1849. At that time the bourgeoisie had hoped to bring about a fusion of ruling classes with itself on top, and in its own way. Momentarily there had been a "triple alliance of Junkers, bureaucrats, and bourgeois now in power," as Engels had written in April 1849.⁵³ But this alliance refused to stabilize itself under the new hegemony. The alliance fell apart; but while the bourgeoisie remained excluded from political power, the tasks of the revolution *manqué* pressed heavily on society nonetheless. Something had to give, in the tension between the revolution that labored in the womb and the revolutionary class that could not give it birth. The same fusion of ruling classes had to be reestablished—only, under the hegemony of the old classes and with a different relation of forces. The

* The phrase "revolution from above" (according to Ladendorf) became current in Germany in the early nineteenth century, especially through F. von Schlegel, who in 1820 claimed its invention. He applied it to the first Bonapartism, that of Napoleon I, in whose hands "the revolution . . . had been transformed into a great despotism and revolution from above."⁵²

revolution that had to come *came*, but in the most reactionary possible form. The Reaction executed the program of the revolution, and "this program of revolution in the hands of Reaction turns into a satire on the revolutionary strivings involved, and thus into the deadliest weapon in the hands of an irreconcilable foe," as Marx had foreseen well in advance.

In short [wrote Engels of Bismarck], it was a thoroughgoing revolution, carried out with revolutionary methods. We are naturally the last to make this a matter of reproach. What we reproach him for, on the contrary, is that he was not revolutionary enough, that he was only a Prussian revolutionary from above. . . .⁵⁴

It was "only half a revolution," stopping short with the interests of the bourgeoisie and the Junkers even if it did revolutionize the outmoded social conditions. Thus Bismarck "made his coup d'état, his revolution from above, in 1866, against the German Confederation and Austria, and no less against the Prussian *Konfliktskammer*." ⁵⁵

The revolution from above by the autonomized state power was not accepted by Marx or Engels as a progressive substitute for revolution. During the 1850s and 1860s Marx's journalistic articles particularly carried on a drumfire of denunciation and indictment against the Bonapartist regimes that is not outdone by any of his other writings. The objective historical role of these regimes was a fact that had to be accepted; but also accepted was the fact that they were "the deadliest weapon in the hands of an irreconcilable foe." The first fact depended on a social analysis—a scientific determination of the lay of the land; the second, on a social taking-of-position—a choice of sides in a class war.

17 | BONAPARTISM AND THE "PROGRESSIVE DESPOT"

In the key passage (given at the beginning of the previous chapter) where Engels lists the types of states characterized by "a certain degree of independence" from the classes in equilibrium, we note that he includes the Bonapartism of the First Empire under Napoleon I as well as that of Louis Bonaparte. Whereas Bismarckism moved Marx and Engels to extend the Bonapartist pattern geographically, here we see them extending it back in time.

The word *Bonapartist* or *Bonapartism*, of course, was common under Napoleon, referring to his partisans; but in the passage under discussion Engels obviously used it in the new sense of a type of autonomized state power. This Bonapartism was less well developed under the uncle than under the nephew, but still visible. How did it manifest itself under the first Napoleon?

1. THE NAPOLEONIC STATE

One of Marx's earliest political attitudes was a deep hostility to Napoleon as a military despot and oppressor of peoples, but it was tempered by a willingness to grant his stature as a military and state-organizing genius and by recognition of his progressive social role in smashing the old regime outside France, especially in Germany. This combination was common enough among German liberals and leftists, especially in the Rhineland where Napoleon's armies had done their work most thoroughly. A letter by Marx's father to his nineteen-year-old son already denounced Napoleon as a suppressor of free thought, even though the father was no Francophobe but rather a pupil of the

Enlightenment.¹ The same year (to instance the positive side) Marx's juvenile "humorous novel" *Scorpion and Felix* illustrated the thesis that giants are succeeded by pygmies, geniuses by wooden philistines, with examples that included the contrast of Napoleon I with Louis Philippe.²

These cases reflect the political climate surrounding Marx's juvenile consciousness; but the same pattern essentially obtains in the first considerable reference to Napoleon in his political writings. In the 1843 exchange of letters published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, the new-fledged socialist Marx depicts Napoleon as a despot who exemplifies the proposition that "Despotism's sole thought is contempt for man, dehumanized man," even if the despot is one "capable of great aims, like Napoleon prior to his dynastic frenzy."³

For decades afterward, Marx frequently echoed the giants-versus-pygmies comparison, especially in contrasting Louis Bonaparte with Napoleon, the "nephew" with the "uncle."⁴ The progressive role of Napoleon's impact on Germany was not in question: *The German Ideology* duly acknowledged his services in "cleaning out Germany's Augean stables," for example.⁵ During the 1848-1849 revolution, the Prussian regime's antidemocratic crimes could be compared only to the "Napoleonic despotism over the press"; still, it had to be acknowledged that, if the French sighed for Napoleon after the Bourbon Restoration, it was only "because the despotism of a genius is more bearable than the despotism of an idiot."⁶

Marx's germinal statement on the link between Napoleon and the concept of Bonapartism occurs, interestingly enough, long before he developed that concept in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, and even before he had fully developed the class theory of the state. It is to be found in *The Holy Family*. The fact that it occurs so early means that we are dealing with the roots of the concept of Bonapartism, not its application.

The analysis in *The Holy Family* revolves around the relation between the French Revolution and the social classes. The revolution opened society to bourgeois rule; but Marx sees that the Jacobin left—here represented by the Terror—wanted to push beyond the bounds of mere bourgeois interests. Robespierre fails; the Thermidor-ean reaction leads to the Directory.

Under the government of the Directory, bourgeois society—which the Revolution itself had freed from feudal fetters and officially

recognized even though the *Terror* wanted to sacrifice it to an ancient [form of] political life—burst out in mighty streams of life.

It was against the flourishing of the liberal bourgeoisie under the Directory that (Marx goes on to say) Napoleon directed his coup d'état of the 18th Brumaire. Was, then, Napoleon simply antibourgeois? The question is ambiguous. He did not wish to reverse the Revolution's acceptance of bourgeois society (capitalism as a social system); still less did he have any notion of turning social relations back to prebourgeois channels. The bourgeoisie would dominate within civil society, sure enough, but the Napoleonic state must dominate all of civil society itself, including the bourgeoisie.

Let us see how Marx puts this crucial thought:

*Napoleon was the last struggle by the revolutionary Terror against bourgeois society . . . and its policy. To be sure, Napoleon already had the insight into the essence of the modern state that it rested on the basis of the unhampered development of bourgeois society, the free activity of private interest, and so on. He decided to recognize and protect this basis. He was no dreamy-eyed Terrorist.*⁷

This was the probourgeois side.* Now the other:

But at the same time Napoleon still regarded the *state* as an *end in itself*, and civil [*bürgerlich*] life only as the treasurer and as its *subordinate*, which must have no *will of its own*. . . . He satisfied the egoism of French nationalism to the point of complete surfeit, but he also demanded the sacrifice of bourgeois business, self-enjoyment, wealth, etc. whenever the political goal of conquest required it. If he despotically suppressed the liberalism of bourgeois society—the political ideology of its day-to-day prac-

* The strongest statement of this side that Marx made subsequently occurs in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, but it does not differ essentially from what is already said on this score in *The Holy Family*. Napoleon "created inside France the conditions under which alone free competition could be developed, parceled landed property exploited and the unchained industrial productive power of the nation employed; and beyond the French borders he everywhere swept the feudal institutions away, so far as was necessary to furnish bourgeois society in France with a suitable up-to-date environment on the European Continent." But, he goes on to say, this done, Napoleon had to disappear along with the other "antediluvian colossi" to make way for the "true interpreters and mouthpieces" of the bourgeoisie and "its real military leaders."⁸ The Bonapartist side of Napoleon I is not raised in this context.

tice—he showed no more consideration for its essential *material* interests, commerce and industry, whenever they came into conflict with his political interests. His contempt for industrial businessmen was the complement to his contempt for *ideologues*. Internally as well, what he fought in bourgeois society was opposition to the state, embodied by himself, as an absolute end in itself.⁹

To be sure, this Napoleonic concept of an autonomized state, which fostered bourgeois development so that the *state's* interests might thereby be aggrandized, had no future under the social circumstances. Marx had already written on a previous page of *The Holy Family* that bourgeois interests "were so powerful that they victoriously overcame the pen of a Marat, the guillotine of the Terrorists, and the sword of Napoleon, as well as the crucifix and the blue blood of the Bourbons."¹⁰ However, it was Napoleon's striving in this direction that constituted the specific Bonapartism of the First Empire, no matter how surely doomed at the time.

A question-mark remains. We can certainly not assume automatically that a given analysis in *The Holy Family* represents a continuity of thought with the mature Marx, in the absence of a repetition of the same analysis later. Unfortunately, Marx never took the occasion later to take up the theme of the Bonapartism of the first Napoleon directly.* But Engels did, even if briefly; furthermore, in the case of both Marx and Engels it is worth noting the constancy of their general view of the man.

In 1860 a pamphlet by Engels linked Napoleon to the later Bonapartism in a minor aspect and in passing.** But much later the figure of

* The nearest approach is a remark in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* made collectively about "the absolute monarchy, during the first Revolution, under Napoleon." In all three cases, "bureaucracy was only the means of preparing the class rule of the bourgeoisie"—i.e., objectively not by intention—whereas "Under the Restoration, under Louis Philippe, under the parliamentary republic, it [the state bureaucracy] was the instrument of the ruling class, however much it strove for power of its own."¹¹ We will return to this passage in Chapter 20.

** In *Savoy, Nice and the Rhine* Engels recalls the episode when the troops of General Anselme took Nice and, out of control, subjected the city to plunder and rape. "This was the original core of the later Army of Italy, with which General Bonaparte gained his first laurels," Engels continues, and then jumps to a comparison with the nephew: "Bonapartism, it seems, in its beginnings always has to base itself on the riffraff [*Lumpentum*]; without a Society of December 10th it would have gotten nowhere."¹² But in terms of historical analysis, a vicious soldiery is hardly the equivalent of Bonapartist storm-troops. Engels wants to link Napoleon with the later Bonapartism but does not really succeed here.

General Boulanger gave him another opportunity, as he commented on the new would-be Bonaparte's electoral victory in 1889. This, he wrote, reflects

°° a distinct revival of the Bonapartist element in the Parisian character. In 1798 [actually 1799: Napoleon's coup d'état], 1848 and 1889, this revival arose equally from discontent with the bourgeois republic, but it took this special direction—appeal to a saviour of society—entirely in consequence of a chauvinistic current.¹³

Bonapartism's antibourgeois side is stressed here, as also in a follow-up letter on the same subject, which links Napoleon I, Napoleon III, and Boulanger with the "recrudescence of Bonapartism, of an appeal to a savior who is to destroy the vile bourgeois who have quashed the revolution and the republic"—this reflecting "the negative side of the Parisian revolutionary character—chauvinistic Bonapartism. . . ."¹⁴

2. THE LITTLENESS OF NAPOLEON THE GREAT

Insofar as Marx's and Engels' general attitude toward Napoleon shifted in later life, it was only in the direction of a more virulent antipathy, less qualified by recognition of positive achievements.

While Marx's journalistic articles of the 1850s constantly scorned Louis Bonaparte in contrast with Napoleon as far as ability was concerned (a pattern set for all France when Victor Hugo labeled the epigone emperor "Napoleon the Little"), he was equally ready to condemn "the cruel despotism of Napoleon I." If he denounced Louis Bonaparte for filling the Paris salons with his police spies, he added: "quite as in the days of the [first] Emperor."¹⁵

What Marx attacked most often was any leaning toward a "Napoleon cult," such as is found even in the alleged libertarian Proudhon.¹⁶ Marx lashed at "the traditional Napoleon superstition," the "Napoleon cult" or "Napoleon legend," in his major works on France; he linked Thiers as sycophantic historian of Napoleon to Thiers as butcher of the Paris Commune; the peasant cult of Napoleon was a "delusion" or fantasy, just as both Thiers and his imperial subject were notorious liars.¹⁷

"Both father and daughter [Jenny] hated Napoleon I," related Dr. Kugelman's daughter, to explain why Jenny answered the question

"Characters of history I most dislike" with: "Bonaparte and his nephew." It was often to abuse the nephew that the "real Napoleon" could even be granted his genius, as when Marx repeated the jest that "*Napoléon le premier a eu génie, Napoléon le troisième a Eugénie.*" Around the same time Marx asked Engels for a clipping from a recent history revealing the "wretched behavior of the hero" Napoleon so that daughter Jenny could win an argument.¹⁸

There are two longer denunciations of Napoleon in Marx.

He devoted a *New York Tribune* article to demonstrating that the current Bonaparte's suppression of liberty and press freedom only reenacted "the shabby part invented and played before by Napoleon the Great," and in fact objected to the title "Napoleon the Great" as furthering "Napoleon-worship." Marx added: "What is more useful to impress on the present generation is that Napoleon the Little [Louis Napoleon] represents in fact the littleness of Napoleon the Great."¹⁹ This article was an elaboration of a remark that Marx had already made in a letter to Engels two months previously: Bonaparte "is only copying his alleged uncle. He . . . personates [personifies] in a most admirable way the littleness of the great Napoleon."²⁰

Again: in a detailed indictment of French policy on Poland, Marx elaborated the thesis that Napoleon betrayed Polish independence; and even at home "that despot rather than have a truly *national* and *revolutionary war* in France after his defeat at Waterloo, preferred to succumb to the Coalition."²¹ In his book *Herr Vogt*, Marx flayed Napoleon's betrayal of Venetian independence "to the despotic yoke of Austria."²² Likewise, in referring to Napoleon's invasion of Spain, he criticized it as "the Napoleonic usurpation," yet also recognized the fact that where Napoleon's armies overran the country, there they "swept away from the soil all monastic and feudal institutions, and introduced the modern system of administration."²³ This two-sided appreciation is very much like Marx's appraisal of British imperialism's role in India, combining political hostility with recognition of imperialism's modernizing impact.

Later Marx introduced a new note even into his appraisal of Napoleon's relationship to European reaction. It appears in a change made between the first draft of *The Civil War in France* and the final version. In the first draft Marx writes of the overgrown French state apparatus, which "grew to its full development under the sway of the first Bonaparte," that under Napoleon "it served not only to subjugate

the Revolution and annihilate all popular liberties, it was an instrument of the French revolution to strike abroad, to create for France on the Continent instead of feudal monarchies more or less states after the image of France." Here, as before, is the counterposition of despotism at home and a progressive impact abroad. But in the corresponding passage of the final version, Napoleon's "First Empire" is described merely as "itself the offspring of the coalition wars of old semifeudal Europe against modern France."²⁴ There is an appreciable shift here, from seeing the Napoleonic regime as "an instrument of the French revolution" even in one aspect, to seeing it as the "offspring" of European reaction itself in a definite sense.

Engels' course was quite similar. In his presocialist literary period of 1840-1841, he referred to Napoleon both with hostility as a despotic ruler and with respect as nonetheless responsible for progressive social gains—listing these gains as emancipation of the Jews, trial by jury, and a sound civil-law system. "Heine's Napoleon-worship is alien to the feelings of the [German] people," he insisted.²⁵ On the other hand, when Napoleon's body was moved to the Invalides, he published a poem combining relief at the passing of the Napoleonic era with respect for the man. It was good that "Europe's scourge, France's god" had died "like Alexander, without issue"; and now

The Emperor sleeps, and hushed is the Te Deum;
A stately pall hangs o'er the pious stone.
The whole great chapel is his mausoleum!
A dead god lies interred, and all alone.²⁶

This two-sided view continued after his conversion to socialism, without essential change. Napoleon established "undisguised despotism," contrasted with Babeuf's goal of "real liberty"; at the same time, his progressive impact on Germany as "the destroyer of old feudal society" was appreciated, even though "the longer he reigned, the more he deserved his ultimate fate."²⁷

In the later Engels, the references to Napoleon are more uniformly hostile.* The Code Napoléon was really the work of the Revolution and

* The main kind of exception continues to be Napoleon's progressive role in modernizing the German states; for example, "The creator of the German bourgeoisie was Napoleon."²⁸ In this respect Napoleon was criticized for failing to go far enough. "He is always revolutionary as opposed to the princes," noted Engels, but added: "Napoleon's mistake of 1806 was that he did not crush Prussia to the end."²⁹

only "botched" by Napoleon himself; he was indeed something of a charlatan like Boulanger; the peasants' Napoleon figure was a "legend."³⁰ In a May Day greeting to Spanish socialists, Engels recalled the resistance to "the foreign invasion and tyranny of Napoleon"; then he started on a longer denunciation of Napoleon, "the so-called representative of the bourgeois revolution, in reality a despot inside his own country and a conqueror vis-à-vis the neighboring peoples," but left this out of the final version.³¹ In his introduction to Marx's *Civil War in France*, he contrasted the Paris Commune with the bureaucratic state machine "which Napoleon had created in 1798." As we saw above, Marx had made the same connection in his first draft of the address on the Commune, when he wrote that the gigantism of the state machine "grew to its full development under the sway of the first Bonaparte" and that under him it served "to subjugate the Revolution and annihilate all popular liberties."³²

Typically, the later Engels did not begrudge a passing bow to the progressive side of Napoleon's impact when the context was Russian czarism's expansionism, though he stressed Napoleon's betrayal of European national movements. In an 1890 article on Russian foreign policy, he reviewed the czar's relations with Napoleon. "The French Revolution had worn itself out, and had brought forth its own dictator—a Napoleon. . . . The rise of Napoleon now gave it [Russian diplomacy] the opportunity for new successes." Napoleon played along with Russia's game until they came to a parting of their imperialist ways over the czar's effort to dominate the German states. Austerlitz kept the Rhineland free of Russian domination, and of course Engels felt that Napoleonic domination was objectively preferable: "The French yoke, at least, was a modern one; at all events it forced the disgraceful German Princes to do away with the most crying infamies of their former political system." There is a good deal more on Napoleon's disregard of various national interests—Finland's and Turkey's as well as Poland's—as he played his imperialist chess game with Russia. Still, "the downfall of Napoleon meant the victory of the European monarchies over the French Revolution, whose last phase had been the Napoleonic Empire."³³

3. THE LINE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION

The significance of Marx's and Engels' hostility to the "progressive" despotism of the first Bonaparte has not usually been appreciated, especially if we keep in mind that this hostility mounted as their politics matured.

It is a good test case because, for one thing, the frequent allegation of a *personal* factor in Marx's political antipathies clearly has no basis in this instance. (In general Marx's pattern is that expressions of personal dislike flow from political enmity, not vice-versa.) For another thing, Napoleon I came along so early that he was not clearly counterposed to a proletarian movement, nor had socialism yet appeared as a viable alternative. This would seem to make him a good candidate for support as a historically progressive modernizer, despot though he be.

But such an approach was totally alien to Marx's and Engels' politics. They were quite capable of appreciating the historical progressiveness of a regime in an objective social sense without confusing this with the criteria for political support, any more than they would dream of becoming political supporters of or apologists for the "progressive capitalists" of the Industrial Revolution.* The touchstone of politics for them was the class struggle—the struggle of the lower classes against oppression and exploitation, in the present as in the time of Spartacus or Napoleon. A political position was a taking of sides in a class war.

Hence they felt not the slightest contradiction between recognizing the objective historical impact of a Bonapartism (Bismarck's, for example) and rallying the harshest political opposition against it. The objective progressiveness of a despot or exploiter meant merely that the enemy was compelled by history to help your cause despite himself: it could not for a moment induce you to change your mind about which side you were on. On the contrary, it was only the continued class struggle from below that could even squeeze the greatest historical advantage out of the "progressive" social forces which were propelling your enemy on his path.

* This question will come up again for discussion in connection with the politics of bourgeois revolution in Volume 2.

This was the attitude spelled out, firmly but ruefully, by Engels when it became clear that Bismarck was in position, by reason of Prussian military successes, to bring about the long-desired unification of Germany in his own way: the situation discussed at the beginning of the previous chapter. A progressive aim was being carried out, though not in *our* way; and so Engels allows that "we, like others, must recognize the *fait accompli*, [whether] °we may like it or not.°"

The good side of this is that it simplifies the situation, facilitates a revolution by getting rid of the rows kicked up by the little state capitals, and in any case accelerates the development. After all, a German parliament is still something altogether different from a Prussian Diet. The whole mess of little states will be drawn into the movement, the worst influences toward local narrowness will come to an end, and the parties will finally become really national instead of merely local.

The main drawback is the inevitable swamping of Germany by Prussianism, and this is a very big one. Then there is the temporary separation of German Austria, which will result in an immediate advance of Slavdom in Bohemia, Moravia, and Carinthia. Unfortunately, against *neither* of these is there *anything* to be done.

So in my opinion we can do nothing but simply accept the fact, without approving it, and make use, as far as we can, of the greater facilities for the *national* organization and unification of the German proletariat that must now arise in any case.³⁴

Marx replied agreeing: "I am entirely of your opinion that the filthy business must be taken as it is. Still it is nice to be far away during this honeymoon period"—while the German states cohabited under Prussia.³⁵

The turn in the situation established a new starting point, but it was a new start for the struggle *against* the "progressive" Bonapartist. Bismarck was "facilitating a revolution" but the revolution could be furthered only by intransigent opposition to this facilitator. When the Lassalleans showed softness on Bismarck, Marx and Engels broke with them publicly.

4. THE CASE OF BOLÍVAR

A case similar to Napoleon's, this time outside of Europe, was that of the leader of the South American liberation struggle, Simon Bolívar. Finding Bolívar's name on the list of articles to be done for the *New American Cyclopaedia*, Marx researched his subject and came up with an attitude of intense political hostility to the "Liberator" as a military dictator, authoritarian, and Bonaparte-type seeker of arbitrary power for himself.³⁶

The issue is sharpened by the fact that Marx clearly assumed the progressiveness of the national liberation movement itself. His attack on Bolívar is always fully inside the framework of the view that the independence struggle was *weakened* by Bolívar's insistence on his personal dictatorship. The various revolutionary congresses exercised a popular mobilizing appeal to the masses insofar as Bolívar *failed* to control and abort them, whereas the leader's despotic methods kept the mass base of the revolution small.*

"Bolívar is a real Soulouque [one of the current sobriquets for Bonaparte]," Marx wrote to Engels, explaining the reason for the "partisan style" of his *Cyclopaedia* article, which its editor had questioned.³⁷ In the article itself, Marx had managed to link Bolívar with Napoleon I three times, however obliquely; mention of Louis Bonaparte would have been obviously intrusive.

If Bolívar was a "real Bonaparte," the leader of another contemporary national-liberation movement was another Bolívar, in Marx's view. This was Hungary's Louis Kossuth, of whom Marx's opinion was as scathing as of Italy's Mazzini. One of Marx's many denunciations of Kossuth's political role, written two years after his Bolívar article, began as follows: "The myth-creating force of popular fantasy has manifested itself in all times in the invention of 'great men.' The most striking example of this sort is indisputably *Simon Bolívar*."³⁸ The dissection of Kossuth followed.

Marx saw these, and other, leaders as men who were *riding* a movement with progressive and liberationist aims, but who bestrode it with political aims of their own which were antithetical to the interests of the masses.

* A detailed discussion of these issues can be found in my article on the subject, *Karl Marx and Simon Bolívar* (see Bibliography).

18 | BONAPARTISM IN EXTREMIS

We can now return to the figure of the model Bonapartist, Louis Bonaparte himself, in order to view him from the same angle as Napoleon I and Bolívar: namely Bonaparte as Progressive Despot. Marx paid little attention to this aspect in his best-known works; when he wrote *The Eighteenth Brumaire* it had not yet emerged as strongly as it did later, and when he looked back in *The Civil War in France* it seemed a finished episode. In the meantime he had written it up cogently; and from today's perspective the subject has new interest.

1. BONAPARTE'S "SOCIALISM"

Even at the time of his "18th Brumaire," Bonaparte's *Idées Napoléoniennes* (the title of one of his books) played a role in giving him an antibourgeois posture, at the same time that his deeds assured the bourgeoisie of his antiproletarian and antirevolutionary bona fides. Other writings like *L'Extinction du Paupérisme* stressed his orientation toward state direction of the economy and social-welfare plans to appeal to a controlled working class. Government "is the beneficent mainspring of every social organism," he had written. Also: "Nowadays the day of class rule is over, the day of mass rule has begun. The masses must be organized so that they can formulate their will, and disciplined so that they can be instructed and enlightened as to their own interests." Bonaparte helped to clarify this rhetoric when he broke strikes, banned independent workers' organization, and worked to keep wages down. Through it all, he represented himself even as a sort of socialist, when appropriate; and in view of the amorphous history of that label, it

would be a purely terminological enterprise to argue that he was "less socialistic" than certain figures discussed in histories of socialism. Indeed, some modern historians seriously present him as a sort of socialist in the same vague way that he put forward the pretense.*

There *was* a definite socialistic wing of the Bonapartist entourage. Its royal patron was the Emperor's cousin, Prince Napoleon ("Plon-Plon," or the Red Prince), who actually consorted with socialists of a sort. Marx liked to take thrusts at "the illustrious Plon-Plon, alias the *Prince Rouge*, the scion of the Bonapartist family, upon whom has fallen the lot of coquetting with revolution, in the same way that his bigger cousin dallies with 'religion, order, and property.'" ² Bonaparte's economic brain trust was composed of disciples of Saint-Simon, who had been considered raving radicals in the 1830s and were now ravenous financiers and industrial expansionists: the Pereire brothers, Michel Chevalier, and others. It was through these Saint-Simonians that the biggest Bonaparte adventure in state-sponsored high finance was founded: the *Crédit Mobilier*, of which we will hear more.

There were other recruits from time to time. The "father of anarchism" himself, Proudhon, greeted Bonaparte's coup d'état with a book which fawned before his new power and invited him to be so kind as to institute the New Society.³ Disillusioned eventually by the Emperor's failure to oblige, our "anarchist" returned to his former hostility, without however giving up hope in Plon-Plon. (Part of the difficulties of the Proudhonist-led French section of the First International was that its leadership was unwarrantably suspected of also being pro-Bonapartist.) Later, after Bonaparte's fall, two of Bakunin's chief lieutenants were going to come out as Bonapartist partisans—in the name of revolution, of course.⁴ Bonaparte's secret payroll included known radicals like Karl Vogt—the same Herr Vogt who published a

* Specifically, J. M. Thompson's *Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire*, in which the facts and citations in the above passage can be found. Thompson accepts the Emperor's self-image not only as a socialist but as "a visionary humanitarian, a friend of the outlawed and the oppressed"—the evidence being that he said so himself. "The Empire, he [Bonaparte] thought, must be at once repressive and progressive." It must keep every class "contented and cooperative." This was "a Bourbon idea: Louis XIV would have understood it. . . . It was also a Napoleonic idea. . . ." The economy "needed discipline and direction." Strong government could overcome the antagonism of bourgeoisie and proletariat. Thompson especially leans on two English witnesses. The reformer Shaftesbury said that Louis Napoleon's course "makes my hair stand on end. Every working man that lives will on seeing these results shout *Vive le Despotisme! A bas les*

scurrilous book slandering Marx for dictatorial ambitions while at the same time he hailed the emperor as a "workers' dictator."⁵ Among other more or less "left" Bonapartists were Sainte-Beuve (who called Bonaparte "an eminent socialist"), Auguste Comte, Frédéric Le Play, and Félix Pyat.⁶

If, as Bonaparte had written, "Today . . . one can govern only with the masses," it was necessary to look for Judas goats who could lead the masses in the proper spirit. Conservatives who did not understand the new game helped Bonaparte along by indignantly denouncing him as a socialist—old Guizot, for example, who greeted the news of the coup d'état by crying, "It is the complete and definitive triumph of socialism!"⁷

To Engels, Bonaparte appeared as a sort of True-Socialist (of the Hess-Grün tendency pilloried in the Manifesto) shading into bourgeois reform:

As for [Louis] Napoleon [wrote Engels to Marx], didn't the man say to L. Blanc, when he went to France: *When I am President I will put your ideas into practice?* Anyway, one sees how financial necessity can drive even a True-Socialist like Louis Napoleon to typical financial-bourgeois measures, like conversion of bonds. The "shopkeeper" and small industry forgive twenty socialistic pranks for this one saving of 18 millions, and the *Daily News* admires the measure. Incidentally, it is impossible to say anything more stupid or disgusting on this business than the *Journal des Débats*. Altogether the old story: post office reform = socialism! conversion of bonds = socialism! free trade = socialism! I'm only afraid that Mynheer Napoleon, who despite everything went into his own socialistic things very timidly and in the mortgage question likewise does not go beyond the bounds of the bourgeois-Prussian loan institution, is finally under the pressure of circumstances transforming all his socialistic impulses into simple bourgeois reforms. . . .⁸

Marx likewise referred to Bonaparte's True-Socialism in this period right after the coup d'état.⁹ A few years later, the original True-Socialist himself, Moses Hess, became a Bonapartist apologist.¹⁰

gouvernements libres!" This seemed to refer particularly to the imperial public-works program and its state-made employment. Walter Bagehot saw Bonaparte as a "democratic despot," and his regime as "the best *finished* democracy which the world has ever seen," meaning an absolutism "with a popular instinct." Besides running the first popular democracy, Bonaparte was also a "Benthamite despot." So Thompson.¹

2. THE CREDIT MOBILIER

It was the rise of the *Crédit Mobilier* and its subsequent scandals that turned Marx, in 1856, to his first close consideration of what he began to call "Bonapartist socialism" or "Imperial socialism," in an important series of articles.

The *Crédit Mobilier* was a banking institution set up as a sort of holding corporation to stimulate the development of industry and public works by concentrating the ownership of various enterprises in one common fund controlled by itself. It is "one of the most curious economical phenomena of our epoch," and may have "an immensely greater development in the future." It buys up the stocks of the various industrial concerns themselves; and this means "to make industry and public works in general dependent on the favor of the *Crédit Mobilier*, and therefore on the individual favor of Bonaparte, on whose breath the existence of the company is suspended."

°Hence the *Crédit Mobilier* avows the intention of making itself the proprietor, and Napoleon the Little the supreme director, of the whole varied industry of France. This is what we call Imperial Socialism.

In practice the *Crédit Mobilier* goes beyond this, by proposing to make itself "not only the proprietor of such great industrial enterprises, but also the slave of the treasury, and the despot of commercial credit."¹¹

The phenomenon had two sides: on the one hand, the Bonapartist higher-ups and speculators had a chance to enrich themselves by grabbing a piece of the flowing moneys before the whole thing blew up in a crash; on the other hand, there was the "socialistic" side. Bonaparte proposed to convert

all the property and all the industry of France into a personal obligation toward Louis Bonaparte. To steal France in order to buy France—that was the great problem the man had to solve, and in this transaction of taking from France what was to be given back to France, not the least important side to him was the percentage to be skimmed off by himself and the Society of December Tenth.*

* This is a variant of a similar passage near the end of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. In 1855 Marx, in a letter to Engels, quoted the 1852 version, about Bonaparte's desire "to steal the whole of France in order to be able to make a

The method: through a credit operation.

And there happened to be in France the school of St. Simon, which in its beginning and in its decay deluded itself with the dream that all the antagonism of classes must disappear before the creation of universal wealth by some new-fangled scheme of public credit. And St. Simonism in this form had not yet died out at the epoch of the coup d'état.¹³

Among the surviving representatives of this idea (Marx goes on) were the Pereire brothers, "who had sat at the feet of the Père Enfantin" in former days, and who had now become "the founders of the Crédit Mobilier, and the initiators of Bonapartist Socialism."*

It is an old proverb, "*Habent sua fata libella.*" Doctrines have also their *fate* as well as books. St. Simon to become the guardian angel of the Paris Bourse, the prophet of swindling, the Messiah of general bribery and corruption!

Another legal move by the government

sanctions the expropriation of the mortgagors of the land, in favor of the government of Bonaparte, who by this machinery proposes to seize on the land, as by the Crédit Mobilier he is seizing on the industry, and by the Bank of France on the commerce of France; and all this to save property from the dangers of Socialism!

The next article, promises Marx, will explain

the plain scheme of dragging all the industry of France into the whirlpool of the Paris Bourse, and to make it the tennis ball of the gentlemen of the Crédit Mobilier, and of their patron Bonaparte.¹⁵

That is, through the machinery of stock manipulation, "all the industry

present of her to France," and added that now he has "performed this task, within the bounds of pure reason. His loan manipulations are important experiments in this direction."¹²

* Four years later, Marx mentioned in a *Tribune* article that ex-Saint-Simonians had been involved in putting together the new commercial treaty between France and England.

But, what is not known by the journals, is that *Père Enfantin*, the ex-high-priest of St. Simonism, was the principal actor on the French side. Is it not truly wonderful how those St. Simonians, from *Père Enfantin* down to Isaac Pereira and Michel Chevalier, have been turned into the main economic pillars of the second Empire.¹⁴

of France" is to be put under a single control, ultimately dominated by the Bonapartist state power.

3. THE STATE AND "INDUSTRIAL FEUDALISM"

The promised explication is given in the third and last article of this series. Marx explains that the speculative profits made by the manipulators of the setup (stockjobbers) will be "the base of the industrial development"; skimmed-off profits from the stock turnover are supposed to fatten the *Crédit Mobilier* holdings and increase the value of its stocks. "In this manner the *Crédit Mobilier* obtains command over a large portion of the loanable capital intended for investment in industrial enterprises." Obviously, this kind of operation offers plenty of opportunity for stockjobbing profits for the insiders too.

But Marx does not see the plan *simply* as a scheme for their personal pocket-lining. As he considers the potentialities inherent in the plan—quite apart from his prediction that the "unavoidable crash" of the whole structure was on the way—he theoretically projects its meaning into the future. This explanation starts by recalling that the *Crédit Mobilier* is required by its statutes to operate only on joint-stock companies:

°°Consequently there must arise a tendency to start as many such societies as possible, and, further, to bring all industrial undertakings under the form of these societies. Now, it cannot be denied that the application of joint-stock companies to industry marks a new epoch in the economical life of modern nations. On the one hand it has revealed the productive powers of association, not suspected before, and called into life industrial creations, on a scale unattainable by the efforts of individual capitalists; on the other hand, it must not be forgotten, that in joint-stock companies it is not the individuals that are associated, but the capitals. By this contrivance, proprietors have been converted into shareholders, *i.e.* speculators. The concentration of capital has been accelerated, and, as it[s] natural corollary, the downfall of the small middle class. A sort of industrial kings have been created, whose power stands in inverse ratio to their responsibility—they being responsible only to the amount of their shares,

while disposing of the whole capital of the society—forming a more or less permanent body, while the mass of shareholders is undergoing a constant process of decomposition and renewal, and enabled, by the very disposal of the joint influence and wealth of the society, to bribe its single rebellious members. Beneath this oligarchic Board of Directors is placed a bureaucratic body of the practical managers and agents of the society, and beneath them, without any transition, an enormous and daily-swelling mass of mere wages laborers—whose dependence and helplessness increase with the dimensions of the capital that employs them, but who also become more dangerous in direct ratio to the decreasing number of its representatives. It is the immortal merit of Fourier to have predicted this form of modern industry, under the name of *Industrial Feudalism*.

To be sure, Marx goes on to say that the specific new invention by Bonaparte and his Pereires is not this setup itself but the idea “to render the industrial feudalism tributary to stockjobbing.” But his article does not end there. He explains why a crash is inevitable; and he asserts his belief that “the real founders of the *Crédit Mobilier* have included it [a crash] in their calculations.”

When that crash comes, after an immensity of French interests has been involved, the Government of Bonaparte will seem justified in interfering with the *Crédit Mobilier*, as the English Government did in 1797 with the Bank of England. . . . Louis Bonaparte, the imperial Socialist, will try to seize upon French industry by converting the debentures of the *Crédit Mobilier* into State obligations. Will he prove more solvent than the *Crédit Mobilier*? That is the question.¹⁶

We have, then, a vast prospect unrolled by a method of extrapolation from incipient tendencies, with several stages of future history seen close up (as always when a telescopic lens is used) even though they would not actually occur for most of a century.

There is, in the first place, the development of the capitalist corporation into the stage of evicting the mass of shareholders from effective control and concentrating the real corporate power in the hands of the “oligarchic Board of Directors,” who in turn operate through “a bureaucratic body of the practical managers”—the development which Berle and Means, eight decades later, rediscovered *after* it had taken

place. But that is only the beginning, for Marx is quick to give credit to a socialist predecessor, Fourier.*

Even more important, Marx does not see this taking place simply as an autonomous economic process, but in close association with the state power, in an eventual fusion, in personnel and role, of the state manipulators with the economic manipulators. The state power, at first standing behind its creature, will then have to step in openly to take over the economic power that will have been thus concentrated. Certainly Marx did give short shrift to the fantasy (reinvented by A. A. Berle in our day)¹⁹ that the oligarchic corporations would develop a social conscience for the good of humanity. "Powerful engines in developing the productive powers of modern society," wrote Marx of the joint-stock companies, "they have not, like the medieval corporations, as yet created a corporate conscience in lieu of the individual responsibility which, by dint of their very organization, they have contrived to get rid of."²⁰

4. TOWARD A BONAPARTIST STATE ECONOMY?

Marx did not return to this sweeping view. The definitive crash of "that curious mixture of Imperial Socialism, St. Simonistic stock-jobbing, and philosophic swindling which makes up what is called the *Crédit Mobilier*"²¹ did not actually come about until a decade later, by which time Bonaparte's regime was in far too much serious trouble to dream of trying "to seize upon French industry." He did not "prove more solvent than the *Crédit Mobilier*" after all.

* For Fourier, "industrial feudalism" was to be the "pivot" period in the fourth (decay) phase of civilization; note that, being antagonistic to industrialism itself, he regarded both parts of the phrase as pejorative. The phrase, born in the 1820s, became a widely used socialist catchword for the next hundred years, not necessarily retaining its anti-industrial force. Fourierism's disciples took it up as an accusation, the Saint-Simonians as a program. Antibourgeois aristocratic dissidents used it for their own purposes, as did radicals as different as Proudhon and Blanqui. By 1902 an American socialist, W. J. Ghent, published a book on *Our Benevolent Feudalism* without mentioning Fourier at all.¹⁷ The phrase *industrial feudalism* was usually applied to capitalism itself, especially in some monopolistic and hierarchized form, just as *industrial serfdom* was used for wage slavery. In this context it became merely a metaphor, though it had been more than that for Fourier. When Engels used the phrase in passing in an 1848 article, it definitely was merely a label for a monopolistic capitalism.¹⁸

But a monstrous crisis did break out in the autumn of the same year, 1856, and while the *Crédit Mobilier* did not collapse, it began to decline. Although a dozen years later Marx looked back with some pride to his analyses of "the real essence of the thing,"²² it is hard to say whether he continued to look on a Bonapartist takeover of the economy as one of the continuing possibilities. The answer seems to be: a possibility, yes; but less and less of a probability. The prospect that the Bonaparte regime would be swept away altogether seemed bright.

When the depression started, Marx (as often) saw a new 1848 coming, with a difference. For the European upper classes "are now discovering that they were themselves the instruments of a revolution in property greater than any contemplated by the revolutionists of 1848. A general bankruptcy is staring them in the face. . . ." Marx calls them "the official revolutionists." For in 1848 the movements preceding the outbreak "were of a merely political character. . . . Now, on the contrary, a social revolution is generally understood, even before the political revolution is proclaimed; and a social revolution brought about by no underground plots of the secret societies among the working classes, but by the public contrivances of the *Crédits Mobiliers* of the ruling classes."²³

Engels opined that now "all socialistic °dodges°" had been exhausted by Bonaparte; but Marx wondered "what socialistic coups d'état Bonaparte is still capable of resorting to at the last moment."²⁴ He was still wondering a year later. One of the open questions continued to be the relationship of "swindling" (the personal-enrichment side of the operation) to the state-capitalist aspect.

Swindling (which, to be sure, in turn also became a presupposition of *solid* commerce and industry) exists properly speaking only in the branches where the state is directly or indirectly the *actual °employer°*. However, it is certain that a capitalist of the size of the French government, even one that is bankrupt in itself (as Hegel would say), can make shift somewhat longer than a °private capitalist°.²⁵

Bonaparte's plan "is evidently to make the Bank of France . . . the general entrepreneur of all his swindle-schemes," he guessed on another day. Engels expressed the opinion in a letter that "nobody believes in Bonapartist socialism any more."²⁶ But this was not the tone of a *New York Tribune* article in which Marx discussed Bonaparte's economic maneuvers to keep bread prices down for the masses while at the same

time keeping agricultural prices up. Thus, wrote Marx, "he proclaims himself a sort of socialist providence to the proletarians of the towns, although in a rather awkward way, since the first palpable effect of his decree must be to make them pay more for their loaf than before. . . .

At all events, we may be sure that the Imperial Socialist will prove more successful in raising the price of bread than he has been in attempts to reduce it." However, this did not mean to Marx that Bonaparte was thereby acting as executive-committee chairman for the bourgeoisie; rather, the emperor thereby served notice on the bourgeoisie that the state asserted control over their purses:

The "savior of property" shows the middle class that not even the formal intervention of his own mock Legislatures, but a simple personal ukase on his part, is all that is wanted to make free with their purses, dispose of municipal property, trouble the course of trade, and subject their monetary dealings to his private cro[t]chets.

And "Lastly, the question is still to be considered from the purely Bonapartist point of view." The "purely Bonapartist point of view" is the point of view of the bureaucracy. The immense public works necessitated by the plan (granaries) will open up "a fresh field . . . for jobs and plunder," that is, more jobs for a lower officialdom and more plunder for the higher.²⁷

5. THE AUTONOMOUS ECONOMIC POLICY

During this depression period Marx came to the opinion that the specific economic form represented by the *Crédit Mobilier* was a limited phenomenon. In a letter to Engels at the end of 1857, after referring to "the °general rottenness° of the bankrupt state" in France, he remarked that "At bottom, a *Crédit Mobilier* was possible and necessary only in a country so immobile" as France.²⁸ That is, it was the form necessitated by the previous stagnation of the economy ("immobile" is counterposed to *Mobilier*).*

* Three months later, Engels wrote that

I have quite come around to your view that the *Crédit Mobilier* in France was not an accidental swindle but a thoroughly necessary institution, and that Morny's gallows-worthy thievery in it was likewise inevitable, for without the prospect of such rapid enrichment a *Crédit Mobilier* would not have been realized in France.²⁹

But Marx never changed his mind about what was implicit, or potential, in the possibilities open to "Bonapartist socialism" with its Saint-Simonian theoretical framework. About the same time as the above letter he was working out a train of thought in his *Grundrisse* notebook which ended up with almost as sweeping a statement about the *Crédit Mobilier* as the previous year's telescopic view of "industrial feudalism." The context was a discussion of the then-common panacea of a "labor bank"; Marx shows at some length that such a bank could not merely remain a simple exchange agency or replacement for the money system, but would have to go on to control buying and selling in general and indeed all production; that is, take over the entire economy: "Then, viewed with precision, the bank would not only be the universal buyer and seller, but also the universal producer." A basic comment then follows:

In point of fact it [such a bank] would either be a despotic government over production and administrator over distribution, or else it would be in fact nothing but a "board" that kept books and accounts for a society based on labor in common. It presupposes that the means of production are held in common, etc., etc. The Saint-Simonians made their bank into the papacy of production.³¹

Thus, on the basis of the same presupposition, collectivism in production, two different courses branched out: in one the organizing authority set up as a controlling "despotism," a "papacy" over the productive system; in the other, the organizing authority simply served a free society as technical coordinator. The Saint-Simonian managers of the Bonapartist enterprise, Marx thought, were pointed in the first direction.

The fact that the potentiality did not work out historically, that the Saint-Simonian aims did not become Bonapartist realities, did not

The Duke of Morny, Bonaparte's half-brother and coup organizer, was something like the Goering of the regime. Engels' letter means that he had previously regarded the *Crédit Mobilier* simply as an ad hoc swindle, without roots in the economic development of France, as distinct from Marx's view of the institution as an organic feature of the economy. Marx had now qualified his view by limiting it to the French type of situation, and Engels was meeting him half-way from an *opposite* direction. Subsequently, Engels' back-references to Bonaparte's "socialism" tended to retain only the swindle aspect, as in *The Housing Question* and *Anti-Dühring*.³⁰ By that time, of course, it was clear that nothing had come of any other aspect, historically speaking; and there was a new context, the necessity of combating state-socialist illusions of another sort. We will discuss this material under the subject of state-socialism in Volume 3.

negate the theoretical meaning of "Bonapartist socialism" in Marx's view. Already, in the article about industrial feudalism he had pointed out a specific national peculiarity of the *Crédit Mobilier*: it was the Bonaparte-Pereire way "to render the industrial feudalism tributary to stock-jobbing." Later, Marx discussed the limitations of the Saint-Simonian operation more fully in notes which became part of the third volume of *Capital*.

There, again expounding the economic meaning of Saint-Simonism on the basis of the Bonapartist scheme, Marx argues that the embryo of the *Crédit Mobilier* is already found in that doctrine. He remarks:

This form, incidentally, could become dominant only in a country like France, where neither the credit system nor large-scale industry had reached the modern level of development. This was not at all possible in England and America.³²

Saint-Simonism incubated the *Crédit Mobilier* because it looked to the bank and credit system for a takeover of the industrial structure; it was a victim of "the illusions concerning the miraculous power of the credit and banking system, in the socialist sense."

The notion that the banks themselves should take over the management and distinguish themselves "through the number and usefulness of their managed establishments and of promoted works" (p. 101 [of a Saint-Simonian textbook]) contains the *Crédit Mobilier* in embryo. In the same way, Charles Pecqueur demands that the banks (which the followers of Saint-Simon call a *Système général des banques*) "should rule production." Pecqueur is essentially a follower of Saint-Simon, but much more radical. He wants "the credit institution . . . to control the entire movement of national production."³³

Marx, to be sure, believes that it is illusory to think of taking over by this route: "there is no doubt that the credit system will serve as a powerful lever during the transition from the capitalist mode of production to the mode of production of associated labor; but only as one element in connection with other great organic revolutions of the mode of production itself."³⁴ But he discusses this illusion as a mistaken and eventually futile form of anticapitalism, not simply as a bourgeois dodge. This also provides the context for the *Crédit Mobilier*.

In short: Marx consistently interpreted the economic policy of the Bonapartist regime as autonomous from the bourgeoisie. This relative

autonomy need not be interpreted as going any further than Napoleon I, who (as *The Holy Family* had explained) already knew that his state had to "recognize and protect" the "unhampered development of bourgeois society." Its driving force was not derived from hostility to the economic interests of the bourgeoisie, but rather from the aim of *subordinating* those interests to the autonomized state, which had its own aims of self-aggrandizement. Just as the bourgeois point of view was ruled by profits, so "the purely Bonapartist point of view" was ruled by the goal of "jobs and plunder" for the deserving Bonapartist cadres of the bureaucracy.

How far was it possible for these two interests to coexist peacefully? We consider this question next, in the light of Marx's coeval discussions of the political course of the Bonaparte regime.

6. WHAT CLASS SUPPORTS THE REGIME?

The year 1858 saw a high point in the revolutionary hopes of the anti-Bonapartist left—including Marx and Engels as well as the French radical emigrés and others.³⁵ While there were several reasons for the belief that the regime was on the skids, the main underlying drive was seen by Marx and Engels as the growing alienation between the Bonapartist state power and the developing bourgeoisie. In a *New York Tribune* article toward the end of that year, they summarized this pattern in essentially the same way as they did in later historical works.* After 1848–1849

The middle class declared itself politically a minor, unfit to manage the affairs of the nation, and acquiesced in military and bureaucratic despotism. Then arose that spasmodic extension of manufactures, mines, railways, and steam navigation, that epoch of *Crédits Mobiliers*, joint stock bubbles, of swindling and jobbing, in which the European middle class sought to make up for their political defeats by industrial victories, for their collective

* For example, Engels in his pamphlet *The Prussian Military Question* and his introduction to *Class Struggles in France*.³⁶ Perhaps best known is Marx's summary in *The Civil War in France*: "Under [the regime's] sway, bourgeois society, freed from political cares, attained a development unexpected even by itself," etc.³⁷

impotence by individual wealth. But with their wealth rose their social power, and in the same proportion their interests expanded; they again began to feel the political fetters imposed upon them. The present movement in Europe is the natural consequence and expression of this feeling, combined with that return of confidence in their own power over their workmen which ten years of quiet industrial activity have brought about.³⁸

As the bourgeoisie's economic strength grew—thanks to the protection and stimulation given it under the aegis of the Bonapartist state—it sought a commensurate political power, such as Bonapartism denied it on principle. Five years before, too, Marx had thought to see this development reaching a breaking point, with the peasantry disillusioned, the proletariat still hostile, and the bourgeoisie pining “for a new change of power, to afford them at last ‘a regular Government’ and ‘sound business.’”³⁹ Now, in 1858, it was perhaps the assassination attempt on Bonaparte's life by the Italian conspirator Felice Orsini in January that helped to crystallize revolutionary hopes; Marx thought the “coolness” of the public reaction was notable. The small bourgeoisie particularly feared “commercial ruin” and would welcome a change. “Boustrapa [Bonaparte] has perceived this and will now unleash the ‘despot’ as such. We shall see.”⁴⁰

What was “the ‘despot’ as such” that had not yet been unleashed? We shall see.

In a *Tribune* article, Marx marshaled the evidence pointing to the coming overthrow, in class terms. Bonaparte's victory had taken place on an upsurge of commercial prosperity;

The commercial crisis, therefore, has necessarily sapped the material basis of the Empire, which never possessed any moral basis, save the temporary demoralization of all classes and all parties. The working classes reassumed their hostile attitude to the existing Government the very moment they were thrown out of employment. A great part of the commercial and industrial middle classes were placed by the crisis in . . . fear of the debtors' prison. . . . Another very large portion of the Paris middle classes, and a very influential one too—the *petits rentiers*, or men of small fixed incomes—have met with wholesale ruin. . . . That portion, at least, of the French higher classes which pretends to represent what is called French civilization never accepted the Empire, except as a necessary makeshift, never concealed their profound hostility to the “nephew of his uncle,” and of late have seized

upon every pretext to show their anger at the attempt to transform a mere expedient, as they considered it, into a lasting institution.

This description certainly does not leave much of a civil ruling class to support the state.

Bonaparte (Marx continues) senses "the gathering storm." The "street enthusiasm" displayed for Bonaparte's escape from Orsini's bombs was organized by the police. The congratulatory addresses came exclusively from men who "one way or the other, belong to the Administration, that ubiquitous parasite feeding on the vitals of France." Bonaparte therefore demands new repressive laws, instead of pretending "to the more or less respectable forms of a regular Government." This shows "that the time of the sullen acquiescence of the nation in the rule of the Society of the perjured usurper has definitively passed away." The addresses of loyalty from the army "are simply the undisguised proclamation of pretorian rule in France."⁴¹

In his next article Marx continued the argument showing the disintegration of internal support to the regime, this time ending with the growing opposition among the peasantry.⁴²

7. "THE RULE OF THE PRETORIANS"

In a special article Marx then squarely confronted the question of the class base and unique character of the Bonapartist state power in this, its period of dissolution. Its title took up a note that had already been sounded: "The Rule of the Pretorians."⁴³ The analogy, implied but not specifically discussed, was, then, the character of the state power in the epoch of the advanced dissolution of the Roman Empire—a long drawn-out epoch.

Marx's thesis in "The Rule of the Pretorians" is that by this time the state machine of Louis Bonaparte has gone all the way to a new relationship with society. The bonds connecting it with the social strata it has rested on (in its own peculiar way) have stretched and stretched, and now have snapped.

"France has become the home of Pretorians only," Marx emphasizes. Now "the rule of the naked sword is proclaimed in the most unmistakable terms, and Bonaparte wants France to clearly understand

that the imperial rule does rest not on her will but on 600,000 bayonets."

If this means merely an ordinary military dictatorship, it is nothing new. Marx poses the key question in class terms with utter sharpness:

°° A great modern historian has told us that, disguise the fact as you like, France, since the days of the Great Revolution, has been always disposed of by the army. There have certainly ruled different classes under the Empire, the Restoration, Louis Philippe, and the Republic of 1848. Under the first the peasantry, the offspring of the revolution of 1789, predominated; under the second, the great landed property; under the third, the bourgeoisie; and the last, not in the intention of its founders but in fact, proved an abortive attempt at dividing dominion in equal shares among the men of the legitimate monarchy and the men of the monarchy of July. Still, all these regimes rested alike on the army. Has not even the Constitution of the Republic of 1848 been elaborated and proclaimed under a state of siege—that is, the rule of the bayonet? Was that Republic not personated by Gen. Cavaignac? Was it not saved by the army in June, 1848, and again saved in June, 1849, to be finally dropped by the same army in December, 1851?

It is clear, then, that all the preceding class regimes also rested openly on the army. (To be sure all class rests on armed force in the last analysis, but here Marx's point is that since 1789 all the French regimes rested on armed force in the first analysis.) Still, in all previous cases the armed force supported the socioeconomic power of different ruling classes. Marx continues: "What then forms the novelty in the regime now openly inaugurated by Louis Bonaparte? That he rules by the instrumentality of the army? So did all his predecessors since the days of Thermidor."

Now comes the answer: the novel phenomenon is that *this* state power supports no social class whatsoever, it maintains the rule of no group other than itself:

Yet, if in all bygone epochs the ruling class, the ascendancy of which corresponded to a specific development of French society, rested its *ultima ratio* against its adversaries upon the army, it was nevertheless a specific social interest that predominated. Under the second Empire the interest of the army itself is to predominate. The army is no longer to maintain the rule of one part of

the people over another part of the people. The army is to maintain its own rule, personated by its own dynasty, over the French people in general.

It is to represent the *State* in antagonism to the *society*.

This is state autonomization no longer as a mere tendency, not even one that is realized in practice to a greater or lesser extent. This is state autonomization driven, exceptionally, to its extreme conclusion. The army is not the "instrumentality" of any of the social classes, of any "specific social interest" of civil society; it represents the state itself in antagonism to "society" *tout court*, to civil society in general.

This is the dangerous experiment under way:

It must not be imagined that Bonaparte is not aware of the dangerous character of the experiment he tries. In proclaiming himself the chief of the Praetorians, he declares every Praetorian chief his competitor.

That is, he becomes vulnerable to military coups by his own generals. Again, the obvious analogy is the pattern of the corresponding Roman epoch, when one praetorian chief after another seized the imperial throne.

This new system of government in France is not the result of any seizure of power by the military in the usual sense; the head of state himself has gone over to it, as his last resort:

We repeat that it is impossible to suppose Louis Bonaparte ignorant of the dangers with which his new-fangled system is fraught. But he has no choice left. He understands his own situation and the impatience of French society to get rid of him and his Imperial mummeries. He knows that the different parties have recovered from their paralysis, and that the material basis of his stock-jobbing regime has been blown up by the commercial earthquake [the crisis].

The reference to "the material basis of his [Bonaparte's] stock-jobbing regime" may recall Marx's formulation of "jobs and plunder" as the economic drive of the specifically Bonapartist cadres, the men who "one way or the other, belong to the Administration, that ubiquitous parasite feeding on the vitals of France." This state bureaucracy, as we have previously noted, had been intertwined by innumerable bonds with the bourgeoisie in the orgy of self-enrichment which the Empire

had unleashed. Now the commercial and financial crisis had cut these opportunities. The nonmilitary sector of the state bureaucracy* was now itself treading air. Only the military cadres, the generals, could save the whole state machine that Bonaparte had put together.

Consequently, he [Bonaparte] is not only preparing for war against French society, but loudly proclaims the fact. . . . The denunciation of *all parties* as his personal enemies enters, therefore, into the game of Bonaparte. It forms part of his system. He tells them, in so many words, that he indulges no delusion as to the general aversion his rule is the subject of, but that he is ready to encounter it with grape and musketry.

8. BY THE SWORD ALONE

This article, Marx's most direct statement on a case of complete state autonomy, raises important questions in hindsight. But first, to complete the picture, let us review Marx's subsequent analyses of the crisis of the Bonaparte regime, into 1859. All of his articles continue to be based on the premises laid out in "The Rule of the Pretorians"; we will not find any change in the conception, only variant formulations which may be useful especially for those unused to this area of Marx's thinking. Here are some highlights:

1. *Bonapartist state versus bourgeoisie and all other classes.* The eventual rising of the "revolutionary masses" will be helped by

the decidedly anti-Bonapartist attitude of the bourgeoisie, the secret societies undermining the lower strata of the army, the petty jealousies, venal treacheries and Orleanist or Legitimist leanings dividing its superior layers. . . .⁴⁶

* There is no theoretical reason to limit the term *state bureaucracy* to the civilian officialdom, though this is often done as a matter of terminological convenience. In this connection, one can look back to the passage quoted earlier in this chapter⁴⁴ in which Marx speaks of the Bonapartist regime as, from the beginning, a "military and bureaucratic despotism." This spells out the two main sectors of the state bureaucracy, to be sure; often enough Marx followed popular practice in labeling it merely a "military despotism." In fact, earlier in the same article "military despotism, the rule of the Caesars" is mentioned as the general form of government on the Continent. Elsewhere Marx referred to the Bonaparte regime as "the rule of the coup d'état in France" or "the coup d'état regime."⁴⁵

Even now there is "coolness" toward the regime: "The masses show themselves °indifferent°. Direct and serious counter-remonstrations have come from: high finance, industry, and commerce; the clerical party; finally, the high military circles. . . ." ⁴⁷ The European aristocracy and bourgeoisie are now disillusioned with Bonaparte:

They knew him long since as a villain; but they deemed him a serviceable, pliant, obedient, grateful villain; and they now see and rue their mistake. He has been using *them* all the time that they supposed they were using him. ⁴⁸

In a *Tribune* article drafted by Engels, "The middle classes . . . are longing for a return of the time when they, or at least a fraction of them, governed the country. . . ." ⁴⁹

2. *The swindlers' regime.* The Bonapartist Empire

had already dropped every pretense of being a regular Government, or the offspring of the "*suffrage universel*." It had proclaimed itself the regime of the upstart, the informer and the twelve-pounder [cannon]. It goes now a step further, and avows itself the regime of the swindler.

This introduces Marx's report on the new financial machinations of the Crédit Mobilier, amidst the financial and commercial rigors of the depression. In addition, there is an immense wastage of capital in "unproductive" public works, typified by the Haussmann urban-renewal program in Paris which features great boulevards suitable for using cannon and cavalry against barricades:

Meanwhile, Bonaparte clings to his old way of sinking capital in unproductive works, but which, as Mr. Haussmann, the Prefect of the Seine, has the frankness to impart to the Paris people, are important in "a strategical point of view," and calculated to guard against "unforeseen events which may always arise to put society in danger." Thus Paris is condemned to erect new boulevards and streets, the cost of which is estimated at 180,000,000 francs, in order to protect it from its own ebullitions. ⁵⁰

3. *Bonaparte's "bankering for confiscations."* This phrase ⁵¹ refers to Bonaparte's plan to expropriate the landed property of the charity institutions in return for state bonds. The regime's finances are in a desperate state, and this time the Crédit Mobilier is in no position to help out. "There remains, then, nothing for Bonaparte but to return, in

financial matters, as he has been forced to do in political ones, to the original principles of the coup d'état." After plundering the Bank of France and the Orleans estates, now he moves toward "the confiscation of the property of the charitable establishments." But this operation "would cost Bonaparte one of his armies, his army of priests, who administer by far the greatest portion of the charitable establishments." An outcry has arisen "against this intended encroachment upon 'private property.' " ⁵²

4. *The "despotic military state."* Bonaparte is instituting a "system of domestic terrorism," a "reign of terror." As a result, "the French middle classes will soon be worked up to the point where they will consider a revolution necessary for the 'restoration of confidence.' " ⁵³

In this "despotic military state," Bonaparte bids fair to become the prisoner of his military instruments (as the late Roman emperors did):

At the same rate that France grows impatient of the yoke of the army, the army waxes bolder in its purpose of yoking Bonaparte. After the 10th of December [1848], Bonaparte could flatter himself that he was the elect of the peasantry, that is, the mass of the French nation. Since the attempt of the 14th January [1858, by Orsini], he knows that he is at the mercy of the army. Having been compelled to avow that he rules through the army, it is quite natural that the latter should seek to rule through him.

This seems better nuanced than the subsequent flat assertion that "the army reigns in France." ⁵⁴

In the shift to a decisively military base and an inevitable outbreak of war, Marx sees the "beginning of the end" for the Bonapartist regime:

. . . the commercial and agricultural distress, financial coup d'état, and the substitution of the rule of the army for rule by the army, are hastening the explosion. . . . [Meanwhile] war is believed to be imminent. Louis Napoleon has no other means of escaping speedy destruction. The beginning of the end is at hand. ⁵⁵

As late as March 1859, it was still Marx's opinion that "°° Louis Napoleon can never more be the demigod of the Bourse and the Bourgeois. He rules henceforth by the sword alone." ⁵⁶

9. LIMITS OF THE BONAPARTE MODEL

Let us now return to the interpretation of the Bonapartist state in dissolution given by Marx in "The Rule of the Pretorians," within the context of his running analyses of the Second Empire's crisis in 1858-1859.

The picture is of a state which has pushed its autonomization to the extreme point, where it is no longer the *resultant* of the actual class forces in society but rather stands in antagonism to all the social classes of civil society. To be sure, this state is the *result* of a historical process through which this class society has actually gone, but the result is that the political superstructure has torn loose from the social foundations which produced it. It has assumed an independent life of its own in the fullest sense.

It is evident that this picture is quite at variance with the narrow and cramped view of the "Marxist theory of the state" commonly presented by Marxist and anti-Marxist expositors, for whom Marx's and Engels' fairly extensive writings on the autonomized and bureaucratic state virtually do not exist.*

Two addenda are necessary.

1. The theoretical flight which Marx took in 1858 with "The Rule of the Pretorians" has to be put in the perspective of later developments.

Through 1858-1859 Marx evidently believed—and certainly hoped—that the Bonapartist regime, having broken its umbilical cord to civil society in a paroxysm of autonomy, had reached a point of no return. But we know, with twenty-twenty hindsight, that Bonaparte did "return," that is, make a turn back to accommodation with the social powers of bourgeois society; this was marked by a free-trade treaty with England in January 1860 and a revival of parliamentary life in November. In consequence, our history textbooks commonly date

* Marx's article "The Rule of the Pretorians" has never been reprinted, and its very text exists only in the not-very-accessible files of the *New York Tribune*. (In translation it is included in the Russian and German editions of Marx's and Engels' works.) Nor is it quoted, or even mentioned, in any work I know of that purports to discuss Marxist theory, with the single and outstanding exception of M. Rubel's *Karl Marx Devant le Bonapartisme*.⁵⁷ But then, it is rare to find even Marx's very accessible concept of Bonapartism presented, let alone explained, in this peculiar body of literature. Lest anyone be tempted to concoct a fable that

something called Bonaparte's "Liberal Empire" from that year. The despot had pulled back from the brink, realizing that he could not rule by the sword alone.

The extreme tensions induced by the autonomous course, which made Marx scent revolution, had had the same effect on the emperor. For the fully autonomized state power that was depicted in "The Rule of the Pretorians" meant a drastically unstable situation. If Bonaparte was "preparing for war against French society," it was the latter that was sure to win, for this bourgeois society was not only viable but on the rise: so Marx calculated, and so Bonaparte decided. As we have seen, Marx looked for revolutionary rumblings to begin quite soon, as "French society"—the classes that dominated the socioeconomic system—hardened in antagonism to the runaway state machine. The snapping of the bonds between this state and this society, therefore, marked a prerevolutionary situation (to use a modern term). The split between state and society had to be fought to a decision; the anomaly had to be resolved, the abnormal normalized.

It cannot be overemphasized that, in this case, the continued viability of bourgeois society was the underlying precondition for this conclusion. There was a state in dissolution, but there was no society in dissolution. On the contrary, we must recall that the roots of the conflict lay in the rapid growth of the bourgeoisie's economic strength: "with their wealth rose their special power . . . they again began to feel the political fetters imposed upon them." These material conditions prescribed the limits of state autonomization for the period. The limits of Bonapartism were defined by the historical position of the social classes it defied.

We need not inquire here whether the Bonapartist state really did reach the extreme point of autonomy which Marx saw in 1858; for even if we come to the conclusion that Marx's hopes were outrunning the facts, the question of state theory is nevertheless settled. What is established is Marx's lack of inhibition about envisaging the special case in which a state achieves full autonomization; what it settles is that

Marx forgot, dropped, or ignored his basic theory of the state at this time, or in articles for the *Tribune*, or in connection with Bonaparte: we may point in advance to one of the best brief statements that Marx ever set down on the relationship of the state as political superstructure to the class foundations of society. It appeared in an article for the *Tribune*, in the midst of the very articles we have been discussing, and on the subject of Bonaparte. Since this article is as little accessible as the other, the relevant section is given in Special Note C.

Marx's theory of the state includes provision for historical conjunctures in which a state, completely independent in the fullest sense, cuts loose from its foundations in civil society and turns on them.

In fact, there is no reason to believe that Marx even thought there was a special problem about it, or that it ever occurred to him that a rigid taboo against such notions would one day be considered "Marxism." For one thing, the formulations in the *Tribune* articles on the subject give not the slightest indication that the writer feels he is venturing into delicate territory. On the contrary, they are unusually brash—for Marx, who could become positively sibylline when he was on thin ice with respect to theory. For another thing: there is the evidence of the Marx-Engels correspondence, which was heavy during those years.* This evidence is like Sherlock Holmes's barking dog: the point is that, in the course of constant cross-discussions of developments in Bonaparte-land, the question at issue is *never* mentioned, either by Marx to get his friend's opinion or by Engels in comment.

2. Marx's 1858 analysis of Bonaparte's autonomous state throws a light, forward and backward, on two better-known writings in which the same question is raised but not answered sharply. These were written at the beginning and at the end of the Second Empire's life: in the one case before the autonomization process reached its apex; in the other, after the crisis thereby created was past.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx's formulation of the question is very tentative. He refers back to six previous periods and regimes in French history, from the absolute monarchy to the 1848 republic, each with its pattern of state-class relations, in order to make the point that the Bonapartist state is something new:

Only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made itself completely independent.** As against civil society, the state machine has consolidated its position so thoroughly that the chief of the Society of December 10 [Bonaparte] suffices for its head. . . .⁵⁸

* A graph of the number of letters per year in the correspondence between Marx and Engels, from (say) 1852 to 1864, corresponds with interesting fidelity to the fever chart of Continental politics. The years 1857-1860 stand up on this chart like an alp, with steep walls on each side.

** Literally, "to have completely autonomized itself." The term *autonomized*, which we have been using, is unwonted in English, but it closely translates Marx's *verselbständigt*.

The key qualification is “seem”: the state machine has not really made itself *completely* autonomous from civil society; the implication, not spelled out, is that it has, however, reached a high point of autonomy not previously seen. Marx then goes on to discuss what classes’ interests are represented by Bonaparte, and how.

At this point, before the actual experience of the Second Empire, it is clear that Marx already has his eye on the problem.

In 1871 Marx, drafting *The Civil War in France*, started a passage on this problem with a statement similar to that in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*; then, once more emphasizing the relative novelty of the state form, he ended up with a strong statement that the Bonapartist state was the form needed for the social rule of the bourgeoisie. For this, indeed, was what it had turned into.

°°The governmental power with its standing army, its all-directing bureaucracy, its stultifying clergy and its servile tribunal [judicial] hierarchy had grown so independent of society itself, that a grotesquely mediocre adventurer with a hungry band of desperadoes behind him sufficed to wield it. . . .

That much was a rewrite of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*.

It appeared no longer as a means of class domination, subordinate to its parliamentary ministry or legislature. Humbling under its sway even the interests of the ruling classes, . . . sanctioned in its absolute sway by universal suffrage, the acknowledged necessity for keeping up “order,” that is, the rule of the landowner and the capitalist over the producer . . . the state power had received its last and supreme expression in the Second Empire.

But this state, which humbled under its sway even the interests of the (civil) ruling classes, proved in fact the only political form through which the ruling classes of civil society (landowners and capitalists) could maintain their power over the producers (workers and peasants):

Apparently the final victory of this governmental power over society, it was in fact the orgy of all the corrupt elements of that society. To the eye of the uninitiated it appeared only as the victory of the Executive over the Legislative, of the final defeat of the form of class rule pretending [that is, claiming] to be the autocracy of society [by] its form pretending to be a superior power to society. But in fact it was only the last degraded and the only possible form of that class ruling, as humiliating to those

classes themselves as to the working classes which they kept fettered by it.⁵⁹

There is another passage, dotted with allusions to the autonomy of the state machine,* which also makes clear that this state protected the social interests of the ruling capitalists and landowners.

Only a vestigial reference to all this remained in the final version of *The Civil War in France* after the work of condensation. There is a quick reference to "The State power, apparently soaring high above society," and the heavy emphasis is on the conclusion that Bonapartism is

the ultimate form of the State power which nascent middle-class society had commenced to elaborate as a means of its own emancipation from feudalism, and which full grown bourgeois society had finally transformed into a means for the enslavement of labour by capital.⁶²

The Bonapartist experience left a model, the record of a striving, and evidence of a potentiality, but it came too early in the history of bourgeois society to develop into anything more. Its significance for the development of Marxist theory, however, was immense.

* Its interpretation is complicated by the fact that Marx's English in this draft is a little rough. It speaks of "this State usurpation" and "the centralized and organized governmental power usurping to be the master instead of the servant of society." Although this state destroyed the ruling classes' "parliamentary pretensions of self-government," it was "the last possible form of their class rule. While politically dispossessing them, it was the orgy under which all the economic and social infamies of the regime got full sway." It was the "last triumph of a State separate of and independent from society." But then, further along, Marx throws in the word *seeming*: this state machine was the "most powerful . . . expression" of the state, writes Marx, and (with good German syntax) he has "expression" modified by this phrase: "elaborated into seeming independence from society."⁶⁰ In the second draft, the formulation of this problem is a very brief summary of the foregoing:

At first view, apparently, the usurpatory dictatorship of the governmental body over society itself, rising alike above and humbling all classes, it has in fact, on the European continent at least, become the only possible state form in which the appropriating class can continue to sway it over the producing class.⁶¹

19 | STATE AUTONOMY IN PRECAPITALIST SOCIETY

The formula version of Marx's theory of the state—"committee for managing the common affairs" of the ruling class—is the formula for relative normality, like most formulas that sum up experience. We have been testing the meaning of the theory by getting behind the formula investigating the conditions under which the state tends to assert autonomy from the ruling classes to a greater or lesser extent.

To push this inquiry further, let us leave the boundaries of Bonapartism, as Engels did in the passage which inaugurated this discussion at the beginning of Chapter 16. He had broached the general category of *exceptional* periods "in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both." As we saw, under this head he included three Bonapartists—Napoleon I, Louis Bonaparte and Bismarck; but the first example he adduced was, as a matter of fact, not a Bonaparte at all: "Such was the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which held the balance between the nobility and the class of burghers. . . ."

The absolute monarchy as a state form reigned over a long historical era—not "for the moment" but for a couple of centuries more or less depending on the country. No Bonaparte figure was necessarily involved, the absolute monarchies being headed by individual monarchs of various shapes and sizes.* We have here an ongoing political *system* involving an autonomized state of a particular kind for a whole historical period, in a number of disparate countries.

* That Engels, like others, thought of Bonapartism as a form that tended to require a Bonaparte figure is attested by his remark that "There is no empire without an emperor, no Bonapartism without a Bonaparte. The system is cut to the man's measure; it stands and falls with him."¹ The context, in 1888, was the question how long Bismarck would last.

The absolute monarchy is not introduced by Engels as an example of Bonapartism. On the contrary, it is subsumed along with the three Bonapartisms under a broader head, to which no "ism" or other label is applied but which is described. They are all autonomized states resting on an equilibrium of contending class forces.

To generalize a point made in the last chapter, they are all cases reflecting a *system in dissolution*, and hence a crisis of a certain magnitude. In the case of Louis Bonaparte, we said, it was a particular political system that was on its last legs, but not the society itself; in different terms, the same would apply to the other Bonapartisms. But in the period of absolute monarchy, the political system was the outcome of a social system in dissolution—feudal society. The crisis was on an entirely different order of magnitude, and the persistence of the autonomized state for a whole historical era was of the same order.

1. THE STATE THAT SWALLOWED UP SOCIETY

As we know, Marx and Engels were quite aware of the possibility that the final crisis of a society might not be soluble even by revolution. They stated it in one of the most conspicuous places in all their writings, the opening statement in *The Communist Manifesto* of the proposition that all history (since primitive times) is "the history of class struggles."

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.²

Engels repeated the alternatives much later in *Anti-Dühring*, not about the past, but with reference to the future: "its [the bourgeoisie's] own productive forces have grown beyond its control, and as if necessitated by a law of nature, are driving the whole of bourgeois society towards ruin, or revolution."³ As the proletariat grows into a power, then "under penalty of its own destruction, [it] is forced to accomplish this revolution" which abolishes capitalism.⁴

In the Manifesto, Marx and Engels assumed everyone was aware of the great example in the past of "the common ruin of the contending classes." It was the disintegration without revolution of the society of the Roman Empire, an example which weighed heavily on all political thought and on its terminology. "Caesarism" later became a general catchword for personal and military dictatorship, but in terms of Marx's conception Caesar's dictatorship was undoubtedly one Roman analogue of Bonapartism. Caesar was the last step in the downfall of the patrician democracy (democracy for the ruling class as a whole, organized in the Roman Republic) after a long period of class struggles stemming from the bid of the rich plebeians for more political power and the ongoing battle between debtors and creditors. Caesar's state maneuvered between the class pressure of the patricians and the rich plebs, with an eye on its own interests.*

It is a pity that neither Marx nor Engels had occasion to take up the *political* forms in which the Roman state disintegrated, in the course of "the common ruin of the contending classes." Most of their writings were ad hoc, and this *hoc* never arose as a pressing theoretical problem. There are many animadversions to the Roman period in their works,⁹ but nothing substantial on the politics of the period of social disintegration—the period when the imperial state more and more came forward as the only cement of the system, while no revolutionary class appeared with aspirations toward a new and progressive social transformation.

For present purposes, the pattern may briefly be summarized as follows: The state sought to maintain the status quo by patching here and there, substituting its own apparatus as necessary for the failing mechanisms of the old order. But this way of maintaining the status

* One may be misled by the fact that, in his 1869 preface to a new edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx expressed the hope of "eliminating the school-taught phrase now current, particularly in Germany, of so-called *Caesarism*," because "this superficial historical analogy" forgets that the Roman class struggle took place inside the free minority, over the backs of the passive slave majority.⁵ The specific analogy Marx was objecting to, in this passage, began flourishing in 1866, and has nothing to do with our subject; the term itself had become current about 1851 with one of the journalistic interpretations of Bonapartism.⁶ Marx himself had made his own analogies with Caesarism more than once: in *New York Tribune* articles he had referred to the Bonaparte regime as "the Caesarism of Paris," and to "military despotism, the rule of the Caesars" in contemporaneous Europe; and when he discussed Bonaparte's decision for war in 1859 he brought out the phrase "*Aut Caesar aut nihil*."⁷ For ourselves the main point is not that Caesar was a Bonaparte or Bonaparte a Caesar, but that both exemplified a more

quo became just another channel through which the unviable status quo changed into something else, for it could not remain the same. Since the status quo could not remain *quo*, the patchwork on the body started turning at long last into the body itself. By the time of Diocletian (around 300 A.D.) if not before, there could be no doubt about what had happened. The old ruling classes had disintegrated with their old social order; the state's role had changed, over centuries, from preserving an ongoing social system to replacing the organizer-classes of disintegrating civil society with its own cadres and mechanisms.*

One of the few places in which Marx touched on this process in passing dealt with another problem altogether: he wished to give an example of how the tillers of the land could be expropriated not by driving them off but by appropriating the product of their labor beyond the point of viability:

In the last days of the Roman Empire the provincial decurions, which consisted not of peasants but of private landowners, deserted their homes, abandoning their land and even selling themselves into slavery, all in order to get rid of property which had become nothing more than an official pretext for harsh and merciless extortion.¹⁰

The merciless extorter in this case was the autonomized state, and the victims were part of the (former) ruling classes. The state that developed has been variously dubbed "state capitalism," "state socialism," "corporative state," and "fascism" by historians, anachronistically resorting to later historical phenomena to find a label for a special type of state arising out of "the common ruin of the contending classes." For when a whole civil society disintegrates, the only institution remaining to keep society together is the state: not to keep the old

inclusive phenomenon: state autonomization resting on a class equilibrium. The day after Bonaparte's coup d'état, Engels already had in mind the analogy between this event and "the rule of the pretorians." He wrote to Marx:

It remains to be seen whether the pretorian regime of the days of the Roman Empire, which presupposed a widely extended state organized throughout on military lines, a depopulated Italy and the absence of a modern proletariat, is possible in a geographically concentrated, thickly populated country like France, with a large industrial proletariat.⁸

But they found that such broad social differences do not preclude broad analogies, when a common pattern is embodied in varying historical forms.

* The best short introduction to this question is by Walbank (see Bibliography), which also has a "Note on Books."

society together any more, but to keep *a* society, some kind of organized society, together on any terms.

The autonomized state becomes the residual legatee of society for a historical period. The political institutionalization of force, the state, infuses all the processes of society and subordinates everything to itself; the political and economic institutions fuse. The state is no longer simply a superstructure; it has swallowed up all of society.

This is what Engels saw happening in his own time, but, as usual, with the close-up telescopic view. In a summary passage of great power, moving in a few lines from the ancient slave societies to "present-day Europe," he notes the monstrous growth of state bureaucratization. The state power

grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become more acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have tuned up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to swallow the whole of society and even the state.¹¹

An unexplained remark like this was possible because Engels assumed everyone knew that a state once had swallowed up "the whole of society."

2. THE FUSION OF POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

When we come to feudalism, there is a marked difference in the formulations of the early Marx (before *The German Ideology*) and the later Marx. An explanation is necessary before the nature of the difference can be appreciated.

The new feudal order crystallized in Western Europe out of the "statified" society in dissolution. In feudal society, land ownership and power went together; on the manor the feudal lord was also the embodiment of the state *automatically*: who held the land held the mastery of society. In this sense, one of the characteristics of feudalism as a social system was its specific way of fusing economic power and political power in the same hands.

Especially where feudalism is decentralized, where the power of the nobility has not yet been absorbed by a monarchy or principedom, the

power of the ruling class can be (and has been) discussed in two apparently different ways, which are really one. The lord can be considered as the landowner (a socioeconomic category) and his land as his private property; at the same time the lord is the state power, which would seem to make the land the property of the state. There is no real contradiction; the difficulty, if any, exists solely in our habit of thinking of state power and economic power necessarily as two separate if related powers; that is, our habit of thinking in terms of the social relations of the bourgeois era and social systems in which property ownership does not directly entail political status.

Thus, in the third volume of *Capital* Marx casually lists "the slave-owner, the feudal lord, and the state (for instance, the Oriental despot)" as representing different social orders.¹² Obviously, at this point he is not thinking of the feudal lord as being *also* the state power, even if only on a duodecimo demesne. But the lord was indeed the state power on his manor.

In Western Europe, out of "the common ruin of the contending classes" of the ancient world, it was the relations of production, established locally between the tiller of the soil and the (military based) owner of the land, that gave rise to the specific state forms of the Middle Ages. The political power of the feudal lord was organically fused with his relationship as landowner to the actual producers. If the consequence was that the land was therefore state property, it was an entirely different form of state property than obtained under the Oriental despotism. Also different was the "state production" that Marx refers to as existing "in former epochs of Russian history on the basis of serfdom."¹³ This is only another way of saying that, just as quite different social systems exist on the basis of private property as an economic form, so also there are different social systems based on state property as an economic form.

As we saw in Part I, the thinking of the young Marx on social issues was dominated by the Hegelian dichotomy between the particular and the universal, the particularity of private or personal interests versus the universality of public or state interests. The political sphere was the sphere of the universal; the economic sphere was that of the particular. And so the relationship of universal to particular translated into the relationship of political and economic.*

* For this, see Chapter 3 (especially the first few sections) and Chapter 1, section 1, and Chapter 2, pp. 70-73.

For this Young Hegelian, an overriding problem was how to fuse the universal interest and the particular into a genuine unity—how to make them identical, or reconcile their antagonism, through changed political forms and institutions. In this context, it was recognized that such a fusion *had* existed in the Middle Ages, in a specifically feudalistic way; the aim was not to return to those old forms, but to find a way of making the fusion on the basis of modern conditions.

This is why the young Marx had occasion so often to refer to the fusion of politics and economics as characteristic of medieval society (to use our terms, not his). As early as 1842, in his *Rheinische Zeitung* article on the wood-theft law, Marx referred to the “mixture of private law and public law such as we meet in all institutions of the Middle Ages.”¹⁴ But it is in his notebook critique of Hegelian politics (1843) that this is done to the greatest extent.

One important passage occurs in the section where medieval society was called the “democracy of unfreedom,” discussed in Chapter 3.¹⁵ If the broad and narrow meanings of *state* in Hegelese are recalled,¹⁶ the following statement becomes clear. Under the Old Regime

The political sphere was the sole state sphere in the state, the sole sphere in which the content . . . was the true universal. . . . It stands to reason that the political constitution as such is developed only where the private spheres have attained an independent existence.

It is in modern bourgeoisified society that “the private spheres have attained an independent existence,” that is, independent of the state power (political sphere).

The abstraction of the *state as such* belongs only to the modern period because the abstraction of private life belongs only to the modern period. The abstraction of the *political state* is a modern product.

. . . in the Middle Ages property, trade, society, men were *political*; . . . every private sphere had a political character or was a political sphere, or [in other words] politics was also the character of the private spheres. In the Middle Ages the political constitution was the constitution of private property, but only because the constitution of private property was the political constitution. In the Middle Ages the life of the people and the life of the state [*or read: political life*] were identical.¹⁷

Again, in his commentary on Hegel's Section 303, Marx, in the course of attacking Hegel's identification of the state bureaucracy as the universal class,¹⁸ also attacks his (reactionary) way of doing away with the modern split between civil and political life. In Hegel, writes Marx, "The civil society's *class difference* becomes a political difference," and "The *separation of 'civil and political life' is to be abolished in this way and their 'identity' established.*" Marx points out that Hegel is trying to reestablish the typically medieval state of affairs; Hegel himself admits that "identity" in *his* sense was at its peak in the Middle Ages.

Here [in the Middle Ages] the *Stände** of civil society [that is, the classes] in general and the *Stände in their political meaning* [the estates] were identical. The spirit of the Middle Ages can be expressed thusly: The *Stände* of civil society [classes] and the *Stände* in their political meaning [estates] were identical because civil society was political society, because the organic principle of civil society was the principle of the state.

... The identity of the civil and political *Stände* was the *expression* of the *identity* of civil and political society. This identity has disappeared [in modern society].²⁰

There is a good deal more of this: for example, of the medieval *Stände*, "Their whole being was political; their being was the being of the state."²¹

The same point recurs in Marx's essay "On the Jewish Question"; these passages have already been quoted in Chapter 5.²² Likewise in the 1844 Manuscripts:

In general, the sway of private property begins with landed property; that is its basis. But in feudal landed property the lord at least *appears* to be the king of the landed property. . . . The piece of real estate is individualized with its lord; it has his rank, it is baronial or ducal along with him, it has his privileges, his jurisdiction, his political position, and so on. . . . Hence the proverb *Nulle terre sans maître* [No land without a master], in which the growing together of the lordship and the landed property is expressed.²³

* In this passage, the German *Stand* (pl. *Stände*) is used in two senses in order to distinguish them, as we explained in Chapter 1.¹⁹ The "*Stände in their political meaning*" are the social estates of the medieval order, classes made corporate as a political institution; the "*Stände of civil society*" are the socioeconomic classes apart from their formal political status.

As for the tillers of the soil, "His [the lord's] status with respect to them is therefore directly political. . . ." Modern society now requires

that landed property . . . be drawn completely into the movement of private property and become a commodity, that the rule of the owner appear as the pure rule of private property, of capital, abstracted from all political tincture. . . .²⁴

Thereby the medieval proverb *Nulle terre sans maître* is replaced by the modern proverb *L'argent n'a pas de maître* [Money has no master], which expressed the complete dominion of lifeless matter over people.²⁵

Insofar as the state power is constituted *directly* by the feudal lord without intermediary, the state can hardly be called the executive committee or committee to manage the common affairs of the ruling class. That aphoristic formula requires an obvious readjustment in a society where economic power and political power are fused in the same hands. Insofar as each feudal lord in his own demesne could say "*L'état c'est moi*," he had no need of any other formula. It was only as political power was centralized, in latter-day feudalism, in the hands of a more or less absolute monarchy that the (centralized) state had to function as the managing committee of the nobility as a class, precisely because land ownership no longer automatically conferred all sovereign political power on the landowner.

Next step: insofar as political power is separated from economic control, it first becomes possible for that political power to aspire to or move toward *autonomy* from the economic masters. This is precisely what happens under the absolute monarchy, when the history of state autonomization resumes. But before we can consider this, we must take up a loose end.

3. PRIVATE PROPERTY UNDER FEUDALISM

We have detailed the thinking of the young Marx on the fusion of politics and economics in feudalism; but what did the mature Marx have to say about this feature of the feudal social order *before the era of absolute monarchy*?

Very little one way or the other; and the above-stated view is

reaffirmed very glancingly, never directly. The reasons for this appear to be two:

1. From *The German Ideology* on—that is, as soon as Marx develops the historical method which points him toward seeking the roots of modern society in the productive relations of previous history—his attention is overwhelmingly concentrated on the later period of feudalism. It is difficult to find even passing references to the earlier feudal period, just as it was difficult to find references to the long period of Roman society in dissolution. Marx's and Engels' interests—usually responsive to some contemporary political task, in the same sense that the writing of *Capital* was undertaken as a *political* need—focused on the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and to a lesser extent on the transition from primitive society to various succeeding forms including Oriental despotism. But they virtually ignored the historical problems of several centuries of European history, from the palmy days of the Roman world to the onset of absolute monarchy, including the transition from “the common ruin of the contending classes” to Western European feudalism.*

2. Where Marx and Engels do comment on the social relations of feudalism, their emphasis is always on the thesis that the underlying determinant of the system was the socioeconomic relation between the landowner and the actual producer (serf). The feudal lord is here considered as the owner of private property, as we have already discussed. At no time did Marx or Engels stop to take up the analysis of the nature of the state power under decentralized feudalism.

These emphases can be seen most clearly, perhaps, in *The German Ideology*, just because it lies on the border between the young Marx and the mature Marx. In this book, where the method of exploring the material factors in history is first being worked out, Marx's emphasis is that, under feudalism, “landownership played the chief role,” and that in the feudal outlook it was landownership that determined “the whole structure of society.”²⁶ He does not, however, go on to discuss directly what sort of state power was thus determined. Perhaps he thought the question sufficiently covered by his brief statement about the *origin* of feudalism:

* Here is an unexploited opportunity for the paranoid school of marxology to explain that Marx was “paralyzed” by the thought of the Emperor Diocletian, since he never offered a theory of the late imperial state. Actually, the list of what Marx did *not* discuss is much longer, and therefore offers endless material for nonexplanations.

The feudal system . . . had its origin, as far as the [German] conquerors [of Rome] were concerned, in the martial organization of the army during the actual conquest, and this only evolved after the conquest into the feudal system proper through the action of the productive forces found in the conquered countries.²⁷

And, elsewhere in the work: "The hierarchical structure of landownership, and the armed body of retainers associated with it, gave the nobility power over the serfs."²⁸ The feudal system, wrote Engels much later, was "in its very origin a military organization."²⁹

The implications of these statements correct the one-sidedness of the emphasis on land ownership alone, but the implications are *not* brought out. Instead, Marx hurries on to latter-day feudalism, since it is this that leads to the historical roots of modern society.

Further on, there is a section devoted to "The Relation of State and Law to Property" which gives the feudal era short shrift: it gets little more than one phrase in a sentence which moves rapidly on to modern capital. Characteristically, we learn that it is not until the rise of modern capital that there comes into being "pure private property, which has cast off all semblance of a communal institution and has shut out the state from any influence on the development of property." It is, furthermore, only in the bourgeois-dominated state that, for the first time, "Through the emancipation of private property from the community, the state has become a separate entity, beside and outside civil society, . . ." and that "private property has become entirely independent of the community."³⁰ If this becomes true under the modern bourgeois state for the first time, then the case must have been otherwise under feudalism. But Marx is not interested in backtracking to cover that problem for its own sake.

A similar pattern is found in later writings, insofar as any attention is paid to the question at all. More than once it is implied in passing that under feudalism the relation between the political and the economic was different from today, but this difference is not in the center of the exposition. Thus in *Capital* there is the remark that "The leadership of industry is an attribute of capital, just as in feudal times the functions of general and judge were attributes of landed property."³¹ These latter functions of feudal times were *state* functions. Elsewhere: when landed property is bourgeoisified, integrated into capitalist relations, it "receives its purely economic form by discarding all its former political

and social trappings and admixtures"—"all those traditional accessories" of feudal landed property.³² In a real sense, feudal landed property has to be *depoliticized* in order to be bourgeoisified. In other notes Marx makes the point that private property in land becomes exchange value only as "the product of capital and of the complete subordination of the state organism to capital."³³ But before capitalist relations become dominant, the state organism is not only not subordinated to capital, it is not subordinated to civil society in general; under feudal relations, the state power is inextricable from landed property.

The same goes for Engels. In his draft for the Manifesto, he wrote that, as distinct from "feudal and guild property," the rise of capitalism "created a new form of ownership—private ownership." This reflects a feeling that private ownership did not exist under feudal forms of property—obviously a vague formulation until explained. In *The Peasant War in Germany* he was not loath to write about the status of feudal vassals as "almost independent sovereigns" when the bonds of empire fell apart. There is a passage of similar force in his *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*.³⁴

Such is the state of this question in Marx's and Engels' writings: very unsatisfactory. Fortunately, a quite different situation exists when we come to the more decisive period that followed, the era of absolute monarchy, with respect to the issue of state autonomization.

4. ABSOLUTE MONARCHY AND STATE AUTONOMY

The fragmentation of state power in the hands of the separate feudal lords, each sovereign in his demesne, had originally arisen as a means of organizing the disintegration of the ancient world; but this political fragmentation could not endure indefinitely in the face of the economic integration promoted by merchant capital, the growth of cities, and the use of money. These pressures necessitated a centralized state power. Without it, even the old feudal nobility could not survive: they exhausted their historical initiative in finding ways to kill themselves off—"devoured by the great feudal wars," or "annihilated in the peasant wars."³⁵ In England they were in a fair way of exterminating themselves in the so-called Wars of the Roses.³⁶

This class as a whole had to be deprived of its sovereign political power in order to preserve its socioeconomic privileges—or more exactly, to preserve *as much as possible* of its ruling-class privileges. It had to be shorn of political power for its own good, as usual—which means: for the good of the social system in which it had a place. As before and after, state autonomization came in as a means of maintaining a system in dissolution, by rescuing its ruling class from their own incapacities.

The centralization of state power in the hands of one feudal lord, all others becoming dependent vassals, took the form of the absolute monarchy. This absolutism was the formal reflection of the need for state autonomization: the more absolute, the more autonomous; the more a duke here or a count there retained some of his former power, the less autonomous the centralized state. The feudal lord, as a member of a ruling class, remained a landowner, still exploiting *enservfed* labor and deriving his income therefrom. The land which was formerly both his private property and his state property now took on more and more the aspect of feudal private property only (later to merge into bourgeois private property)—and at the same time, ownership became more and more divorced from management of the demesne. “The landed noble turned into the court noble, the faster and surer to be ruined.”*

In notes for a revision of his *Peasant War in Germany*, Engels remarked that the absolute monarchy

had to be absolute just because of the centrifugal character of all elements. However, “absolute” [is] not to be understood in the vulgar sense: [it was] in constant struggle partly with the estates, partly with the insurgent feudal lords and cities. . . .

And he makes the interesting suggestion that the absolute monarchy should rather be called the *ständische*, or estate, monarchy; that is, it should be designated not by the new political form on top but by the way in which the underlying population was organized in sociopolitical estates. This monarchy, he adds, was “still feudal, feudal-in-decline and bourgeois-in-embryo.”³⁹

* So Engels.³⁷ In *The German Ideology* this idea was used to show how Max Stirner’s “Ego” had derived its views on “My Self-Enjoyment” (one section of his book): “In modern times the philosophy of enjoyment arose with the decline of feudalism and with the transformation of the feudal landed nobility into the jovial, extravagant nobles of the court under the absolute monarchy.”³⁸ (An even more telling example is that other “anarchist” classic, Rabelais’ depiction of the Abbey of Thélème.)

This state was "still feudal" inasmuch as it began as the only possible way of saving the feudal lords from shaking their society apart with their blind-alley brawls. In notes for a history of Germany, Engels pointed to the confused tangle of feudal rights, among numerous reasons for a permanent state of internecine conflict.

How could conflicts be avoided? Hence that century-long alternation of the vassals' attraction to the royal center, which alone could protect them against external foes and against each other, and of their repulsion from that center, into which that attraction inevitably and perpetually changed; hence that continuous struggle between royalty and vassals, whose tedious uproar drowned out everything else during that lengthy period when robbery was the only source of income worthy of free men. . . .

His conclusion:

It is plain that in this general chaos royal power was the progressive element. It represented order in confusion, and the budding nation as opposed to dismemberment into rebellious vassal states. All the revolutionary elements taking shape under the feudalistic surface gravitated just as much towards royalty as the latter gravitated towards them.

Centralized monarchic power offered both protection and encouragement to the burgeoning bourgeoisie:

The alliance of royalty and burgherdom dates back to the tenth century. Often interrupted by conflicts, because nothing pursued its course consistently in the Middle Ages, it was each time more firmly and vigorously renewed, until it helped royalty to its final victory [over the nobility], and royalty, by way of thanks, subjugated and plundered its ally.⁴⁰

The basic conception that the absolute monarchy represented a form of relative state autonomy, balanced on the countervailing pressures of contending classes, already appeared in *The German Ideology*. There it comes up first as codicil to one of the earliest statements of Marx's characteristic theory of the state—that the state is "the form of organization which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests."

The independence of the state is only found nowadays in those

countries where the estates have not yet completely developed into classes, where the estates, done away with in more advanced countries, still have a part to play, and where there exists a mixture; countries, that is to say, in which no one section of the population can achieve dominance over the others. This is the case particularly in Germany.⁴¹

Germany's retarded social development is linked with the fact that none of the social spheres (estates turning into classes) had been capable of asserting exclusive domination.

The necessary consequence was that during the epoch of absolute monarchy, which was seen here [Germany] in its most stunted and semipatriarchal form, the particular social sphere which, owing to the division of labor, was responsible for the administration of public interests acquired an abnormal independence, which was pushed even further in the modern bureaucracy. Thus the state constituted itself as an apparently independent power, and this position, which in other countries was only transitory—a transitional stage—it has maintained in German to the present day.

There were certain consequences in the ideological superstructure:

It is this position of the state which explains both the honest character of the government officialdom which is found nowhere else, and all the illusions about the state which are current in Germany, as well as the apparent independence of German theoreticians in relation to the burghers—the apparent contradiction between the form in which these theoreticians express the interests of the burghers and those interests themselves.⁴²

The equilibrium thesis was put forward directly by Engels in 1847:

... the [Prussian] king, representing the central power of the state, and supported by the numerous class of government officers, civil and military, besides having the army at his disposal, was enabled to keep down the middle classes by the nobility, and the nobility by the middle classes, by flattering now the interests of the one, and then those of the other; and balancing, as much as possible, the influence of both. This stage of absolute monarchy has been gone through by almost all the civilized countries of Europe, and in those most advanced it has now given place to the government of the middle classes.⁴³

And then this stage was mentioned in the *Communist Manifesto* as one

of the steps in the development of the bourgeoisie, when it was "serving either the semifederal* or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general. . . ."44

Soon afterward, the equilibrium thesis was applied by Engels to countervailing social forces other than classes—namely, to the disparate national groups in the Austrian empire of the Hapsburgs, in combination with a class equilibrium. To begin with, the Hapsburgs "supported the city burghers against the nobility and the towns against the princes" as "the sole condition on which a great monarchy was at all possible."⁴⁵ But the developing bourgeoisie began to threaten the dominance of the nobility, and growing peasant opposition aroused old national struggles.

In this state of affairs Metternich brought off his masterpiece. With the exception of the most powerful feudal barons he deprived the rest of the nobility of all influence over the conduct of the state. He deprived the bourgeoisie of its strength by winning over the most powerful finance-barons**—indeed he had to do this, under compulsion of the financial situation. Thus supported by the high feudal nobility and high finance as well as the bureaucracy and the army, he attained the ideal of absolute monarchy more completely than any of his rivals. The burghers and peasants of every nationality he kept in hand through the nobles of the same nationality and the peasants of all the other nationalities; the nobles of every nationality, through their fear of the burghers and peasants of their own nationality. The various class interests, narrowminded nationalist tendencies, and local prejudices, complicated as they were, were mutually held in check to the fullest, and allowed the old scoundrel Metternich the greatest freedom of movement.⁴⁷

* *Semifederal* is the loose translation, in the standard Moore-Engels English version, of the *ständische* monarchy, that is, the monarchy based on estates—the same term that Engels later suggested as a substitute for *absolute* monarchy.

** In a shorter version of this explanation in Engels' later *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, *finance barons* and *high finance* become *large stockjobbing capitalists*:

The government of Prince Metternich turned upon two hinges: firstly, to keep every one of the different nations, subjected to the Austrian rule, in check by all other nations, similarly conditioned; secondly, and this always has been the fundamental principle of absolute monarchies, to rely for support upon two classes, the feudal landlords and the large stockjobbing capitalists; and to balance, at the same time, the influence and power of either of these classes by that of the other, so as to leave full independence of action to the Government.⁴⁶

5. ABSOLUTE MONARCHY: THE DOWN PHASE

There was a common pattern to the absolute monarchies, including the Austrian: at first, a push behind the rising bourgeoisie, in order to keep the nobility in line; then a bridling of the new class, to prevent it from taking the bit in its teeth. Thus the era of absolute monarchy had its ascending line, when as "a product of bourgeois development"⁴⁸ the royal power played a progressive role, and then it started downward on the path of decline, when it stood in the way of further progress.

In the first period, the bourgeoisie was not moved *above* the nobility but merely alongside, as recipients of the state's favors.

Here [in Kautsky's article, wrote Engels] there is missing a lucid exposition of *how* the absolute monarchy came into existence as a naturally evolved compromise between nobility and bourgeoisie and how it therefore had to protect certain interests of both sides and distribute favors to them. In this process the nobility—politically put in retirement—got as its share the plundering of the peasantry and of the state treasury and indirect political influence through the court, the army, the church and the higher administrative authorities, while the bourgeoisie received protection through tariffs, monopolies and a *relatively* orderly administration of public affairs and justice.⁴⁹

In the later period, the Crown was still trying to keep the bourgeois forces locked into this pattern in spite of their increasing economic power. But this was no longer possible on the basis of the old division of the plunder. The Crown therefore had to shift the direction of its thrust in order to try to maintain the old equilibrium; that is, in order to maintain the status quo, it had to alter the status quo. At this point the absolute monarchy turned against the current of economic development.

Now, "as a rule" such a turn means that the ongoing system is no longer historically viable and must eventually succumb.* For the absolute monarchy too, there was

* Engels in *Anti-Dühring*:

After the political force has made itself independent in relation to society, and has transformed itself from its servant into its master, it can work in two different directions. Either it works in the sense and in the direction of the natural economic development, in which case no conflict arises between them, the economic development being accelerated. Or it works

a period when the Crown played the burghers against the nobility, in order to keep one estate in check by means of the other; but from the moment when the bourgeoisie, still politically powerless, began to grow dangerous owing to its increasing economic power, the Crown resumed its alliance with the nobility, and by so doing called forth the bourgeois revolution. . . .⁵¹

The pattern of decline was discussed by Marx a little more fully in an 1847 article. The target of this article was the feudal-socialist tendency in Germany whose anticapitalism led it to support the absolutist regime against the bourgeoisie. Marx was therefore intent on emphasizing the reactionary role to which the absolute monarchy had descended. The bourgeoisie, he explained, originally helped the monarchy to victory against the great feudal lords, and later exploited the financial needs of the Crown to make it dependent on high finance.⁵² Now the absolute monarchy was trying to check further progress:

Having arisen out of the defeat of the feudal orders and itself taken the most active part in their destruction, it now tries to maintain at least the *semblance* of feudal distinctions. Formerly encouraging commerce and industry and simultaneously the rise of the bourgeois class as necessary conditions of both national power and its own resplendence, the absolute monarchy now stands in the way of commerce and industry, which have become more and more dangerous weapons in the hands of an already powerful bourgeoisie.⁵³

True, a process of bourgeoisification takes place inexorably, but the absolute monarchy sets its face *against* this development; it tries to hold back the clock.

But in Prussia, as previously in England and France, the absolute monarchy does not let itself be bourgeoisified amicably. It does not abdicate amicably. Besides their personal prejudices, the princes have their hands tied by a whole civil, military, and

against economic development, in which case, as a rule, with but few exceptions, force succumbs to it.⁵⁰ [The first part of this passage was discussed in Chapter 11, p. 248.]

If a rule allows exceptions, as most do, it is still necessary to explain the exceptions in terms of the framework established by the rule. In this case Engels is able to allow for exceptions because of the concept of state autonomy as a resultant of class forces.

clerical bureaucracy—components of the absolute monarchy which by no means want to change their status as rulers for one as servants with respect to the bourgeoisie. For another thing, the feudal orders hold back; for them it is a question of to-be-or-not-to-be, that is, property or expropriation. It is clear that the absolute monarchy, in spite of all the servile genuflections of the bourgeoisie, perceives its real interests to lie on the side of these feudal orders.⁵⁴

Thus, when push comes to shove, the absolutist state “perceives its real interests to lie” on the same side as the decaying aristocracy. It is plainly not acting in this respect as the managing committee of the old aristocracy, now far gone in marasmus and political impotence. It is acting in its own real interests, including the interests of its components, the various sectors of the ruling state bureaucracy, which has the social power to tie the hands of the head of state.

6. FROM ABSOLUTISM TO BONAPARTISM

Given this analysis of the play of class forces producing the absolute monarchy in both its up and down phase, there is a plain relationship between this state form and the state form of Bonapartism. Both are autonomized states resting on an equilibrium of contending classes, but the classes in question are different. In the first case, “the basic condition of the old absolute monarchy” was “an equilibrium between the landed aristocracy and the bourgeoisie,” while “the basic condition of modern Bonapartism” is “an equilibrium between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.”⁵⁵

In the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie [wrote Engels in a letter*] the Bonapartist monarchy . . . played a part

* Engels' letter was educationally addressed to E. Bernstein, then in the heyday of his revolutionary period as editor of *Der Sozialdemokrat*. A few months later Bernstein had occasion to show what he had learned, in an important lead article. In this article the pertinent passage is interesting because of its degree of generalization: “State absolutism,” wrote Bernstein,

is the political expression of quite definite social conditions—it is found everywhere where a class that has been the ruling class up to then feels

similar to that of the old absolute monarchy in the struggle between feudalism and bourgeoisie.⁵⁷

The "Bonapartist monarchy" here is the Prussian, under Bismarck. In Prussia the relationship between absolute monarchy and Bonapartism had a special feature, for the general social backwardness of German conditions caused one to *merge* into the other.

The basic precondition for the [Prussian] monarchy, which had been slowly rotting since 1840, was the struggle between nobility and bourgeoisie, in which the monarchy held the balance. When the nobility no longer needed protection against the onrush of the bourgeoisie and it became necessary to protect all the propertied classes against the onrush of the working class, the old absolute monarchy had to go over completely to the form of state expressly devised for this purpose: *the Bonapartist monarchy*.⁵⁸

Evidently the nobility no longer needed protection against the bourgeoisie after the ignominious collapse of bourgeois radicalism in 1848-1849. At the same time an impetus was given to the bourgeoisification of the bureaucracy itself as well as of the rural nobility.⁵⁹ Catching up with itself, Prussia ran the two state forms together, in the Bismarckian monarchy, the result being a "pseudoconstitutionalism" which "is at once the present-day form of the dissolution of the old absolute monarchy and the form of existence of the Bonapartist monarchy."⁶⁰

If the absolutist monarchy could telescope into the Bismarckian (Bonapartist) state without any break in continuity, it was because of the continuity of the common feature: the autonomization of the state. What changed was the equilibrium pattern of the contending classes on which the state rested. The social formation that assured the continuity of the state *through the changeover in class basis* must have been, then, the one that Marx pointed to as a decisive component of the autonomized state: *the bureaucracy*. To this question we now turn, last but not least.

itself in decline while the new class that is developing is not yet strong enough to rule. Hence we find it everywhere at the close of the Middle Ages—in England, in France, in Germany.

Engels thought the article "very good," but his comment makes no specific reference to this passage.⁵⁶

20 | STATE BUREAUCRACY AND CLASS

There has already been frequent occasion to refer to the role of the state officialdom or bureaucracy. Naturally: for the development of a *special* social stratum of state officials is already involved in the basic conception of Marx's theory of the origin of the state, as we saw in Chapter 11.

This is one of the distinctive features of Marx's political theory: the bureaucracy is not a mere accretion or an adventitious element in society, not simply an unfortunate tumor on the otherwise sound body of the state, but rather inherent in and inseparable from the very existence of a state. Therefore no political theory makes the officialdom, as an institution, more central to state theory as well as practice.

Within Marx's framework, the state cannot be defined without thereby defining the bureaucracy. Terms like *managing committee* or *special agencies* are collective nouns for the people who man them. The integral connection is most evident in Engels' summary:

Society gives rise to certain common functions which it cannot dispense with. The persons appointed for this purpose form a new branch of the division of labor *within society*. This gives them particular interests, distinct too from the interests of those who empowered them; they make themselves independent of the latter and—the state is in being.¹

Thus, the characteristic *detachedness* of the officialdom's relationship to the mass of the people, the gulf between this special body and the people it rules—this already exists in the Marxist conception of the state as "a power seemingly standing above society . . . and increasingly

alienating itself from it."² In any case, who says *state* says *bureaucracy*.*

In popular parlance and some academic systems, *bureaucracy* may be reduced to a conjunctural relationship: perhaps a set of bad habits (for example, arrogance, insensitivity, slothful organization) or bad governmental practices (overstaffing, red tape, swollen paper work) or bad intragovernmental relations (hierarchy). These are indubitably bureaucratic diseases or disease symptoms to be combated, but they do not define the diseased organism; they are consequences. This secondary meaning may be best represented by the term *bureaucratism*, to distinguish it from *bureaucracy as a social formation*.

In our present context, then, *bureaucracy* is used to denote a social stratum of officialdom which is an instrument of *rule from above* in society, institutionally detached from the mass it is organized to manage. Its internal hierarchy, with lines of command from the top down, is a reflection of its basic class function.**

* In 1849 Marx was led to make this point explicit in ABC fashion for the benefit of malicious German officials. It is worth reading since it is an odd marxological tenet nowadays that Marx was capable of discussing a state (the Oriental state) without it occurring to him that it had a bureaucracy. In a *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* article, Marx denounced the Düsseldorf authorities for planning to try Lassalle twice for the same speech: once for advocating "arming against the sovereign power" and again for advocating "forcible resistance against government officials." Marx treated this as a contemptible dodge, not worthy of serious debate:

If in a speech I "call for arming against the sovereign power," doesn't it go without saying that I am calling for "forcible resistance against government officials"? The *existence* of the sovereign power is, indeed, precisely its *officials*, army, administration, judges. Apart from this its body, it is a shadow, a figment of the imagination, a [mere] name. The overthrow of the government is impossible without forcible opposition to its officials. If in a speech I call for *revolution*, then it is superfluous to add "*Forcibly oppose the officials*."³

It must be remembered that in the course of its millions of words, Marx's *NRZ*, like everyone else, customarily referred to the absolutist state power as the "Crown" or similar standard term of collectivity (monarchy, absolutism, and so on). It was only in a later century that this language could be considered vague. "The state is the officials [*Beamten*]" went an old German saying.⁴ It is historians who popularize Louis XIV's alleged counterclaim that "*L'état, c'est moi*," but the common man knew the state as a network of outstretched hands, hard faces, and armed men. Indeed, Louis is supposed to have made this famous assertion in interrupting a magistrate who dared to use the expression "the king and the state."⁵ In his notes on the historian Maine, Marx remarked at one point: "This unfortunate Maine has not the faintest idea that . . . the state is by no means the prince; he only seems to be."⁶

** By analogy, bureaucracies, in the sense of institutionalized officialdoms not

1. THE VIEW FROM 1843

When Marx discussed bureaucracy so extensively in his notebook critique of Hegel in 1843, the term was still quite rare in serious political writing. It had *not* been used by Hegel himself for his class of officials; it was Marx who introduced it into the analysis.

What did it mean in 1843? Firstly, from its beginnings in French and German the term was strongly pejorative—as it still usually is today, especially outside academic circles influenced by Max Weber. It was possible for Marx to put it to use because his viewpoint was pointed against bureaucracy.

Secondly, the term had already bifurcated into its two areas of meaning: a ruling social formation of some kind, or merely a set of practices or attitudes. The former had characterized the term's first recorded appearance in a German book (by C. J. Kraus, 1808), where the *Büreaukratie* denoted a stratum which "blatantly rules" Prussia in place of the aristocracy. It had earlier been used in the German periodical press in connection with the French revolutionary developments after 1789.⁸ The Brockhaus encyclopedia of 1819 had recognized it; and in the 1820s it became better known through use by the prominent publicist J. J. Görres, whose writings, familiar to the young Marx and Engels,⁹ are said to have naturalized the term in German.¹⁰

But in France, where the term had originated and which still provided the impetus for its international diffusion, Balzac's novels had popularized it in the 1830s in its reduced, secondary meaning of *bureaucratism*. This is clear from the little essay on bureaucracy toward the beginning of his *Les Employés*, the main source. Three months later John Stuart Mill published an article on France using the term (probably its first appearance in an English magazine) with exactly the same limited meaning.¹¹ A similarly limited meaning was also dominant in

susceptible to control from below, are found in all levels below the state machine—for example, in corporations, sociologists' associations, charity foundations, large organizations of many kinds. Marx's views on the trade-union bureaucracy are reserved for another volume.—For the confused multiplicity of meanings of "bureaucracy" in contemporary thought, see the introduction to Albrow, who illustrates the sad state of affairs by writing a section on Marx which is factually inaccurate in virtually every sentence.⁷

German academia up to a "short time ago," according to a contemporary authority writing in 1846.*

When Marx first discussed bureaucracy in his Hegel critique of 1843, then, there was a choice. But in Marx's critique, *bureaucracy* definitely denotes a ruling bureaucracy as a basic social formation.

The present chapter will begin the discussion of how Marx regarded the role of the state bureaucracy in the context of class society. There is a present-day tendency, unfortunately, to concentrate this subject under the narrow issue *Is the bureaucracy a class?* While taking account of this current approach, it must be emphasized that the question did not exist in this form for Marx's milieu or for Marx himself; and we shall see that this formulation of the question violates some fundamentals of Marx's method.

If the question *Is the bureaucracy a class?* were asked in the society in which Marx came to political consciousness, it would have been as frivolous as asking whether Prussia was a monarchy. In the Prussian absolutist regime, in which the bourgeoisie was only commencing to aspire to participation in political life, the classes usually meant the *Stände*, the estates of the realm. These were the official classes of society: social formations recognized as having a formal-juridical relationship to the state even though rooted in civil society—represented as such in the Rhenish Diet, for example, as we saw in Chapter 1.¹⁴

* Though published three years after Marx's notebook on Hegel was written, this essay by Robert von Mohl provides the nearest thing to a report on the meaning of *bureaucracy* in serious literature at the time Marx first used it. In a footnote added later, the author stated that to his knowledge his 1846 article was the first attempt at an analysis of this "new term," this "new favorite expression." Mohl's article began: "Since a relatively short time ago, talk about 'bureaucracy' has been cropping up everywhere and under the most various circumstances. As a rule, not in a favorable and fair sense. . . . Now what is the precise conception of this term which is condemned as barbarous by philologists?" For some years, relates Mohl, the term was sparsely applied, under the influence of Malchus' *Politik der Staatsverwaltung*, to government departmental organization in which "business is not discussed collectively by the staff" but ordered by hierarchic authority. "But nowadays," he complains, "the bureaucracy is spoken of as a social power or a governmental system. . . . It is in any case something bigger and broader [than Malchus' sense]. . . ." ¹² This broader usage in German circles, decried by the influential professor of political science, is attested indirectly by one of the first English-language articles to use the term analytically: J. S. Blackie's "Prussia and the Prussian System," a review of recent German books (1842). The magazine's editor appended a note treating the term as Blackie's. ¹³

It was a Hegelian tenet, previously discussed,¹⁵ that not only was the bureaucracy a class, it was *the* Universal Class (*allgemeine Stand*), the one that represented the interests of society as a communal whole as against particularistic interests. Even when Marx set out to refute Hegel's view in his first theoretical exploration of state concepts, in 1843, it did not even occur to him to question the plain fact that the bureaucracy was a class: he sought only to prove that it was a particularist class like all the others, that it did not deserve the "universal class" badge which Hegel pinned on it in order to raise it above the ruck of the other social classes.

This view had incubated while he was still a *Rheinische Zeitung* left democrat. After all, the Cologne paper was not simply a business enterprise: it was the mouthpiece of an embattled political tendency, whose direct enemy was precisely the existing state bureaucracy. Writing for it, and then taking over its editorship, meant a day-to-day collision with the agencies of that bureaucracy. In the foreground, as *The Enemy*, was not merely the monarchy in the abstract but the *Beamtenstaat* (functionary state). The power of the bureaucracy had to be clipped, Marx wrote.¹⁶ The state arrogantly demands that the people put "unlimited trust in the officialdom" while the state itself holds "unlimited distrust of all nonofficials": this is the "basic defect" of "all our institutions."¹⁷

His article on the wood-theft law anticipated his critique of Hegel: the Diet debases the state officialdom into "material instruments of private interest."¹⁸ His article on the Moselle peasants emphasized the narrowmindedness of the bureaucratic mentality: the government official is guilty of "demeaning the state [that is, communal] interests into his private affair," and of regarding "the domain of governmental authority" as the one and only "official reality."¹⁹ In another passage this article pushed the insight a little further. The obtuseness of the bureaucratic mind is no personal or adventitious characteristic but inherent in the "*bureaucratic* essence" of the government administrative machine, which is not *able* (Marx's emphasis) to see that the trouble lies within itself, not only "in the sphere of nature and the private citizen." He continued:

With the best will in the world, the keenest humanitarianism and the strongest intelligence, the administrative authorities are unable to do more than resolve temporary and transitory conflicts,

and are unable to resolve a continual conflict between reality and administrative precepts; for neither is this a task covered by their position, nor is the best will in the world capable of breaking out of an *essential relationship* or *fatality*, if you will. This *essential relationship* is the bureaucratic relationship, inside the administrative body as well as in its *connection with the body administered*.²⁰

The last sentence drew a necessary distinction between bureaucratism as a characteristic of the internal life of the administration itself (hierarchy, and so on) and bureaucracy as a characteristic of the government's relationship to society at large. For it was the second that defined the bureaucracy as a social stratum.

Then Marx's 1843 notebook on Hegel's state theory spelled out a hard position—demoting Hegel's Universal Class to just another class with selfish (particular) class interests, which were falsely identified with those of the state (society). The bureaucracy holds “the essence of the state . . . in its possession; it is its *private property*”—that is, for the bureaucracy state power plays the same role, in terms of the material basis of its ascendancy (posts, career, and so on), as private property does for the property-owning classes.²¹ “Class in the medieval sense [*Stand*],” writes Marx, “remained only within the bureaucracy itself, where the civil status and political status are directly identical.”²² That is: the fusion of economic and political position which characterized society as a whole in the Middle Ages,²³ holds true today *only for the bureaucracy*; only for the bureaucracy is its economic position directly based on its political.

Furthermore, the bureaucracy generates typical bureaucratic symptoms. Thus the state exists as “various bureau-mentalities connected by relations of subordination and passive obedience.” The “chief abuse” becomes “hierarchy.” Nor is this bureaucracy a mere institutional abstraction: it is *certain people*. “The affairs and operations of the state are bound up with individuals (the state operates only through individuals). . . .” Hegel forgets “that the state affairs and operations are human functions,” incarnated in “human beings” called bureaucrats (officials, functionaries, and so on),²⁴ because Hegel made the state an abstract category.

This is Marx's first reminder that, while customary language spoke in shorthand of the state (or the monarchy or the Crown) doing thus and

so, it was not merely one royal individual that was in question, but the whole class (*Stand*) which corporately governed under the aegis of the Crown-holder.

2. THE ABSOLUTIST BUREAUCRACY BEFORE 1848

When Marx wrote down the first clear exposition of a Marxist view of social development in *The German Ideology*, he did not suddenly suffer amnesia about something previously accepted as part of the ABC of politics.

In this work Marx is no less aware than before of the role of the bureaucracy, but now he also points to the *difference* in the socio-political role of the state bureaucracy before and after the bourgeoisie acquires dominance in the state. Let us first examine the exposition in Marx and Engels of the "before" role of the bureaucracy—its role in the epoch of absolute monarchy before the bourgeois assumption of political power.

In *The German Ideology*, to illustrate the epoch-making thesis there first formulated that "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas," the immediate example given by Marx is not a period with *a* ruling class. He starts with the harder case:

For example, in a period and in a country in which royal power, aristocracy, and bourgeoisie are contending for [political] rule, and where the rule is therefore shared, the separation-of-powers doctrine manifests itself as the ruling idea and is now expressed as an "eternal law."²⁵

This, then, is a three-sided contest, still unresolved; there is not *a* ruling class, but a pattern of shared rule.

In this type of situation, in which the prebourgeois estate system has not yet been decisively replaced by social class divisions, "in which no one section of the population can achieve dominance over the others," one still finds "the independence of the state"—Germany being given as the case in point—as distinct from the "more advanced countries" (France, England, and America) where the modern state has become subordinated to bourgeois private property. This "independence of the

state" clearly refers to its relative autonomy from control by any of the contending classes, not the basic independence of any state from society as such.²⁶ Later in the same work, this autonomy is concretized as the "abnormal independence" of the *bureaucracy* under the royal power, not simply of the state. For there was no question but that operationally the state manifested itself as the state bureaucracy.²⁷

As the manuscript of *The German Ideology* was being finished, Engels wrote an article in which he carried this line of thought further. His subject was the persistence of the absolute monarchy in Germany, the current form of which he viewed as "a new system, which has been peculiar to Germany." His explanation was in terms of a class equilibrium which would later apply much more widely:

°°The aristocracy was willing to govern, but too weak; the middle classes were neither willing to govern nor strong enough—both, however, were strong enough to induce the government to some concessions. The form of government, therefore, was a sort of mongrel monarchy. A constitution, in some [German] states, gave an appearance of guarantee to the aristocracy and the middle classes; for the remainder there was everywhere a *bureaucratic* government—that is, a monarchy which pretends to take care of the interests of the middle class by a good administration, which administration is, however, directed by the aristocrats. . . . The consequence is, the formation of a separate class of administrative government officers, in whose hands the chief power is concentrated, and which stands in opposition against all other classes.²⁸

This article illustrates the prevalent view of the absolutist bureaucracy as a classlike formation. However, the relation of class forces is not yet clear in this 1846 article: the "separate class" of administrators in this "bureaucratic government" holds the "chief power" as against all other classes, yet the government is "directed by the aristocrats." Into the bargain, the next sentence is: "It is the barbarian form of middle-class rule"—meaning a form *preparatory* to bourgeois rule, as barbarism is preparatory to civilization. At this point Engels had just begun his intellectual association with Marx. The following year he wrote more clearly of the balancing of classes—nobility versus bourgeoisie—by "the king, representing the central power of the state, and supported by the numerous class of government officers, civil and military. . . ." ²⁹

It was also in 1847, as we saw in the previous chapter, that Marx

presented the same bureaucracy in quite as autonomous a light, without actually using the class label. The absolute monarchy, which did not act as the instrument of the feudal aristocracy, was still farther from acting as if it had become a bourgeois state. On the contrary, from previously encouraging the development of commerce and industry, it now stood in the way, positively resisting bourgeoisification. Why? "Besides their personal prejudices, the Princes have their hands tied by a whole civil, military, and clerical bureaucracy—components of the absolute monarchy which by no means want to change their status as rulers for one as servants with respect to the bourgeoisie." (The attitude of the feudal orders is given as an additional reason.) The royal power now sees its interests as allied with the feudality, not with the bourgeoisie.³⁰ Clearly this state power involves so autonomous a social formation at its heart that the class label becomes a mere matter of terminology.

Outside the triangle of contending forces there is a new class growing up, the proletariat. It confronts alternatives:

It asks whether it is the present political state of affairs, the rule of the bureaucracy, or the one which the liberals strive for, the rule of the bourgeoisie, that will offer it more means to attain its own ends.³¹

This "rule of the bureaucracy" referred concretely to the Prussia of 1847, still cramped and clogged by absolutism. More summarily, Marx indicated the same line of thought for absolutist France, in retrospect. In his *Eighteenth Brumaire* he explained that the enormous over-bureaucratization of the French state—"embracing wide strata, with a host of officials numbering half a million,"—had arisen under the old absolute monarchy, but had continued on through and after the bourgeois revolution. The privileges of the former ruling class, the land-owning nobility, had been transmuted by absolutism into the bureaucratic power of the new rulers:

The seignorial privileges of the landowners and towns became transformed into so many attributes of the state power, the feudal dignitaries into paid officials, and the motley pattern of conflicting medieval plenary powers into the regulated plan of a state authority whose work is divided and centralized as in a factory.³²

This description of the transference of political power from the feudal

lords to the state bureaucracy was somewhat revised by Marx in 1871 for his work on the Paris Commune.*

Objectively, this autonomized state incubated the bourgeois economy and thereby a new class rule, but the state itself did not become the instrument of any ruling class of civil society except as it was eventually mastered by either the old feudals or the new bourgeois:

... under the absolute monarchy, during the first Revolution, under Napoleon, bureaucracy was only** the means of preparing the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Under the Restoration, under Louis Philippe, under the parliamentary republic [of 1848], it was the instrument of the ruling class, however much it strove for power of its own.³⁵

This makes the interesting statement that until 1814–1815 the autonomized state, under various leaderships, could *not* be considered “the instrument of the ruling class,” either of the former ruling class (the feudal aristocracy) or of the upcoming ruling class (the bourgeoisie).

3. THE TEST CASE OF FRIEDRICH WILHELM IV

Marx spelled the point out even more bluntly in connection with the problem posed by the reign of the current Prussian king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV.

* The final version of *The Civil War in France* followed *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in tracing back to the period of absolute monarchy the “centralized state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature—organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labour. . . .”³³ The first draft added some detail here, subsequently condensed out, about the “ubiquitous and complicated military, bureaucratic, clerical and judiciary organs” of the “centralised state machinery.” This passage is plainly a rewrite direct from *The Eighteenth Brumaire*: “The seigniorial privileges of the medieval lords and cities and clergy were transformed into the attributes of a unitary state power, displacing the feudal dignitaries by salaried state functionaries. . . .”³⁴

** This *only (nur)* is an intensive, as previously explained in Chapter 11, page 257 fn. The very same passage makes clear that bureaucracy was a quite different means from the standpoint of the absolute monarchy itself; it is from an *objective* historical overview that it was “the means of preparing the class rule of the bourgeoisie,” in the same sense that capitalist development is objectively the means of preparing socialist society.

We have already touched on this king's inclination to turn the clock back in social conditions.³⁶ As Marx explained in 1843, the king "who bumbled about a great past full of priests, knights, and bondsmen," a feudal past to which he dreamed of returning, found that even the Crown could not transfer power back to the old feudality: for "the servants of the old despotism soon put an end to these un-German activities." These servants were the bureaucracy, whom the Crown could not control (so Marx argues). For while the young king had illusions about the omnipotence of the royal power, thinking it was "his state," the actual outcome was a return to the "servants' state" (*Dienerstaat*).³⁷ Here was a test of strength, a test of the realities of state power, and—Marx insists—it was the bureaucracy that wielded the power of decision, not the Crown.

In 1850 Engels, in his series on *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* (which, remember, was reviewed by Marx and published as his own work), gave an account of the same interesting class struggle. After describing the pre-1848 Prussian regime as "a half-feudal, half-bureaucratic monarchism,"* he writes that Friedrich Wilhelm IV "was known to be no supporter of the predominantly bureaucratic and military monarchy of his father," Friedrich Wilhelm III. Rather,

°° He hated and despised the bureaucratic element of the Prussian Monarchy, but only because all his sympathies were with the feudal element. . . . he aimed at the restoration, as complete as possible, of the predominant social position of the nobility.

And this aspiration was combined with the concept of a class equilibrium: the king's ideal was to rule over "a complete hierarchy of social ranks or castes" fixed rigidly by birth and social position, "the whole of these castes or 'estates of the realm' balancing each other, at the same time, so nicely in power and influence, that a complete independence of action should remain to the King. . . ."³⁹

Finally, in 1859 Marx presented this test case in even greater detail, for there was now more evidence to go on. "The King with the brainless head" wished a return to medieval relations, with an "independent aristocracy" while at the same time retaining "an omnipotent bureaucratic administration."⁴⁰ Up to 1848 he was unable to satisfy the class aspirations of the Junkers, despite his preachment of "the necessity of

* The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had used to refer to the Prussian regime typically as "the bureaucratic-feudal-military despotism."³⁸

engrafting the poetical rule of aristocracy upon the Prussian prosaic rule by the schoolmaster, the drill-sergeant, the policeman, the tax-gatherer, and the learned mandarin"—that is, rule by the bureaucracy—and so the Junker aristocracy "were forced to accept the King's secret sympathies in lieu of real concessions." The weak bourgeoisie was still unable to move. And—

°° Finally, the romantic King himself was, after all, like all his predecessors, but the visible hand of a common-place bureaucratic Government which he tried in vain to embellish with the fine sentiments of by-gone ages.⁴¹

The "absolute" monarch was typically only the visible agency of the bureaucracy, which was the real ruler.

This remained, during the 1848-1849 revolution, the viewpoint from which Marx and Engels wrote voluminously in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Perhaps its most general expression came in Marx's speech at his Cologne trial in February 1849. All through this period, as before and after, the *Crown* and similar shorthand labels were freely used in writing in the usual way; but in this political lecture to the jury Marx differentiated the relationships. The Crown is viewed alongside the bureaucracy in specifying the "political expression" of the regime.⁴² And:

The *political* expression corresponding to the old society was the Crown-by-the-grace-of-God, the domineering bureaucracy, the autonomous army. The *social* foundation corresponding to this old political power was the privileged aristocratic landed property. . . . The old political power—heaven-annointed Crown, domineering bureaucracy, autonomous army—saw that its actual material foundation would disappear from under its feet as soon as there was any infringement on the foundation of the old society, the privileged aristocratic landed property, the aristocracy itself. . . . On the other hand, that old society saw that political power would be torn out of its hands as soon as the Crown, the bureaucracy, and the army lost their feudal privileges.⁴³

So the bureaucracy (which term properly covers the military bureaucracy too) joined with the aristocracy in impelling the Crown to counter-revolution. In any case, it is made repetitively clear that the label *Crown* does not denote the rule of one man: "The rule of the Crown—

by-the-grace-of-God is precisely the rule of the antiquated social elements."⁴⁴

Then, after 1849, Junkerdom utilized the victorious counter-revolution to implement the king's medievalizing dreams for a few years (1850-1857), turning the clock back to pre-1807 conditions. Marx's summary of this short-lived Restoration shows he saw it in terms of a power struggle in which the state bureaucracy was temporarily subordinated to the old feudal class:

°°There was an end of coy, romantic aspirations; but in their place there sprang up a Prussian House of Lords; mortmain was restored, the private jurisdiction of the manor flourished more than ever, exemption from taxation became again a sign of nobility, the policemen and the Government men had to stoop to the noblemen, all places of power were surrendered to the scions of the landed aristocracy and gentry, the enlightened bureaucrats of the old school were swept away, to be supplanted by the servile sycophants of rent-rolls and landlords, and all the liberties won by the revolution—liberty of the press, liberty of meeting, liberty of speech, constitutional representation—all these liberties were not broken up, but maintained as the privileges of the aristocratic class.⁴⁵

This describes a more thorough purging and recasting of the bureaucratic state by the restored aristocracy than was effected by the bourgeoisie during its temporary ascendancy in 1848. Marx sums it up this way: "The police and administrative machinery were not destroyed, but converted into the mere tools of the ruling class." That is, of the ruling class in civil society, the landed aristocracy. The bureaucratic monarchic state, then, had *not* been the tool of this ruling class.

Marx's article continues with an explanation of how the bustling bourgeois economy grew and spread, until even the "aristocrat became converted into a profit-loving, money-mongering stockjobber," and price rises brought about "the general fall of the fixed incomes of their [the bourgeoisie's] bureaucratic rulers."° In short, the struggle for dominance between the old feudal class and the "bureaucratic rulers" was finally superseded by the common bourgeoisification of the contending classes.

* A second, continuation article is promised, but it did not appear; the survey ended at this point.

4. THE BUREAUCRACY IN BOURGEOIS SOCIETY

It is this basic process of social bourgeoisification which, in Marx's view, changes the autonomous role played by the state bureaucracy. The new bourgeois society had to subordinate the state bureaucracy to itself, to the new ruling class of civil society; it had to break the tradition of autonomy established by the special conditions of absolutism. The bourgeoisification of the bureaucrats was a means toward the political subordination of the bureaucracy.

The change can be summarized as follows: In the highly autonomized state of the absolute monarchy, the bureaucracy had been in position to act as a class element in terms of the specific structure of *that* society. But insofar as the bourgeoisie gained more and more social and political power in its own name, thereby taking over direct command of the state, the bureaucracy was reduced more and more to the status of a social stratum acting merely as the agent of the ruling class. This is the status it tends to be restricted to, as a rule, wherever the ruling class of a given society is still robust enough to exercise unchallenged socioeconomic *and* political sway. In this sense, it is its *normal* status.* In the United States, which had started on a more or less bourgeois basis without evolving through feudalism, Marx noted that "the state, in contradistinction from all earlier national formations, was subordinated from the first to bourgeois society and bourgeois production, and could never make the claim of being an end in itself."⁴⁶

For Marx, this new relationship under bourgeois conditions, in the "modern state," first came to the fore in *The German Ideology*, as we saw in Chapter 8. There Marx's exposition of the class nature of the state was already applied to a social order taken (by anticipation) as already bourgeois in essentials, even though the retarded actuality in Germany was fully recognized in other sections of the same book.

The thesis about the change in the role of the bureaucracy was set

* This suggests why the class status of the bureaucracy has again become a moot question in the contemporary world, which sees the down phase of bourgeois society and the increasing prevalence of autonomized state phenomena. It is this phase that is prefigured in the Bonapartist elements discussed in Chapters 14-19. The above formulation of the "normal" status of the bureaucracy was later turned into a suprahistorical law by "Marxist" dogma.

down by Marx in so many words in his 1849 speech to the Cologne jury, in the midst of the passage already cited. The Crown had been linked with "the old feudal-bureaucratic society" and represented "the feudal-aristocratic society" as against "modern bourgeois society."

It inheres in the conditions of existence of the latter [modern bourgeois society] that bureaucracy and army, instead of being masters of commerce and industry, be reduced to their tools, and be *made* into mere organs of bourgeois business relations [*Verkehr*]. It cannot be tolerated that agriculture be restricted by feudal privileges or industry by bureaucratic tutelage. . . . It must subordinate the Treasury administration to the needs of production, while the old state had to subordinate production to the needs of the Crown-by-the-grace-of-God and to shoring up the pillars of royalty, the social props of this Crown. . . . In modern society there are still *classes* but no longer *estates*.⁴⁷

We have seen that the thesis was repeated, in passing, in Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*: until 1814–1815 the bureaucracy was historically a means of "preparing" bourgeois class rule, but with the bourgeois monarchy born in July 1830, and still more with the Second Republic in 1848, the bureaucracy became the "instrument" of the ruling class.⁴⁸

To be sure, this downgraded bureaucracy still "strove for power of its own," adds Marx in the same work. This reminder is necessary, since the bureaucrats' *strivings* by no means disappear from history. Caliban continues to mutter, "I must obey: his art is of such power . . ." but adds, "And yet I needs must curse . . . sometime am I / All wound with adders, who with cloven tongues / Do hiss me into madness." The servant-monster cries throughout the subsequent history of the bourgeoisie: "A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!" while he dreams of riches and a return to power. Caliban drunk seeks a new master; and in the next *Tempest*, the Caliban-state did find a new god to worship in the form of Louis Bonaparte.

With this new master, the state machine took off at a zigzag angle away from that straight course which history rarely follows. The bureaucracy was conjuncturally able to tear itself free again: "Only under the second Bonaparte," wrote Marx, "does the state seem to have made itself completely independent."⁴⁹ With this contrast Marx asserted that under the regime of Louis Bonaparte the state was *more* autonomous than ever before, more so even than under the absolute monarchy. It was not dominated by any ruling class of civil society.

But even in this case "the state power is not suspended in mid-air," Marx cautions in the next paragraph. This power *rests* on the support of the peasantry, the support or toleration of sectors of the bourgeoisie, and above all, on the precarious equilibrium of the bourgeois-proletarian antagonism, the frozen class struggle. This highly autonomized state is not the "instrument" of any one of the propertied classes contending for political power; *but it is still the resultant of class society taken as a whole* in its current constellation of countervailing powers. We thus get behind the formula version of Marx's theory, to find that even in this abnormal situation the class conception of the state is as central as ever.*

Furthermore, the Bonapartist state power "is not suspended in mid-air" in terms of its own social orientation: it does not set itself against the ruling socioeconomic powers of civil society; on the contrary, it strives to be accepted by the latter, to be accepted as the managing committee of class society taken as a whole. And one of the decisive issues of the period will be whether it can impose itself in this capacity on the reluctant bourgeoisie.

It should then be clear that, in terms of Marx's historical method, the abstract question *Is the bureaucracy a class?* is little better than "How high is up?" An answer can be considered only in terms of a specific social order at a given historical stage. If Marx had no trouble explaining that the state bureaucracy of Friedrich Wilhelm III functioned as a class in the framework of the estates structure of the Prussian absolute monarchy, he also had no doubt that the triumph of the bourgeoisie normally produced social relations in which the state bureaucracy was demoted to a status too amorphous and ancillary to claim a class role.

This same conclusion about the role of the bureaucracy *under capitalism* was approached from the economic side in Marx's manuscripts for the fourth volume of *Capital*. Here Marx is concerned with

* This is the conception that Engels more than once presented as being the *basic* formulation of the theory of the state, a more all-embracing formulation than the narrower sort of "normal" case where the state acts as the managing committee of a ruling class in a more or less stable situation. We saw Engels make the same point in explaining the complex class basis of Bismarckian Bonapartism: "In reality however the state as it exists in Germany is likewise the necessary product of the social basis out of which it has developed."⁵⁰ He made the point even more sharply in connection with a similar test case, a nonbourgeois government in process of forcing the development of capitalism—absolutist Russia. This case is reserved for fuller discussion in Chapter 23.⁵¹

the state officialdom as one of those social strata that consist of people who do unproductive labor but are nevertheless useful to the ruling class in some way. (These strata are collectively labeled "the ideological, etc. classes" in one of the passages to be cited, and the "ideological *Stände*" in another.) The question under discussion in this context is the revenue devoted by the bourgeoisie to maintaining these strata, hence the bourgeoisie's original objection to the expense of maintaining them, and its subsequent reconciliation to this expense.

Political economy in its classical period, just like the bourgeoisie itself in its parvenu period, took a severe and critical attitude toward the state machinery, etc. Later it saw and—as was also shown in practice—learned by experience that it was out of its own organization that the necessity arose for the inherited societal combination of all these classes which were in part quite unproductive.⁵²

With this realization the bourgeoisie became willing to justify even "the exaggerated demands" of its defenders, and "The *dependence* of the ideological, etc. classes on the *capitalists* was in fact proclaimed." ⁵³

Marx then quotes a notable passage from Adam Smith lumping the whole state officialdom among the unproductive laborers along with the men of the church and the intellectual professions as well as "players, buffoons," and so on. He explains:

This is the language of the still revolutionary bourgeoisie which has not yet subjected the whole of society, state, etc. to itself. These illustrious and time-honored occupations—sovereign, judges, officers, priests, etc., the aggregate of all the old ideological strata [*Stände*] arising out of them, their men of learning, teachers and priests—are *economically speaking* put on a par with the swarm of their own lackeys and jesters. . . . They are mere °servants° of the °public,° just as the others are their °servants°. . . . State, church, etc. are justified only insofar as they are committees for the management or administration of the common interests of the productive bourgeoisie. . . .

But as soon as the bourgeoisie has conquered the terrain, in part itself taking over the state and in part making a compromise with its former possessors; as soon as it has acknowledged the ideological strata [*Stände*] to be flesh of its flesh, and has everywhere transformed them into its functionaries in accordance with its own nature . . . as soon as the intellectual tasks them-

selves are more and more carried out in its *service*, entering into the service of capitalist production: then, taking a new tack, the bourgeoisie seeks to justify "economically" from its own standpoint what it previously had critically opposed.⁵⁴

Even where, in other cases, Marx emphasizes the autonomous importance of the bureaucratic apparatus, he does not forget that, under bourgeois relationships, its power after all is limited to a subordinate sphere. We saw such a case in Marx's apparently sweeping identification of "the permanent and irresponsible *bureaucracy*" of "creatures of the desk" and "obstinate old clerks" staffing India House as "the real Home Government" of British India. But before the end of this tirade against bureaucratism, it is made clear that the power of the state is wielded by the British "oligarchy" and "moneyocracy," and it is under their aegis that "a subordinate Bureaucracy paralyze its [India's] administration and perpetuate its abuses as the vital condition of their own perpetuation."⁵⁵ The "abject" bureaucratic "odd fellows" reigned over the administration, but did not rule. The same view is implicit in a sketch of the British bureaucracy in India itself, written a few years later.⁵⁶

5. THE QUESTION OF CLASS PROVENANCE

The autonomized hierarchy "is not suspended in mid-air" in another respect: with regard to its class composition. This important question of the class provenance of the bureaucracy was first discussed at some length in an important manuscript (of an unfinished educational pamphlet) by Engels in 1847. Let us follow its line of thought.

German backwardness is shown by the dominance of agriculture; on the land dominance is held by the aristocracy; below the aristocracy and dependent on it is the petty-bourgeoisie (small property-owners, artisans, and so on); the poorly developed bourgeoisie still counts officially only alongside the petty-bourgeoisie. What political structure results?

The present constitution of Germany is nothing more than a compromise between the aristocrats and the petty-bourgeois, which is tantamount to turning over governmental administration

to the hands of a third class: the bureaucracy. The two high-contracting parties share in the makeup of this class in accordance with their mutual position: the aristocrats, who represent the more important branch of production, reserve for themselves the higher positions, the petty-bourgeoisie is content with the lower ones and gets only exceptional candidates into the higher echelons of administration. Where the bureaucracy is subjected to a direct control, as in the constitutional states of Germany, the aristocrats and petty-bourgeois share in it in the same way; and it is easy to understand that here too the aristocracy reserves the lion's share for itself.⁵⁷

Engels then asks: "Now, how does the German bourgeoisie stand in relation to the two classes that share in the political rule?"⁵⁸ It would seem that the aristocracy and the petty-bourgeoisie "share in the political rule" in proportion to their contribution to the formation of the bureaucracy, which however functions as "a third class," the one that runs the government. Is this bureaucratic class merely derived from the two classes dominant in civil society, or is it more basically conditioned by its derivation? How autonomous is this peculiar class with respect to the other two? Engels' pamphlet is concerned with quite other problems, not these; but his picture of Germany clearly expresses the conception that no single class has managed to achieve ruling status as yet:

The wretchedness of the German status quo consists principally in the fact that no single class has so far been strong enough to put its own sector of production forward as the national one *par excellence*, and thereby put itself forward as the representative of the interests of the whole nation. . . . This regime represented by the bureaucracy is the political compendium of the general impotence and contemptible meanness, the stuffy tediousness and the filth, of German society.⁵⁹

The thrust is, in hindsight, plainly toward the view, more clearly formulated later, of the "bureaucratic monarchy"⁶⁰ as the result of an equilibrium of class forces, producing a highly autonomized bureaucracy.

As Marx did in his article of the same year, Engels proceeds to emphasize strongly that this bureaucratic state power is a fetter on the development of the progressive class, the bourgeoisie, whose decisive section is the manufacturing capitalists:

The manufacturers, however, are hampered in the full utilization of their capital not only by inadequate tariffs but also by the *bureaucracy*. If they are confronted with indifference in the matter of tariff legislation, they are here, in their relationship to the bureaucracy, confronted with the very direct hostility of the government.

The bureaucracy has been established to rule petty-bourgeois and peasants. . . . The petty-bourgeois and peasants therefore cannot do without a powerful and numerous bureaucracy. They must let themselves be kept in tutelage in order to avoid the greatest confusion, in order not to be ruined by hundreds and thousands of lawsuits.

But the bureaucracy, which is a necessity for the petty-bourgeois, very soon becomes an intolerable fetter on the bourgeois. The officialdom's surveillance and interference become very irksome already in manufacturing; the manufacturing industry is hardly possible under such supervision. Up to now the German manufacturers have kept the bureaucracy off their necks as much as possible by bribery, for which they certainly cannot be blamed.⁶¹

There is more about "the bureaucratic hatred of the bourgeoisie." Then comes an important statement about the change in the status of the bureaucracy that would result from bourgeois political victory:

The bourgeoisie is therefore compelled to break the power of this arrogant and double-dealing bureaucracy. From the moment that the running of the state and legislation come under the control of the bourgeoisie, the independence of the bureaucracy collapses; indeed, from that moment the tormentors of the bourgeois turn into their submissive servitors.⁶²

All this ties in with the main argument of Engels' pamphlet, which was directed against the "feudal socialists" whose antibourgeois fervor pushed them to look with favor on the monarchical regime. In the course of this argument, it is the state bureaucracy that emerges as the main political obstacle to social progress at the given point in history.

After the revolution, Engels had another go at the question of the class provenance of an absolutist bureaucracy and its relation to civil society. The subject is Austria; and perhaps this exposition is clearest because the situation described is starkest.

In *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* Engels explains

that the Hapsburg absolutism balanced the feudal landlords and the "large stockjobbing capitalists" against each other while keeping both tied to the state power by class economic interests.

°Thus, Metternich was sure of the support of the two most powerful and influential classes of the empire, and he possessed, besides, an army and a bureaucracy which, for all purposes of absolutism, could not be better constituted. The civil and military officers in the Austrian service form a race of their own; their fathers have been in the service of the Kaiser, and so will their sons be; they belong to none of the multifarious nationalities congregated under the wing of the double-headed eagle; they are, and ever have been, removed from one end of the empire to the other . . . ; they have no nationality, or rather they alone make up the really Austrian nation. It is evident what a pliable and at the same time powerful instrument, in the hands of an intelligent and energetic chief, such a civil and military hierarchy must be.⁶³

Here it is emphasized that the state bureaucracy, however derived originally, has been torn from its roots in civil society—both class roots and national roots—and turned into an order of Janissaries beholden only to the state power. It is an extreme form taken by autonomization.

If Engels used the conveniently vague *race* (in the old meaning of any classification of people)⁶⁴ for this social formation, we also find resort to the elastic word *caste*. In an 1858 article Marx discussed the class position of the Prussian *Landräte*, landowners appointed as Crown officials, the highest government representatives in their districts. "These *Landräte* combine, therefore, in their persons the quality of the *Krautjunker* (fox-hunter)* and the Bureaucrat." They do not live on their state salaries. "Generally, therefore, their interests are more strictly bound up with the class and party interests of the landed aristocracy than with the caste interests of the Bureaucracy."⁶⁶

Here the case is farthest away from that of the Austrian Janissaries: this Prussian part-time "bureaucrat" not only has his provenance in the aristocracy, he still lives primarily as an integral part of the class milieu based on land ownership, not state ownership. And by this time, as we have seen, even the central bureaucracy was well on the way to

* In this jocular definition, Marx, writing in English, is equating the Prussian rural aristocrat ("cabbage-Junker") with the English country squire. It is an approximation, of course, as he noted elsewhere.⁶⁵

bourgeoisification. This bureaucracy was *déclassé*—displaced from its class role—as a whole. While it was increasingly difficult to think of it as a class, it was still a *something*.

6. CASTE OR CLASS?

Again we must deal with a terminological aspect not because it was important to Marx but for the contrary reason: he was so indifferent to the finicky choice between *class* or *caste* that he left plenty of room for latter-day marxology to blow the matter up to huge proportions. As against a modern propensity to consider Marx's terminology, often taken anachronistically, as the key to his conception, we must emphasize it is only his conception that explains his terminology.

Another element too often ignored is the usage of the times. Since the late Enlightenment brought a vogue for things Indian, *caste*—including its combinations like *caste spirit*, *caste mentality*, and so on—had come into wide currency as a swear-word directed especially against Old Regime strata seen as fossilized, such as the old nobility, officer élite, and so on, as well as the bureaucracy.⁶⁷ This pop-sociological or journalistic usage existed alongside the technical or narrow meaning of caste in Hindu society. As in other cases, both meanings are to be found in Marx. In addition, there is a third aspect to the imported term that is important to understand.

The underlying problem is that, while Marx could and did apply his own conception of social class (taken objectively) to any period of history, the drawing of *class* lines of demarcation through civil society does not at all exclude other lines of demarcation within the same society. Thus at various times Marx considers color lines, other racial or ethnic lines, occupational lines, and so on, as lines of demarcation, and these have a certain relationship to the basic class lines. But history shows another and very important way of drawing lines of demarcation through a given civil society: namely, the way in which a society officially establishes such divisions *for itself*. In various social systems, these divisions have been called estates (*Stände*, *états*), orders (for example, Equestrian Order), castes, and so on.

Three points may usefully be made about this terminological problem.

1. As distinct from the Marxian category of class, the contemporaneous labels (estates, and so on) typically denoted social divisions *whose boundaries were fixed or recognized juridically*, established or enforced by political-legal means with openly accepted sanctions. Whatever the means or the degree of rigidity, the boundaries thus demarcated were a refraction, but not necessarily a reproduction, of the objective lines of social division that underlay the society's consciousness. They were conditioned by the class divisions, possibly related ethnic divisions (for example, conqueror and conquered), sometimes occupational divisions, and so on. The contemporaneous labels marked a pattern of *juridical orders* which lay athwart the pattern of social classes.

Capitalism finally does away with this duality. "Bourgeois society knows only *classes*," Engels noted when he had to explain in 1885 the meaning of a passage written by Marx in 1847, about estates and classes. He was echoing Marx's words of 1849.⁶⁸ Bourgeois society as such involves no class-like formations or privileged orders that are *juridically* established with relation to the production process and the appropriation of the surplus product, exceptions being recognizable as prebourgeois survivals.

If bourgeois society knows only classes, prebourgeois societies knew the duality. The famous roll call of classes at the beginning of the *Communist Manifesto* is not, in fact, a list of classes only: it loosely mixes classes in the Marxist sense with juridical orders in the contemporaneous sense. For example, patrician and plebeian were recognized orders of Roman society; and the plebeian order incubated more than one class. This same freedom in mixing the two terminologies characterizes the next paragraph too.

2. In Marx's and Engels' writings, social formations that are classes in the Marxist sense are also freely given the other label, the one which is specific or indigenous to the social system in question.

The most common case in point involves *class* and *estate* (*Stand*) with respect to feudalism. Thus, from the standpoint of Marx's historical analysis, the landed aristocracy was a class under feudalism; it was also a feudal *Stand* or estate, from the standpoint of the contemporaneous social structure. Marx freely calls it one or the other depending on the context, without risk of being misunderstood. It would be quite senseless to ask whether Marx thought the aristocracy was a class or an estate.

The relation between class and estate has its complications but they offer little difficulty. For example, before 1789 the young French bourgeoisie ranked as *part* of a feudal estate, the Third Estate; on the other hand, the First Estate of the realm, the high clergy, was part of a class in social reality. The estates system was rooted in the objective class structure, but the two patterns of division were not necessarily congruent. Marx, writing for contemporaries who did not need to have this explained, sometimes used one framework, sometimes the other—like everyone else. Hence what seem to be loose usages to us were often merely idioms of the day.

3. Under the absolutist regime the state bureaucracy was seen as one of the estates of the realm. But it was also seen as a social class. This depends not on some suprahistorical definition of class, but on the concrete nature of the social system involved.

The way in which a given society divides up into classes is specific to its own social relations. Thus, there are warlord elements in many societies, but a warlord becomes a *feudal* lord or baron only when specific social relationships become dominant. There is no rule-of-thumb definition which decides whether the chief of an armed band who resides in a stronghold and lives off the surplus labor of unfree producers, etc. is or is not a member of a *feudal* class. The point can be settled not by a glossary but only by a concrete examination of the overall social relations of the society. Similarly, merchants become a separate *class* not simply because they buy and sell, but only when buying and selling begins to play a certain role in a given society.*

Likewise, *state bureaucracy* always describes a formation of government officials, of course; but an officialdom enters into differing social relations depending on what societal whole it functions in. We have already explained that to ask whether the bureaucracy is a class in some suprahistorical sense—that is, apart from the social relations of a specific system—is quite as pointless as to ask whether the aristocracy was a class or an estate.

It should now be possible to understand what is implicit in a passage

* This point is closely related to Marx's explanation of how other socio-economic categories take on class character only in the context of a given social system. Thus: "A Negro is a Negro. He only becomes a slave in certain relations. A cotton-spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. It becomes *capital* only in certain relations. Torn from these relationships it is no more capital than gold in itself is *money* or sugar the price of sugar."⁶⁹

Marx wrote in 1849. A progovernment writer, expounding a supra-historical view of classes as fixed for all time, had argued that wherever there was "labor and division of labor" there were necessarily class differences, for which reason the worker-bourgeois relationship could never be abolished. Marx replied:

In Egypt there was labor and division of labor—and *castes*; in Greece and Rome, labor and division of labor—and *freemen* and *slaves*; in the Middle Ages, labor and division of labor—and *feudal lords* and *serfs*, *corporations*, *estates* and the like. In our era there is labor and division of labor—and *classes*, one of them being in possession of all the instruments of production and means of livelihood, while the other lives only by selling its labor. . . .⁷⁰

Here *caste* is used coordinately with *class* and *estate*. *Caste* is to ancient Egypt what the *estate* is to feudalism: it is the juridically demarcated social formation that is specific to the society—one of the contemporaneous social divisions that lie athwart the underlying class division.

Marx did not have available any agreed-on generic term to denote this family of social formations, no umbrella term marking what is common to *estate*, *caste*, *order*, and so on. There is still none in common acceptance today. In addition, the word *estate* is specially ambiguous in English: for example, when Engels wanted to refer to the estates of pre-1848 Prussia for American readers, his solution in one article was to call them "social ranks or castes" and "these castes or 'estates of the realm.'"⁷¹ Does this mean he thought the feudal estates were *castes*? Not at all; as often, *caste* was simply a stand-in for something without a tag of its own. Contrariwise, in *Anti-Dühring* Engels referred in passing to the "system of social estates" (*Ständegliederung*) in the "heroic epoch" of ancient Greece.⁷² Does this mean he thought there were feudal estates in the Homeric age? Of course not, as Engels' accounts of this society show elsewhere.⁷³ *Ständegliederung* should be translated as any ordered arrangement of social ranks; for *Stände* then and today often has this broader generic meaning.*

* It is interesting that in his *Historical Materialism*, realizing the need, Bukharin adopted *caste* as his generic term for a juridically established legal-political category, hence inclusive of *estate*.⁷⁴ He wrote *inter alia*:

In ancient Egypt, the administration of production was practically identi-

Estate and *caste*, as well as *rank*, *order*, and the like, have occasionally functioned as generics pointing to any kind of class-like formation, leaving open the specifics. The kind of exegesis, therefore, that stresses how frequently Marx and Engels called a bureaucracy a class or a caste is not very helpful. By and large these usages followed the circumstances of the time. Consider the following three passages in Engels:

1. In 1850 Engels remarked of the 1849 campaign in Germany that "The reactionary classes, aristocracy, bureaucracy, and big bourgeoisie, were few in number."⁷⁹ The bureaucracy—specifically, the bureaucracy of the absolutist monarchy—is called one of the classes without inhibition.

2. In 1872, as we have already quoted, he wrote that "both in the old absolute monarchy and in the modern Bonapartist monarchy the real governmental authority lies in the hands of a special caste of army officers and state officials."⁸⁰

3. In 1884, describing the 1848 revolution, he listed "the absolute monarchy, feudal land ownership, the bureaucracy, and the cowardly petty-bourgeoisie" as adversaries of the German bourgeoisie.⁸¹ The bureaucracy is here implicitly regarded as part of the class structure of 1848—and separate from the monarchy as a social force, at that—but no labels are applied.

These usages do not involve a change in Engels' *conception* of the sociopolitical role played by the autonomized state bureaucracy in the recent past. But something else did change during the decades between the first and the last of the above statements. As Germany developed with rapid strides from the semiabsolutist, semi-Bonapartist monarchy

cal with that of the state, the great landlords heading both. An important fraction of production was that turned out by the landlord state. The role of the social groups in production coincided with their caste, with whether they were higher, middle, or lower officials of the state, or slaves. . . .⁷⁵

This is one of many cases where *caste* has been detached from the narrow meaning based on its Hindu form, and more or less arbitrarily invested with some broader meaning for purposes of sociological analysis. More often than not, however, Marx himself used *caste* with some relation to the narrow sense, especially in his scientific economic writings.⁷⁶ (Since Marx refers to Egypt more than to India in this connection, it should be mentioned that later Egyptologists rejected the earlier view of "the Egyptian system of castes," as Marx called it in *Capital*.)⁷⁷ On the other hand, for example, in his *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx applied the *caste* label to Louis Bonaparte's inflated bureaucracy: as an "artificial caste" which was *created* by the head of the state, it is contrasted with "the actual classes of society."⁷⁸ Here the term *caste* is obviously a stand-in, as often, and has no relation to the Indian social formation.

to a modern bourgeois society, then (as we have discussed) the bureaucracy was accordingly subordinated to bourgeois power, hence downgraded from its previous height of autonomization as a class, caste, or estate, becoming a subaltern "social stratum." It certainly was still visible as a distinctive social category, but it could no longer be viewed as playing an autonomous class role. By 1884, calling the *old* bureaucracy of the absolutist period a class in a historical sense would have required an explanation for the contemporaneous reader. Back in 1850 no explanation had been necessary as a matter of course.

7. BUREAUCRATIC HYPERTROPHY

There is another question that has to be put in its place. It concerns the distinction already mentioned between bureaucratization as the necessary accompaniment of a state in class society, and *overbureaucratization* as a pathological symptom.

The phenomenon of bureaucratic hypertrophy is, of course, very old, antedating even the swollen state machine of the later Roman Empire, and is in no way limited to any one type of class society. It is especially typical of the fatty-degeneration stage of any class society, and reached a new peak in the *ancien régime*, as the feudal class lay in its death throes and the young bourgeoisie grew to adolescence. Thus bourgeois political consciousness, arising amidst the rank overgrowths of the absolute monarchies, grew up with a certain hostility to "statism," a frame of mind which produced the *laissez-faire* ideology in its moderate form and bourgeois anarchism in its extreme form. (It is interesting that the same Frenchman, Vincent de Gournay, is credited with inventing both the term bureaucracy and the phrase *laissez faire, laissez passer* in the eighteenth century.)⁸²

However, the tendency to state gigantism tended to reproduce itself in the bourgeois state too, just as in previous class societies. This is a tendency which worked itself out at different rates and in more or less offensive forms, depending on country and period. Above all, it is necessary to keep in mind that even where a tendency is itself inevitable given certain social developments, the particular manifestations in which it takes form are *not* inevitable as individual phenomena, and indeed usually seem to be highly avoidable and remediable—if *only* the

leaders were wiser, or whatever—especially in small-scale cases. If, therefore, one asks whether a particular problem of bureaucratism or overbureaucratization is rooted in the system or merely adventitious, the question may be ambiguous. Any given case of bureaucratic excess may be avoidable, but not so the tendency that some such phenomena will be generated.

Cases of bureaucratism naturally attracted Marx's and Engels' pens. The army bureaucracy provided examples galore for Engels' military writings. The Crimean War was a rich source, perhaps the most notorious case being the disastrous administration and logistics of the British forces, topped by the famous blunder that launched the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava (which Engels wrote up at the time).⁸³ More important than the fact that "someone had blundered" was the decimation of the British army by the incompetence of its own bureaucracy. The scapegoat, wrote Engels, is Lord Raglan,

but this is not just. We are no admirers of his Lordship's military conduct, and have criticized his blunders with freedom, but truth requires us to say that the terrible evils amid which the soldiers in the Crimea are perishing are not his fault, but that of the system on which the British war establishment is administered.⁸⁴

This introduces an article which details "this beautiful system of administration . . . this machinery so well adapted to fetter generals and to ruin armies." Marx followed, after a British investigating commission had reported, with a more comprehensive study of the fossilized routine of bureaucratism. A typical passage:

The regulations were so beautifully arranged that . . . nobody knew where his authority began nor where it ceased, nor to whom to apply for anything; and thus, from a wholesome fear of responsibility, everybody shifted everything from his own shoulders to those of somebody else. Under this system, the hospitals were scenes of infamous brutality. . . . And the authors of all these horrors and abominations are no hard-hearted barbarians. They are, every one of them, British gentlemen of good extraction, well-educated, and of mild, philanthropic, and religious dispositions. In their individual capacity, they no doubt were ready and willing to do anything; in their official capacity, their duty was to look coolly and with folded arms upon all these infamies, conscious that the case was not provided for in any part of Her Majesty's regulations affecting themselves. . . .

Not a man on the spot had the energy to break through the network of routine, to act upon his own responsibility as the necessities of the case demanded, and in the teeth of the regulations. The only party who has dared to do this is a woman, Miss Nightingale.⁸⁵

Raglan Marx dismissed as "all his life a head-office-clerk to Wellington . . . a man bred to do just as he was bid." Other high officers "are well bred, good-looking gentlemen, whose elegance of manner and refinement of feeling do not permit them to handle a thing roughly, or to act with even a show of decision. . . ."

But we must now note that Marx did *not* draw the conclusion that these particular bureaucratic horrors flowed inevitably from the social system, though a connection was obvious. On the contrary, he predicted flatly (and accurately) that, since the system could not afford these indulgences to its inherent tendencies, "it is impossible that there should not be a reform in the system and administration of the British Army."⁸⁶

For this situation can be taken as a classic example of a bureaucratic foul-up which, while visibly the outcome of tendencies inherent in the class structure, yet had to be and could be remedied in the short run—even if plugging a hole in one place meant that the same tendency would burst out elsewhere. The same can be said of instances of the bureaucratic mentality, which are usually removable in retail and inescapable in wholesale.*

* Perhaps the purest case of a reaction to bureaucratic mentality and tone *alone* is provided by the tale of Engels and the librarian. In the 1860s Engels became active in the German cultural center of Manchester, the Schiller Institute; in fact, he became president 1864-1868 and remained on its executive till he moved to London.⁸⁷ One day in 1861 he received a curt form letter from the institute librarian about returning a book. Its form and tone (the request itself not being in question) ignited him and he fired a missive at the executive protesting the brutal style of the communication: "In fact, when I read the document I thought I had been suddenly translated back to the homeland." It was like "a peremptory summons from some German police commissioner. . . ." He then looked back at one of the founding documents of the institute (1859) and flared up again:

It said the Schiller Institute should serve to make "the young German . . . feel immediately *at home* here . . . be better *taken care of and provided for*, morally and spiritually . . . and above all return home *unestranged from the fatherland*." Beyond question, the bureaucratic style of this sort of official communication is quite calculated to make the recipient feel immediately on *home* soil, and forced to believe that he is as well if not "better taken care of *and provided for*" than at home in his beloved

We have seen other instances of Marx's attention to the development of bureaucratization in England, particularly in the form of British colonial machinery for the control of India.⁸⁹

Still, it was not England that was the hearth of state bureaucratism; indeed, well past the middle of the century, the islanders regarded the new word *bureaucracy* as the name of a foreign phenomenon known to be rife on the Continent. The visible vanguard of bureaucratization in Western Europe was constituted by France and Prussia. The two went together: when Marx refers to the Prussian bureaucracy as "that omnipotent, all-meddling parasitic body," the context is a comparison with "the France of Louis Philippe."⁹⁰ Elsewhere, comparing the state expenditures of France with England's, Marx notes that "in a bureaucratic country, like France, the cost of collecting the revenue grows at a rate disproportionate to the amount of the revenue itself."⁹¹

It was mainly in connection with this bureaucratic country par excellence, especially under Bonapartism, that Marx uses the catchword *state parasite* and similar expressions. The reference above to the "parasitic" Prussian bureaucracy is an exception; it is significant that it was written in 1858, that is, well past the heyday of the old absolutist bureaucracy, when this social holdover was taking on an anachronistic look in critical eyes.

To be sure, Marx's occasional use of the epithet or metaphor *parasite* is always made offhand, and never becomes a statement on the subject, let alone a theory. For the most part it underlines the unproductiveness of overbureaucratized sectors of the state machinery. Later, in *The Civil War in France* and its drafts, where the elimination of the state as such

patriarchal police state, that great institution for the care of little children; and as long as this sort of official communication flourishes, there is certainly not the least danger that any member of the Schiller Institute will be *estranged from the fatherland*. Yes indeed, if by exception some member had not yet had occasion at home to get acquainted with the forms of the bureaucratic civil service and the peremptory way of speaking of the authorities, the Schiller Institute would seem to offer him the best opportunity to do so; . . .

To be sure, many members have hardly allowed themselves to suppose that "the German spirit in the fullest sense of the word," for whose cultivation the Schiller Institute is to be the center, also comprises that spirit of bureaucratism which at home unfortunately still holds almost all political power, which all Germany is fighting, winning victory after victory just at this time. This tone of direct command, these peremptory summonses to restore order within twenty-four hours, are out of place here anyway. . . .⁸⁸

is under discussion, it may also suggest the dispensability of *any* state as an instrument of class oppression.*

But what is mainly wrong with a sober-sided effort to read portentous theoretical conceptions into a phrase like *state parasite* is that it misses the main point. Marx's critics usually like to point out that he not only had a theory about capitalism, he was so deficient in academic objectivity that he hated it with a passionate detestation. When, therefore, they read in Marx about "capitalist vermin" and bourgeois "bloodsuckers," and so on, these phrases do not move them to break out with the discovery that Marx held a Theory of the Increasing Verminosis of Capitalism. Instead, they cry shame at such blatantly unscientific language, for everyone knows the said critics have a perfectly unemotional detachment about the social powers they live under.

Likewise with *state parasite* as an imprecation against the bureaucracy: Marx labored under the complication of feeling passionate hostility to everything the state bureaucracy represented. It was not merely an institution to be studied, but an enemy to be fought. The two aims were not contradictory: it had to be studied in order to be fought effectively.

In the hour when hatred of the bureaucracy was not merely a political idea but a matter of day-to-day agitation, that is, in the 1848-1849 revolution, Marx's articles were already studded with castigation of "the ox-heads of the arrogant bureaucracy with upturned noses," and the like, and a call to an active "distrust of the executive bureaucrats" on generalized grounds.⁹² In short: in Marx, the bureaucracy as a social formation (not simply bureaucratism) is a dirty word from very early on.

* In Special Note D, a closer examination is given to Marx's use of the phrase *state parasite*.

21 | ORIENTAL DESPOTISM: THE SOCIAL BASIS

If bureaucracy was an enemy to be fought, it was also a mid-nineteenth-century commonplace that "the most stupendous bureaucracy in existence" was to be found in the Oriental empires, especially China.¹

By this time, Europe was long past the cult of admiration for Chinese despotism which had reached its zenith in the Sinomania of the Enlightenment; state bureaucratization had become notorious on the Continent as a burgeoning evil; the imperialist aims of the European powers in China and India dictated derogation, not admiration, of Oriental society. The climate of thought was no longer as hospitable to the formerly widespread idealization of bureaucratic despotism as a model state. This idealization persisted, to be sure, in other forms, as in the rife illusions about the "progressiveness" of the czarist regime in Russia—a notion that lived on among liberals and leftists in proportion to the belief that the czarist state was *not* merely a bureaucratic despotism any more than it was bourgeois or feudal.

Marx did not become interested in the nature of Oriental society because of the problem of its bureaucracy, which held no puzzle for his day.* His attention was first drawn eastward at the beginning of the 1850s by the growing possibility that the East might provide a new force for a revolution in the West, perhaps even a decisive force for

* In our time, this version of Marx's relation to the problem has been promoted by the writings of K. Wittfogel, and has sterilized much of the discussion of the issue. Special Note E sketches the nature of this diversion and traces the career of the Oriental despotism concept before Marx, as against the Wittfogel fable. Perhaps this Special Note should be read as an introduction to the present chapter. It explains why the idea of a bureaucratically ruled state was "perfectly conventional, if not downright platitudinous" in Marx's milieu.

initiating the overthrow of a European capitalism which, having become colonialist, was exploiting not only workers at home but peoples abroad. From this standpoint the problem that required elucidation was the interaction between Western society, that is, capitalism, and Far Eastern society, mainly Chinese and Indian; and the basic dimension of this interaction was naturally the socioeconomic. Therefore Marx's and Engels' main interest in understanding Oriental history became, and remained, an understanding of the socioeconomic relations that were being shaken by the Western impact. As far as the political structure of Oriental society was concerned—Oriental despotism proper—this always remained a subordinate issue and an apparently simple one at the time.

In the following pages, given the subject of this volume, we shall try to treat summarily that side of Oriental society which is actually of major importance to Marxist theory, its place in Marx's theory of social evolution, in order to concentrate on the nature of the political structure and its bureaucracy. However, because of the specific nature of this society, these two aspects can be disentangled less easily than in most others.

1. MARX STARTS WITH STATE PROPERTY

The various "Eastern questions" did not arise in Marx's and Engels' writings until they were quite through with elaborating their theory in general (up to 1848) and then with testing their politics in the revolutionary proving grounds of 1848–1849. Their first attempt at an overall sketch of social evolution in Part I of *The German Ideology* had made only passing references to the East.* This sketch was implicitly or explicitly based on the experience of the ancient world and the Middle Ages,³ therefore on classical and European history; it certainly did not follow Hegel's example in starting with the Orient as the "childhood of history."

The noteworthy feature of this first historical sketch is that *it posits state property, not private property, as the basis of the earliest class societies*. To be sure, Marx's researches in social history had barely begun; his exposition is rather vaguely formulated and can scarcely be

* As far as we know: for there are four missing pages of the manuscript which, judging by the context, take up early social evolution.²

taken as a contribution to scholarship. The importance of this early presentation, outside its use to explain the historical-materialist method, is simply that the concept of a state-dominated economy was ordinary enough to be mentioned without fanfare. It was not a concept Marx had to come to, but one that he started with.

Two forms of property* preceding feudalism are put forward. The first is "tribal property," corresponding to "the undeveloped stage of production, at which a people lives by hunting and fishing, by animal breeding, or, at most, by agriculture." The tribe is an extended family headed by a patriarchal chief, and eventually has slaves (at least in higher stages).⁴

In the case of the ancient peoples, since several tribes live together in one town, the tribal property appears as state property, and the right of the individual to it as mere "possession," which however, like tribal property as a whole, is confined to landed property only.⁵

"The slavery latent in the family" continues to develop to a more important level, but even the second form is not primarily based on private property:

The second form is the ancient communal and state property which proceeds especially from the union of several tribes into a *city* by agreement or by conquest, and which is still accompanied by slavery. Beside communal property, we already find movable, and later also immovable [landed], private property developing, but as an abnormal form subordinate to communal property. The citizens hold power over their laboring slaves only in their community, and on this account alone are therefore bound to the form of communal property.⁶

A summary statement says that by the time tribal property has evolved through its several stages up to modern capital, which is "pure private property," it "has cast off all semblance of a communal institution and has shut out the state from any influence on the development of property."⁷

At this point Marx is using *communal property* and *state property*

* *Property* is used here, and in other translations, for *Eigentum*, which can be, and often is, also translated *ownership*. In most cases the two translations can be considered interchangeable.

interchangeably, thereby blurring the difference seen later between primitive communalism *before* the rise of a state and statified property *after* the breakup of society into classes. No doubt the Hegelian amalgam of state with communality is still a conditioning influence. For other reasons too, this sketch cannot be taken as a mature "Marxist" formulation of social evolution. What it testifies to, however, is the matter-of-fact lack of inhibition about societies based on state property, typical of Marx's development from the earliest.

2. LOOKING TO CHINA—1850

The German Ideology was written between the British victory in the First Opium War, which opened up Chinese ports as a Western bridge-head, and the outbreak of the main Taiping Rebellion in 1850, a peasant-powered uprising against the Manchu dynasty. As Marx was preparing the first issue of his London magazine, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung/Revue* [&c.], in January 1850, a German missionary brought initial reports about the first large-scale revolutionary upsurge in three centuries in the "imperturbable" Oriental empire.⁸

In writing up the good news, Marx emphasized the "gratifying fact that the bales of calico of the English bourgeoisie have in eight years [since the opening of the ports] brought the oldest and most imperturbable empire on earth to the threshold of a social upheaval, one that will in any case hold most significant consequences for civilization." The uprising was rooted in economic privation. On top of long-standing oppressive conditions due to overpopulation, the forceful imposition of British free trade soon flooded the country with cheap machine-made goods.

Chinese industry, reposing as it did on hand labor, succumbed to the competition of the machine. The imperturbable Celestial Empire went through a social crisis. The taxes ceased coming in, the state was on the brink of bankruptcy, the population was pauperized *en masse*, revolts broke out, the people went out of hand, mishandled and killed the Emperor's mandarins and the Fohist [Buddhist] bonzes.⁹

The news was gratifying because it augured "a violent revolution" in

this previously static corner. What constituted "social crisis" in China? The breakdown of the state's economic machinery and the attack on the imperial officialdom.*

The missionary's report was also gratifying because he complained that socialistic talk had been heard from the Chinese "mob." Marx gives the socialistic quality of the talk short shrift (it "may stand in the same relation to the European variety as Chinese philosophy stands to the Hegelian"—that is, as the primitive stands to the advanced), but he does project the possibility that a revolution might establish at least a republican form of government in that "stronghold of arch-reaction and arch-conservatism," by the time the approaching revolution in Europe sends "our European reactionaries" fleeing across Asia.¹⁰ This hopeful prospect is put in terms of the international interaction between revolution in the East and in the West. The same note will be struck as soon as Marx returns to the Chinese revolution in 1853.

In the same article Marx also proposed a sort of "orientation to the Pacific," including its Asian coast. His view was that California gold, and the immense tilt of world trade toward the west it had already induced, was making the Pacific what the Mediterranean and the Atlantic had once been, the central sea; the Asian as well as the American coast of the Pacific was seen as the new arena of economic expansion.¹¹

3. SCOTS AND TAIPINGS—1853

The Taiping rebels continued to gain ground through 1853 and after. In the articles which Marx had begun to write the preceding year for the *New York Tribune*, European issues predominated, but Marx's attention must already have recurred to the Chinese potential. An article written in January 1853 indicated in passing a new familiarity with the history of Asian society. Its subject was not the East but the

* Here, and throughout this chapter, some readers may be interested in following Marx's frequent references to the Chinese bureaucracy and other Oriental bureaucracies, since the Wittfogel fable (as discussed in Special Note E) suggests that Marx was inhibited about discussing the existence of the officialdom under the Oriental regimes.

Scottish enclosures movement in the early nineteenth century replacing farmers with sheep-walks and the old forms of clan property with modern private property for the aristocracy. (Marx recalled this bit of history in order to pillory the Duchess of Sutherland as she posed before the women's movement as a philanthropist.)

This is the first time that Marx analyzed social forms founded on the absence of private property in land. The old Scottish clan system, he explains, represented a stage before feudalism, that of patriarchal society. The land belonged to no individual but to the clan, an extended family organized militarily, just as in the Russian "community of peasants" there is also no question of "private property in the modern sense of the word." But there was a hierarchy of officers: the imposts levied on the producing families, though small, represented "a tribute by which the supremacy of the '*great man*' and of his officers was acknowledged."

The officers directly subordinate to the "*great man*" were called "*Taksmen*" . . . Under them were placed inferior officers, at the head of every hamlet, and under these stood the peasantry.

. . . But the land is the *property of the family*, in the midst of which differences of rank, in spite of consanguinity, do prevail as well as in all the ancient Asiatic family communities.¹²

Thus Marx connected the clan form not only with the contemporary Russian village community but also with that of Asiatic society. The forms based on communal property in land, which he often called Asiatic or Oriental in accordance with the common language of the day, were forms which he knew from the beginning of his investigation were not historically limited to the East. Furthermore, in this very first consideration there was much emphasis that the clan was organized under a hierarchy of officers in a military manner, and that the relations of consanguinity did not gainsay the fact that differences of rank prevailed. Indeed it is this latter feature which immediately produced his comparison with Asiatic society. Finally: the relationship between the peasantry and the magnate's power was already described as *tributary*; later this will be given a fuller content.*

* The first volume of *Capital* quoted another part of this article dealing with the enclosures movement.¹³ James Mill, in his *History of British India*, had suggested that there were "curious strokes of resemblance" between the Indian village community and certain Celtic manners in parts of Scotland, but his footnote was not pointed.¹⁴

In the course of 1853 the Taipings took Nanking and made it their capital. In the course of this year Marx also returned to the theme which became the title of his first *Tribune* article on China: "Revolution in China and in Europe." It repeatedly made the point that the European revolution "may depend more probably on what is now passing in the Celestial Empire—the very opposite of Europe—than on any other political cause that now exists."¹⁵

His demonstration of this thesis traces the economic and political impact of British intervention on China's "barbarous and hermetic isolation from the civilized world," via the cotton industry, movement of silver, and so on. One of the consequences was the breakdown of the imperial administrative cadres; opium-connected corruption "has entirely demoralized the Chinese state officers in the southern provinces." These imperial officers were regarded as sustaining the Emperor's paternal authority. "But this patriarchal authority, the only moral link embracing the vast machinery of the state, has gradually been corroded by the corruption of those officers. . . ." In proportion as "opium has obtained the sovereignty over the Chinese, the emperor and his staff of pedantic mandarins have become dispossessed of their own sovereignty." The force of "all these dissolving agencies acting together on the finances, the morals, the industry, and political structure of China" underlines the question: "Now, England having brought about the revolution of China, the question is how that revolution will in time react on England, and through England on Europe." Marx argues, as in previous articles on England, that this country is heading for an economic slump; and if a Chinese revolution withdraws the Eastern market for British goods, then

it may safely be augured that the Chinese revolution will throw the spark into the overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long-prepared general crisis, which, spreading abroad, will be closely followed by political revolutions on the Continent. It would be a curious spectacle, that of China sending disorder into the Western World while the Western powers, by English, French, and American war-steamers, are conveying "order" to Shanghai, Nanking, and the mouths of the Grand Canal.¹⁶

In this reciprocating interaction, Marx traces another element. The Manchus' effort to exclude foreigners was largely due to "the fear of

the new dynasty, lest the foreigners might favor the discontent existing among a large proportion of the Chinese during the first half century or thereabouts of their subjection to the [Manchu] Tartars. . . . In any case an interference on the part of the Western governments at this time can only serve to render the revolution more violent, and protract the stagnation of trade."¹⁷ In fact, as the rebellion continued to mount, Britain abandoned its benign attitude toward a struggle that was weakening China, and moved openly to crush the rebels militarily.

Later, *Capital* (in a footnote omitted from all English translations) remarked that revolutionary convulsions began in China in 1853—"pour encourager les autres"—at a time "when the rest of the world seemed to be remaining quiet."¹⁸ No wonder it engaged Marx's attention.

4. LOOKING TO INDIA—1853

In the spring of the same year, 1853, another Eastern problem faced the British government as the charter of the East India Company came up for renewal: how to deflect the cry for reforms in Indian administration into a means of continuing "the privilege of plundering India for the space of [the next] twenty years."¹⁹ The Indian people were giving trouble, and expensive wars were frequent: the First and Second Sikh Wars had been fought since the writing of *The German Ideology*; the Second Burmese War had just been ended; in less than six years the East India Company was going to be abolished in the midst of the Sepoy Revolt. Here was another front of the revolution, an impulse that might ricochet from East to West and back again. Marx's attention turned decisively to India, and his research on Indian history continued into his last years.²⁰

Marx's course of reading on India turned up a gem in François Bernier's accounts of his travels through the Mogul empire in the seventeenth century; he reported on it to Engels, who had just written him about his own study of Arab and Biblical history. Marx put this question: "Why does the history of the Orient *appear* as a history of religions?"—why does it take this form?

Bernier had made clear that even a capital city like Delhi was basically a big military camp economically dependent on supplying the

court and the army. (That is to say, it was not an urban concentration of private property.) "The king," wrote Bernier in a statement quoted and underlined by Marx, "is the sole and exclusive owner of all the lands in the kingdom."²¹ Marx concludes

Bernier rightly finds the basic form of all phenomena in the Orient—he speaks of Turkey, Persia, Hindustan—in the fact that *no private property in land* exists. This is the real key even to the Oriental heaven.²²

Engels took up the thesis and went on:

The absence of [private] property in land is in fact the key to the whole Orient. Herein lies its political and religious history. But why did it come about that the Orientals did not arrive at property in land, not even the feudal kind?²³

As Marx and Engels discussed this question, it merged with the problem of the static character of Oriental society, which Hegel and others had long emphasized. Marx and Engels are equally free with generalizations about "the unchanging character of Asiatic societies," particularly with regard to China, "that living fossil," whose "fossil social existence" and "rotting semicivilization" are "vegetating in the teeth of time, insulated by the forced exclusion of general intercourse."²⁴ (These are phrases from four articles.) But as they went on, this conception became something more definite. Marx formulated it particularly with regard to India:

... the whole of her past history, if it be anything, is a history of the successive conquests she has undergone. Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history, is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society.²⁵

It is Indian *society* that has "no history," that is, has not evolved,* even though it has plenty of political history:

* Compare Marx's similar use of *world history* in *Grundrisse* notes: "World history did not always exist," he jots down in a telegraphic memo listing points to be made about the materialist conception of history as a method. The context makes the meaning clear: the subject is "Influence of means of communication," and he wants to argue that "history as world history" is a *result* of the development of means of communication.²⁶

However changing the political aspect of India's past must appear, its social condition has remained unaltered since its remotest antiquity, until the first decennium of the nineteenth century. [That is, until the establishment of the ryotwari system by Sir Thomas Munro.] ²⁷

Marx applied this conception to China and the Orient in general:

... the Oriental empires show us a picture of steadfast immobility in the social substructure and restless change in the persons and peoples [*Stämme*] that get control of the political superstructure. ²⁸

The thesis, then, is that political history in the Orient is superficial—literally the history of the surface of society; this superficiality also tends to take a religious guise (“appears as a history of religions”). In the margin of Irwin’s *The Garden of India*, Marx jotted a note contrasting “a modern centralized gouvernement” with “the much more ‘fluid’ Asiatic despotism or feudal anarchy.” ²⁹ Fluid, not static? It is the political surface which is fluid, while the social depths remain frozen. The reference made above to “the unchanging character of Asiatic societies” can now be filled out:

... the unchanging character of Asiatic societies, which is in such striking contrast with the constant dissolution and reconstitution of Asiatic states and incessant dynastic changes. The structure of the basic economic elements of the society remains untouched by the storms in the political skies. ³⁰

We will shortly note a basic socioeconomic reason for this socially static quality (the “self-sustaining unity of manufacture and agriculture”) but in any case the duality exists. In the same passage last cited, from *Capital*, Marx presents the key to this dual character of Oriental society. Let us go back a bit and pick up the course of his thinking.

5. THE KEY TO THE ORIENT

We have seen that the inquiry started with the thought that the absence of private property in land (the basic and dominant form of private property in any agricultural society) was the “real key” to

Oriental society,* leading to the question why private property in land had not arisen. Engels began by giving a geographical-materialist explanation: the climate makes artificial irrigation necessary, and this can be accomplished only by government, central or local. This in turn conditioned the nature of Oriental governmental machinery: "Government in the Orient always had no more than three departments: finance (plundering at home), war (plundering at home and abroad), and public works—provision for reproduction."³² Wars and dislocations could therefore turn whole regions into wastelands, with accompanying cultural retrogression that might obliterate knowledge even of writing and foster the rise of myths.

Marx expanded this explanation for his article in the *Tribune* on "The British Rule in India":

There have been in Asia, generally, from immemorial times, but three departments of Government: that of Finance, or the plunder of the interior; that of War, or the plunder of the exterior; and, finally, the department of Public Works. Climate and territorial conditions, especially the vast tracts of desert, extending from the Sahara, through Arabia, Persia, India and Tartary, to the most elevated Asiatic highlands, constituted artificial irrigation by canals and waterworks the basis of Oriental agriculture. As in Egypt and India, inundations are used for fertilizing the soil of Mesopotamia, Persia, etc.; advantage is taken of a high level for feeding irrigative canals. This prime necessity of an economical and common use of water, which, in the Occident, drove private enterprise to voluntary association, as in Flanders and Italy, necessitated, in the Orient where civilization was too low and the

* Marx had written that it was the "real key even to the Oriental heaven," that is, to Oriental religion, which played such a large part in Hegel's discussions. In his *Grundrisse* notebooks, as explained below (pp. 531-533), Marx's discussion of the "Unity" of the primitive tribal society ties up the roots of religious ideas with the social and political development; but the religious side is not developed. He did not come back systematically to a demonstration of how Oriental religious ideas reflected the socioeconomic pattern. There is a general passage in *Capital* on how religious ideas in very early societies (including specifically the Asiatic) reflect their conditions, in comparison with Christianity. An interesting remark is made at the beginning of his article "The British Rule in India," regarding the Hindu religious amalgam of sensuousness and asceticism. The fact that popular movements in the Orient tended to have "a religious coloration," noted in 1862, is also true of much of Western history. Engels' later references to the subject are made in passing, as was an early mention in *The German Ideology*. Among later Western Marxists, Thalheimer dealt with the question.³¹

territorial extent too vast to call into life voluntary association, the interference of the centralizing power of Government. Hence an economical function devolved upon all Asiatic Governments, the function of providing public works. This artificial fertilization of the soil, dependent on a Central Government, and immediately decaying with the neglect of irrigation and drainage, explains [barren lands, ruins, depopulation by war, and so on].³³

In *Capital*, Marx developed the thesis that, where the soil is fertile and nature is lavish, there is a large amount of surplus labor that is freely disposable (for use by the authorities, for example) and less need of a drive toward economic development; hence it is not the tropics but the temperate zone "that is the mother-country of capital." More generally, "It is the necessity of bringing a natural force under the control of society, of economizing, of appropriating or subduing it on a large scale by the work of man's hand, that first plays the decisive part in the history of industry." It is in this context that he mentions the irrigation works developed in Europe and in the Orient, and footnotes: "One of the material bases of the power of the state over the small disconnected producing organisms in India was the regulation of the water supply."³⁴

Contrariwise it follows that where the state failed to perform this function (because of war, for example), the small producing organisms were blighted, and retrogression could set in.

But Marx did not believe that this geographical factor could by itself account for the lack of socioeconomic development in the Orient. In his reply to Engels' letter suggesting the irrigation factor, he accepted it as only the first part of the answer. Interrelated with it was the nature of the basic socioeconomic unit of Oriental life, the village community, which was self-sufficient with respect to other villages, being dependent only on the far-off central state power for the water supply. Atomized, it was an atom detached from any mass, in orbit around a distant sun.

What fully explains the stationary character of this part of Asia [India], despite all aimless movement on the political surface, are two circumstances mutually bolstering each other: (1) The public works were the concern of the central government. (2) Alongside this fact, the whole empire, apart from the few larger towns, was atomized [*aufgelöst*, dissolved] in °villages° each possessing a completely distinct organization and forming a little world of its own.³⁵

6. THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY AS BEEHIVE

This societal pattern was found by Marx in a number of recent works on India, and was best described by a much-quoted passage in an 1812 report of a House of Commons committee. (Marx cites this 1812 report three times: in his letters to Engels, in "The British Rule in India," and later in *Capital*.)³⁶ The parliamentary report, discussing one of the northern districts, mentioned "those petty communities, into which the whole country is divided," and described this village community in some detail, particularly "its proper establishment of officers and servants," who are maintained by allotments from the common produce. Wearing British spectacles, it states of the community that "politically viewed, it resembles a corporation or township." Marx interpolates at this point: "Every village is, and appears always to have been, in fact, a separate community or republic."³⁷*

The kernel of the 1812 description goes as follows:

Under this simple form of municipal government, the inhabitants of the country have lived, from time immemorial. The boundaries of the village have been but seldom altered; and though the villages themselves, have been sometimes injured, and even desolated, by war, famine, and disease; the same name, the same limits, the same interests, and even the same families, have continued for ages. The inhabitants give themselves no trouble about the breaking-up and division of kingdoms; while the village remains entire, they care not to what power it is transferred, or to what sovereign it devolves; its internal economy remains unchanged; the Pottail is still the head inhabitant, and still acts as the petty judge and magistrate, and collector or renter of the village.³⁷ [Punctuation in original]

In his letter to Engels, Marx added the remark:

These idyllic republics, which jealously guard only the *boundaries of their villages* against the neighboring village, still exist in fairly "perfect" fashion in the northwestern parts of India only recently acquired by the English. I believe that no one could think of any more solid foundation for Asiatic despotism and stagnation.³⁸

* In all texts of Marx's letter to Engels (presumably in accordance with the manuscript), this sentence appears as a part of the quotation from the 1812 report. It is not in that passage. Inserted by Marx, it is no doubt a paraphrase from one of his readings.

In Marx's opinion, this village-community form had long been the dominant one in India and in at least the early history of China. To be sure, "These small stereotype forms of social organism have been to the greater part dissolved, and are disappearing," as a result of the impact of English goods as well as English forcible intervention.³⁹ Also, Marx was entirely aware of pockets or patches of other economic forms in various parts of India.* But it was the once-dominant village-community economy that accounted for the main lines of India's social past.

Besides the characteristics of this form already mentioned, there was another aspect which Marx saw as basic to its operation and to its static character:

Those family-communities were based on domestic industry, in that peculiar combination of hand-weaving, hand-spinning and hand-tilling agriculture which gave them self-supporting power.⁴⁴

The broad basis of the mode of production here [India and China] is formed by the unity of small-scale agriculture and home industry, to which in India we should add the form of village communities built upon the common ownership of land, which, incidentally, was the original form in China as well.⁴⁵

This "unity of small-scale agriculture and home industry" was important because it underpinned the self-sufficiency of the community and thereby its atomization—"their worst feature, the dissolution of society into stereotype and disconnected atoms."⁴⁶

The atom metaphor might be replaced by a comparison with the spore form of organism, which has the advantage of being resistant to dissolving forces. Marx pointed out that even "usury" (loaning at

* In the above-quoted letter to Engels, Marx cautions that landed property did seem to have existed in at least one part of India. Campbell, like others studied by Marx, included considerable attention to forms of slavery and "feudal" relations occurring in the subcontinent; he reported that the village-community form was dominant in the north and frequent in the south, not that it was universal. Marx mentioned the existence of forms of slavery in his articles, and referred to the native princes as feudal landholders and the Indian aristocracy.⁴⁰ But the village community was not a feudal form.⁴¹ In *Capital* Marx mentioned the subordinate role of commodity production and trading in "the ancient Asiatic, ancient classical, etc. modes of production" and the interstitial place of trading organisms. The "question of property," Marx warned in his letter to Engels, "constitutes a big *controversial question* among the English writers on India." In a *Tribune* article he discussed the various views in this field, pointing out how the Europocentric slant of the writers, together with the pressure of

interest), which "has a revolutionary effect in all precapitalist modes of production only insofar as it destroys and dissolves those forms of property on whose solid foundation and continual reproduction in the same form the political organization is based," has a dim effect on *this* precapitalist form: "Under Asian forms, usury can continue a long time, without producing anything more than economic decay and political corruption."⁴⁷ Even trade, with its increased use of money, "scarcely shook the ancient Indian communities and Asiatic relations in general."⁴⁸ After all: in the plant kingdom, fungi, one of the most primitive divisions, can produce highly resistant spores, but have not changed much "since time immemorial."

To Marx, then, the village community that lay at the root of India's history was a specific form of primitive communalism (if taken in terms of its own little world). As he explained in *Capital*: cooperative labor among producers "at the dawn of human development . . . or, say, in the agriculture of Indian communities," is based on two things: (1) "ownership in common of the means of production," and (2) on the fact that "each individual has no more torn himself off from the navel-string of his tribe or community than each bee has freed himself from connection with the hive."⁴⁹ This beehive relationship is very important to an understanding of the primitive community. In later forms of exchange, the private owners of the things exchanged treat each other as independent individuals—"But such a relationship of mutual alienness [*Fremdheit*] does not exist for the members of a primitive community [*Gemeinwesen*],* whether it has the form of a patriarchal family, an ancient Indian community, an Inca state, etc."⁵⁰ In the margin of Irwin's book on India, Marx jotted down an observation on the big difference between the beehive relationship and *security* in the modern world:

°° It seems very difficult for the English mind—having always present before itself the examples of the small British and the

material interest, distorted their understanding of a non-European society.⁴² As he said of a European anthropologist: "these civilized asses cannot free themselves of their own conventionalities."⁴³ In this connection, see also Marx's marginal note in Irwin's book, cited below, p. 529f. Perhaps it goes without saying that the historical question of property is as controversial now as then.

* In the standard translation, *Fremdheit* is de-Hegelianized into *independence*; *Gemeinwesen* is expanded into "society based on property in common."

diminutive Irish *tenant at will*—to understand that *fixity of tenure* may be considered a *pest* [pestilence] by the *cultivator* himself; even the *fugitive slave* or *serf* presupposes a society where, to get free, you have only to escape, to get rid of a *man*, but to get rid, to escape *from social interdependence*, à s'échapper des rapports sociaux [escape from social relationships], is quite another thing.⁵¹

7. THEORY OF PRECAPITALIST FORMS

Marx had a brief summary on the nature of the Indian village-community form of society in *Capital*, but it is only a fragment of the analysis that reposed in his notebook drafts. The passage in *Capital* is the one, already mentioned, which gives "the key to the secret of the unchanging character of Asiatic societies." Here now is the rest of this passage. The context is the subject of various forms of division of labor.

For example, those very ancient small Indian communities which still continue to exist in part are based on common possession of the land, direct union of agriculture and handicraft, and a fixed division of labor, serving as a pre-set ground-plan for founding new communities. Each forms a self-sufficient production unit. . . . The main bulk of the products is produced for direct use by the community itself, not as commodities, and even these in part only if in the hands of the state, which from time immemorial receives a certain quantity of them as rent in kind. Different parts of India have different forms of these communities. In the simplest form, the community tills the land in common and divides the products among its members, while each family carries on spinning, weaving, etc. as an accessory domestic industry. Along with this body of people engaged in the same work, we find [a number of community officers are here listed]. . . . These dozen persons are maintained at the expense of the whole community. . . . The law regulating the division of communal labor operates here with the inviolable authority of a natural law. . . . The simple productive organism of these self-sufficient communities, which constantly reproduce themselves in the same form and, if they happen to be destroyed, reconstitute themselves in the same place with the same name—this supplies the key to the secret of the unchanging character of Asiatic societies. . . .⁵²

It is in his notebooks of 1857-1858 (the *Grundrisse*), written during the height of the Sepoy Revolt in India and while the Taiping rebellion was still going forward in China, that Marx put together his fullest analysis of the "Asiatic" mode of production and its relationship to its political structure, the "Oriental despotism." Far from being in finished form, these notes are rough "reminders to myself" jotted down under difficult personal circumstances. The line of thought is partly a summary of some ideas he had already written about and partly a supplement and elaboration.

Marx begins this section, "Forms Preceding Capitalist Production . . .," by taking up the forms of property in land before the separation of the worker from the means of labor, which in the first place was land. One such early form was free small-holding; another was "collective landed property based on the Oriental commune [*Kommune*]."

In the first form of this landed property: there figures, to begin with, a naturally evolved [*naturwüchsiges**] community as the first precondition. [There is the] family and the tribe formed by an extended family, or by intermarriage among families, or by a combination of tribes. . . . [T]he *tribal collectivity*, the natural community, appears not as the *result* but as the *precondition for the collective appropriation* (temporary) and *use of the soil*. . . . The naturally evolved tribal collectivity, or, if you will, the herd order, is the first precondition. . . . They naively relate to the land as to the *property of the community*—that community which produces and reproduces itself in living labor. Each individual relates to it, as *owner or possessor*, only as a member of this community. . . . This form can be realized in very varied ways on the basis of the same fundamental relationship.⁵³

One of these ways is encountered where, "as in most *Asiatic* fundamental forms," there is an all-encompassing "Unity" above the communities. (Marx is here using Hegel's *Einheit*, or Unifying Entity, for the relationship that holds the community together.) This *Oneness* of the

* *Naturwüchsig*—then a relatively recent term—is often translated *primitive*; it means developed directly out of a state of nature. We shall meet it again. In the translation of *Capital* by Moore-Aveling-Engels, it is translated *spontaneously developed* as well as *primitive*. In general, *community* translates *Gemeinwesen* or *Gemeinde* (and their forms), while *collectivity* is used for *Gemeinschaft*; but the nuance is not usually significant.

community may be embodied in various ways as the development proceeds: at first religious-social, then also identified with the person of the sovereign or despot. However conceived, this unity stands above all the small, separate communities and figures as the owner of all the land, while the communities under it figure only as the *possessors* of the land by tradition. No individual holds property in land. The property relation is understood as a grant from above, made *to* the individual land-tillers *via* the local communities *by* the entity that represents the Overall Unity (*Gesamteinheit*) of society in their eyes.⁵⁴

This Overall Unity

is embodied in the despot as the father of the many [local] communities. . . . The surplus product . . . therefore belongs to this supreme Unity. Therefore, at the core of the Oriental despotism and of the propertylessness which it juridically seems to entail, there exists this tribal or communal property which is in fact its foundation. This property is created mostly through a combination of [hand-] manufacture and agriculture inside the small community, which thus becomes thoroughly °self-sustaining° and contains within itself all conditions for reproduction and surplus production. A part of its surplus labor belongs to the higher [that is, overall] collectivity, which finally takes on existence as a *person* and this surplus labor shows up both as tribute, etc., and as labor in common for the glorification of the Unity—in part, of the actual despot; in part, of the imaginary tribal entity, the god.⁵⁵

This kind of common property can develop in two ways. In one, “small communities independently vegetate alongside each other, while the individual works, with his family, independently on his allotted portion of land”; there are also certain kinds of common labor for economic purposes as well as for war, religious worship, and so on. This form is the source of the original rise of dominion by lords, and may form a transition point to serf-labor. In another form, “the Unity can extend to collectivity in labor itself, which can be a formal system, as in Mexico, in Peru especially, among the ancient Celts, and some tribes in India.”*

* A later passage elaborates: “Communal production and common property such as is found in Peru, for example, is evidently a *secondary* [that is, second-stage] form, introduced and transmitted by conquering tribes which in their own

In addition, the collectivity of the tribe may take the form of a Unity represented by the head of the tribal group or of a relationship among the heads of families:

Accordingly, therefore, either a more despotic or democratic form of this community. The collective conditions for actual appropriation through labor, *water supply systems* (very important among the Asian peoples), means of communication, etc., appear then as the work of the higher Unity, the despotic government which looms over the small communities.

In this connection, Marx makes the point, which he originally found in Bernier, about the character of the towns as an appendage to the sovereign and his satraps:

Real towns are established here alongside these villages only at points specially favorable for trade with the outside, or where the head of the state and his satraps exchange their revenue (surplus product) for labor, which they expend as °labour-funds.°⁵⁷

This special character of the towns—"nothing but roving encampments *au fond*"—is one of the consequences of the fact that "in Asiatic societies . . . the monarch figures as the exclusive owner of the land's surplus product."⁵⁸ For the peripatetic towns are essentially centers where the state functionaries ("the head of the state and his satraps") distribute this revenue to camp-followers. The Oriental city was shaped by the mode of production.*

Of the social forms, the Asiatic is the longest-lived:

areas were acquainted with common property and communal production in the old simpler form found in India and among the Slavs. Likewise, the form we find among the Celts in Wales, for example, seems to be one that was transmitted there, that is, to be *secondary*, introduced by conquerors among less advanced tribes they conquered."⁵⁶

* This also conditions the distinction which Marx later makes between the nature of cities in different societies. "Commercial wealth as an independent economic form" has existed at a variety of economic stages, including "the ancient Asiatic city" among others. Primitive Germanic society did not have concentrated centers in the form of towns at all; classical civilization was *based* on the city. But the Asiatic form was different from both: "Asiatic history is a kind of indifferent unity of town and country (the really large towns are to be considered here simply princely camps, excrescences on the economic structure proper). . . ."⁵⁹

The Asiatic form necessarily holds out longest and most tenaciously. This fact is rooted in its very presupposition: that the individual does not become autonomous vis-à-vis the community; that the production cycle is self-sustaining; unity of agriculture and hand-manufacture, etc.⁶⁰

The latter part of this presupposition is connected with a typical lack of roads: on the one hand, there is little need for them between self-sustaining communities; on the other, their absence locks the communities into isolation.⁶¹ Whenever slavery and serfdom develop, they necessarily modify the property relations of tribal communalism, but they are least successful in doing so in the case of the Asiatic form, where "the self-sustaining unity of manufacture and agriculture" resists conquest by these rivals.⁶² In the Oriental form it is hardly possible for the individual member of the community to lose his fixed relationship to property (the community property) "except through entirely external influences"; for he "never enters into a free relationship to it such that he could lose his (objective, economic) tie with it. He has taken root."⁶³

8. THE "GENERAL SLAVERY"

To take root is to be bound to the soil. In *Capital*, as previously mentioned, Marx uses the more traditional and more accurate beehive metaphor. If the individual "never enters into a free relationship" to this communal beehive, then his condition can be called a sort of slavery—at least metaphorically, just as Marx freely uses *wage-slavery* for an entirely different social system. Some Europeans had called the Asiatic state of affairs slavery *tout court*.⁶⁴ Marx proceeded to a differentiation, to separate the Asiatic form from the slaveholding mode of production familiar to Europeans. Thus we get his phrase "the general [*allgemeine*] slavery of the Orient."^{*}

* It will be useful to remember, from earlier chapters, that *allgemein* (as in Hegel's *allgemeine Stand*, the civil service or bureaucracy) is often best translated *universal*, and with a Hegelian cast, suggests the communal rather than the particular or individualist. It is this connotation that allows it to carry the thought that the producer is the slave not of an individual but of the community. The English *general slavery* does not convey this connotation, which is suggested by the *gemein* common to *allgemein* and *Gemeinde*, *Gemeinwesen*. Much later

This exposition starts with the following course of analysis. In tribal society in general, an individual's relationship to property is based on the fact that he is a member of a tribe. It is the tribe that holds property (primarily land). Therefore, if one tribe is conquered by another and made subject to the conquerors, it becomes *propertyless* (Marx's emphasis). Instead of having its own property, it itself becomes the tribal property of the conquerors. Marx draws the conclusion: "Slavery and serfdom, therefore, are [*understand: begin as*] only further developments of property based on tribalism. They necessarily modify all forms of the latter." This is true of tribalism in general, but "They can do this to the least extent in the Asiatic form." Why? Due to "the self-sustaining unity of manufacture and agriculture on which this form is based," the Asiatic form is more resistant to the effects of conquest than where agriculture (alone) and private-property forms of landholding predominate exclusively. So on the one hand, the Asiatic form resists the encroachments of slaveholding as a private-property-holding mode of production; but on the other hand it is true that a sort of slavery already characterizes the internal life of this Asiatic community. In Marx's words:

... since in this [Asiatic] form the individual never becomes owner [of land] but only possessor, he is at bottom himself the property, the slave, of that in which the unity of the community exists; and here slavery neither abolishes the conditions of labor nor modifies the essential relationship.⁶⁶

The point recurs a little further on, as Marx reminds us that property takes different forms in accordance with different conditions of production. When, in early societies including the Asiatic, property involves the relationship between a working producer and the conditions of *his own* production and reproduction (his own livelihood), then we must assume that the individual producer is "a member of a tribal or communal organism (whose property he himself is, up to a certain point)."

(1887) Engels referred to slavery in both "Asiatic and classical antiquity" as "the predominant form of class oppression" in a polemic against the single-taxer Henry George, in which Engels wanted to refute the proposition that the root cause of class divisions is "the expropriation of the mass of the people from the land." It is rather, he argued, "the appropriation of their persons."⁶⁵ It is this feature which apparently led him to blur classical slavery and Asiatic "slavery" together. Under the best interpretation Engels' formulation of this argument is unbuttoned. For the claim that Engels abandoned or rejected the Asiatic concept at this time, see Special Note F.

The individual is the "property" of the tribal community? Then he is its "slave"? Marx proceeds to make a distinction in order to avoid misunderstanding. There is the kind of "slavery, serfdom, etc. where the worker himself figures as one of the natural conditions of production for another individual or community," but "this is *not* the case with (e.g.) the general slavery of the Orient"; it is so "*only* from the European point of view."

That is: to European eyes the rootedness and unfree condition of the producer might seem like slavery, but in point of fact a basically different mode of production is involved. (We may remark that this mode could just as well have been called the *general serfdom* of the Oriental community form.)

Where the real slave relationship does occur in this Asiatic society, Marx adds, it is "always secondary, never the original form," that is, it is a second-stage development out of the original communal form.*

In another place Marx likewise carefully distinguished chattel slavery from the Asiatic form, in much the same terms:

The original unity of laborer and conditions of labor (leaving out the slave relationship in which the laborer himself is one of the objective conditions of labor) has two main forms: the Asiatic community (primitive [*naturwüchsigen*] communism) and small-scale family agriculture (combined with domestic industry ° in one or the other form.° Both forms are infantile forms, and are alike unsuitable to develop labor as *social* labor and develop the productive power of social labor.⁶⁸

One important difference is this: in the Asiatic form the individual himself is not a slave; he does not live in a slave relationship either to another individual or to the community as a slavemaster. The slave-like

* The passage here explained is an involuted, stream-of-consciousness sentence that owes more to carbuncles and insomnia than to grammar. The phrase about "general slavery" occurs as a parenthetical insert with a close reference. A literal translation of this monster sentence might read:

Slavery, serfdom, etc., where the worker himself figures as one of the natural conditions of production for another individual or community (this is *not* the case with, e.g., the general slavery of the Orient; [it is so] *only* from the European ° point of view°)—hence property is no longer the relationship of the individual working for himself to the objective conditions of labor—is always secondary, never the original form, even though it is the necessary and consistent result of property based on the community and labor in the community.⁶⁷

Note that "Slavery, serfdom, etc." is the subject of "is always secondary . . ."

relationship that does exist is generalized or universalized—to apply to the community itself, which is exploited as *an organism* by the despotic Unity (organizing entity) above it.

9. THE MEANING OF THE ASIATIC MODE

The form of society, or mode of production, we have been discussing had impinged on European consciousness from the Far East, and hence first appeared to Europeans with the geographic label *Asiatic* or *Oriental*. It was Marx who first stated that the mode of production which Europeans had discovered in Asia in modern times had also existed in the prehistory of European society, that the Asiatic mode of production had to be considered a more or less world-wide development, even though it had taken different paths in different regions and had fossilized in one of them.

It is the terminology which has been confusing, not the conception; and the terminology is confusing today only if it is lifted out of its contemporaneous context (as is usually done). In fact, this social form discovered in Asia was treated by contemporaries much the same as other fossils being unearthed in far-flung places. It was (and is) standard procedure to use geographic terms as universal designations in a number of sciences then young, including geology, anthropology, and paleontology. Thus Peking man, Java man, and Mousterian culture were named after the places of first discovery. Nor was the formation of social forms exempt from being metaphorically compared with the process of geological formation, by Marx as well as others.⁶⁹

We have seen that already in 1853 Marx had an idea of the historical connection between the Asian and European forms.⁷⁰ He worked it out in his notebooks during 1857–1858.

In Marx's exposition, the starting point is the "naturally evolved community" of primitive tribal society, which, in the course of time, develops its property relations in two different forms, along two different paths. These are summarized (on the first page of the section "Forms Preceding Capitalist Production") as: "free smallholdings" and "collective [*or communal*] landed property based on the Oriental commune." Further on, a little more fully, the two ways are described as independent cultivation by families, which may lead to the rise of

lords and serf labor, and a unified organization of labor whose collectivity is embodied in a Unity as previously discussed.⁷¹

Of these two main forks, Marx summarizes: "Accordingly, therefore, either a more despotic or democratic form of this community."⁷² Clearly, the more despotic form is the second of the main forks, the village community based on a unified organization of labor, which leads toward the concretization of the Unity of the community in a despotic regime—the Oriental form. It is this form that became dominant in the Orient. The "more democratic form" was typical of the European development.*

It would have been convenient if, from here, Marx had applied the label *Asiatic* (or *Oriental*) form only to the "more despotic" form which actually dominated in Asia, rather than to both and either indifferently. This would have required the invention of a new overall term for the type of society which was bifurcating along these two paths. But, as mentioned, it was the Asiatic label that was retained for both—for a time. (We will see a new overall term in 1881.)

Therefore, in 1859, writing the preface for his *Critique of Political Economy*, which was carved out of the *Grundrisse* notebooks, Marx summed up the outline of societal evolution in a sentence just as concise as the other formulations given in this preface about his

* Why did a particular society take one or the other fork in the road leading out from the naturally evolved community? In the *Grundrisse* notebooks Marx comments on this question briefly in three separate passages, no doubt written at various intervals; he discusses or mentions factors of geography, climate, physical conditions like soil, tribal character, effect of historical movements like migrations, relation to other tribes. Marx's classification is not altogether clear. At one point, examples of the first fork are given as the Slavic and Rumanian communes; but further on, the second fork is described as based on the "*directly communal property*" and is equated with the "Oriental form, modified in the Slavic form" and further developed in the classical and Germanic forms. This indicates that the second fork branches off in four subdivisions, and would be neat enough except that the Slavic form appears to be listed under both forks. Apart from this inconsistency (if it is one), it is clear that the main forking roads are presented as two, not four. Where Marx describes the communities of the second fork, as based on "a unified organization of labor," he gives as examples "Mexico, Peru especially, among the ancient Celts, some tribes in India." The second-fork communities, therefore, are not Oriental ones only, though the Oriental commune is taken as the type. When in one place Marx wants to specify the "Oriental community" in the Orient itself, he uses the phrase "the specifically Oriental form."⁷³ A somewhat different pattern which Marx wrote down in 1881, in connection with Europe, will be discussed in the next section.

historical method. "In broad outlines, Asiatic, ancient [classical], feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive* epochs in the economic formation of society."⁷⁵

The only way to interpret this terse formulation is in terms of the notebook (*Grundrisse*) material which it sums up. Understood this way, there can be little doubt that by the "Asiatic" mode of production here Marx designated the general form of naturally evolved community which took different courses of development in different historical contexts, starting from primitive common property. It is an umbrella name, in terms of a social development known to the educated public, for the several forms of primitive communal society which Marx discussed in these notes. The notebooks themselves do not contain any other overall term for this mode of production which would mean something to readers without considerable explanation.

The line of thought in the *Grundrisse* which we have already set out should be enough to indicate this. But in addition, there is no lack of direct statements, all making this much clear: that the underlying village-community form based on common property was not peculiar to Asia but rather was a more or less universal development in the beginning of man's society. Just as the discovery of Peking man did not mean that only the Chinese had prehuman ancestors, so too the survival of living-fossil social forms in Asia did not mean that the "Asiatic" mode of production was an Oriental monopoly. This can be found in the main body of the *Grundrisse* notes from the first pages to the last, literally. In the first pages we read that "History . . . shows common property (e.g. among the Indians, Slavs, ancient Celts, etc.) to be the

* The German is *progressiv* (not *fortschrittlich*), hence tends to reinforce the idea of succession in time to some degree. Writing in French, Marx later used *phases d'évolution successives* for the types of primitive communities—this in his drafts for a letter to V. Zasulich which is full of expressions of temporal succession in connection with early social forms.⁷⁴ At the same time these drafts strongly reinforce the caution implied in the conditioning phrase *in broad outlines*. It is unquestionable that Marx conceived the "progressive" epochs (stages or types) within the framework of a broad time series; but it is equally clear that the time relationships involved no rigid linear sequence. On the contrary, there was plenty of room (as always in history) for overlapping forms, fossil leftovers, lateral diffusion of cultures, reciprocal influences, and a host of other complications in the ordinary pattern of historical inquiry. The idea that Marx meant that each "progressive" epoch had to come to an end before the next in line of destiny could begin, or that everywhere the epochs goosestepped in fixed sequence like a parade, is simply grotesque. But this is really an issue in Marx's historical method, which is outside our scope here.

original form, a form which long plays an important role in the shape of community property." And a little earlier Marx had referred to "the decline of common property, as among Oriental and Slavic peoples." The view is broadened in what is the very last paragraph of the manuscript:

Common property has recently been rediscovered as a special Slavic curiosity. But in point of fact India offers us a sample-case of the most multifarious forms of such economic communities, more or less in dissolution but still entirely recognizable; and a more thoroughgoing historical research finds in turn that it was the starting point with all civilized peoples.⁷⁶

This passage was in turn expanded to become a part of the *Critique of Political Economy* itself, for publication. New emphasis is put on the universal application of this social form. In the course of an economic argument, the book reads: "Let us take collective labor in its naturally evolved [*naturwüchsigen*] form, as we find it on the threshold of history among all civilized peoples." A footnote at this point makes the following statement:

In recent times a ridiculous prejudice has become widespread, to the effect that the *naturally evolved* [*naturwüchsigen*] form of common property is a specifically Slavic or even exclusively Russian form. It is the original form, which we can point to among the Romans, Teutons, and Celts; of this form, however, a whole showcaseful, with diverse specimens, is still to be found among the Indians [of Asia], even though partly in ruins. A closer study of the Asiatic, especially the Indian, forms of common property would show how different forms of naturally evolved common property gave rise to different forms of its dissolution. Thus, for example, the various original types of Roman and Teutonic private property can be traced back to various forms of Indian common property.⁷⁷

Capital later quoted this in full, as a footnote to a similar statement.⁷⁸

The scope of "the Asiatic . . . forms of common property" in this passage would be ambiguous perhaps, were it not introduced by the reference to the "history among all civilized peoples." There is no question, however, about a later letter by Marx to Engels, written after reading Maurer's books on the constitution of the old German mark and village community:

... he demonstrates in detail that private property in land developed only later. . . . Precisely now it's interesting that the *Russian* way of redistributing the soil at definite times (in Germany at first annually) was maintained in Germany here and there up into the eighteenth and even the nineteenth century. The view which I put forward [in the *Critique of Political Economy*], that everywhere the Asiatic, or Indian, property forms constitute the starting point in Europe, here receives a new proof (although Maurer does not know about it). For the Russians, however, even the last trace of a claim °of originality° disappears, even °in this line.° What's left them is that they are still stuck in forms that their neighbors cast off long ago.⁷⁹

If "Asiatic" property forms "constitute the starting point in Europe," it is plain that Marx was quite willing to apply the Asiatic label to the communal forms of primitive Europe or any other continent. *Asiatic* is used as a type-label; and "the Asiatic mode of production" was the generic designation for the primitive community in any or all of the various forms discussed in the *Grundrisse* notebooks, from the earliest community taken as it is evolving out of natural conditions, up through its transition to a state-organized class society, and, with a certain additional looseness, including the final stage where, in the "specifically Oriental form," this mode of production becomes subordinated as the economic foundation of a developed Oriental despotism.

In subsequent references by Marx, there is strong affirmation that the village-community economy based on common property (whatever the label pinned on it) was once the general case in Europe as well as in Asia. A few days after the last-mentioned letter, Marx again wrote Engels about Maurer's works:

His books are exceptionally important. . . . Even the best minds fail to see—on principle, owing to °a certain judicial blindness°—things that are right in front of their noses. Later, when the moment has arrived, one is surprised to find traces everywhere of what one has failed to see. . . .

To show how much we all labor under this °judicial blindness°: Right in *my own* neighborhood [near Trier], in the *Hunsrück* mountains, the old German system survived up till the *last few years*. I now remember my father talking to me about it from a *lawyer's* point of view!⁸⁰

In another letter two years later:

It is, furthermore, a historical lie to say that this [Russian] *common property* is *Mongolian*. As I have repeatedly indicated in my writings, it is of *Indian* origin and therefore is found among all civilized European peoples at the beginning of their development. Its specifically *Slavic* (not *Mongolian*) form in Russia (which also recurs among *non-Russian South Slavs*) indeed has the greatest similarity *mutatis mutandis* to the *old German* modification of Indian common property.⁸¹

There is an especially interesting passage where Marx used the very term *Oriental* for the primitive economic form in the development of classical society (Greece and Rome). A footnote in *Capital* remarks that the small peasant economy and handicrafts in combination not only form the basis of the feudal mode of production but "likewise form the economic foundation of the classical communities in their best period, after the original Oriental common property ownership had disintegrated and before slavery had taken over production in earnest."⁸² Obviously, *Oriental* is used here purely as a typological label meaning "common property as found in the Orient," or "Oriental-type common property." The English translation by Moore-Aveling-Engels in 1887 struck the word *Oriental* out of this passage (though it remained in the German editions of *Capital*).

If Marx could publish this statement in 1867, without realizing that it might be confusing to readers, there should be no difficulty in accepting the fact that, in 1859, he intended "*Asiatic mode of production*" to have the same scope, that is, to apply to a general stage in social evolution, not one limited geographically to Asia.

10. THE "ARCHAIC FORMATION"

The next step in the development of Marx's view of early social evolution, as he continued to study the problem, is mainly known to us from his drafts for a letter to V. Zasulich about the Russian village commune, in 1881 (two years before his death).

Here he was addressing himself more to the European past than to the Asian. His comments are incidental to the main point of the letter, hence not intended to be systematic; in addition, the exposition was left unfinished. For present purposes, it is triply fragmentary, but still

suggestive. He is thoroughly aware of the inadequacy of the historical material at his disposal: "The history of the decadence of the primitive communities still remains to be done. . . . Up to now only meager outlines have been provided."⁸³

The former predominance of the primitive communal form in Europe is the basis of the whole discussion.

Go back to the origins of Western societies and everywhere you will find common property in the soil; in the course of social progress this has everywhere disappeared in the face of private property. . . .⁸⁴

The general label used throughout these drafts for the early epoch, anterior to the development of slavery and serfdom and the breakup of the communal land system, is "the archaic formation of society."⁸⁵ (In one place, "the primitive formation of society" is also used,⁸⁶ and in another "common property of a more or less archaic type."⁸⁷)

This archaic formation is our previous acquaintance, the naturally evolved community. It is divided into two main stages: the "community of the more archaic type," that is, the earliest stage, and its successor, the "agricultural commune" or "rural commune" (so called "by common agreement," writes Marx). The latter stage was no longer based on kinship, gave more scope to private property, and had periodic redivisions of the communal land for individual cultivation. It is "the *last expression* or last period of the archaic formation"—"the *most recent type* and, so to speak, the last word in the *archaic formation* of societies."⁸⁸ The contemporaneous Russian commune was of this later type.

This agricultural-commune form is, in turn, the transition to the class societies based on private property (in Europe):

As the last phase in the primitive formation of society, the agricultural commune is at the same time the phase of transition to the secondary formation, hence transition from society based on common property to society based on private property. The secondary formation, of course, embraces the series of societies based on slavery and serfdom.⁸⁹

In short, this archaic formation, which Marx specifically sees as the generally early form in both Europe and Asia (and elsewhere), represents exactly the same rung in the ladder of social evolution that had

been labeled the Asiatic mode of production twenty-two years previously.

Even the difference in the label can be easily understood. In 1859 Marx had gone through a study of the village community mainly in its Asian forms, which at that time were relatively well known, while there were only intimations of a similar development in Europe. The label "Asiatic mode of production" could be used *faute de mieux*, in the same sense as the anthropologists and geologists were using geographic labels for time periods. By 1881 Marx had gone through an exciting study of Maurer and other works on Europe's past, and the letter he was drafting specifically dealt mainly with Europe. Using "Asiatic mode of production" as generic label was out of the question in this new context. But the change in label should not obscure the identity of substance.*

With the 1881 letter drafts before us, we have as full an idea as we can get of Marx's conception of the social basis of Asiatic society. Now: what was the nature of the *political* structure associated with this form?

* Also identical in substance is Engels' linking of the common-land institutions of early Europe with those in India and Java, in 1875 in an article doubtless discussed with Marx: "In reality communal ownership of land is an institution which is to be found among all Indo-Germanic peoples on a low level of development, from India to Ireland, and even among the Malays, who are developing under Indian influence, for instance, in Java." And so on.⁹⁰ As in the case of Marx's letter drafts to Zasulich, the background target was the Russian Narodnik claim that the village-community pattern was peculiar to the Russian soul.

22 | ORIENTAL DESPOTISM: STATE AND BUREAUCRACY

If the societal form represented by the Asiatic village community was based on a mode of production different from those familiar to Europeans from their own class history, that is, from classical slavery and medieval feudalism, then can it be considered an example of primitive communism? If so, does this mean it was classless and stateless like the earliest tribal communities?

Indeed, in a passage we cited on page 536—from Marx’s notes for the fourth volume of *Capital*—he does label the Asiatic community, in passing, as primitive [*naturwüchsigen*] communism, that is, a primitive communal form that has developed directly out of the state of nature.* In this case, where does the Oriental despotism come in?

1. THE TRANSITION TO THE STATE

This question arises because so far, in summarizing Marx’s notebooks and his line of thought, we have been largely bypassing what is half the problem. So far the spotlight has been mainly on the underlying village-community economy. If an ancient Indian village community

* The same idea is behind an interesting passage in a little-known work by Marx’s follower J. G. Eccarius (secretary of the International 1867–1871), a work “which was written with mighty assistance and coaching by Marx,” according to Engels. Chapter 1 gives a bird’s-eye view of the succession of social epochs, after quoting Marx’s summary statement on this from his preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*. Then comes a substantial passage on the Asiatic mode of production, beginning:

The leading characteristic of the Asiatic, as contradistinguished from any other mode of production, is a species of *communism*, with a political

were transposed to another planet as an isolated colony, then its character as a primitive communism would stand out in relief. But if we consider the village community as it existed in historical Asia, not on Mars, then we must take account of the fact that it did not exist as an isolate.

It should be apparent that, in the *Grundrisse* notebooks, Marx inextricably fused the nature of the village-community economy with the role of the "higher Unity" towering over it. Marx's resort to the seemingly vague term *unity*, in the sense of something that unites or embodies the collectivity of the social unit, is not simply a Hegelian reminiscence. The Hegelianizing term is useful because its vagueness, or indeterminacy of content, allows this unifying entity to be seen as a historical process as its content changes. The concept has an algebraic character: the x changes, but the equation (the social relationship) remains.* The Unity *ends* by being embodied in, and identified with, the supreme power of the sovereign or despot; it *begins* with the earliest forms of collectivity, or the sense of Oneness, in the tribal extended family, in the institutions of communality developing out of primitive natural conditions (the *naturwüchsiges Gemeinwesen*).

Underlying this conception is the view of the state's origin which was explained in Chapter 11: the state does not arise as an institution that descends on society out of the blue; it develops out of the overall unifying institutions of the primitive community, out of the already existing organizing authority of the originally stateless society. It follows that this could have taken place only in the course of transitional

superstructure of "caste." The *soil* is the common possession of the people . . . every village was in itself a *whole*, insulated and secluded from the rest of the land and produced all that was necessary to the satisfaction of human needs.

Eccarius' book goes on to stress that the monarch was the controller of the economy, assisted by "the public officers." Outlining the composition of the population, it lists first "the higher officers of state, the dignitaries of religion, the standing army" and then the "artists [*sic*] and artisans" and their domestics—and no other classes. While this is Eccarius writing, not Marx, there can be little doubt that this is Eccarius' version of what he had gathered from Marx's coaching.¹

* The same x is used elsewhere in these notebooks for a different relation. From the outset of capitalist development, says Marx, "capital stands as One or Unity vis-à-vis the workers as Many . . . as a Unity that is external to the workers,"² for capital is by nature the concentration of many units of living labor. In this case, capital is viewed as the unifying entity over the separate atoms of labor.

epochs and in transitional forms. Inevitably (given the paucity of positive knowledge of prehistory) a given transitional form will appear to us as a puzzling phenomenon: it seems to be neither this nor that. One task of theory is to aid investigation by suggesting what it is transitional *from* and *to*.

Marx's exposition in the notebooks assumed such a process of transition, the historical process in which one variant of the naturally evolved community arose under Asiatic conditions and eventually fossilized. The general process of transition was most clearly sketched by Engels in *Anti-Dühring*, as presented in Chapter 11. Now, in addition, let us see how Engels specifically discusses this transition in terms of Asiatic society.

To refute the notion that the state comes into being simply as an imposition by force from outside the social structure, Engels develops the following argument (in his preparatory draft for the book):

But state and force are precisely what all hitherto existing forms of society [after primitive times] had had *in common*, and if I should try to explain, for instance, the Oriental despotisms, the republics of antiquity, the Macedonian monarchies, the Roman Empire and the feudalism of the Middle Ages by stating that they were all based on *force*, I have explained nothing as yet.

The explanation has to be made in terms of what the force is used to take, namely, the products and productive forces of the time, and so on.

It would then appear that Oriental despotism was founded on common property, the antique republic on the cities engaged in agriculture, the Roman Empire on the latifundia, feudalism on the domination of the country over the town, which had its material causes, etc.³

The rough summary statement that "Oriental despotism was founded on common property" did not get into the finished work, though this rough formula had been written down by Marx more than once. In what sense could a *state*, which is the outcome of class divisions, be "founded on common property"? In *Anti-Dühring* itself, the matter is put in terms of historical process. Engels brings up the role of the Oriental water works, for example, precisely in connection with the process of class differentiation:

Society divides into classes: the privileged and the dispossessed,

the exploiters and the exploited, the rulers and the ruled; and the state,⁴ which the primitive groups of communities of the same tribe had at first arrived at only in order to safeguard their common interests (*e.g.* irrigation in the East) and for protection against external enemies, from this stage onwards acquires just as much the function of maintaining by force the conditions of existence and domination of the ruling class against the subject class.⁵

The protostate institution arises in order to safeguard "common interests"—in the Orient, irrigation—and then evolves its class function. This is what it means to say that it was founded on common property. To complete this picture, let us see how a *ruling class* arises out of the same foundation of common property.

2. THE TRANSITION TO A RULING CLASS

Pointing to the Asiatic village communities, Engels recalls that "For thousands of years Oriental despotism and the changing rule of conquering nomad people were unable to injure these old communities," whereas the importation of European goods started to dissolve them, not primarily by the use of force.

... the peasants simply find it to their advantage that the private ownership of land should take the place of common ownership. Even the formation of a primitive aristocracy, as in the case of the Celts, the Germans and the Indian Punjab, took place on the basis of common ownership of the land, and at first was not based in any way on force, but on voluntariness and custom.⁶

This primitive aristocracy which was formed on the basis of common ownership of the land: was it a ruling class? We can raise the same question about the primitive aristocracy that Marx had first described in his article on the Duchess of Sutherland and the Scottish clan. We are dealing with transitions; in this case it is clear that we are dealing with a social formation which is in transition. In general, we are dealing with a ruling class in the process of becoming, an embryonic ruling class, that is, not yet a (finished) ruling class; or merely—depending on what point in the transition is in question—an officialdom with the potentiality of

becoming a ruling class. Marx gave thought to the same problem in his anthropological studies.⁷ It is in the nature of transitions that a definite answer is possible only after concrete factual investigation of a particular case. There is still a controversy over when fertilized ova become persons, and how many hairs must be lost before one is officially bald.

The Scottish clan officialdom described by Marx was needed to safeguard communal interests. Likewise, Engels writes of the need for offices even in classless communities to safeguard certain common interests, including control of water supplies, and adds:

Such offices are found in aboriginal communities of every period—in the oldest German marks and even today [the 1870s] in India. They are naturally endowed with a certain measure of authority and are the beginnings of state power.

These beginnings of state power, which naturally do not begin by quite being a state power, tend to become increasingly independent of the community as a whole as class differentiation proceeds.

It is not necessary for us to examine here how this independence of social functions in relation to society increased with time until it developed into domination over society; how he who was originally the servant, where conditions were favorable, changed gradually into the lord; how this lord, depending on the conditions, emerged as an Oriental despot or satrap, the dynast of a Greek tribe, chieftain of a Celtic clan, and so on; to what extent he subsequently had recourse to force in the course of this transformation; and how finally the individual rulers united into a ruling class.⁸

“It is not necessary for us,” wrote Engels in this notable example of apophasis, “to examine here how” this potential, embryonic, unfinished, proto-ruling class, comprising all these lords, chieftains, satraps, Oriental despots and whatnots, moulted into such a ruling class as could be recognized by a textbook; or united (crystallized, amalgamated, clotted, or synthesized) out of class elements into a certifiable class. At any rate, if the *how* of it was not further examined, it is still quite clear that the individual rulers *did* unite into a ruling class, including the individual big and little despots and satraps of the Orient, emerging out of the community infrastructure with independent powers that could be transferred, by conquest or otherwise, to bigger

Oriental despots. Engels, like Marx, saw no puzzling problem in this process.*

When a state power did crystallize, continued Engels' exposition, its basis was always "the exercise of a social function." And "However great the number of despotisms which rose and fell in Persia and India, each was fully aware that above all it was the entrepreneur responsible for the collective maintenance of irrigation throughout the river valleys, without which no agriculture was possible there." This reflected the "common interests" side of the political power, which continued alongside the class function. It really was in the common interest of the despot or state to keep the communities flourishing; for how else could state revenue be collected? On the other hand, if the amalgamated ruling class of despots and satraps could maintain themselves only in constant warfare, which devastated the villages and undermined the maintenance of the state's social function, this was an internal contradiction of the system.**

3. THE TRIBUTE-COLLECTING STATE

If a distinctive type of class society developed out of the village-community economy and produced individual rulers who finally united into a ruling class (with a characteristic type of state, the Oriental despotism), there are more questions raised about the relationship between the mode of production and the political power.

The key point was the "question of property"—the dominant type, landed property. *Who owned the land?* The answer is duplex, reflecting two sides of the reality. On the one hand, Marx made clear often enough, as we have seen, that in this mode of production it was the village community that owned the soil. On the other hand, he wrote

* All this describes, according to Engels, *one* "process of formation of classes," alongside which "another was also taking place." This was the emergence of slavery.⁹ It is clear that class society based on slavery is regarded as qualitatively different from the type of class differentiation described above, even though both might proceed in conjunction.

** A modern account, starting with Marx's views, of the development of a ruling class out of village-community society may be found in an important work by F. Tökei.¹⁰

more than once that it was the state (Oriental despot, etc.) that owned the land. In a *Tribune* article he referred quite in passing to "the Asiatic system making the state the real landlord." In *Capital*, emphasizing that the appropriation of ground rent presupposes the ownership of landed property "by certain individuals," he gave examples beginning with: "The owner may be an individual representing the community, as in Asia, Egypt, etc.," that is, the state sovereign or despot. The context is a warning against "confusing the various forms of rent pertaining to different stages of development. . . ." In other notes, he wrote that most of the surplus product in the precapitalist modes of production goes to "the landowner (the state in Asia)." In *Anti-Dühring* Engels combined the two formulations to make the point that "In the whole of the Orient, where the village community or the state owns the land, the very term *landlord* is not to be found in the various languages. . . ." ¹¹

If we are considering the naturally evolved community before the institution of the state separates out, that is, while the Unity is located within the life of the tribal community itself, then there is no problem. The land is communal property. But a special feature of the Asiatic mode of production in the Orient is not simply the existence of the village-community form but the continued existence of this form after the communal Unity has become embodied in a "higher" power, one that has risen *above* the local communities, that has separated itself from the producers as a collectivity and now towers above them with a separate body of armed men and special institutions to extract the surplus product. This is the village-community form taken after it has given birth to a class differentiation, which in turn has taken on a life of its own as a state power—*while the village-community infrastructure persists*, "vegetating in the teeth of time."

Within the framework of its own little world, the village community may remain relatively unchanged for a long time; and within this framework it is still the owner of the soil *as against the individual*. But there is now a new relationship between it, as a little world, and the larger world outside its sporelike walls. The essential feature of the new relationship is the appropriation of its surplus product by the state power, which is the real owner of the soil *as against the local community*.

The form in which this surplus product is extracted, the form in which this ground rent is paid, is *tribute*. The characteristic relationship

between the Oriental state and the underlying village community is *the tributary relationship*.

Thus, Marx writes in *Capital* that

Under the slave relationship, serf relationship, tributary relationship (insofar as primitive communities are concerned), it is the slaveholder, the feudal lord, the tribute-collecting state that is the owner and hence the seller of the product.¹²

Further on, there is a similar remark that specifies the state as the economic ruler (owner of the surplus product) taken parallel to the slaveholder and the feudal lord. Marx mentions

under those earlier modes of production the principal owners of the surplus product with whom the merchant dealt, namely, the slaveholder, the feudal lord, and the state (for instance, the Oriental despot). . . .¹³

The tribute-collecting state is the specific political structure corresponding to the Asiatic mode of production in its Oriental form.* There are three features of this type of state that may usefully be reviewed here:

1. This state extracts tribute not from the individual producer, not from a slave or serf, but from the community of producers as a whole. In general, the tributary relationship did not primarily regulate the relations of the state with individuals; it was the form in which the surplus product (or surplus labor) was extracted from the local community as a collectivity.

2. The relationship of this state to its economic infrastructure more nearly resembles symbiosis than in any other society; for it appears as a relationship between two organisms that seem to be more or less autonomous. The Mogul power can be imagined conquering Afghanistan or Turkey instead of India (though not necessarily with the same socioeconomic result, of course); and the village communities did in fact get along much the same under a variety of conquerors. The

* See also the passage in *Capital* that speaks of the greater amount of freedom for the worker under the "tributary relationship" than under "serfdom with compulsory labor."¹⁴ The tribute-collecting nature of this state was not yet developed when Marx was jotting down his *Grundrisse* notes, though it is suggested in passing in the passage quoted above, p. 532. Elsewhere Marx mentions the ordinary tribute relationship between a conquering state and subjugated peoples, with a reference to the Turks and Romans;¹⁵ but Roman society was not built around tribute-collection any more than around merchant capital.

communities felt the effect of changes in state composition in terms of the "three departments of government" that Engels and Marx had described as characteristic of the Oriental state: more or less tribute extracted, more or less devastation by war, more or less attention to the necessary public works (especially water works). Otherwise, the "restless change in the persons and peoples that get control of the political superstructure" merely changed the hands that collected the tribute. The conquests, the "storms in the political skies," replaced one centralized power with a similar one, this centralization being the other face of the atomization that reigned below, in "a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members [components]." ¹⁶

3. The tributary relationship—unlike the slave relationship, serf relationship, or wage-labor relationship—is scarcely conceivable except as a relationship between the producers on the one hand and the ruling *political* power on the other. In the case of the other three, the relationship of exploitation appears as a relationship between two classes of civil society, between a class of producers and a class of private-property owners.* In these cases, the state normally arises as the instrument or guardian of the economic rulers, the owning class. But in the tributary relationship, the relationship of exploitation is between the producers and *the state itself, directly*. Put another way: in the case of the other three modes of exploitation, economic exploitation and political rule are *related* in a certain way; but in the tributary mode, economic exploitation and political rule are *fused* in the same hands.

* With the qualification that the feudal ruling class tends to have the dual character of property-owner and political power-wielder, a point that has already been made in several connections.¹⁷ Therefore serfdom partly shares the characteristic of the tributary mode explained above. But in the tribute-collecting state of the Orient, it was the *ruling* political power (the summit) that owned the land and the surplus product, intermediaries being merely its agents. Under feudalism, the serf relationship could and did exist formally between direct producers (serfs) and landowners quite low in the feudal hierarchy, each of whom was one member of the ruling class.

4. SYMBIOSIS: LOCALISM AND ORIENTAL DESPOTISM

The disconnected local autonomy of the communities, then, was the complement of the over-all state centralization. "I believe that no one could think of any more solid foundation for Asiatic despotism and stagnation," Marx told Engels.¹⁸ When he sent this letter, Marx had already written his first article on "The British Rule in India," which closed with a powerful passage along these lines. "Sickening as it must be to human feeling" to see what British imperialism is doing to these "inoffensive social organizations," the village communities, still "we must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism. . . ."

It is worth reading the rest of this indictment of an outlived and retrograde society, set alongside his invective against the vileness and stupidity of the British masters. We must not forget, continued Marx,

that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. We must not forget the barbarian egotism which, concentrating on some miserable patch of land, had quietly witnessed the ruin of empires, the perpetration of unspeakable cruelties, the massacre of the population of large towns, with no other consideration bestowed upon them than on natural events, itself the helpless prey of any aggressor who deigned to notice it at all. We must not forget that this undignified, stagnatory, and vegetative life, that this passive sort of existence evoked on the other part, in contradistinction, wild, aimless, unbounded forces of destruction and rendered murder itself a religious rite in Hindostan. We must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery, that they subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man to be the sovereign of circumstances, that they transformed a self-developing social state into never-changing natural destiny, and thus brought about a brutalizing worship of nature, exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell down on his knees in adoration of *Kanuman*, the monkey, and *Sabbala*, the cow.¹⁹

Turned around, from an indictment to a program, this is also a statement about the grand socialist alternative as against both the "inoffensive" victims stuck in the past and the "vile" exploiters of the present.*

Marx also applied this insight into the symbiotic union of atomized localism with despotism to the obvious case of Russia. The Russian village community has a self-weakening characteristic:

This is its isolation, the lack of liaison between the life of one commune and the others'—this *localized microcosm*,** which is not found everywhere as an inherent characteristic of this type but which, wherever it is found, has given rise to a more or less central despotism over the communes.²¹

Engels echoed the point more than once, usually with an eye on Russian czarism:

Such a complete isolation of the individual communities from one another, which creates throughout the country similar, but the very opposite of common, interests, is the natural basis for *Oriental despotism*, and from India to Russia this form of society, wherever it prevailed, has always produced it and always found its complement in it.²²

This common ownership [of land] quietly persisted in India and Russia under the most diverse forcible conquests and despotisms, and formed their basis.²³

Where the ancient communes have continued to exist, they have for thousands of years formed the basis of the cruelest form of state, Oriental despotism, from India to Russia. It was only where these communities dissolved that the peoples made progress of themselves.²⁴

* Marx ended this article (a sure sign that he regarded it as an important piece of writing) with a flourish from the literary classics, in this case from Goethe:

Since their pain has swelled our pleasure,
Should we too not feel this pain?
Have not souls beyond all measure
Been consumed by Tamerlane?

** Elsewhere in this draft letter, the phrase becomes: "its *localized microcosm*, which deprives it of historical initiative."²⁰ For another reference (by Engels) to this insight, see the passage about Dutch state-socialism in Java, page 559f (letter to Kautsky).

We shall take up the case of Russia in the next chapter. It is more unexpected that Marx saw the Oriental despotism element in a European country at the western end of the continent: Spain.

5. THE CASE OF SPAIN

On plunging deep into Spanish history for his series of articles on the Spanish revolution in 1854, Marx was struck by the occurrence of the localism-despotism pattern in the peculiar development of absolutism on the peninsula.

On the one hand, Spain was “the very country, where of all the feudal states absolute monarchy first arose in its most unmitigated form”; yet here “centralization has never succeeded in taking root”—that is, centralization of the social infrastructure as distinct from the political centralization represented by the absolute monarchy. Marx asked: “How are we to account for the singular phenomenon”?²⁵

Marx’s answer (which he announced was “not difficult”) does not concern us here in detail; it sought to explain historically why the absolute monarchy in this country did not play the same civilizing (modernizing) and centralizing role as elsewhere in Europe, and hence why the towns and bourgeoisie vegetated in decay.

°° And while the absolute monarchy found in Spain material in its very nature repulsive to centralization, it did all in its power to prevent the growth of common interests . . . the very basis on which alone a uniform system of administration and the rule of general laws can be created. Thus the absolute monarchy in Spain, bearing but a superficial resemblance to the absolute monarchies of Europe in general, is rather to be ranged in a class with Asiatic forms of government.

What was “Asiatic” about this form of government? It is the localism-despotism relationship that Marx has in mind.

°° Spain, like Turkey, remained an agglomeration of mismanaged republics with a nominal sovereign at their head. Despotism changed character in the different provinces with the arbitrary interpretation of the general laws by viceroys and governors; but

despotic as was the government it did not prevent the provinces from subsisting with different laws and customs, different coins, military banners of different colors, and with their respective systems of taxation. The oriental despotism attacks municipal self-government only when opposed to its direct interests, but is very glad to allow those institutions to continue so long as they take off its shoulders the duty of doing something and spare it the trouble of regular administration.²⁶

In presenting this observation on a Spanish peculiarity, Marx is *detaching* the pattern of Oriental despotism as a form of government from the Asiatic mode of production. There is no question here of a primitive village-community economy, only municipal self-government.* This usefully underlines the fact that Marx uses *Oriental despotism* to mean a form of government, like *republic* (which, remember, he metaphorically applied even to the Indian village community itself) or *monarchy*.

Furthermore, the element of Oriental despotism is only one strand in the political character of this peculiar Western state. It is that aspect of Spain's history which differentiates it from other European countries; but it does not negate the area of likeness. The background is not the village community but feudalism; and "Charles I attempted to transform that still feudal monarchy into an absolute one," by destroying the power of the nobles and restraining the power of the Cortes. The royal power won out in civil war: "it was, above all, the bitter antagonism between the classes of the nobles and the citizens of the towns which Charles employed for the degradation of both."²⁸

This class pattern is similar to the rise of other absolutisms, as we saw in Chapter 19. But for specific historical reasons in Spain it led to economic stagnation and a decaying infrastructure, instead of industrial development and a burgeoning bourgeoisie: hence to retrograde political forms. We may add: hence also to retrograde political ideologies, such as anarchism, which flourished in Spain longer than elsewhere—its localism being the natural complement of despotism.

* In this study Marx does not mention the role of water works in Spain's economic past. He does in *Capital*: "The secret of the flourishing state of industry in Spain and Sicily under the domination of the Arabs lay in their irrigation works."²⁷ A footnote at this point makes a connection with India but not with Spanish history.

6. THE TRIBUTE-COLLECTING CLASS

Let us now take a closer look at the nature of the tribute-collecting state. Specifically, we are interested in the class at the receiving end of this relationship. For Marx the ruling class was defined, socio-economically speaking, as the class possessing control over the appropriation of the surplus product. Under the Oriental despotisms—as under feudalism, but not capitalism—the answer to this basic question was visible to the naked eye of the most untutored peasant: it was acted out in front of him every day. He could see the physical hands that reached out to take away his surplus product, and he was solemnly made aware of—not deceived about—the hierarchy of power that lay behind those hands. We are, in fact, asking one of the easiest questions in all social history.

That is, it is an easy question as long as we are dealing with Marx's tribute-collecting state, and not with the views of others who claim that the dominant forms of Asiatic history have been chattel-slavery or feudalism, that is, forms familiar to the Europocentric mind.

An illuminating light on the nature of the tribute-collecting state is cast, from another direction, by an inquiry of Engels'—unwittingly, for he was not thinking about Oriental despotism in this connection. Soon after Marx's death, Engels, reading about the Dutch colonial system in Java, saw an important point in the difference between Dutch and British colonial policy in Asia. J. W. B. Money's *Java* made clear to him that, whereas the British in Java (1811–1836) as well as in India had tried to introduce private property in land for peasants, the Dutch refrained from such a westernizing effort in Java. The Dutch maintained the old village-community system, and channeled their control and exploitation through the native chiefs and village heads without changing the age-old economic forms of the infrastructure. They merely put *themselves* at the receiving end. The villages paid their tribute as usual to their higher-ups, who in turn were milked by the Dutch.

To Engels, preoccupied at the time (1884) with the problems of Bismarckian Germany and its homegrown "Bonapartist socialists," the pattern had a familiar look. He wrote the German party to examine this case of state-socialism in order to use it as a means of educationally

exposing the exploitive meaning of the Bismarckian state-socialism then making a stir.*

In terms of our present subject, the case of the Dutch in Java showed how a modern imperialist power could step into the role of the Oriental despot just like any other conquering tribe—and *maintain the same mode of production as the underpinning of its exploitation and rule*. There were two officialdoms, not one, involved in this political system. Standing between the direct producers and the Dutch rulers was the native aristocracy (Money's term) of chiefs and village heads, equivalent to the "primitive aristocracy" discussed above on pages 548-549; and standing above this native communal hierarchy was the Dutch colonial bureaucracy, which appropriated the surplus product, allowing part to stay with the native chiefs. In the case of the old despotisms, this would be the complete pattern; in the case of the Dutch, of course, there was an extra step up, for above the colonial bureaucracy was its ruling class back home. But (to run a hypothetical test mentioned before) if Java with its colonial masters were transported to Mars, it would be detached from the overseas capitalist class. Only the Dutch settlers (immediate colonial exploiters) would remain at the head of the society. To be sure, this transmutation could not actually be worked on the Dutch; but *it serves to illustrate the exact pattern of the traditional Oriental despotism* with modern imperialists at the summit.

* Engels wrote to Bebel:

If you want a model of state-socialism, then take *Java*. Here, on the basis of the old communistic village communities, the Dutch government has organized all production in so beautifully socialistic a fashion, and has so nicely taken the sale of all products in hand, that, aside from about 100 million marks in stipends for officials and the army, there is still another sum of about 70 million marks in net proceeds that accrues annually. . . . In comparison Bismarck is a mere child indeed!²⁹

The explanation to editor Kautsky was longer:

It would be good if someone took the trouble to lay bare the state-socialism now rife, through an example that is in full-blooming practice in *Java*. All the material is contained in [Money's book]. . . . Here one sees how, on the basis of the old community communism [*Gemeinde-kommunismus*], the Dutch organized production under the aegis of the state, and secured for the people their idea of a quite comfortable existence. Result: the people are kept at the stage of primitive stupidity and 70 million marks a year (very likely more now) are raked in for the Dutch treasury. The case is highly interesting, and the practical applications can easily be seen. Besides, it is proof how primitive communism [*Ur-*

Engels had leaped the gap between two apparently unrelated social forms: the updated Oriental despotism of the Dutch in Java (subordinated to an overseas capitalism), and the up-to-date state-socialism of Bonapartism in its Bismarckian version, the class content of which was discussed in Chapter 16.³¹ What the two had in common, amidst a host of differences, was the autonomous role of the state power with respect to the class structure of civil society: this was what linked Java to state socialism.

In Java as in Germany, the executor of this autonomous role was the bureaucracy.

It is ironic, in view of the contemporary intimations that Marx was reluctant to recognize the existence of the Oriental bureaucracy, that Marx—so far as I have been able to discover—was the very first writer to do exactly that: apply the still new-fangled term *bureaucracy* to the Chinese state apparatus (in 1858).^{*} More than today, the very use of the word had overtones. As we have pointed out, Marx wrote about the highly visible officialdom of the Chinese state with about the same relative frequency as he did of the Prussian, and with about the same division of labor between terms treating the sovereign power as a *Gesamtheit* (king, emperor, Crown, throne, monarchy) and terms referring to the inside of the state apparatus. And as in the case of Prussia, he assumed everyone knew that “The *existence* of the sovereign power is, indeed, precisely its *officials*, army, administration, judges. Apart from this its body, it is a shadow, a figment of the imagination, a [mere] name.”³⁴

kommunismus] there, as in India and Russia today, provides the finest and broadest foundation for exploitation and despotism (as long as no modern communist element stirs it up), and how it shows itself to be as much of a crying anachronism in the midst of modern society (one to be removed or else well-nigh reversed in course) as were the independent mark associations of the original Swiss cantons.³⁰

^{*} Marx's 1858 articles on the British-imposed opium trade dealt with one of the consequences for China: “[t]he corruption that ate into the heart of the Celestial bureaucracy, and destroyed the bulwark of the patriarchal constitution.”³² (It would seem that it was *not* the emperor that was the bulwark of this political system.) The sovereign power was powerless to control its officialdom in its efforts to suppress the opium trade, efforts which (Marx points out) were decided on by the deliberations of “all the high officers of the Empire.” Among other interesting glimpses of the Chinese bureaucracy in Marx's articles, there is the role of the mandarin in meeting the Taiping rebels' attacks, which can be read in an interesting if neglected article entitled “Chinese Affairs.”³³ I do not mean to exclude the possibility that a search might turn up other writers who applied the neologism *bureaucracy* to China earlier than Marx.

It is certainly true that it never occurred to Marx to reassure future marxologists about a question no one was yet asking, since his unsophisticated era knew no special inhibition about the concept of a bureaucratic ruling power. For two centuries writers on China had again and again routinely described the locus of all power in the hands of the state apparatus, whether this was considered to be the emperor operating through his far-flung administrative machine or the apparatus with the emperor at its head. In the case of Russia, the Marquis de Custine* had taken some time to conclude that the state power was in the hands of an *apparat* that was no longer effectively controlled by the czar, but the one theory that Custine never entertained was that the power was in the hands of the nobility or any other property-holding class. In Marx's lifetime, it would have been a puzzling innovation if anyone had claimed that the ruling power under Oriental despotism was in any hands *other* than the state apparatus.

Another reminder is necessary, if only as background: as in the case of many other subjects, Marx's political writings about China and India were usually keyed to current issues, like British policy, movements of revolt, and so on. He never got around to writing his planned volume on the state, nor did he set pen to paper to wrap up the political scene in scientific formulas. He did not do this even with a long list of far more important issues—unfortunately. Nowhere did he ask, in good catechetical fashion, *What is the ruling class under the absolute monarchy?* and set down the answer for the textbooks of the future. Several scores of marxologists have written learnedly of his failure to promulgate a canonical definition of class.**

The fact is that Marx took it for granted that everyone and his or her mother knew who ruled under Oriental despotism and similar regimes. It was an easy question, not a difficulty. In *Capital*, one of his first remarks about "the ancient Asiatic and other ancient modes of production" is this: "Those ancient social organisms of production are, as compared with bourgeois society, much more simple and transparent, to an extraordinary degree."³⁶ In contrast, Marx has amply explained that "bourgeois society is the most highly developed and most multi-

* The Marquis de Custine's observations are reported in Special Note E.

** It remained for Wittfogel to claim that Marx's alleged reticence about a ruling class under Oriental despotism "was a strange formulation for a man who ordinarily was eager to define social classes. . . ."³⁵

plex historical organization of production.”³⁷ On the economic level, the simple peasant understood about his own society what the simple professor disputes in ours, namely the fact and mode of exploitation, the appropriation of the surplus product. *Simple and transparent.*

7. THE “POLITICAL DEPENDENCY RELATIONSHIP”

Most important is the common failure to understand the significance of Marx’s repeated insistence on what was *basic* to the inquiry: the contention, which he put forward aggressively time and again as the key to everything, that this Oriental society was founded on “common property”; that is, that *there was no private-property-holding class in existence*. Only today do we have to spell out that there could be no ruling class based on private property if the social scene contained not a single candidate for this honor. To be sure, private-property-holding elements existed in the pores of this society; but they were not such candidates. It was therefore no problem for Engels—writing in *Anti-Dühring*, in intellectual collaboration with Marx, the sole work in which they undertook a more or less systematic presentation of Marx’s ideas—to speak of the amalgamation “into a ruling class” of ruling elements *not* based on private-property power.³⁸

In *Capital* Marx used an appropriate term for the stratum of economic exploiters in the Asiatic mode of production: referring specifically to the old village-community system, he wrote of the nonagricultural laborers that they

are directly employed by the magnates [*den Grossen*], to whom a portion of the agricultural surplus product is rendered in the shape of tribute or rent. One portion of this product is consumed by the magnates in kind. . . .³⁹

Die Grossen—the Great Ones, magnates, or grandees—is a term used globally for the appropriators of the surplus product, the identity of whom we know from Marx’s explanations. It may remind us of Marx’s use of *the great man* for the head of the hierarchy of officers in the Scottish clan.⁴⁰ Later Marx used *rural magnates* (in English) to refer to the landed aristocracy in the French provinces.⁴¹

In 1881–1882 Engels resorted to the same algebraic term *die*

Grossen in describing the transition to the feudal ruling class out of the Germanic communities that had melded in the invasions of Rome and gone over to private property in land. But this ruling class-in-formation did not begin simply out of land ownership.

When, during and by means of the civil wars, the beginnings of a ruling class of the great men [*Grossen*] and the powerful—landowners, officials, and military chiefs—were already being formed, their support was bought by the princelings with gifts of land.⁴²

Thus the “officials and military chiefs” who entered into the formation of this ruling class were homogenized with the landowners—eventually. So it was in the European, not the Asiatic, course of development. In the Asiatic pattern, they could not be so homogenized because a private landowning class did not arise.

In *Capital* Marx’s use of the *Great Ones* for the ruling magnates who received the tribute or rent (the distinctive revenue of rulers under Oriental despotism) occurs in the course of a favorable summary of Richard Jones’s analysis of the Indian system. In his economic notebooks Marx had copious notes on and excerpts from Jones regarding this point among others. These notes show Jones referring only to “the sovereign” as the controller of the general labor fund for the non-agricultural laborers.⁴³ It was Marx who introduced the *Great Ones*. In another book Jones referred incidentally to “the state and its officers” as the receivers and dispensers of this fund; and Marx excerpts this passage for quotation in his work.⁴⁴

Most interesting is a statement that occurs as Marx’s conclusion from Jones’s material on the history of rent:

In all earlier forms it is the landowner, not the capitalist, who figures as the direct appropriator of the *surplus labor* of others. *Rent* . . . appears historically (on the biggest scale among the Asiatic peoples) as the general form of *surplus labor*, of labor performed gratis. Here the appropriation of this surplus labor is not mediated through exchange, as in the case of capital, but its basis is the forcible rule of one section of society by another (hence also direct slavery, serfdom, or political dependency relationship).⁴⁵

“The forcible rule of one section of society by another,” which provides the basis for the appropriation of the producers’ surplus labor,

"on the biggest scale among the Asiatic peoples": what else did this mean to Marx than the pattern of the state in socioeconomic terms?

This is immediately followed by a list of three modes of production presented as exemplifying different forms of the preceding pattern. Two of these three are well known: direct slavery and serfdom, both of which we know Marx ruled out as descriptions of the dominant Asiatic mode of production. The Asiatic form is termed the political dependency relationship (*politisches Abhängigkeitsverhältnis*). This is *not* a designation for the political superstructure of this mode of production: it is the term for the central relationship of the mode of production itself.

What is the political dependency relationship which is set coordinately alongside slavery and serfdom? Why is it a *political* dependency relationship? Because of the specific characteristic of this mode of production which was explained in a previous section:⁴⁶ the direct dependence of the producer on the political power. It is the political power that is the *socioeconomic* exploiter, that section of society which exercises its forcible rule over another.

When the state apparatus is taken as a ruling "section of society," it is idle to believe that some crowned head is the total content. If, further on, Marx remarks that in precapitalist modes of production most of the surplus labor and surplus product goes to "the landowner (the state in Asia)," ⁴⁷ it is as disingenuous to believe that he means a single landowner in the first case as that he knows only a single person in the second.*

Let us put this passage alongside the previously cited one in which the same three modes of production were listed in their double aspect:

Under the slave relationship, serf relationship, tributary relationship (insofar as primitive communities are concerned), it is the slaveholder, the feudal lord, the tribute-collecting state that is the owner and hence the seller of the product.⁴⁹

The threefold division is identical, for the tributary relationship is the

* A similar remark occurs in *Capital* under "Rent in Kind," where Marx again discusses characteristics common to precapitalist societies. Even when rent in kind replaces labor rent, he writes, it is still usually accompanied by survivals of the earlier form (rent paid in compulsory labor), "no matter whether the landlord is a private person or the state." Rent in kind as a form "is quite suitable for serving as the basis for stationary social conditions, as we see e.g. in Asia."⁴⁸

same as the political dependency relationship. It is *political* because it is the tribute-collecting *state* which is the owner of the products of labor as well as of the land itself, that is, owner of the economic infrastructure as well as ruler of the political structure, thereby fusing economics and politics in this form of society. It is this fusion which makes the political dependency relationship central to the mode of production.

The importance of the designation *political* dependency relation for the Asiatic mode of production may be better gauged if we get acquainted with the role played in Marx's thinking by the basic concept of *dependency relations* (*Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse*). Marx worked this out in the *Grundrisse* notebooks; *Capital* reflects the results.

Well known is Marx's periodization of history in terms of modes of production characteristic of different societies. In his notebooks Marx proposes a related periodization of history in terms of the dependency relations characteristic of three great stages of society. In these terms, *all* precapitalist societies become the first stage; capitalism represents a second stage; and the future socialist society will be the third stage. An interesting feature of this synoptic view is the basis on which all precapitalist forms are subsumed under a single head: this common content is called "*personal* dependency relations."

Following is a résumé of Marx's exposition which follows his language fairly closely, with added explanations:

- The mutual interdependence of everybody with everybody else in production is a characteristic of all societies and always remains true, but this "all-around dependency of the producers on each other" may be organized in different forms. In modern bourgeois society, where all products and activities tend to become exchange values (commodities), the necessary interdependence of everybody in production is brought about for the first time by a *social* bond, not a personal one.

- This social bond, the binding force that keeps people working in concert, is represented by bourgeois exchange value (commodity relations, production for the market), and is objectified as money. Thus the social bond, which embodies the social character of production, confronts the individual producer as something alien to him *which has become a thing* (in this case, money), not simply a relation.

- But in precapitalist societies, money (wherever it existed) had nothing like this social power. It could not be, and it was not, this *thing* which acted as the social bond enforcing the necessary interdependence

in production. Rather, this function—the function of binding individuals together for production—was performed by the *power of the community* over the individual, whether this community was the old patriarchal community, the community of ancient classical society, or of the feudal and guild system.

• Today, in bourgeois society, the thing—the social bond standing outside the individual—has an impersonal power over him. In a society where no *thing* has this social power, the same job has to be done by people, that is, by personal relations. Thus Marx writes:

Every individual [today] possesses this social power in the form of a thing [money]. Rob the thing of this social power and you must give it to [certain] people [to exercise] over [other] people. Personal dependency relations (quite spontaneously developed from nature, to begin with) are the first forms of society in which human productivity develops, [if] only to a slight extent and at isolated points. Personal independence based on dependence on *things* is the second great form, one in which for the first time there takes shape a system of general social metabolism, a system of universal interrelations, multifarious needs, and universal [social] wealth. Free individuality, based on the universal development of individuals and on gaining mastery over their communal, social productivity as well as over their social wealth, is the third stage. The second stage creates the preconditions for the third.⁵⁰

Or in bare outline: (1) The societies based on personal dependency relations. (2) The society, capitalism, in which the personal bond in dependency relations is replaced by a social bond, alien to or external to the individual's personal relations. This is summarized as "personal independence based on dependence on *things*." (3) The coming replacement of all dependency relations by "free individuality."

This sets the framework in which to understand Marx's treatment of the Asiatic form. All the social forms of the precapitalist stage are based on *personal* dependency relations in one way or another; but in the Asiatic form these personal dependency relations are *political*: that is, the binding force in production is the relationship to the state. This is why Marx can write "direct slavery, serfdom, or political dependency relationship" as a quick rollcall of precapitalist societies. Under all three, the power that enforces the interdependence of production is wielded by "people over people." Under slavery, it is wielded by certain

people called slaveowners; under serfdom, it is wielded by certain people called feudal lords; under the political dependency relation, it is wielded by certain people called the state.

8. THEOCRATS AND PRIEST RULE

Before coming to the main passage in *Capital* where this political dependency relationship is expounded somewhat systematically if briefly, it is worth noting a place where it appears in passing.

Discussing "the colossal effects of simple cooperation" in labor, Marx presents a passage from Jones about the gigantic structures erected by Oriental states, out of the surplus, through prodigal use of massed human labor. Jones remarks that what makes this possible is the "confinement of the revenues which feed them [the laborers] to one or a few hands." This does not sound as if he is aware of a ruling class; but in the same passage (still as quoted by Marx) he had also remarked of Egyptian food production: "this food, belonging to the monarch and the priesthood, afforded the means of erecting the mighty monuments. . . ." ⁵¹ In Egypt he is aware of the priesthood as a social element which is an integral part of the state structure.

Marx then adds the following comment of his own:

This power of Asiatic and Egyptian kings or Etruscan theocrats, etc., has in modern society passed over to the capitalist, whether he figures as an isolated capitalist or, as in joint-stock companies, a collective capitalist. ⁵²

The reference to the Etruscan theocrats is not in Jones, who was discussing Oriental states. Etruscan society, of course, is a dark subject, now as then; but whatever Marx had in mind by Etruscan theocrats—presumably either early priest-kings or the later aristocracy that assumed religious sanctions (called the "Etruscan priest-nobles" elsewhere by Marx) ⁵³—the term plainly pointed to a class or classlike formation. Moreover, the power over the disposal of the social surplus—the basic socioeconomic power in any society—is regarded as held by the Asiatic sovereigns in the same sense as the Etruscan ruling class and the modern capitalist ruling class.

The reference to the Etruscan theocrats as a ruling class has its

near-counterpart in an equally casual reference by Marx to Egypt, which is however far more specific than Jones's "the monarch and the priesthood," though it derives from the same historical sources. Marx writes: "The necessity for calculating the periods of the Nile's overflow created Egyptian astronomy, and with it the rule of the priest caste as the director [*Leiterin*] of agriculture."⁵⁴ Typically, Marx is not here posing the question *What is the ruling class in Egypt?* but making a different point, whose very formulation reveals what he is taking for granted.* The control by the priest "caste" over the technological essential of the conditions of production led to their control over economic life not by means of private-property ownership but rather by means of their control over the state apparatus—a *political* control exercised through religious sanctions much like the Etruscan theocrats. What was established was a political dependency relationship, basically different from direct slavery or serfdom as Marx had explained. (Whether and when slavery *also* existed within the framework of this system, as in India, is an entirely separate issue.)

9. THE "INNERMOST SECRET" OF SOCIETY AND STATE

It is in the section on "Labor Rent" included in the third volume of *Capital* that Marx comes closest to a direct discussion of the political dependency relationship. It begins with labor rent under serfdom (ground rent in the form of unpaid labor for the feudal lord's estate). Marx then generalizes that in all forms of society in which the direct producer does not own his land but is only its "possessor,"

* Equally typically, Wittfogel disposes of this passage by a diversion. Besides objecting that Marx gives him caste and not class, he throws it out on the ground that Marx uses "a most peculiar determinant of economic dominance," namely "making astronomy the basis for economic leadership" instead of "control over the means of production."⁵⁵ But astronomy did not begin as an intellectual pursuit by professors. Marx's point is precisely that the *technology* involved (astronomy) was the economic necessity (condition of production) essential for "control over the means of production." Furthermore: if this inept objection were indeed justified, then it would mean that Marx departed from his own theory in order to nominate a *nonprivate-property-holding* stratum as the ruling power of Egyptian society. A most peculiar insistence for a man "paralyzed" by fear of just such a conclusion!

the property relationship must likewise show itself as a direct relationship of rulers and ruled [*or* lordship and servitude], and therefore show that the direct producer is not a free man—a lack of freedom which can soften from serfdom with compulsory labor down to a mere obligation to pay tribute [*Tributpflichtigkeit*].⁵⁶

The latter, we know, is the central feature of the Asiatic mode of production, or better, tributary mode of production based on the village community. The direct producer independently carries on his cultivation and handicrafts.

This independence is not negated by the fact that, much as they do in India, these small peasants may form themselves into a more or less naturally evolved community of production, since involved here is merely their independence from the nominal landlord. Under these conditions, surplus labor for the nominal landowner can be squeezed out of them only by noneconomic coercion, whatever form this may take.

One should keep in mind that, for the worker under capitalism, the normal form of pressure involves *economic* coercion, coercion not directly mediated through the state. Basically the same is true of serfdom, which normally involved a *mutual* dependency relationship—the direct land-tiller receiving protection and other services from his lord. But slavery involved noneconomic coercion (forceful compulsion at least implied). Therefore in the next sentence Marx makes the distinction: “What differentiates this from the slave or plantation economy is that the slave works with another’s conditions of production, and not independently.” He then continues on the village-community form: “Hence a personal dependency relationship is necessary, personal unfreedom to one degree or another, and the condition of being tied to the soil as an appurtenance, bondage in the true sense.” This characteristic applies to both the serf relationship and the tributary relationship. The next sentence narrows it down:

If it is not a private landowner but rather, as in Asia, the state which confronts them [the direct producers] directly as their landowner and their sovereign at one and the same time, then rent and taxes coincide; or rather, there then exists no tax other than this form of ground rent.

To paraphrase: if the state, vis-à-vis the direct producers, is both economic and political overlord rolled into one, then ground rent and taxes are also rolled into one package (the tribute in this case); and it is this amalgamated levy which is the source of the social surplus collected by the rulers. Marx continues:

Under these conditions, the dependency relationship* politically as well as economically need not take harsher form than what is common to any subjection to that state. Here the state is the supreme landlord. Here sovereignty is concentrated land ownership on a national scale. It follows, however, that private land ownership does not exist, although there is both private and collective ownership and usufruct in the soil.⁵⁸

In this system, "sovereignty," that is, political rule, "is concentrated land ownership," writes Marx. This is not merely another form of the aphorism that politics is concentrated economics, which merely points to a relationship between the two. What we have here is an identity, a fusion. Here the state is not the managing committee of the landlords; "here the state is the supreme landlord."

Is this view somehow out of line with Marx's theory of the state? As if to answer this in advance even at the expense of an intrusive digression,** at this very point we get the most generalized statement in *Capital* on the nature of the state in terms of its socioeconomic underpinnings. In line with the context, the formulation is *not* pitched in terms of class—which provides only a mediating definition—but rather *in terms of that which defines class too*. This rock-bottom determinant is the "sovereignty-dependency relationship" which derives from "the specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labor is pumped out of the direct producers."

The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labor is pumped out of the direct producers determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and in turn reacts upon it as a determinant. But on it is based the entire formation of the economic community growing out of the

* This key term (*Abhängigkeitsverhältnis*) has disappeared from extant English translations. Not quite as bad is the fact that, in the first volume of *Capital*, where Marx remarks that the Asiatic mode of production is based on "direct ruler-ruled relationships," the translations blur this into: "direct relations of subjection."⁵⁷

** The order was possibly determined by Engels' editing; the original manuscripts would have to be checked to determine this.

productive relations themselves, and therewith its specific political form likewise. It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers—a relationship whose actual form always naturally corresponds to a definite stage of development in the ways and means of labor and hence its social productive power—which holds the innermost secret, the hidden foundation of the entire social structure and hence also of the political form of the sovereignty-dependency relationship, in short, of the specific form of the state in each case.⁵⁹

These three sentences* present the most concentrated statement by Marx of his theory of the state in relation to his theory of social structure and change, pitched in terms applicable to all class societies without exception. If one had to select from Marx's writing a single statement which contains the main body of his theoretical work *in ovo*, this would be it.

* A fourth sentence completed the paragraph:

This does not gainsay the fact that, due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural conditions, relationships among races [tribes, &c.], outside historical influences, etc., the same economic basis—same in terms of the main conditions—can show endless variations and gradations in the phenomenon, which can be made out only by analysis of these empirically given circumstances.⁶⁰

This was a caution to the coming generations of marxologists who were going to repeat endlessly that Marx reduced all history to unilinear, one-factor, rigidified uniformity. "*How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?*" said Bildad the Shuhite in an Eastern land.

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It is now possible to take up Marx's views on the nature of the Russian czarist political superstructure, and, finally, come to a statement of his general theory of the state.

The case of the Russian state has already been mentioned in connection with Oriental despotism. What exactly was the connection? By its nature the connection was not exact at all. To Marx as to everyone else, Russia was the "semi" country: semi-Asiatic, semi-Occidental, semi-civilized, semi-Byzantine, semi-Mongolian. While every country has an admixture of influences, Russia was an extreme case for obvious historical reasons; and moreover the problem of what was, or was becoming, its dominant line of development changed even while Marx and Engels were considering it during their lifetime. The challenge was to disentangle the separate interacting factors, evaluate their relationship to each other at any given time, and estimate their direction and rate of change.

There are, of course, a number of questions clustering about Russian history, but for present purposes we are interested in Marx's views on the nature of the state power.

1. THE ASIATIC SIDE

The economic forms that the Russian state encompassed were as conglomerate as the historical influences on the country. A letter by Engels to a Russian socialist in 1885 sums up an important aspect:

There [in Russia] where the situation is so strained, where the revolutionary elements have accumulated to such a degree, where the economic conditions of the enormous mass of the people become daily more impossible, where every stage of social development is represented, from the primitive commune to modern large-scale industry and high finance, and where all these contradictions are violently held in check by an unexampled despotism, a despotism which is becoming more and more unbearable to a youth in whom the dignity and intelligence of the nation are united—there, when 1789 has once been launched, 1793 will not be long in following.¹

We want to focus not on the nature of the coming Russian revolution which is adumbrated here and elsewhere in Marx and Engels* but on the peculiarity of this society “where every stage of social development is represented”: a living museum of precapitalist economic forms alongside the latest capitalist formations—the “combined” aspect of the Russian development. The two extreme ends of this spectrum, mentioned by Engels, represented different features: on one side, the still primitive peasant village community (*obshchina*, *mir*); on the other, the modern industrial works in the big cities. In between there were the surviving feudal forms represented by the privileges of the aristocracy, though serfdom had been formally abolished in 1861.

In this potpourri, *who ruled?* What class wielded the state power? This now-standard question assumes that *a* class wielded the state power: an assumption without a shadow of justification within the framework of Marx’s conceptions. In any case, this is not how the Russian reality looked to Marx. While the state was tied to the interests of the socioeconomic infrastructure as always, it was not acting as the tool of any one of the classes of civil society. As we have seen in the case of Western Bonapartism, this means we are dealing with a state characterized by a high degree of autonomy.

The Asiatic component of this “semi” country was represented socially by the village-community economy in which the bulk of the peasantry still lived. When Marx found evidence in Maurer that the

* Marx’s and Engels’ views on the coming Russian revolution are reserved for another volume. In the above passage, 1789 stands for the bourgeois-democratic revolution; 1793 was the high point in the domination of the French Revolution by the plebeian left wing, pushing beyond the bourgeois boundaries of the revolution.

Russian village commune (which the Narodniks, or Populists, vaunted as a Russian originality) had arisen in Asia and elsewhere in Europe, he commented that "the very last vestige of a title to originality disappears for the Russians. . . . What remains true of them is that they are still to this day stuck fast in forms that their neighbors cast off long ago."² Later that year, Marx specified further:

The whole thing [the Russian community], *down to the smallest detail*, is absolutely identical with *the primitive Germanic community*. What must be added in the case of the Russians (and this is also found in a section of *the Indian community*, not just in the Punjab but in the South) is (1) the *nondemocratic* but *patriarchal* character of the commune executive, and (2) the *collective responsibility* for taxes to the state, etc. It follows from the second point that the more industrious a Russian peasant is, the more he is exploited on behalf of the state, not only for taxes but for supplying produce, horses, etc. during the continual troop movements, for government couriers, etc. The whole pile of crap is in process of collapse.³

In another connection we have also seen some of Engels' references to the link between the Russian community and Oriental despotism.⁴

This provides the economic underpinning of Marx's (and others') view of Russia's Asiatic heritage: the village-community economy represents "the economic groundwork of Asiatic production" in Russia.* In another place Marx linked the institutions of "common property of the Russian peasants" to their "Asiatic barbarism," the same Asiatic barbarism being also regarded as a general characteristic of the Russian power vis-à-vis Europe. Indeed, Marx and Engels were free with characterizations of the Russian power as Asiatic, "semi-Asiatic in her condition, manners, traditions, and institutions"; "semi-Eastern" (whereas China was "completely eastern"), a "Byzantine offspring" in religion and civilization, Mongolian-Tartar especially in the aristocracy.⁶

In short, the "Oriental despotism" aspect of the Russian complex referred to the symbiotic relationship between the disconnected "localized microcosms" of the old village communities in which the peasantry lived, on the one hand, and the autocratically centralized despotism on top, on the other.

* This remark in *Capital*⁵ refers to the impact of Russian commerce, and no doubt refers not only to "Asiatic production" in Russia itself but also to the "neighboring Asiatic market" (so in Engels' appended footnote).

2. THE REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE

But this Asiatic side represented the past, which still weighed on Russia's development. The European side, or the side which looked to Europe, depended on the economic modernization of the country in order to maintain it as a power among the other great powers.

On this side the Russian state resembled the absolute monarchies of the West rather than the Oriental despotisms. In Chapter 19 we saw that the absolute monarchies, no matter how great their initial feudal sympathies, were compelled to encourage the development of capitalist commerce and industry, that is to stimulate the growth of the new class that was to destroy them. This was easy to understand in England and France *before* the first bourgeois revolutions, when the feudal power simply regarded the bourgeois as moneybags to be exploited or cows to be pastured for milking. But even in the nineteenth century, when Europe was already part bourgeois and part prébourgeois, the old regimes were not scared off this course by the suspicion they might be digging their own graves. On the contrary, the remaining absolutisms intensified efforts to *bourgeoisify their own social orders* while still holding tightly onto the reins of state power. They accepted social bourgeoisification (development of capitalist industry, and so on) as necessary and inevitable, and set out to carry out this revolutionization of society under the auspices of the absolutist state power precisely in order to avoid seeing it carried out under a bourgeois state power; that is, in order to avoid a revolution from below. This was what Marx called the revolution from above, which was characteristic of the Bismarck regime.

... then came the new period [wrote Engels], ushered in by Germany, a period of revolutions from the top ... Russia took part in this general movement.⁷

Russia was under even greater strains than Germany; for Russian society was very obsolete, the state was very autocratic (autonomous), the aristocracy was very dinosaurian, the liberal bourgeoisie was very spineless, and the peasantry was very resentful and restive. The dislocation between state and civil society was the greatest in Europe. It

meant: a social order *in extremis*, and a state power autonomized *ad extremum*.

This course worked itself out under various pressures. As Marx wrote in a somewhat different connection, "Russia exists in a modern historical milieu; it is contemporaneous with a superior culture; it is tied to a world market in which capitalist production predominates."⁸ The form in which this economic imperative manifested itself most imperiously was, as often, the problem of military might, with war as the court of judgment. Not only were the Russian nobles paupers (in their own eyes) as compared with the Western capitalist nabobs; not only did they habitually speak French instead of Russian as their link to a higher culture; but Russia was sliding down to a third-rate power, as the Crimean War showed. Five years after the Treaty of Paris came the "emancipation" of the Russian serfs as a step toward modernization. As Engels wrote to a Russian correspondent in 1892:

°°From the moment warfare became a branch of the *grande industrie* (ironclad ships, rifled artillery, quickfiring and repeating cannons, repeating rifles, steel covered bullets, smokeless powder, etc.), *la grande industrie*, without which all these things cannot be made, became a political necessity.

A political necessity: that is, the economic modernization of the country was required by the *state's* interests. Engels' letter continued:

All these things cannot be had without a highly developed metal manufacture. And that manufacture cannot be had without a corresponding development in all other branches of manufacture, especially textile.

I quite agree with you in fixing the beginning of the new industrial era of your country about 1861. It was the hopeless struggle of a nation, with primitive forms of production, against nations with modern production, which characterised the American [Civil] War. The Russian people understood this perfectly; hence their transition to modern forms, a transition rendered irrevocable by the emancipation act of 1861. . . .

Another thing is certain: if Russia required after the Crimean War a *grande industrie* of her own, she could have it in one form only: the *capitalistic form*.⁹

The low level of culture in general meant that Russia, like Austria,

"lacks the numerically large educated class that alone can supply a sufficient number of competent officers for so large an army," hence the Russian mishaps in the 1878 war with Turkey.¹⁰ During the fighting with Turkey, Engels explained to Marx why neither side could carry on a modern war:

The immobility of the Turks lies essentially in the lack of supplies organization. It seems impossible for any barbarians and semi-barbarians to make an army fit not merely for fighting but also for free mobility; their army, organized by dint of great exertions to approximate a modern one (for fighting), has to carry out movements by means of the °appliances° of an old-time barbarian army. Modern weapons are introduced, but the ammunition for them is left to take care of itself. Brigades, divisions, and army corps are organized and massed in accordance with the rules of modern strategy but they forget that they are then unable to forage for their own upkeep like a horde of Janissaries, Spahis, or nomads. This is already visible with the Russians, still more with the Turks. . . .¹¹

Result? In an encyclopedia article, "Infantry," Engels compared the Russian situation with the bureaucratization of the Byzantine army. In Byzantium

°°The hierarchic and administrative organization of the troops was perfected to an almost ideal state of bureaucracy, but with the result that we now see in Russia: a perfect organization of embezzlement and fraud at the expense of the state, with armies costing enormous sums and existing in part only on paper.¹²

The Russian state power undertook a "social revolution"—the revolution from above. So Engels summarized it, from the perspective of 1890:

°°The internal development of Russia since 1856, furthered by the Government itself, has done its work. The social revolution has made giant strides; Russia is daily becoming more and more Occidentalised; modern manufactures, steam, railways, the transformation of all payments in kind into money payments, and with this the crumbling of the old foundations of society, are developing with ever accelerated speed. But in the same degree is also evolving the incompatibility of despotic Tsardom with the new society in course of formation. . . . The Revolution that in

1848 halted on the Polish frontier, is now knocking at the door of Russia. . . .¹³

Russia, Engels argued, could not have "held its own in the world" without industrialization. "A nation of 100 million that play an important part in the history of the world could not, under the present economic and industrial conditions, continue in the state in which Russia was up to the Crimean War." The "domestic patriarchal industry" would have been smashed by the West's cheap goods, and Russia would have wound up like "India, a country economically subject to the great Central Workshop, England," that is, with a semicolonial status.¹⁴

3. THE STATE BREEDS A CAPITALIST CLASS

Looking back in 1894 over the changes in Russia in the past two decades, Engels again insisted that, after the Crimean defeats of the old czarist despotism, "there was only one way out: the swiftest possible changeover to capitalist industry." But one change had to lead to another in an inexorable chain. The vast expanses of the empire

had to be spanned by a network of strategic railways. But railways implied a capitalist industry and a revolutionizing of the primitive agriculture. On the one hand, agricultural produce even from the remotest part of the country come into direct contact with the world market; on the other, an extensive network of railways cannot be built and run without a domestic industry supplying rails, locomotives, railway cars, etc. But it is impossible to create *one* branch of large-scale industry without also introducing the whole system; the relatively modern textile industry . . . was given a fresh impetus. The construction of railways and factories was followed by the enlargement of the existing banks and the establishment of new ones; the emancipation of the peasants from serfdom led to freedom of movement, and it was only to be expected that this would naturally be followed by the emancipation of a sizable part of these peasants from landownership as well. In this way, all the foundations of the capitalist mode of production were laid in Russia in a short time.¹⁵

This precipitate growth of modern industry in Russia "has been brought about only through artificial means, protective tariffs, state subsidies, etc."¹⁶ To be sure, industrialization had been furthered by state policy and action in Western Europe too.* But Russia's case, as seen by Marx and Engels, showed a qualitative difference. The English and French monarchies acted largely under the pressure of an objective economic impulsion (the rise of money, for example) and an expanding bourgeoisie; but by the time this wave of the future hit Russia, the relationship had to be reversed. The Russian state, under the impress of the socioeconomic forces that gripped the modern world to which it was tied, set out to *create* in Russia the modern economy which it lacked, hence also the class and the bourgeois conditions which alone could produce this result.

°°The [Crimean] war had proved [wrote Engels in 1890] that Russia needed railways, steam engines, modern industry, even on purely military grounds. And thus the government set about breeding a Russian capitalist class.

In "breeding a Russian capitalist class," the state bred another class too, continued Engels:

But such a class cannot exist without a proletariat, a class of wage-workers, and in order to procure the elements for this, the so-called emancipation of the peasants had to be taken in hand; his personal freedom the peasant paid for by the transference of the better part of his landed property to the nobility. What of it was left to him was too much for dying, too little for living. While the Russian peasant *Obshtchina* [village community] was attacked thus at the very root, the new development of the bourgeoisie was artificially forced as in a hot-house, by means of railway concessions, protective duties, and other privileges; and thus a complete social revolution was initiated in town and country. . . .¹⁸

* Even to furthering the creation of classes, for example in the creation of the class of free laborers by freeing them of all property. Marx's *Grundrisse* notebooks put it:

It has been historically established that they [the free laborers] first tried the latter alternative [begging, vagabondage, and robbery], but were driven off this road, onto the strait and narrow path leading to the labor market, by means of gallows, pillory, and whip—from which [it follows] therefore that the *governments*, for instance Henry VII, VIII, etc., figure as conditions for the existence of capital.¹⁷

Marx had written before this about a case of the deliberate *creation* of social classes by a political power: by the British in India.* With regard to Russia, he too had used the image of the czarist state's hothouse-forcing the growth of capitalism:

At the expense of the peasants the state has hothouse-forced the growth of branches of the Western capitalist system which are best fit to facilitate and stimulate the robbery of agricultural products through unproductive intermediaries. . . . It has thus collaborated in the enrichment of a new capitalist vermin sucking the blood of the already debilitated "rural commune."²¹

Marx saw the big industries as "placed under governmental tutelage."²² "A certain kind of capitalism, nourished at the expense of the peasants through the intermediary of the state, has been erected vis-à-vis the commune."²³

4. THE ROLE OF THE CZARIST BUREAUCRACY

There is an interesting passage in which Engels discusses possible class alternatives before Russia at the crossroads following the Crimean War. What actually happened, he had explained, was the changeover to capitalist production and the chopping down of the Russian village community.

To lament over this now is useless. Had the czarist despotism been replaced after the Crimean War by the direct rule of nobles

* Marx wrote that Campbell was right, from the English standpoint, in his assertion that "it is necessary to create a fresh class" in India, an intermediate privileged class.¹⁹ In fact, the British did call into being a new class of pseudo-landowners in the shape of the "zemindars," replacing "the original class of zemindars," and the new class "have introduced a variety of the zemindari tenure called *patni*"—who "have created in their turn a class of 'hereditary' middlemen called *patnidars*, who created again their subpatnidars, etc., so that a perfect scale of hierarchy of middlemen has sprung up. . . ." Again: "From the Indian natives, reluctantly and sparingly educated at Calcutta, under English superintendence, a fresh class is springing up, endowed with the requirements for government and imbued with European science."²⁰ Obviously Marx was not as finicky in using the appellation *class* as his epigones.

and bureaucrats, the process [of the commune's destruction] would perhaps have been somewhat slowed down; had the budding bourgeoisie come to the helm, it would certainly have been accelerated still more. The way things were, there was no other choice. With the Second Empire in France and the most dazzling upswing of capitalist industry in England, Russia could not really be expected to plunge into state-socialist experiments from above on the basis of the peasant commune.* Something had to happen. What was possible under the circumstances did happen, as is always and everywhere true in countries of commodity production, for the most part only half consciously, or quite mechanically without knowing what one was doing.²⁴

There was no other choice? Certainly each of the classes named had its own choice. It was the autonomized state that decided. But who exactly made the decision?

In this connection, there is special interest in the casual reference to "the direct rule of nobles and bureaucrats" as one of the alternatives proposed (even if unrealistically). This course being counterposed to the maintenance of the despotism, it means that the bureaucracy and the state were not always synonymous in terms of political reality.** In fact, there was (and is) a tendency in political literature to speak of the bureaucracy as an independent reality *only* insofar as it escapes from complete subordination to the sovereign. As long as it remains an inert tool of the central Unity, it does not impose itself on observers as a social force and does not provoke separate identification.

In the Russian case, the talk about a parliament of nobles and bureaucrats meant, in the second member, a decisive sector of the bureaucracy; it did not imply that the czar would be left with only his valet. But after all, such splits are inevitable in the case of any social stratum. What is important is that the despotism (the central state power around the czar, therefore including a sector of the bureaucracy) pushed in one direction while an important sector of the bureaucracy pressed in another. The latter acted as an independent class element.

* For such state-socialist experiments, compare this with Engels on state-socialism in Java under the Dutch, above, p. 559f.

** An earlier glimpse of this reality played a key role in the estimate of the state by Custine, discussed in Special Note E. The next sentence above applies to Custine particularly.

As in the classic case of France under Richelieu, the creation of the czarist bureaucracy had begun as part of the necessity for freeing the central state power from the pressure of the landed aristocracy. The emancipation of 1861 was another step in this direction: "First of all," said Marx, "the emancipation of the serfs had emancipated the supreme government from the obstacles the nobles were in a position to place in opposition to its centralized action."²⁵ This pattern—balancing the peasants against the nobility in order to free the hand of the central state—went back at least to Ivan the Terrible and the sixteenth century: "While enraged against the boyars and also against the rabble in Moscow, he sought, and had to seek, to present himself as *representative* of the *peasants' interests*," wrote Marx.²⁶ More positively, the bureaucracy was the indispensable instrument of the czarist state for the execution of the long revolution from above. So wrote Marx:

°° If the Muscovite Czars . . . were obliged to *tartarize* Muscovy, Peter the Great, who resolved upon working through the agency of the west, was obliged to *civilize* Russia. In grasping upon the Baltic provinces, he seized at once the tools necessary for this process. They afforded him not only the diplomatists and the generals, the brains with which to execute his system of political and military action on the west, they yielded him, at the same time, a crop of bureaucrats, schoolmasters, and drill-sergeants, who were to drill Russians into that varnish of civilization that adapts them to the technical appliances of the Western peoples, without imbuing them with their ideas.²⁷

Diplomatists, generals, bureaucrats, schoolmasters, drill-sergeants—all of these elements belong to the state bureaucracy in reality, though the word *bureaucrats* appears as only one item.

These are the human components of the state machine, which, when they act as one, seem to merge into one visage. This was the bureaucratic army—civil and military, for the military is included in the bureaucracy—of the long revolution of the czarist despotism. In the first place, as mentioned, it was an army mobilized against the landed nobility, to subordinate them to the central state power; that is, to shear them of power to control it. In the second place, it was an army of taskmasters to modernize the leading elements of the population, including the brood of bourgeois in the aforementioned hothouse. The state's need of the bourgeoisie gave the latter a hold on the former's

economic policy, just as the bourgeoisie's fear of change from below kept it under the state's tutelage.*

This bureaucracy, acting out not a conjunctural but a long-term historical role, could not seriously be regarded as the instrument of any of the extant classes of civil society.

Now what is the Russian system of government, wherever it is not mixed up with feudal institutions, but a military occupation, in which the civil and judicial hierarchy are organized in a military manner, and where the people have to pay for the whole?²⁹

This was an attempt by Engels, even before the Crimean War and the emancipation of the serfs, to find a label for "the Russian autocratic system, accompanied with its concomitant corruption, half-military bureaucracy, and pasha-like exertion."³⁰ When talk of the coming emancipation arose in Russia as it staggered under the Crimean War, Engels noted that the country was stirring, but

°°Still, with the existing political state of the country, no other system of administration was possible than the exclusive and exaggerated bureaucratic system which existed. To lay a foundation for a better system, Alexander II. had to recur to the idea of emancipating the serfs. He had two formidable opponents to contend with, the nobility and the very bureaucracy which he intended to reform against its own will, and which at the same time was to serve as the instrument of his designs.³¹

In effect, this pointed to a contest inside the bureaucratic system.** In any case, it assumes the most extreme condition of autonomization on the part of the state.

In 1875 Engels published an essay we have had occasion to cite more than once: a polemic against the views of a Populist-Jacobin-confusionist named Tkachov, who maintained that the Russian state

* As Engels put it:

In all important economic questions, the state must comply with its [the bourgeoisie's] wishes. If meanwhile the bourgeoisie still puts up with the despotic autocracy of the czar and his officials, it does so only because this autocracy, which in any case is mitigated by the corruption of the bureaucracy, offers it more guarantees than do changes—even bourgeois-liberal ones—whose consequences for Russia's internal situation no one can foresee.²⁸

** This passage continues with the discussion of countervailing social forces in Russia quoted in Chapter 12, p. 278f.

was an "imaginary power," a state "hanging in the air, so to speak, one that has nothing in common with the existing social order," and which "does not embody the interests of any particular estate [*Stand*]." ³² The kernel of rationality in this we have already seen; but Engels has little difficulty showing how the interests of the various classes (he uses *Stand* and *Klasse* interchangeably) are the material bases on which the state rests, instead of hanging in the air. After listing the interests of the noble landowners, the peasantry, the usurers and traders, he winds up with the big bourgeois elements, and finally asks:

... have all these important and rapidly growing elements of the population no interest in the existence of the Russian state? To say nothing of the countless army of officials, which swarms over Russia and plunders it and here constitutes a real social estate [*Stand*]. ³³

The term a *real Stand* would ordinarily be translated a *real class*, not only in 1875 but even today for the most part. In using *Stand* here instead of *Klasse*, Engels is merely echoing the text of Tkachov's statement, which he is engaged in refuting. Insofar as there was formerly a historical distinction, it has no present bearing on the case. True, it runs into the consideration previously explained in the case of *caste*. ³⁴ But the sterile question of terminological refinement is unimportant compared to the plain reality of the special social role played by the czarist bureaucracy, as seen by Marx as by Engels. For it is here—in Russia, says Engels, not in bourgeois Western Europe—that the bureaucracy constitutes a real class-like formation.

5. THE GENERAL THEORY OF THE STATE

Let us now put the question *Who ruled?* in the following form: What class was it that pushed through the long "social revolution" in Russia? The state was the executive or managing committee of what class as it set about breeding a bourgeoisie and bourgeois industry as in a hot-house? Certainly not of the bourgeoisie that first had to be bred up; not of the aristocracy which fought it every step, tooth and nail; not of the peasantry which was being ruined in the process. That does not leave very many classes as candidates for the post.

It is in this connection that Engels presented the basic formularization of the socioeconomic foundation of the state structure. It is expressed in terms broad enough to include the normal class interpretation of the normal state; that is, it underlies the class formula. Like the latter, it is put in terms of executors. Writing specifically of the complex role of the Russian state absolutism, Engels stated:

°° All governments, be they ever so absolute, are *en dernier lieu* [in the last analysis] but the executors of the economic necessities of the national situation. They may do this in various ways, good, bad and indifferent; they may accelerate or retard the economic development and its political and juridical consequences, but in the long run they must follow it.³⁵

This, Engels continued, was why the industrial revolution in Russia was unavoidable.

This was no new thought for Engels, even in this aphoristic form. He had met the same problem in a similar way, if from another direction, in 1875. In the essay against Tkachov, as mentioned, Engels showed how the interests of the various classes are the material bases on which the state stands, instead of hanging in the air. But he does not turn the Tkachov fantasy over on its other side by trying to prove that this Russian state is simply the instrument of a particular class. The conclusion he comes to is put as follows:

Not only the Russian state in general but even its specific form, the czarist despotism, instead of hanging in the air, is the necessary and logical product of the Russian social conditions with which, according to Mr. Tkachov, it has "nothing in common"! ³⁶

This is a formula for the nature of the state which cuts behind—or deeper than—the normal class formula.*

The relation between these two formulas can now be understood to state the full content of Marx's theory of the state:

Under normal conditions—conditions of relative stability in society—the necessary product of the social conditions is the accession of a

* At this point it would be useful to look back to Chapter 20, where the same conception is arrived at from another direction, the nature of the Bismarckian state. Compare Engels' conclusion that "In reality however the state as it exists in Germany is likewise the necessary product of the social basis out of which it has developed."³⁷ Also related is the passage by Marx on the "innermost secret" of the state (p. 571f).

particular class to the unshared domination of the state power. But this can hardly be the product in a period when a societal transition is still unresolved. It cannot be the product when classes are still struggling for dominion in an undecided contest; in such a flux the state's class content will reflect the state of the war. Nor can it be the necessary product in a situation such as Russia's, driven into the maelstrom of social revolution from above, where no class of civil society was capable of acting as "executors of the economic necessities of the national situation."

In this Russian case, what was needed was a class whose own interests impelled it to act as the instrument to save the real interests of *all* the social strata that had a stake in the ongoing society, to save them *by saving the society itself from the collapse which was the only alternative to the social transformation*. This is what defines "the economic necessities of the national situation," not in terms of the interests of any single class, but in terms of the class constellation as a whole.

The only social power that could perform this function was the state apparatus. In this way the state acts as the *Gesamteinheit*—the overall Unity—not simply of "society" in the abstract, but of all class elements whose real interests rest on the maintenance of social exploitation in one form or another.

And the maintenance of social exploitation in one form or another, in the midst of the Russian transmogrification, had a very concrete meaning, capable of being figured in rubles. In general, we here meet a phenomenon that was also important in Western Europe in the eventual bourgeoisification of the feudal aristocracy itself, insofar as the latter reconciled itself to the inevitability of change instead of inviting a 1789 type of revolutionary convulsion. Both the old and the new ruling class—the landowning nobles and the bourgeois—were equally property-owning, exploitive classes. The revolution from above was a shift from one mode of extracting surplus labor to another. *This was also the reason why a revolution from above was possible*. The old ruling class in crisis learns that, at any rate, this sort of revolution offers them some very comforting mitigations of the indignity forced upon them: namely, continued economic privileges to one degree or another. (We had occasion to make this point in Chapter 14 regarding the Bismarckian development.)³⁸

But this consolation prize depends on channeling the inescapable

revolution into a form that maintains social exploitation in one form or another. It is not usually just one of the contending classes themselves that can undertake the organization of this redistribution of power; as we have pointed out elsewhere, it is difficult for one sector of the capitalist class, for example, to referee the internecine struggles of competing capitalists to make sure that the system is not shaken apart by the melee. In the Russian case, it is the state that acted as the executor for the interests of class society as a whole. Autonomous from any particular class of civil society, it could embody what the contenders had in common: the need to ensure the conditions under which to continue the extraction of surplus labor from the mass of people.

This spells out the class content of Engels' formulation of the theory of the state: the state, "necessary and logical product of the [given] social conditions," is always in the last analysis "the executor of the economic necessities of the national situation." Thus it is always the organizer of society in the interests of the class (exploitive) structure taken as a whole.

This is the general theory of the state in Marx and Engels.

Within its framework lies the special theory of the state which applies to normal times and conditions in roughly the same way as Euclidean geometry applies to normal space. It is the view of the state as the managing committee of a ruling class with which we started in Chapter 11.

Normality here is a function of the process of change. The more rapid the change—the more revolutionary the times, the more history is caught in the flux of becoming—the more does the special theory begin to warp away from a close match with reality, and the more does the general theory of the state become applicable in order to explain the pattern of political power in the process of social transformation.

APPENDICES

There is a bulky output of literature alleging that Marx's essay "On the Jewish Question" is anti-Semitic because it equates Jewry with the spirit of money-making, the merchant-huckster, preoccupation with self-interest and egoism—that is, with the commercialism of the new bourgeois order. The charge has been furthered in various ways, including forgery: one honest critic renamed the essay "A World Without Jews" as if this were Marx's title.¹ Few discussions of the essay explain clearly its political purpose and content in connection with the Jewish emancipation question, or even accurately present the views of its target, Bauer. Mainly, the allegation is supported by reading the attitudes of the second half of the twentieth century back into the language of the 1840s. More than that, it is supported only if the whole course of German and European anti-Jewish sentiment is whitewashed, so as to make Marx's essay stand out as a black spot. This note will take up only the 1843 essay and its background.

The general method was memorably illustrated in C. B. Kelland's 1936 novel *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, which some may know as a Gary Cooper film. In an attempt to have a hearing declare Mr. Deeds of unsound mind, two little old ladies are brought in from his home town to testify. It's well known, one explains, that he is pixillated—balmy in the head. The honest woman's evidence seems damning. But the case blows up later when she is asked one more question: "Who else in your town is pixillated?" She answers: "Why, *everybody!*"

As soon as the question is raised, it is not difficult or even controversial to show that virtually the entire population of Germany (and the rest of Europe, too) was pixillated—that is, habitually used and accepted the words *Jew* and *Jewry* in the manner of Marx's essay whether they were favorable to the Jews' cause or not, whether they were anti-Semitic or not, whether they were Jews or not. In this they were only following the very old, if now discredited, practice of using

national and ethnic names as epithets, usually derogatory, for people showing a trait supposedly characteristic of the nation or ethnic group. This practice, which began to be suppressed in self-consciously polite society only a few decades ago, was as common in English as in any other language, and some of it still hangs on. Consider a few: *wild Indian* (active child), *apache* (Paris criminal), *Hottentot* (as in *Hottentot morality*), *street arab*, *gypsy*, *bohemian*, *Cossack*, *blackamoor*, *Turk*; or, as an adjective: *Dutch courage*, *Mexican general*, *French leave*. Another of this group, for centuries, has been *Jew*.

1. THE PATTERN IN GERMANY

Marx's essay represents a very attenuated form of the general pattern, for most commonly *Jew* was a synonym for *usurer*, whereas by this time mere money-making was eminently respectable.² Bauer's writing assumed that *Jew* meant usurer—quite in passing, for he was not interested in the economic Jew but in the "Sabbath Jew."³ The same economic stereotype of the Jew can be found in Arnold Ruge,⁴ who remained a liberal and never became a communist, as well as in Max Stirner,⁵ whose book *The Ego and Its Own* heralded anarchism. These names already cover the spectrum of the Young Hegelian milieu, whose philosophic mentor Feuerbach provided the immediate example for this language about the role of Jewry.⁶

A special case, near if not in the Young Hegelian tendency, was Moses Hess: conscientiously Jewish himself, Hess had been brought up in an orthodox household and later became the progenitor of Zionism. It is well known that the language of Marx's Part II of "On the Jewish Question" followed the view of the Jews' role given in an essay "On the Money System" just written by none other than Hess, and just read by Marx.⁷

Hess's thesis was that present-day society was a "huckster world," a "social animal-world," in which people become fully developed "egoists," beasts of prey and bloodsuckers. "The *Jews*," wrote the father of Zionism, "who in the natural history of the social animal-world had the *world-historic* mission of developing the *beast of prey* out of humanity have now finally completed *their mission's work*." It was in the "Judeo-Christian huckster world" that "the mystery of the *blood of Christ*, like the mystery of the *ancient Jewish blood-worship*, finally appears quite unmasked as the *mystery of the beast of prey*." There is

more verbiage, going back to the "blood-cult" of ancient Judaism as the prototype of modern society, and on to a condemnation of priests as the "hyenas of the social animal-world" who are as bad as the other animal-people by virtue of their "common quality as beasts of prey, as bloodsuckers, as Jews, as financial wolves."⁸ Earlier in 1843 Hess had published an important article on "The Philosophy of Action," which only incidentally remarked that "The Christian God is an imitation of the Jewish Moloch-Jehovah, to whom the first-born were sacrificed to 'propitiate' him, and whom the *juste-milieu* age of Jewry bought off with money. . . ."⁹ Hess intended no special anti-Jewish animus in any of this stuff, compared to which Marx's approach is complimentary and drily economic. Note that Judaism is criticized as part of the Judeo-Christian complex, and not in order to praise Christianity—this being the same pattern as Voltaire's; although Hess saw no contradiction between his own continued Jewish faith and loyalties and his opinion, expounded in his writings, that Christianity was the more advanced, modern and "pure" religion—all in the Feuerbachian groove.¹⁰

It is relevant to add that much of the economic-Jew stereotype had at this time gained general *Jewish* acceptance, at least as applied to rich Jews: so one can learn from the best German historian of anti-Semitism, Eleonore Sterling.¹¹

If we move outside Young Hegelian circles, we may note that two other famous Jews of the period are no exception to the rule: Lassalle¹² and Heine. Heine is especially interesting, as always. His article on the Damascus affair of 1840—one of the famous frameups of Jews on the "blood" accusation—is full of bitter indignation against the French Jews for lack of concern over their victimized brethren abroad. "Among the French Jews, as with other Frenchmen," wrote Heine (in France), "gold is the god of the time, and industry is the prevailing religion." Baron Rothschild and the noted Jewish plutocrat Fould are called "two distinguished rabbis of finance." Heine says caustically, "I do not believe that Israel ever gave money, save when its teeth were drawn by force. . . . There are, of course, now and then examples that vanity can open the obdurate pockets of Jews, but then their liberality is more repulsive than their meanness."¹³ (At this point the American translator was moved to apologize for Heine's language, for by this time, 1891, the modern racist type of anti-Semitism was over a decade old; in 1840 it had no such significance or motivation.) An excellent study by William Rose gives the context of Heine's aphorism that "The Jews were the Germans of the Orient, and now the Protestants in the Germanic countries . . . are nothing else than old-oriental Jews."¹⁴ Rose

naturally makes clear Heine's polyvalence about Jewry (*ambivalence* would be too weak).

As for other products of the Hegelian school, farther right, D. F. Strauss¹⁵ was *more* virulently anti-Jewish than those mentioned; and the famous Hegelian scholar Eduard Gans, whose lectures Marx attended at the university, was another Jewish case in point. Indeed, Gans's case can be considered a symbol. When Marx came to the University of Berlin in 1836, Gans (in jurisprudence) was the big Hegelian influence on the faculty. Seventeen years before, Gans had helped Leopold Zunz found the first society for Jewish studies in the world, of which he became president. The project bogged down because the rich Jews whom they had counted on refused to dip into their pockets. Zunz cried that Jewry was beyond reform, "the prey of barbarians, fools, moneylenders, and *parnasim*," (synagogue money-men), "slaves of mere self-interest . . . a pap of praying, bank notes, and charity." But he plugged on. President Gans reported: "The only link which unites the Jews is fear; the only interest for which they are willing to part with some of their worldly goods is charity"—whereupon he went through the baptism route from the *cheder* to the *Katheder*. But even earlier, in the society's journal, Gans had had no inhibition against remarking that "Jewish life" reflected a "double aristocracy whose component parts . . . are . . . money and rabbis."¹⁶

Hegel himself had written along the same lines mainly in early works, that is, before his Prussian conservatization.¹⁷ This was no paradox. It was the conservative right that usually expressed antipathy to Jewry in religious and racist terms; it was the left-of-center that put the spotlight on the *economic* role of Jewry, the economic Jews; and both stereotypes flourished among peasants and other poor victims of the system. Fichte, another source of philosophic radicalism, deserved the name of systematic anti-Semite more than any so far mentioned.¹⁸

If we move to anti-Establishment dissent to the right of the Young Hegelians and their circle, we find that the Young Germany movement, through the pens of its leader Karl Gutzkow and prominent literary light Heinrich Laube, wrote no differently about the Jews, and at some length.¹⁹

2. THE UNIVERSALITY OF PIXILLATION

In the 1840s both sides, for and against political emancipation, held the economic image of the Jew as common ground. The strong bourgeois-liberal movement pressing for Jewish rights was quite vocal in arguing that civil emancipation was necessary in order to solve the Jewish question by dissolving Jewry as a recognizable entity into the general pool of Germanness and thus eventually eliminating it. Hess himself had presented this viewpoint in his most successful book, in 1841.²⁰ Says Gustav Mayer of the pro-Jewish liberals: "Only through full and equal rights, they believed, would it be possible to wean away the Prussian Jews from their un-German customs and from their one-sided preference for petty trade."²¹

Glickson, in the course of an indignant harangue against Marx, lets slip the following statement: "It is a well-known fact that the contemporary masters of philosophy and literature, with the single exception of Lessing, had no sympathy for Jews or Judaism. The greatest of them taught that the Jews were foreign and different, and drew definite political conclusions from these teachings. Goethe, the great world-citizen, strongly opposed the liberation of the Jews; he saw in them heretics who deny 'the source of our high culture.'"²² Goethe had worse and stupider things to say about the Jews than this, including of course the commercial stereotype.²³ Lessing, the alleged "single exception," had been dead for sixty-two years and was hardly a contemporary; we will come back to this mythical exception. (*Why, everybody's pixillated!*)

Silberner, who writes as a prosecuting attorney, eventually makes the following remark: "The most various writers could indeed have reinforced Marx's prejudice against the Jews. Many representatives of German classical literature and philosophy were not precisely fond of the Jews, and since he read much of them, they could have contributed to his Judeophobia."²⁴ Silberner does not mention any who *were* "fond of the Jews," including Jews. All of German history exists, for him, only as an influence on Marx. This bizarre approach is due to the understandable reluctance, shown by him and similar writers, to inform the modern reader that so many great men either disliked the Jews or thought of them in terms of the economic stereotype, for fear of reinforcing contemporary anti-Semitic currents by giving them respectable sanction. It is only Marx who is to be accused of being pixillated.

As Roman Rosdolsky said of this *modus operandi*, "In this manner

one could very easily assign to the camp of anti-Semitism three-quarters of the thinkers, writers, and politicians of the past."²⁵ If we consider only left-of-center circles, the proportion would be closer to 100 percent, since it is on the left, rather than on the right, that the *economic* structure and role of Jewry was the main operative factor.

All this was not only true of Germany. In France and England the economic stereotype of the Jew and its expression in leftish circles was similar; we are not dealing with a phenomenon of the German soul. France was worse.

An essay by Z. Szajkowski is illuminating on the subject of France. It reports at the end that it is impossible to find *any* "sympathetic reference to the Jews in the French socialist literature, from Saint-Simon to the date of Drumont's first appearance [1886]." For the most part, what this involved was the stereotyped identification of Jews with money values and economic exploitation. More virulent attitudes existed among the Fourierists especially. The tradition of dislike for Jewish economic activities goes back in France not simply to Voltaire but to the history of Jewry in the later Middle Ages and the Enlightenment.²⁶

In France, indeed, one first finds a new note: here Jew-hatred took a proto-Nazi form in the express desire of Proudhon (father of anarchist "libertarianism") for the physical extermination of all Jews. Bakunin, the other father of anarchism, was almost as virulently anti-Semitic in the modern sense as Proudhon.²⁷ But in this period, this proto-Nazi anti-Semitism is found only among these anarchist liberty-shouters, as far as I know.

England was by no means as bad as France. But routine equation of the economic Jew with money-bags, financial overlords, commercial exploitation, and the rest, cropped up in the Chartist press, including the best of the left Chartists,²⁸ in the manner of Marx's essay. To take another part of the political spectrum: Macaulay can be viewed as an English example of the liberal *supporter* of Jewish civil emancipation who expressed as much aversion to Jewish economic activities as many an opponent.²⁹ The jibes at the economic Jew stereotype are not at all peculiar to socialist writings: they are found wherever there is expression of antagonism to the bourgeois or financial world. The reactionary antibourgeois critic Thomas Carlyle was not only virulently anti-Jewish but also opposed the granting of greater legal rights to the Jews.³⁰

But it would be a complete misunderstanding of the economic-Jew stereotype if it is identified with an *anti-Jewish* context only. Leaving aside the advocates of Jewish emancipation who used language similar

to Marx's essay just as automatically as its opponents, it is instructive to look at the first *Jewish* socialist movement which began stirring in the latter 1870s.

This is three decades later than the period of Marx's essay; the whole basis of awareness of the Jewish question has been transformed by the rise of a systematically racist anti-Semitic movement for the first time; we are dealing with Jewish-conscious socialists reacting to a *real* anti-Semitic threat; and by this time there is something of a Jewish proletariat in existence. Everything is different; but still, consider the terms of the first socialist manifesto issued to Jewry, by Aaron Lieberman, the historic pioneer of this movement. His *Call to the Jewish Youth* reverberated with the tones of Isaiah (as in Isaiah 2:7-9, for example). It said: "Emancipate yourselves from the power-lust that lies at the bottom of your privileges. Stop praying to gold and might." Lieberman blames the Jewish bankers and merchants for the plight of his people:

We have had to pay for your sins! The race hatred, the religious hatred, with all their terrors have fallen mostly upon us [the poor Jews]. You kindled the fire that devours us. We have you to thank for it that the name Israel has become a curse. The entire Jewish people, suffering and astray, must suffer more than all other peoples because of your greed. It is your fault that we have been exposed to calumny. International speculators, who have dragged our name through the mud, you do not belong to us!³¹

The power of the traditional stereotype is recognized here precisely by the justified fervor of the plea to repudiate it, to emphasize the class struggle *within* Jewry in order to exorcize it. There is a historical background to this.

3. ROOTS OF THE ECONOMIC JEW

We have assumed up to now that the reader has a general conception of the economic history behind the stereotype—at any rate, how Jews were forced into a lopsided economic structure by Christendom's prohibition on their entrance into agriculture, guild occupations, and professions. Three myths about the economic Jew are easy to refute but not germane here; they are: (1) that Jews *controlled* finance or any part of economic life; (2) that *all* Jews were rich; and (3) that it was the Jews that created, or invented, capitalism. After these myths are disposed of, however, the real historical basis of the economic Jew can be

broached. Something else was involved beyond these exaggerations, and may be summarized as follows:

1. The important role that the (upper stratum of) Jews did play in the development of postfeudal society, especially considering the tiny proportion of the population they constituted.

2. The great tilt in the economic structure of Jewry toward middleman and financial occupations, including the bulk of *poor* Jews in huckstering occupations, for example, peddlers, petty merchants.

3. The relatively high visibility of the Jews' economic role—as, for example, when Junkers employed Jews as loan collectors and mortgage foreclosers, thus gaining the profits while the Jews gained the onus as “bloodsuckers.”

In 1843 little was known, even to those aware of the question, about the economic or sociohistorical development of the Jewish people. The very concept of a *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Jewish studies) had arisen only in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Today there is a considerable literature on the question,³² but it is ahistorical to predate its acquisition. A portion of that history which is important background for our present subject is well summarized in Sterling's *Judenbass*, which deals precisely with Germany in the years 1815–1850:

The enlightened officials recognized, already in the middle of the eighteenth century, the useful and progressive function of the Jews in the development of commerce and industry, which tended to transform the still seminatural-economy state into a modern money- and credit-economy state. The princes summoned Jews to their courts in order to carry out the financing of their provinces independently of the Estates, in order to obtain moneys for raising and maintaining their armies, and to make possible the operation of new businesses. In this way was formed a small rich and politically privileged upper stratum within the Jewish population. Jewish court agents, bankers, and army contractors assumed an important position in finance, in commerce and in the industry of the mercantilist-oriented states. When the economic upswing set in after the Napoleonic war, many Christians as well as Jews found themselves in an advantageous position because they had large amounts of liquid capital at their disposal. Still their number must have been slight. . . .

In the course of time arose a new but also not numerous group of Jews who became well-to-do through the new economic development. Unhindered by old traditions and guild regulations, they quickly adopted the methods of the modern English credit

system and stock speculation. They understood how to turn out large quantities of goods produced in the new factories for the market, got in position to give state loans, and participated in railroad construction and built factories.

In that way the real security of the Jews essentially depended on their usefulness to others and on the good will of the governments; all their enterprises, indeed their very existence, remained always in jeopardy. They therefore attempted with great energy to compensate with economic power for the legal and social security they lacked. In this way the Jewish financiers who had grown rich in the new capitalist order, in which money was all-powerful, achieved a "privileged" position. . . .

In the sections where capitalist commerce and industry had already made important progress even without Jews, the Christian population by no means felt that the success of the Jewish upper stratum was a handicap for themselves. Thus, already in 1817 the *Gewerbepolizei* in Aachen said that Jewish business in the Prussian Rhineland could no longer be considered "usury" but a synonym for free trade and the profit system.³³

Such favorable attitudes were not taken, however, by merchants' corporate guilds and the patrician order in the smaller German states and backward areas, not to speak of the peasantry and artisanry.

It is clear why the spearhead of the Jewish emancipation drive, the petition campaign,

came mostly from the big-bourgeois circles of the cities in which industrial development was already far advanced and in which the Jews of the bourgeois upper stratum already played an integrating function in the economy. It was Christian and Jewish great merchants, factory owners, bankers, and insurance directors who drafted the petitions and submitted them with numerous signatures.³⁴

This was the nature of the emancipation campaign which Marx supported and Bauer attacked.

But it would be a mistake to believe that the economic-Jew stereotype among the population was merely a reflection of this upper stratum, of the Rothschilds and Foulds. Many or most of the *poor* Jews also functioned as middlemen—peddlers, hawkers, hand-to-mouth traders and merchants, petty money-lenders—in very direct contact with the poor Christian population, caught in the classic pattern of having to squeeze those below as they were squeezed from above. Jews were associated with "financial exploitation" on levels far below Rothschild: "Recent happenings in the Rhineland and Alsace," relates

Solomon Bloom, "strengthened this popular suspicion; Jewish money-lenders broke up properties of landlords and farmers at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Western radical community was not unaffected by the resulting animosities." Gustav Mayer says, of anyone brought up in the young Marx's place and time: " 'The Jews' to him meant mainly the Jewish cattle dealers in the Rhineland, those who bought from, and sold to the small peasants, taking advantage of their own superior business abilities."³⁵

For our present purposes it is not necessary to settle the controversy over just how important the Jews were in the rise of capitalism. The identification of Jewry with commercialism, which was everybody's pixillation in the 1840s, was elaborated in great detail as late as 1911 by Werner Sombart's *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*; and after all the nonsense in that erudite opus is discounted, there is more than enough left to explain the mind of a generation that existed before economic history had even been invented.

4. EX POST FACTO ANTI-SEMITISM

After the rise of Hitlerism, it became *de rigueur* to play down the Jews' significance for capitalism, since the Nazis used it for their own purposes.³⁶ But eminent Jewish historians have proudly lauded their role. In his introduction to Ruppin's *The Jews in the Modern World*, for example, Professor L. B. Namier, writing militantly as a Zionist Jew and a true-blue Englishman, boasted: "Two races [*sic*] headed the movement [of progress in the capitalist system] though under vastly different conditions—the British and the Jews; they were the pioneers of capitalism, and its first, and perhaps chief, beneficiaries." For others, that picture was considered to hold only until about the middle of the nineteenth century, which thoroughly covers Marx's essay.³⁷

A. Léon has argued, against Sombart and others, that Jewry played such a role in *precapitalist* society:

Judaism was an indispensable factor in precapitalist society. It was a fundamental organism within it. That is what explains the two-thousand year existence of Judaism in the Diaspora. The Jew was as characteristic a personage in feudal society as the lord and the serf. It was no accident that a foreign element played the role of "capital" in feudal society. . . . The "capital" of precapitalist society existed outside of its economic system.³⁸

But, continues Léon's thesis, the rise of capitalism to dominance in the social system went hand in hand with the *decline* of Jewry in this function. Thereupon the Jews were pushed more and more into the interstices of the system, especially in a capacity as distribution middlemen and as usurers dealing more with the poor than with kings, as formerly. "In the measure that usury became the principal occupation of Jews, they entered increasingly into relations with the popular masses, and these relations worsened all the time." The peasant who lost his land or stock, or the artisan who lost his tools, to the Jewish money-lender, was incapable of seeing the upper-bourgeois Christians behind the usurer; hatreds were let loose on the highly visible intermediaries.³⁹ Léon's term for Jewry, the *people-class*, is an attempt to give scientific form to the social basis of what we have been calling the economic-Jew stereotype.*

Léon aimed at a Marxist analysis; but we can turn to a leading theoretician of Socialist Zionism for confirmation, from an entirely different angle, of the effective universality of the old equation for which Marx's essay gets denounced. Hayim Greenberg, writing in 1942, was disturbed about the use made by Nazi anti-Semitism of the *facts* of the Jews' economic role. He denies "the old charge that Jews are parasites in the world's economic order" by arguing that the economic role which Jewry was forced into was in fact useful, honorable, and nothing to apologize for. He concludes that "There is nothing wicked in being a middleman, but it is not sound for a whole people to consist of middlemen." What Greenberg is trying to say is that it is no more wicked to be a Jewish middleman than a Christian one. All of which was true, of course, as Marx had demonstrated in his own way by transforming the issue from the *contrast* of Jews to Christians into the *economic equivalence* of Jews and Christians. In the course of this defense, however, Greenberg testifies to the universality of pixillation—in queasy terms which, it must be remembered, are being written by a Zionist champion a hundred years after Marx's essay and over a decade after the rise of Nazism:

Jews also have been considerably influenced by the notion that they constitute an unproductive, or even a destructive force, in the world's economy. We speak of Jews as essentially a people of

* Léon's term *people-class*, which marks the conjuncture of an ethnic group with a collective economic role, is similar to Marx's repeated references to the "merchant-peoples" (or trading peoples, *Handelsvölker*) of antiquity and the Middle Ages. Among these he mentioned the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Lombards, and Normans, as well as the Jews, all of them operating in the "interstices" or "pores" of a society not itself based on commerce.⁴⁰

... individuals whose occupations are unsubstantial, who are exploiters, speculators and traffickers in the labor of others.

Signs of this self-condemnation first appear in the literature of our "enlightenment." Jews who felt spiritually emancipated from the civilization of the ghetto even before they were emancipated from its legal disabilities, developed a great admiration for European culture and were in no small degree affected by its anti-Jewish prejudices. Certainly they shared the European's disdain for the Jew as a trader.

By 1942 all this had become anti-Semitic by *ex post facto* determination; but note that Greenberg was not so ignorant or hypocritical as to pretend that he had Marx in mind:

The views of many Jewish socialists in regard to the economic role of the Jews have also been tinged by a certain anti-Semitic bias. . . .

Non-Jewish socialists, and not necessarily Marxian socialists, have tended to look down on the Jew in the world's economy.

He cites the Russian *Narodnaya Volya*, the peasant-oriented populist-terrorist movement of the late nineteenth century, which was even known to encourage peasant pogroms as one activity in their struggle. The Populists, he explains, held "the idea that the Jew was essentially a 'bloodsucker,'" and adds: "This also explains Tolstoy's rather unfriendly attitude towards the Jews, an attitude most eloquently expressed by his repeated failure to speak up on behalf of the persecuted Jews." There goes another pixillated "libertarian." But Greenberg goes further: to the Zionist socialists themselves *and* their left wing:

Nor is Zionism free from its share of responsibility. There was a time when it used to be the fashion for Zionist speakers (including the writer) to declare from the platform that "to be a good Zionist one must first be somewhat of an anti-Semite."⁴¹

Greenberg states that this attitude can be found in Pinsker, Syrkin, Borochoy, A.D. Gordon, and others—all of them the leaders and founders of the Labor Zionist movement. "To this day," he adds, "Labor Zionist circles are under the influence of the idea that the Return to Zion involves a process of purification from our economic uncleanness."⁴² It should be added that the movement's social-democratic theoretician, Ber Borochoy, based his whole theory of Socialist Zionism on a class analysis of the Jewish people along the now-interdicted ("anti-Semitic") lines, and that his fundamental "Marxist" argument for Zionism was that it was the only road to changing the

class composition of the Jews. The same goes for his successor as the theoretician of Socialist Zionism, Nachman Syrkin.⁴³

It cannot be overemphasized that all of this, for which Greenberg beats his breast, was a matter of contrasting the economic Jew with the Christian world to the Jews' *discredit*; for this bolstered the Zionist aim of making the Jews "a people like other people." None of this sort of thing was in Marx's 1843 essay, which repudiated such a derogatory contrast by already *identifying* modern (bourgeois) Christendom with the commercial role of what Léon called the people-class.

While we have shown that this identification was in no way peculiar to Marx but was the common coin of the time—and it was precisely for this reason that Marx could turn it to account in order to make his political point—we must now go a little further along these lines. This identification was not merely generally accepted, but had been built into the language. McLellan goes so far as to put it this way:

Judentum, the German word for Judaism, had the derivative meaning of "commerce," and it is this meaning which is uppermost in Marx's mind throughout the article. "Judaism" has very little religious, and still less racial, content for Marx and it would be little exaggeration to say that this latter part of Marx's review [Part II of "On the Jewish Question"] is an extended pun at Bauer's expense.⁴⁴

This pun was not a jest but a play on words. Such word-play was indeed a favorite literary pattern of the young Marx, as it was of Hegel. In both it was not a humorous but an explicatory device: a means of developing, out of the different aspects of meaning packed into one word, various aspects of the reality which the word reflected.

Ruppin states that "in the Middle Ages the conceptions of Jew and trader became well-nigh synonymous." Gustav Mayer makes a similar statement: "to the average German, Judaism and capitalism came pretty close to being synonymous." Sterling quotes the economist Friedrich Harkort at the time, on the fact that behind the Jewish money-lenders and mortgage collectors stood the Junkers, who made the profit. These Junkers Harkort called "the Jews with boots and spurs" who constituted the real speculators and grasping creditors.⁴⁵ The synonymy of Jew and some form of commercialism was taken for granted not only by those who threw epithets at the Jews but equally by those who defended them.

With this background in mind, one can go back to Marx's "On the Jewish Question" to read it as it was written, not as it is refracted through the dark glass of contemporary ignorance and malice.

It was a contribution to a hotly fought campaign in favor of Jewish political emancipation—not however on behalf of the “Christian and Jewish great merchants, factory owners, bankers, and insurance directors who drafted the petitions,” but to show how to link this current battle up with the eventual struggle *against* these very gentlemen. Its aim was to support political emancipation today in order to make possible social emancipation tomorrow. Hence its last words: “The social emancipation of the Jew is the *emancipation of society from Judaism.*”

These compact words do in fact sum up the entire burden of the argument: It is wrong to make the political emancipation of the Jew wait on his social emancipation (as Bauer wanted); for we are dealing with the economic Jew, and economic Judaism is now one with bourgeois society as a whole.

5. HOW TO MANUFACTURE ANTI-SEMITES

It should be clear now that there were two quite different issues involved in attitude toward the Jews, from the period of the Enlightenment to at least the 1870s (when anti-Semitism first became a racialist social and political movement and indeed the term itself was invented—by anti-Semites). One issue involved an opinion about *das Judentum** (like or dislike); the other, a position on the status of Jews in the state and society (abolition of civic, legal, political disabilities). As we have seen, a dim view of Jewry was well-nigh universal, in some not-always-clear sense and for varying reasons, but with clear roots in the nature of “economic Judaism.” The division in public opinion occurred on the second issue, the question of political emancipation and equal rights.

As a result there is a curious system common among historians, not to speak of marxologists. Historical figures are made into “philos-

* This, in turn, divides into two subquestions: one's opinion of the religion (Judaism) or of the people. The first problem was consciousness of the distinction. Marx had distinguished between the two with unusual clarity in his letter of 13 March 1843 (see p. 111 fn), in which he mentioned his repugnance to the religion as against supporting the demand for Jewish emancipation. It must be recalled that at this point Judaism meant mainly the orthodox faith as it had emerged from the Middle Ages; Reform Judaism had just taken shape but would not have determined the public discussion. The rise of Reform Judaism was itself a symptom of the widespread repugnance felt by those modernized Jews who were not willing to be hypocritically orthodox à la Rothschild.

Semites" or "anti-Semites" at will by referring only to one or the other issue, with the same obtuse lack of distinction that was so characteristic of the people of that benighted era itself. A couple of examples will give a proper perspective on the treatment of Marx's essay.

We saw that Glickson (p. 595) had looked for a single exception among the contemporary masters to the general lack of sympathy for Jews, and had gone back to the previous century to turn one up: G. E. Lessing, whose poetic drama *Nathan the Wise* (1779) was the most renowned "philo-Semitic" production in Germany, perhaps in European history. This reputation is based on the sympathetic portrayal of Nathan as *Edeljude*, the noble Jew, good and wise. This reputation brought down on Lessing's head the vituperation of generations of anti-Semites—for example, Nazi-like ravings by E. Dühring in 1881.⁴⁶ Without derogating Lessing's contribution for its time, a closer look at the play produces a strange result if it is counterposed to Marx's essay.

1. Lessing's play does not raise the question of equal rights for Jews; to the contrary, it takes their inferior status for granted. For the setting is Saladin's Jerusalem, where both Jews and Christians exist on the sufferance of Saladin, who is portrayed as being just as noble as Nathan.

2. Lessing's chosen model, Nathan, is a rich Jewish merchant who has just returned from a debt-collecting trip, bringing back a fabulous wealth of goods. He is so rich that he is capable of playing the part of Rothschild to the sultan. In short, he is the worse of the two stereotypes of the economic Jew, not the poor-huckster model but the financial-plutocrat model. Lessing does not challenge the stereotype; he gilds it. He glorifies his rich Jew by painting him in pleasing colors.

3. Nathan is a Jew by birth but not by belief in Judaism, being in fact a Deist, like Lessing himself. He explains in a parable (which is the ideological centerpiece of the play and was its starting point in Lessing's mind) that the three religions are as like as identical rings; the only difference is that one happens to inherit one rather than the other. The repugnance the wise Nathan would feel for Jewish orthodoxy is left implicit but is unquestionable.

4. The point is repeatedly made that Nathan is an *exceptional* Jew. Repeatedly "Jew" is used generically to refer to the usual mean, miserly, money-mad Jew of the popular language. The noble Sittah twice wonders whether Nathan is a Jew like other Jews or whether he is good as reported; the noble Templar wonders whether Nathan has really unlearned "to be a Jew"; and the noble Nathan himself, wondering at one point what game the sultan is playing with him, soliloquizes, "Who here is really the Jew—he or I?" (To be sure, Lessing does not refer to "the dirty Jews"; instead, he refers just as routinely to "the

dirty Moors," the contemporaneous equivalent of "dirty niggers.")⁴⁷

In short, the great "philo-Semitic" message of the play is the equivalent of "Some of my best friends are Jews," or even "You would hardly believe he's a Jew, my dear!" In fact, Lessing had written it down himself, in an early (1749) "philo-Semitic" comedy called "The Jews": "Truly there are Jews who aren't Jews at all."⁴⁸ Replying to a critic who urged that the noble-Jew figure was so great an improbability as to invalidate the play, Lessing vigorously agreed the case was rare, but argued that, since the Jews' unfortunate condition was due to their necessity for "living purely and simply from trade," it would cease with the cause, when the Jews no longer "maintain a wretched existence through base small trade." Hence, he explained, he chose a rich man as his figure.⁴⁹ Lessing's views revolved around the economic-Jew stereotype as completely as anyone's.

The single exception in a hundred years, Lessing, turns out to have used *Jude* as the same generic cuss-word as every other pixillated German and European. In contrast, Marx used *Judentum* as an impersonal historic-economic category, to make the point that Jewry and Christendom had been homogenized in our huckster society.

There is a second example, mentioned earlier: the case of "Voltaire's anti-Semitism," as reported by Peter Gay.⁵⁰ Voltaire's derogatory remarks about the Jews, including the inevitable economic stereotype, are exhibited. But we are told in addition that Voltaire's transgression is so much the less forgivable because the very same period held a live option for "philo-Semitism" which was taken by other men.

John Locke is cited as the philo-Semite, against Voltaire the anti-Semite. The evidence is Locke's *Letter on Toleration* (1689), where he indubitably comes out in favor of religious worship for Jews: "The Jews are permitted to have dwellings and private houses; why are they denied synagogues?" If Locke was also in favor of equal rights for Jews across the board, as Gay seems to imply, Locke neglected to say so in this essay. He goes so far as to state that "neither Pagan nor Mahometan nor Jew should be excluded from the commonwealth because of his religion."

Gay did not mention, however, that in this very same passage Locke makes clear that *he* considers Judaism to be "abominable."⁵¹ This is said only in passing; but then the other statements are in passing too; for Locke's essay is a closely reasoned argumentation, not a discursive article, and the reference to the Jews is a hurried one. We know of no reason to believe that Locke had any greater liking than Voltaire for the practitioners of this "abominable" cult: he was arguing in the spirit of

the civil-liberties lawyer who battles for equal rights even for known criminals.

But was not Voltaire also for religious toleration in the same sense? Yes, he was; and in fact in 1764 a French translation of Locke's essay was joined to Voltaire's treatise on toleration to make one book, with a preface (which Professor Klibansky believes was written by Voltaire himself) praising Locke's argument.⁵²

We can now see how to create (or appoint) philo-Semites and anti-Semites at will. Granted that both Locke and Voltaire were for toleration of the Jewish religion, and that both disliked the Jews themselves, you quote Locke on the first and Voltaire on the second—*voilà!* The system is an infallible recipe.*

There is a further complication about the "anti-Semite" Voltaire, which Gay does set forth. It seems, argues Gay, that in these excursions Voltaire was interested in striking not so much at Judaism as at Christianity, for he wanted to reinforce his hostile view of Christianity by also discrediting the source (Judaism) from which this pernicious religion derived. Hence his "dislike of the Jews . . . was a partly unconscious, partly conscious cloak for his anti-Christian sentiments."⁵⁴ In fact, Voltaire was interested in attacking all religions from his Deist standpoint—just as, from the same Deist standpoint, Lessing wanted to represent all religions as equally meaningless as far as differences were concerned. Where Lessing portrayed the noble Jew, Moslem, and Christian with equable brush in a paroxysm of reconciliation, Voltaire painted all the devout as fools, knaves, and miscellaneous miscreants—also fairly impartially. In his century there was no reason to let the Jews off the hook; that makes him an "anti-Semite" in this century—for historians who project themselves back into history as undercover agents of the Anti-Defamation League.

Lastly: we mentioned earlier that the "Young Germany" movement (Gutzkow, Laube) has been cited for anti-Semitic treatment of Jewish figures—like everybody else. Gutzkow, for example, wrote a novel involving this sort of anti-Semitism. But when the young Engels, not yet nineteen, became enthusiastic about Young Germany's liberal and democratic tendency, the figure he admired most was Ludwig Börne.

* Gay does the same with Montesquieu, but with an open contradiction. He cites Montesquieu as his second example of philo-Semitism as against Voltaire, since Montesquieu deplored persecution of the Jews. But Gay also mentions, before closing the matter, that Montesquieu was so misguided as to note "the Jews' affinity for commerce and banking," and that he even wrote: "You ask me if there are Jews in France. Know that wherever there is money, there are Jews."⁵³ Everybody is pixillated.

Indeed his letters of this time to a boyhood friend are filled with encomiums on this German Jewish publicist.⁵⁵ In this young man's eyes, Young Germany stood not only for political freedom in general but in particular for Jewish emancipation—"Who can have anything against this?"* For him, the "distress of the Jews" is part of the liberal indictment of the status quo. He tells his friend about his literary hero: You call for a faithful Eckart? "See, there he is already, a small chap with a sharp Jewish profile—his name is Börne. . . ." He mentions the liberal poet Creizenach twice with warm praise, and both times prominently identifies Creizenach as a Jew. He brings up the "Wandering Jew" (in German, the "Eternal Jew") as one of the models for freedom of the spirit about which he dreams of writing a second *Faust*. He lists "the emancipation of the Israelites" as the first of three positive achievements of Napoleon.⁵⁷

Is this young man a philo-Semite like Lessing? Yes, like Lessing: for, in this same correspondence with his friend, one also finds the routine use of the economic-Jew stereotype as a jibe, as also in later life. Quoted by itself, this would make him an anti-Semite—like all the other pixillated people.

The real issue of the time had nothing to do with the use of language about Judaism based on the universally accepted economic-Jew stereotype. The real Jewish question was: *For or against the political emancipation of the Jews? For or against equal rights for Jews?*

This was the Jewish question that Marx discussed, not the one that dominated the minds of a sick society a century later.

* See page 200 for two citations from Engels' letters of 1839 mentioning the Jewish emancipation issue. The emancipation of the Jews, as a political issue, continued to play the same role for Engels in later years.⁵⁶

RHYME AND REASON:
THE CONTENT OF MARX'S
JUVENILE VERSE

A Note to Chapter 9, page 196

Comments on the verse that Marx wrote in 1836–1837, when he was about 18 or 19, usually echo Franz Mehring's negative opinions.¹ This would seem a safe procedure, in view of Mehring's status as a Marxist, historian, and literary critic. Besides, there is the scornful view of his own poetic productions which Marx himself expressed by late 1837 and in later years.² Since Mehring, any serious independent evaluations of these poems can be counted on the fingers of one hand.³

This much remains uncontroversial: most of the poems are amatory effusions of a personal sort; the themes were common in recent German romantic poetry, going back at least a couple of decades; and esthetically speaking they are not notable as poetry. "However," Mehring added, "something that has no esthetic value can nevertheless have a biographical and psychological value."⁴ This is our present concern: what features of interest do the poems show in the context of our discussion in Chapter 9?

Precisely on this point Mehring is of limited use as a guide, for a reason that is usually overlooked. The poems he discussed are not the ones that have been available to us. He saw the poetry notebooks of 1836, which were later lost; the poetry notebook of 1837, the only one extant until recently, had not been discovered when Mehring wrote. But the latter is substantially more interesting than the former with regard to the "biographical and psychological value" of the material.*

To begin with, there is no doubt that many of the poems breathe a spirit of passionate energy; but the trouble with making much of this

* Here is a summary of the facts about the various poetry notebooks. (1) *Poems of 1836*: in three notebooks, dedicated to Jenny von Westphalen (to whom Marx had become secretly engaged earlier that year) and given to her as a Christmas present; some poems may have been written before 1836. Two of the notebooks are titled *Buch der Liebe* (Book of Love); Part I, compiled in October–November, was dated "Berlin, 1836, end of autumn"; Part II, compiled in

fact is that it is just in this respect that they are most plainly echoes of romantic clichés. Byronic and Heinesque heroes with emotions that are tearing them apart had long been a drug on the market. This has never prevented young apprentices to poetry from feeling the old emotions anew, but the forms into which the passions are poured have to be seen in their contemporaneous context. Thus, if in a "Song to the Stars"⁷ the young Marx denounces the tranquillity of his subject—

But ah! you shine forever
With calm ethereal rays;
The gods will fill you never
With burning brands that blaze—

one must recognize that the sentiment was in a rut, though it is illogical to conclude that it was insincere.

In this body of verse, the most often mentioned examples of tearing a passion to tatters are the two—the only two—that Marx published, four years later, under the joint title "Wild Songs."⁸ The very first products of Marx's pen to see print, they are as good examples as any of this genre. The first is "The Minstrel":

The Minstrel's viol is singing;
His light-brown hair is out-flinging
He wears a saber at his side,
His pleated cloak is flaring wide.

November, was dated "November 1836." The third notebook, titled *Buch der Lieder* (Book of Songs), was compiled in November–December and dated simply "1836." This set of notebooks had disappeared by 1925 when D. Ryazanov of the Marx-Engels Institute searched for them, and were not published in *MEGA*. A handful of stanzas had been quoted in print—for example, by Mehring and in John Spargo's *Karl Marx* of 1910. But in 1954 and 1960 members of the Longuet family turned them over to the Moscow institute. Their reappearance was mentioned in a note in *MEW*, which however published only one of the newly recovered poems; others appeared in translation in the new English edition of the *Collected Works*.⁵ (2) *Poems of 1836*: a single notebook which Marx compiled for his father's sixtieth birthday in April 1837. Although previously known from Marx's description in his letter to his father of 10 November 1837, it was discovered through Ryazanov's efforts, and is the only notebook reprinted in *MEGA*.⁶ Postscript: As this volume is prepared for the press, the first volume of the new *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* has just appeared with the full contents of the above-listed notebooks, plus more early poems by Marx from two notebooks compiled by his sister Sophie.

"Minstrel, Minstrel, how savage you sound!
Minstrel, why look so wildly around?
What inner storm is so heart-rending?
Look, your very bow is bending!"

—"You ask me why? Why does Ocean roar?
To shatter waves on its rocky shore,
Till eyes go blind and hearts rebel,
And the soul goes roaring down to hell!"

—"Minstrel, though scorn tears at your heart,
A shining God sent the healer, Art,
To draw you on high to rhythms entrancing
Till you mount the sky where stars are dancing!"

—"What's that! I'll thrust, beyond control,
This blood-black saber into your soul;*"
God knows not of Art, and less does he care;
Art rises as fumes from the Devil's own lair,

Till it addles the brain and transmutes the heart:
I got it from Old Nick himself, this Art.
'Tis he beats the time, he tells me how
I must play the dead-march wildly now,

Must play a-darkling, must play a-glow,
Till the heart is broken by strings and bow."

The Minstrel's viol is singing;
His light-brown hair out-flinging
He wears a saber at his side,
His pleated cloak is flaring wide.

The companion poem, entitled "Love in the Night,"¹⁰ is somewhat darker:

His arms round her strain,
His eyes dark and stormy:
—"Love, hot burns your pain,
You, you tremble before me.

* At this point there is an additional couplet in Marx's original (notebook) version of the poem; it was omitted on publication in 1841. This couplet continues the threat: "Get out with you, get out of my sight, / Or children will play o'er your head tonight!" The other lines move down accordingly, till the next-to-last stanza is filled out to a quatrain like the rest. There were some other small changes.⁹

"You drank of my soul,
 From me took fire!
 Blaze out, aureole,
 Young blood, blaze higher!"

—"Sweet, whitely you stare,
 Speak so strangely, my love;
 Look, singing up there
 High the worlds spin above!"

—"High, darling, high!
 Burn, stars, O burn!
 Up! up to the sky
 Let our souls flash in turn!"

His voice low and frightening,
 Despair in his sighs,
 His glances dart lightning,
 Burn a void in his eyes.

—"It was poison you drank,
 We must go—come away!
 Night's host, rank on rank,
 Comes to banish the day."

His arms round her strain,
 Death stands at the door;
 And stabs of deep pain
 Close her eyes evermore.

Perhaps the maximum that can be read into these juvenile effusions, this side of common sense, has been set down by W. M. Johnston in connection with "The Minstrel." He sees it as an "expression of the artist's isolation"; the artist is "a victim of alienation"; he "knows no restraint in his calling."

Indeed, at first glance it may seem that here Marx is expressing a whole series of romantic commonplaces. The artist as a man in league with the powers of darkness, the musician as the supreme artist, the power of music to intoxicate the soul, the scorn of the artist for the restraints of the social order—these themes are familiar in Germany from Wackenroder, Tieck, and Novalis in the 1790's on down to Platen, Lenau, and Heine in the 1830's. Marx, however, voices these sentiments with a fury that suggests rebellion of a starker sort than mere poetic *Weltschmerz*.

Why is this "of a starker sort"? Because this artist carries a saber and threatens to commit mayhem. This effort to endow the becloaked

minstrel with originality assumes that Heine and the others always expressed "mere poetic *Weltschmerz*" rather than fury with the way of the world: an assumption which is simply not true. But why must the poetical sentiments be established as original before they can be taken to reflect Marx's temperament? Johnston also writes:

While it may be going too far to say that this minstrel is an incipient revolutionary, it is plain that his estrangement from society is total. He lives uniquely for his art, as a dedicated revolutionary lives uniquely for his cause. In temperament, Marx's minstrel is a born despiser of the social order. It is not far-fetched to say that out of this minstrel a revolutionary is waiting to be born. And even if we ignore Marx's post-1846 vocation as a revolutionary, his portrait of the artist as the alienated individual *par excellence* suggests that his own sense of alienation may have deepened enormously during 1836 and 1837.¹¹

Maybe. The trouble with this kind of case is that too many adolescents and youths of idealistic temperament have gone through stages of rebellion and estrangement without becoming revolutionaries; the revolutionary that waits to be born is aborted by the despised society. Plainly Marx's case went deeper than anything visible in the juvenile verse.

Obviously more self-revealing was the poem which Mehring selected for quoting from the notebook that was later lost.¹²

I ne'er can treat with calm dispassion
What grips my soul the mightiest,
Ne'er repose in easeful fashion—
On I dash, without a rest.

* * *

I would compass all, attaining
Every boon the gods impart:
Dare to crave all knowledge, straining
To embrace all song and art.

* * *

So let's dare all things to seek out,
Never resting, never through,
Not so dead as not to speak out,
Not to want, and not to do.

Only never, meekly standing,
 Bear a yoke in fear and pain;
 For the yearning, the demanding,
 And the deed—all these remain.

There are quite a number of poems in the 1837 notebook that deal directly with ideas, though none is overtly political.* Some reflect the youth's idealistic indignation against sordidly materialistic attitudes. Among a group directed at the medical profession, perhaps best is one entitled "To Physicians."¹⁴

You philistine physicians, cursèd pack,
 To you the world's a bone-heap in a sack.
 If once you've cooled the blood with hydrogen,
 And felt the pulse begin to throb, why then
 You think: "I've done what can be done for these:
 Now one can live in tolerable ease;
 The Lord God is a clever one, I see,
 To be so well-versed in anatomy;
 And every flower is useful, it is true,
 When once it's made into an herbal brew."

The same spirit is evident in several of the "epigrams," taking the side of the high-minded, loftily spiritual, and idealistic against the mundane. Goethe and Schiller are taken as representing the former. There is a philosophical quartet of "epigrams" entitled "Hegel," which reflects Marx's first antagonistic reaction to that thinker. In the following example, the third of the quartet,¹⁵ it must be understood that the "I" refers to Hegel, and the whole thing was intended as a needle-thrust against him:

* There is a possible exception in the prose piece, *Scorpion und Felix*, subtitled a Humorous Novel, of which Marx included some chapters in the 1837 notebook. Its style is something like *Tristram Shandy* but written with more deliberate incoherence. Chapter 27, the whole of which follows,¹³ can be interpreted as a cry of political confusion. Or perhaps not. I quote it with fingers crossed:

"Ignorance, boundless ignorance."

"Because (referring to a previous chapter) his knees bent too much to one particular side!" but there is nothing definite, and who can define or fathom which side is right and which is left?

Tell me, mortal, where the wind comes from, or whether God's face has a nose, and I will tell you what right and left are.

Nothing but relative concepts are they, in order for folly and madness to drink themselves into wisdom!

Oh, vain is all our striving, illusory our yearning, until we fathom what right and left are, for the goats will be put on the left but the sheep on the right.

Turning around, he takes a different direction, since he dreamed at

Kant and Fichte like to roam the ethereal blue,
 Where they sought a distant shore;
 But I seek only to grasp through and through
 What I found—right outside my door!

A year later, this sarcastic jab was going to change from derogatory to honorific, as Marx found that Hegel's concern with the real world (which is mundane by definition) was his strong side as compared with previous idealist philosophy. Indeed, the same reversal would affect Schiller later: Marx used "Schillerizing," counterposed to "Shakespearizing," to connote abstraction-mongering in literature.¹⁶

But in other "epigrams" of the 1837 notebook, Schiller and Goethe were put on a pedestal. In the following two examples,¹⁷ the assumed speaker is a despised critic of the Olympians:

V

This is the trouble with Schiller, I'd say:
 He can't entertain in a human-like way;
 He drives things so far they take off and soar,
 But won't put his hand to a workaday chore.
 He's good at the thunder-and-lightning bit,
 But entirely lacks plain everyday wit.

VI

There's Goethe now, too precious a man:
 He'd rather view Venus than Raggedy Ann;
 Right stoutly he'd grasp things from below,
 Yet if soaring on high one is forced to go,
 Don't make the form too sublime, on the whole:
 It leaves no footing for the soul.
 Now Schiller was right to a greater extent:
 With him the ideas were evident,
 You could say they were down in black-and-white,
 Even if you didn't quite grasp them aright.

night that the goats are to the right and the pious to the left in accordance with our wretched views.

Therefore settle for me what right and left are, and the whole riddle of creation is solved, *Acheronta movebo* . . . if Mephistopheles appeared, I would become Faust, for it is clear, everyone of us, everyone is a Faust, in that we know not which side is right, which side is left, our life is therefore a circus, we run around and search for the sides, till we fall on the sand and the gladiator, namely Life, slays us, we must have a new Redeemer, for—tormenting thought, you rob me of slumber, you rob me of health, you destroy my life—we cannot distinguish the left side from the right, we do not know where they lie——

There is a group of "epigrams" under the collective title "Pustkuchen," defending Goethe and Schiller against the Lutheran pastor of that name who became notorious when he attacked Goethe as the "most typical representative of the licentious and depraved tendencies in modern literature" and published a moralizing parody of *Wilhelm Meister*. Here are three of the Pustkuchen "epigrams."¹⁸

1

Schiller, he thinks, might have been all right
 Had he only read more in the Bible at night;
 His poem "The Bell" would be fine if a section
 Were added to expound the Resurrection,
 Or how on his little ass
 Christ rode into town, alas.
 And his "Wallenstein" needs additional scenes
 On how David defeated the Philistines.

2

For the ladies Goethe is pure Hades,
 A horror above all to old ladies;
 All he has grasped is nature's totality
 But hasn't polished it up with morality.
 Let him study Luther's book a bit
 And manufacture verses out of *it*.
 On beauty, indeed, he'd sometimes call
 But forget to say, "God made it all."

7

On the wings of sin this Faust would soar;
 He lived for himself and nothing more.
 He doubted in God, in the world no less,
 Forgot Moses thought it a smashing success.
 And Maggie that goose, she loved him instead
 Of stuffing the fear of the Lord in his head
 By reminding him he was the Fiend's own prey
 As he soon would find out on Judgment Day.

"How David defeated the Philistines" is indeed the keynote. The sensitive youth sees the "apathetic throng" and the dead weight of philistinedom flattening all public life, and reacts with scorn. The first and third of the "epigrams"¹⁹ express this most clearly:

I

In snug armchairs, dull and dumb,
 The German public all keep mum.
 What if the storms rage nimbus-shrouded,
 What if the sky grows dark and clouded,
 What if the lightnings writhe and hiss—
 They are not stirred by things like this.
 But when the sun comes out of hiding,
 The breezes rustle, the storm's subsiding,
 Then forth they come and crow at last,
 And write a book: "The danger is past."
 They spin out fancies, fabrications,
 Would trace the thing to its foundations,
 Claim the correct way wasn't pressed,
 It just was heaven's peculiar jest,
 Life needs a more systematic model—
 First rub your feet and *then* your noddle—
 They act like children, babble on,
 Chase after things long dead and gone—
 Meanwhile, let them only seize the day,
 Let earth and heaven go their own way,
 Things would go on as they did before
 And the wave roll calmly along the shore.

III

If the Germans had ever got under way,
 The people would surely have won the day;
 And when it all was over, indeed,
 On every wall here's what you would read:
 "Marvels have happened! Will wonders ne'er cease?
 All men will soon have three legs apiece."
 Thereupon everybody would fidget and fret
 And begin to be covered with shame and regret:
 "Too much all at once has happened, we vow—
 Let's all become quiet as mice for now;
 That sort of thing belongs in a book—
 And it won't lack for buyers, the way things look."

If Johnston saw the "incipient revolutionary" in the alienated artist-figure, D. Ryazanov pointed to the last-cited epigrams as "the germinal form of rebellion":

It is against philistinism that the idealist concentrates the whole bitterness of his scorn and the sharpness of his ridicule. But it is not a question of the traditional antithesis between the gay life of students kicking over the traces and the orderly, comfortable everyday life of the good burgher: *this* "Sturm und Drang" period Marx had already gone through in Bonn [the university]. He appears here, rather, as a youth filled with philosophical and political aspirations that come into contradiction with the insipid realism and inertia of the "public." . . . This protest against the intellectual domination of the philistine is, however, nothing but the germinal form of rebellion against the dominant state of things in society.²⁰

There are many kinds of germs, and from this undifferentiated form one does not always know what the germ will grow up to be. What we have at this point is a leaning in character and temperament.

THE STATE AS POLITICAL
SUPERSTRUCTURE:
MARX ON MAZZINI

A Note to Chapter 18, page 460

In 1858 Marx's attention was focused on what he thought were the last gasps of the Bonaparte regime in France. The political temperature had heated up with the attempt by the Italian nationalist Felice Orsini to assassinate the emperor on January 14, in protest against the French designs on Italy. In brief, Bonaparte wanted to "liberate" Italy from Austrian domination in order to impose French control. In Italy, Cavour was playing the cat-and-mouse game of alliance with France, aiming to use Bonaparte's imperial ambitions for the purposes of the House of Savoy, without being swallowed up by the French "liberator." In this situation the émigré leader of the republican wing of the Risorgimento, Giuseppe Mazzini, called on the "people" to forge Italian national unity against both Cavour and the foreigners.

Mazzini took the Orsini attentat as an occasion for issuing an open letter denouncing Bonaparte.¹ Now in general Mazzini represented about everything Marx detested in the self-styled radical: he was as bitterly antisocialist as he was antidemocratic; a much admired rhetorician who substituted empty moralizing abstractions for political ideas; a bourgeois nationalist who sought a following among the working classes with social elocution rather than a social program; a conspiratorialist who preferred plots to mass organization. Six years after this episode, it was going to be a knot of Mazzinians in London, headed by Mazzini's secretary Luigi Wolf, who presented one of the first obstacles to putting the International on its feet.

But Mazzini's open letter to Bonaparte impressed Marx as striking a new note, in its awareness of the relationship of socioeconomic development to political problems in general, and in its attention in particular to the interests of working people. In consequence Marx wrote an article for the *New York Tribune* on the Mazzini letter which greeted it with pleasure and quoted from it extensively and approvingly.

The longest Mazzini passage quoted indicted the Bonaparte regime in terms of the economic conditions of the peasantry and working class as well as of the "dissatisfied bourgeoisie." It is also made clear that Mazzini was pronouncing the doom of the Second Empire: "The fullness of time approaches; the Imperial tide is visibly rolling back," he wrote. "... From this moment, your fate is sealed. You may now live months; years you cannot."

Written on March 30, 1858, Marx's piece was published on May 11 under the title "Mazzini and Napoleon," as a leading article (editorial), hence unsigned. We reproduce the first part of the article, up to the point where Marx starts quoting and summarizing the content of the Mazzini letter.

So much for the context. Its interest for us here lies in its remarks on the relation between the political superstructure and the "economic realities."

MAZZINI AND NAPOLEON

M. Mazzini has recently addressed a letter to the French Emperor, which, in a literary point of view, must hold, perhaps, the first place among his productions. There are but few traces left of that false sublimity, puffy grandeur, verbosity and prophetic mysticism so characteristic of many of his writings, and almost forming the distinctive features of that school of Italian literature of which he is the founder. An enlargement of views is also perceptible. He has, till now, figured as the chief of the Republican formalists of Europe. Exclusively bent on the political forms of the State, they have had no eye for the organization of society on which the political superstructure rests. Boasting of a false idealism, they have considered it beneath their dignity to become acquainted with economical realities. Nothing is easier than to be an idealist on behalf of other people. A surfeited man may easily sneer at the materialism of hungry people asking for vulgar bread instead of sublime ideas. The Triumvirs of the Roman Republic of 1848*, leaving the peasants of the Campagna in a state of slavery more exasperating than that of their ancestors of the times of imperial Rome, were quite welcome to descant on the degraded state of the rural mind.

All real progress in the writing of modern history has been effected by descending from the political surface into the depths of social life. Dureau de Lamalle,² in tracing the different phases

* On March 29, 1849 (not 1848), upon the Italian defeat at Novara and the abdication of the king, the nationalist forces in Rome set up a triumvirate to keep order; Mazzini was one of the three triumvirs.

of the development of landed property in ancient Rome, has afforded a key to the destinies of that world-conquering city, beside which Montesquieu's considerations³ on its greatness and decline appear almost like a schoolboy's declamation. The venerable Lelewel⁴, by his laborious research into the economical circumstances which transformed the Polish peasant from a free man into a serf, has done more to shed light on the subjugation of his country than the whole host of writers whose stock in trade is simple denunciation of Russia. M. Mazzini, too, does not now disdain to dwell on social realities, the interests of the different classes, the exports and imports, the prices of necessities, house-rent, and other such vulgar things, being struck, perhaps, by the great if not fatal shock given to the second Empire, not by the manifestoes of Democratic Committees, but by the commercial convulsion which started from New York to encompass the world. It is only to be hoped that he will not stop at this point, but, unbiased by a false pride, will proceed to reform his whole political catechism by the light of economical science.

The hope that Marx expressed in this article was not to be fulfilled. In September of the same year, Marx devoted another *Tribune* article to Mazzini, "Mazzini's New Manifesto."⁵ Most of the article is given over to a translation of his "historical document enabling the reader to judge for himself of the vitality and the prospects of that part of the revolutionary emigration marshaled under the banner of the Roman triumvir." Marx limits himself to a brief comment:

Instead of inquiring into the social agencies on which the Revolution of 1848-1849 foundered, and of trying to delineate the real conditions that, during the last ten years, have silently grown up and combined to prepare a new and more powerful movement, Mazzini, relapsing, as it appears to us, into his antiquated crotchets, puts to himself an imaginary problem which, of course, cannot but lead to a delusive solution.

The "imaginary problem" is why the *émigrés* have failed "at renovating the world"; Mazzini "busies himself with advertising nostrums for the cure of their political palsy." The long excerpts from the manifesto show Mazzini appealing for "action" regardless of views, with the People "writing upon its banner the signal: God, People, Justice, Truth, Virtue."

Still, the following year Marx had occasion to write another *Tribune* article complimentary to Mazzini, for by that time the expected war had broken out, with France ostensibly allied with Piedmont against Austria. Marx's article on "Mazzini's Manifesto" welcomed the republican leader's position of intransigent opposition to Bonaparte's schemes.⁶

A number of different theories of the state have been assigned to Marx posthumously, since it is easier to deal with a Marxian theory if one has first invented it oneself. One of these is "the 'independent parasite' theory" of the state, fabricated by an ingenious marxologist by putting together two words to form a phrase which Marx never used and which makes no sense in his framework.¹ It is done with rare economy, by quoting a sentence from *The Eighteenth Brumaire* without wasting words on analysis.

While none of Marx's passing mentions of *state parasite* constitutes a theory, there is a certain interest in examining the train of thought behind its use.

1. IN *THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE*

The use of the metaphor state parasite (or similar term) is concentrated in, though not limited to, two of Marx's historical works written about two decades apart, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and *The Civil War in France* (especially the drafts of the latter), representing respectively the beginning and end of Bonaparte's Second Empire. Since it is found mostly in connection with a denunciation of the grossly overinflated bureaucratic machine of the Bonapartist state, the question arises whether, in the thought behind the phrase, it is the state as such which is being impugned as parasitic, or only the Bonapartist overgrowth.

The second interpretation is certainly in the forefront, for the context overwhelmingly emphasizes the *dispensability* of the characteristically Bonapartist expansion of the government apparatus. We meet

the epithet in a key passage of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, describing the overbureaucratization of the French state. It says that "in a country like France," where the state has swollen to such immense and all-pervading proportions, "where through the most extraordinary centralization this parasitic body acquires a ubiquity . . ." one of the National Assembly's tasks was to "simplify the administration of the state, reduce the army of officials as far as possible. . . ."*

This is also the interpretation we would expect from everything else that, we have seen, Marx wrote about Bonaparte's regime, with its superstructure of praetorians, stockjobbers, swindlers, functionless functionaries, and lumpen adventurers, piled on top of the normal state superstructure.

But it is evident that to point to a parasitic element as dispensable does not mean it is useless to the ruling class. On the contrary, not only was the inflated bureaucracy obviously useful to Bonaparte: in the very next sentence Marx points out it became useful also to the French bourgeoisie. The fact that the Bonapartist freebooters sponge off the social revenue does not in the least prevent them from playing a role as instruments of the rulers: indeed, the first is requisite to the second *from the standpoint of the rulers*, though not from the standpoint of society's objective interests. These elements are certainly parasites from a basic social point of view, but pillars of the state from the point of view of their patrons.

A second key passage in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* elaborates the description of the French bureaucratic tradition, and again the "parasite" epithet crops up in the indictment.** But this time we are clearly told that "This executive power . . . this appalling parasitic body . . . sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system. . . ."2 It was not the state that sprang up at this time, only a particular type of state or state apparatus. Unquestionably the reference is not to the state as such but to the special phenomenon of the heavily overbureaucratized state structure.

A similar remark six years later also refers specifically to the Bonapartist regime: "the Administration, that ubiquitous parasite feeding on the vitals of France. . . ."3

* For the whole passage, see pp. 395-396.

** The context of this passage is given on p. 401.

2. IN *THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE*

When we get to *The Civil War in France* there is a certain ambivalence built into the relevant passages. The reason for this is the great and repeated emphasis in this work, particularly in its drafts, on the Commune's replacement of the state as such.* This pervades the work so thoroughly that the two possible interpretations under discussion appear to be telescoped.

To be sure, the second draft of the essay repeats the statement, from *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, that "The huge governmental parasite . . . dates its birth from the days of absolute monarchy."⁶ Again, it is clear at this point that the parasite is the overinflated bureaucratization of the state, and not the state as such. But in a dozen other passages—mainly by juxtaposition of ideas, never by direct statement—the attribution of parasitism could just as well be an epithet hurled against the state as such, and not only against the particular French leviathan.

The final version of *The Civil War in France* says that the organization of national unity by the Commune constitution would become a reality "by the destruction of the State power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence." But this is followed immediately by the clearest of all statements that there was no question of abolishing the state *tout court*: the "legitimate functions" of the state would be exercised by "the responsible agents of society." Further: "The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by the State parasite feeding upon, and clogging the free movement of, society." The argument is made that the Commune would have provided "cheap government . . . by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditures—the standing army and State functionarism [bureaucracy]."⁷ In short,

* This question of the Commune state (or nonstate) is reserved for another volume. Suffice to say that the meaning is concisely explained in the second draft: the old state is replaced by

the central functions, not of governmental authority over the people, but [those] necessitated by the general and common wants of the country. . . . These functions would exist, but the functionaries themselves could not, as in the old governmental machinery, raise themselves over real society, because the functions were to be executed by *communal agents*, and, therefore, always under real control.⁴

I have reviewed part of this question in a special article.⁵

parasitic excrescences are to be eliminated, legitimate functions retained in a new form—the concept of the smashing and recasting of the state machine. Further along, we read that "The Commune would have . . . transformed his [the peasant's] present bloodsuckers, the notary, advocate [lawyer], executor, and other judicial vampires, into salaried communal agents. . . ."⁸

In the first draft of this work, where Marx—along with an unusual number of other cuss-words, please note⁹—uses the "parasite" epithet very freely, the passing mentions are equally casual. None in the least resembles a statement on the idea.*

But we may well pause at the remark that the Commune does away "with the unproductive and mischievous [that is, harmful] work of the state parasites. . . ."¹⁴ This links the charge of parasitism with the fact that, economically speaking, state officials are unproductive laborers. This is a significant ingredient in the connotation of the phrase.

The economics of unproductive labor had already been thoroughly explored by Marx in his manuscripts for *Capital*, particularly the fourth volume, and we will take this subject up in some detail in Volume 2 of this work, dealing with the role of intellectuals in society. One connection has already been made in the passage which we had occasion to quote about the subordination of the bureaucracy to bourgeois society.¹⁵ Here the subject is the social stratum of unproductive laborers such as "state officials, military people, artists, doctors, priests, judges, lawyers, etc." All of them find it unpleasant

* Some samples: "official France, the France of Louis Bonaparte, the France of the ruling classes and their state-parasites—a putrescent cadaver" . . . "the exploiting classes, their retainers and their state parasites" . . . "a mere state parasite, like Thiers, a mere talker" . . . "the state parasite received only its last [i.e., latest] development during the second Empire" . . . the state bureaucracy is "a trained caste—state parasites, richly paid sycophants and sinecurists, in the higher posts" . . . The Commune means "the army of state parasites removed."¹⁰ The main passage on state gigantism in France is followed by this: "This parasitical [excrescence upon] civil society . . . grew to its full development under the sway of the first Bonaparte."¹¹ The bracketed words were apparently added by the original Russian editors under Ryazanov, but it is not clear whether as an interpolation or reconstruction. This draft also refers to the "state vermin" and the "state monster," and, just as we have read of bloodsuckers and vampires, it denounces "the bourgeois spiders that suck its blood," meaning the state's judiciary functionaries who dip into the people's pockets.¹² The word *excrescence* did not by itself mean *parasitic* to Marx; he used it in the sense of any outgrowth, not a dispensable morbid growth; as in his remark that "in all its forms it [the state] is an *excrescence of society*."¹³

to be relegated [by Adam Smith] *economically* to the same class as clowns and menial servants and to appear merely as people partaking in the consumption, parasites on the actual producers (or rather agents of production).¹⁶

The bourgeoisie originally objected to the expense of keeping such unproductive laborers, but changed back insofar as state power came under its own control.*

Bourgeois society reproduces in its own form everything against which it had fought in feudal or absolutist form. In the first place therefore it becomes a principal task for the sycophants of this society, and especially of the upper classes, to restore in theoretical terms even the simply parasitic section of these "unproductive laborers," or to justify even the exaggerated demands of the section which is indispensable.¹⁸

It is seen on closer examination, then, that Marx does not say that all unproductive laborers are also parasitic. There is a "parasitic section," but others are indispensable. And if the parasitic elements are dispensable, they may still be useful in a class sense. In any case, while unproductiveness is a scientific category and not a value judgment (poets and socialist theoreticians are just as unproductive as policemen), it would be a mistake to treat the "parasite" epithet as if it aspired to be the same sort of scientific term. That is why we never meet it except as an incidental sideswipe.

If this is understood, then it may well be that in *The Civil War in France* Marx pinned the "parasite" label on the state as such in one definite sense: namely that the best interests of society no longer need a state at all any longer, and that it will be the task of socialism (as it was the orientation of the Commune) to get rid of this *no longer indispensable institution*.** This points to the well-known prospect of the withering away of the state, but not to any innovation in Marxist theory.

* Thomas Jefferson, like Adam Smith reflecting "the still revolutionary bourgeoisie" on this point, likewise linked overbureaucratization with parasitism: "I think we have more machinery of government than is necessary, too many parasites living on the labor of the industrious."¹⁷

** This is the interpretation seen by Lenin, in *State and Revolution*, of the two Marx passages he quotes on the state as parasite. The context is his argument against "Kautskyite opportunism" (social-democratic view of the state) which "considers the view that the state is a *parasitic organism* to be the peculiar and exclusive attribute of anarchism."¹⁹ This argument, in which Lenin was unquestionably correct, involves only that aspect of the "parasite" epithet which points to the "withering away of the state."

3. "PARASITIC" CAPITALISM

Insofar as *parasitic* simply connotes *dispensable*, then Marx should be just as complaisant about applying it to capitalism itself, not only the state. And that is exactly what he does—in exactly the same way, as a passing expletive. It crops up particularly in notes and drafts rather than in finished and published writings, as an expression of antipathy rather than analysis. Thus, in the notes for the fourth volume of *Capital*, Marx discusses just how much the productivity of labor must rise "before a °profitmonger, ° a parasite, can come into being. . . ." ²⁰ This certainly reflects Marx's feelings about the role of capitalists, but it hardly constitutes a new theory of capitalism.

Some profit-mongers are more parasitic than others: this is applied, with or without the epithet, especially to usury and commerce as distinct from manufacturing. ²¹ It applies redoubled to special situations, like that of the czarist state, which has "collaborated in the enrichment of a new capitalist vermin, sucking the blood of the already debilitated 'rural commune.' " ²²

Besides the "capitalist vermin," we also find Marx denouncing the English factory owners as °° "These vampyres [*sic*], fattening on the lifeblood of the young working generation of their own country. . . ." ²³ because of their sweatshop use of child labor. And in a draft of *The Civil War in France* he refers to the "financial swindler[s]" as "the most parasite fraction" of the reactionary classes. ²⁴

Like Marx, Engels pointed to Russia as the country where "capitalistic parasitism" was most developed, referring to elements less advanced than the big bourgeoisie. ²⁵ More important, Engels flatly called the merchant class in general "a class of parasites." The context shows that this label referred to its character as an unproductive class,

. . . a class that took no part in production, but engaged exclusively in exchanging products—the *merchants*. . . . Here a class appears for the first time which, without taking any part in production, captures the management of production as a whole and economically subjugates the producers to its rule; a class that makes itself the indispensable intermediary between any two producers and exploits them both. . . . [Thus] a class of parasites arises, real social spongers, who, as a reward for very slight real services, skim the cream off production at home and abroad. ²⁶

Here the use of *parasite* is clearly rhetorical, especially since it is simultaneously acknowledged that this parasite is indispensable under

the given historical circumstances. It is not used as a scientific economic term, any more than *state parasite* is a rigorous political term. One might as well try to read something into Marx's note that "Capital. . . constantly sucks in living labor as [its] soul, like a vampire."²⁷ But any marxologist who is beating the brush for new and profound Marxian "theories" can spin the Theory of Vampire Capitalism into a fresh discovery without any more difficulty than heretofore.

Today, discussions of Oriental despotism have mainly become a surrogate form of discussing the contemporary "Communist" social system—that is, a society ruled by a state bureaucracy. As such, the subject is outside our purview, but a word about its genesis may help to clarify our own inquiry.

1. THE CONTEMPORARY ISSUE

Just as the literati of the Enlightenment praised Chinese despotism as a means of criticizing the society they lived under, Voltaire being the type, so now theories of Oriental despotism tend to be—and to be regarded as—predated judgments on the type of society developed in Stalin's Russia. This approach was first adopted by the Stalin bureaucracy itself, when a Leningrad conference in February 1931 decreed a new party line, a departure from views expressed in the 1920s by D. Ryazanov and others, and even from the views embodied in the 1928 Program of the Communist International.¹ The new pronouncement by the scholastic establishment was that henceforth Marx's views on the Asiatic mode of production, if mentioned at all, were to be interpreted to mean that the Asiatic societies were essentially feudal.

The political motivation behind this decision was not hidden: it was specifically directed against the menace of "Trotskyism," after the disaster of Stalin's China policy of 1925–1927. What was required from scholars was a theory justifying Stalin's popular-front type of policy, which in turn involved the notion that *the* enemy in China was the "remnants of feudalism" and imperialism—at any rate, precapitalist social forces familiar to European political thought. Supporters of any

other view were decreed to be Trotskyites, and a number of them were sent to their ancestors for instruction on this point.

The party line was later amended by 1934 to make the Asiatic societies slavery-based instead of feudal; later, loosened up to allow other versions mixing slavery or feudalism as ingredients, as long as interpretations stayed inside the framework of European classical and medieval society. The Chinese Communists (Maoists) continued to enforce this policy after their accession to power, as before. Even dissidents who persisted in emphasizing the uniqueness of Chinese society relative to the two European patterns had to do so in terms of the "slaveholding" or "feudal" labels. The crux was the proposition that the ruling class had to be one of these two private-property-holding classes, so that the possibility of the mandarin bureaucracy was excluded.²

The contribution by Wittfogel on this issue, especially through the publication of his book *Oriental Despotism* in 1957, was to rouse a hue and cry in the Western marxological enterprise, which widely accepted Wittfogel's claim that here was a new handle by which to administer a beating to Marx's reputation. As it happened, this coincided with the intellectual thaw touching Eastern Europe after the death of Stalin and after the Twentieth Congress in 1956. It was clear that refutation of Wittfogelism on the basis of the Stalinist dogma on Oriental society was impossible for anyone striving for a modicum of intellectual honesty. There arose a strong thrust in some intellectual circles of the Communist world for a change in the party line, or at least a loosening to allow deviationist opinions, namely Marx's.

One of the prominent spokesmen of this tendency was the Hungarian Sinologist Ferenc Tökei, who first published his views in his own country and then participated in discussions that bubbled up in French Communist circles of Orientalists and others who respected scholarship more than political dogma. During the 1960s the French discussion became the main international sounding-board for dissident opinion on this issue from scholars in various Communist countries, at any rate in print.³

A discussion opened in Russia in December 1964, sparked by E. Varga. In May 1965 the Russian academic establishment organized a conference on the issue in Moscow, where variants of the Asiatic mode of production view were permitted to be expressed in a careful form (one that indicated no political conclusions) as *one* dissident theory. At its close the reporter, V. Nikiforov, laid down the line again with full force. The very term *Asiatic mode of production* was still to be rejected (the official pretense being that Marx and Engels had abandoned it

themselves) but, Nikiforov emphasized, the crux was not the term itself but this:

When it is said that there is no Asiatic form [of society], what is meant is that there is not, and there could not arise, a society characterized by antagonisms without a class of private owners of the means of production; that the state could not arise in a society where classes have not formed—in any case up to now we do not know any facts attesting such a development.⁴

The crucial word is *private*: no class society can exist except under a ruling class of *private*-property owners—so goes the decree for the past, present, and future. The concept of a state bureaucracy functioning as a ruling class in any conceivable society is outlawed. In the international discussion there was somewhat more leeway for analyses of Oriental society as a mode of production, but much less for any political conclusions, that is, implications for the theory of the state.

2. WITTFOGEL'S CLAIMS

With respect to this issue, Wittfogel represented the opposite side of the coin.

Karl Wittfogel came out of the matrix we have just sketched. A former Comintern theoretician, he had been one of those whose views were scotched in Leningrad in 1931. By 1957 he was one of the many ex-Communists reconciled to Western capitalism and specializing in exposing his ex-colleagues. However, by the time of the cold-war period of the 1950s, anti-Communist expositions were neither new nor scarce. Wittfogel's novelty consisted primarily in three allegations:

1. Marx refused to take the obvious step of designating the ruling class of Oriental despotism to be the state bureaucracy.
2. He did this because he was "paralyzed" by the precognition that his socialism had to lead to a bureaucratic despotism like Stalin's.
3. This was embedded in a grandiose theory about a world-historical pattern of "hydraulic society" (based on water works), which purported also to offer a historical explanation for the rise of the Stalinist regime in Russia.*

* Wittfogel's theories are mainly presented in his book *Oriental Despotism* (1957) and the article which heralded it, "The Ruling Bureaucracy of Oriental Despotism: A Phenomenon That Paralyzed Marx" (1953). Other articles added

Not all of these propositions had equal success. The hydraulic-society theory on its Wittfogelian scale soon began petering out, as an over-watered exaggeration of the water-works factor. The second proposition—the paralysis thesis in its most psychiatric form—has not been taken up with a will by most of the marxological industry; apparently it required too much of the instant-Freudian psychoanalysis seen mainly in movie plots and the works of L. S. Feuer. The deposit that was left behind by Wittfogel's contributions has worn down mainly to one theorem: Marx failed to "solve the problem of the ruling class" under Oriental despotism because he could not accept a bureaucracy in this role; and this shows that his theory cannot account for historical reality.

We have seen in Chapter 21 that, along with everyone else, Marx was unaware of an unsolved problem of this sort in connection with Asiatic society, and that he had no difficulty working with the then commonly accepted view of the nature of this Oriental state and society. But this is exactly what had to be expunged from the picture if Wittfogel's thesis was to have verisimilitude. If Marx was to be depicted as *refusing* to see what was so clearly before his eyes that his blindness could be explained only by mental "paralysis," then there must have been contemporaries of his who did make the discovery that he closed his eyes to. Wittfogel entered his nominees for this service: "the classical economists," mainly Richard Jones and John Stuart Mill, also Adam Smith and James Mill.

Hence Wittfogel solved his problem with the following two propositions, essential to his case:

1. Marx learned about Oriental despotism (or Asiatic society) from these classical economists, who—in the Wittfogel story—were the first to use these concepts, indeed the first to use these labels or their similars.
2. "Jones, Mill, and others" did "indicate the character of the ruling class in Oriental society," thereby providing Marx with the answer which he refused to adopt. Therefore the excuse cannot be made for

little of interest. The originator of the Oriental-despotism theory of post-1917 Russia was Karl Kautsky, as far as I know: "Some forms of government are incompatible with a prosperous capitalist development. One of them is Oriental despotism, and another is its most modern prototype, which masquerades in the garb of the dictatorship of the proletariat."⁵ Wittfogel's own obsessions go beyond the propositions listed above. He actually proposed, for example, that Marx's "paralysis" was at least in part over the following worrisome question: "Would state ownership of the means of production work as well in an industrial socialist society [as envisaged by Marx] as in Asiatic agrarian society?"⁶—that is, as in ancient China!

Marx that the idea was unheard of. If Marx has to be depicted as rejecting it, then someone has to be discovered who proposed it.

These claims are a farrago of misinformation in a double-barreled way. The classical economists did *not* do what Wittfogel claims; but, far from the concept of Asiatic society being otherwise unknown, it had been spread over Europe on a massive scale for two centuries and had become ideological platitudes. Far from the British classical economists being innovators of these ideas, they were relatively silent about—perhaps uninterested in—Continental views about the Oriental state and bureaucracy which were part of an educated person's baggage when Marx was a mere student, frequently encountered in the literature on which he was educated.

But before we review this Continental furor over Oriental society, let us see what it is Wittfogel tries to extract from the writings of Jones, Mill, and others.

3. THE CLASSICAL ECONOMISTS

Wittfogel scoured the writings of Smith, Jones, and Mill, and came up with a meager handful of phrases which went little further than *to refer to the existence of state officials* under the power of the Oriental emperor. Naturally this material, if clearly presented, would not have set the Potomac on fire. Their phrases had to be puffed up into the semblance of a theory, or at least a serious conception, about the Oriental state structure and bureaucracy. This job is accomplished by Wittfogel indirectly.

To begin with, how are these writers represented as innovators? We are told that Marx, on reading them, "accepted . . . their conviction that . . . there existed a specific institutional conformation, which they [*they*, presumably not others before them] called Asiatic or Oriental society." When the *Communist Manifesto* was written, Marx and Engels "seemed unaware of a specific Asiatic society."⁷ It was in the early 1850s that Marx began to use the concept "following Richard Jones and John Stuart Mill. . . ." He had found "the 'Asiatic' concept . . . ready-made in the writings of the classical economists." Again: "Marx's concept of Asiatic society was built largely on the views of such classical economists as Richard Jones and John Stuart Mill. . . ."⁸ The invention of the term *Oriental society* is assigned to Mill in 1848, and of *Asiatic society* to Jones. (We shall see that the picture implied by these claims is pure fantasy.)

How does Wittfogel know that Marx learned about Asiatic society only from Jones and Mill? The factual basis is solely that Marx *read* them, as he did indeed. There is no question of evidence that he so much as jotted down a note about the discovery claimed by Wittfogel. But Wittfogel embroiders freehand:

In the 1850s the notion of a specific Asiatic society struck Marx with the force of discovery. Temporarily abandoning party politics, he applied himself intensely to the study of industrial capitalism. . . .⁹

This is pure fiction. No attempt is made to confuse by citing a fact. But we know quite well, from the Marx-Engels correspondence, why Marx temporarily "abandoned" party politics (organizational life) after the revolution; and we know that it had nothing whatsoever to do with the unrecorded moment when the discovery of Asiatic society burst on Marx as he read the classical economists. The historical method here is vintage Hollywood, the script being modeled after the dramatic moment when Don Ameche invented the telephone.

What exactly was the innovative political theory allegedly put forward by the classical economists? In his original article on the subject, Wittfogel went close to the edge of outright falsification: "In contrast to Jones, Mill, and others, Marx failed to indicate the character of the ruling class in Oriental society."¹⁰ Ordinary people would take this to mean that Jones, Mill, and others *did* designate the ruling class in Oriental society; and furthermore the context would leave no doubt that the ruling class they nominated was the state bureaucracy. But Wittfogel cannot cite a line or word where Jones or Mill did this service; in fact, no such statement exists in Jones or Mill to account for Marx's "discovery"; in fact, neither of these men even raised the question of what the ruling class was in Oriental society, or "indicated" that such a question existed.

A couple of pages after this dangerous juggle, the claim is stated more carefully:

. . . Marx should have had no real difficulty in determining the ruling class in Asiatic society. Moreover, Jones and Mill had already volunteered important suggestions. Jones had viewed, as the representatives of the Asiatic state, the monarch "and his officers"; at times he omitted the sovereign altogether and spoke only of "the king's officers" or "the state and its officers." John Stuart Mill listed among the "many" persons who benefited from the revenue of the Asiatic state "the immediate household of the

sovereign," and particularly "the various functionaries of government" and "the objects of the sovereign's favor or caprice."¹¹

The inquiring reader who turns to the actual passages in Jones and Mill indicated by Wittfogel will find that these passages are not at all concerned with any political exposition or theory about the state officials mentioned, let alone about a ruling class.* The great "discovery" is that these state officials *exist* and consume revenue, that the state does not consist solely of the person of the monarch. We are to assume that somehow Europe had believed, before Jones and Mill uncovered the truth, that the Oriental state had no officers, that perhaps the monarch had no household, or that the officers and household were not maintained by state revenue, or some other remarkable notion which would mean that Jones and Mill were preceded in Europe exclusively by simpleminded witlings.

The "important suggestions" about the nature of the ruling class which Jones and Mill made, then, turn out to be the fact that they reveal the existence of state officials and such. It was on coming across this revelation one day that Marx threw up his hands and abandoned party politics. Moreover, according to Wittfogel, upon learning the crucial fact that an officialdom existed, "Marx should have had no real difficulty in determining the ruling class in Asiatic society." On this a provisional comment: it becomes very puzzling why, three quarters of a century and several revolutions later, after everybody and his brother had raised the question of the bureaucratic ruling power all over the world press, Wittfogel himself had such agonizing difficulty in determining the ruling class in a society right in front of his eyes, where state officials not only obviously existed, but in fact ordered him what to think—about state officials.

In his main opus published four years later, Wittfogel was more discreet. At the very beginning he even stated some of the damaging

* Neither Jones nor Mill used the term *bureaucracy* in connection with the Oriental state, in the works cited by Wittfogel, that is, up to 1848. It was only in 1861 that Mill's *Representative Government* referred to "The Chinese Government, a bureaucracy of Mandarins." The same 1861 essay contained formulations about the "oligarchies of officials" in several European countries and in past governments.¹² By that time, *bureaucracy* had made its tour of the world, though the term was still regarded with suspicion in the academy. Furthermore, we have pointed out that the claims made for the classical economists by Wittfogel do not amount to much when these claims are given a hard look; but if, in addition, one bothers to look up the passages cited to back up the claims (when such passages are cited), things begin to dim out. This is entered as a general caveat without taking space for the textual demonstration.

facts about what his innovators had *not* done. True, Jones and Mill "indicated [a word that does not mean *said*] that in Oriental society the officials enjoyed advantages of income which in the West accrued to the private owners of land and capital." How this enjoyment of "advantages of income" differs from that by officials in any other society is not "indicated," nor is there any citation to explain it; nor is it mentioned that "advantages of income" is precisely what does *not* define a ruling class, or a class of any kind, from Marx's viewpoint.

But Wittfogel is very modest in making claims even for this minor accomplishment. For "they did so only in passing and without stating clearly that under agrodespotic conditions the managerial bureaucracy was the ruling class." (Did they come near stating it even unclearly? Wittfogel can't be caught stating this.) "They therefore did not challenge the widely accepted concept of class which takes as its main criterion diversities in (active) private property."¹³ This means: their theoretical conceptions did not even raise the possibility of the bureaucracy being the ruling class. Perhaps Mill was "paralyzed" by the precognition that the coming aggrandizement of the state under liberal capitalism was going to lead to fascism—if Wittfogelian psychiatry is taken seriously.

In spite of this total lack of evidence for his central proposition, Wittfogel still manages to find words to contrast Marx's "paralysis" with the perspicacity of Jones and Mill, for he cannot do without some such ploy: "although Marx accepted the classical view in many important essentials, he failed to draw a conclusion," namely that his own theory required the designation of the bureaucracy as the ruling class.¹⁴ The admission about the innovators leaves Wittfogel with remarkably little basis for claiming that Marx "should have had no real difficulty" in giving an answer to a question that no one had even asked as far as Wittfogel knows.

All he has is the indubitable fact that Jones and Mill had mentioned the *existence* of state officials in the Oriental society. To hint at a contrast, then, Wittfogel must actually suggest that Marx failed to note even the *existence* of anybody in the Oriental state except the individual monarch. How he manages this testifies to the advantages of being an ex-Comintern wrangler. The following statement appears:

Marx established a ruling class as the main beneficiaries of economic privilege [in other societies], whereas with regard to government-dominated Oriental society he was satisfied to mention a single person, the ruler, or an institutional abstraction, "the state."¹⁵

A careful reexamination of this extraordinary statement turns up the possibility that this is not a summary statement (as it would appear to the ordinary literate reader) but that it applies only to certain previously mentioned passages in Marx. That is, in *these* passages Marx mentions only a single person or the state. If this were really all Wittfogel was saying, then it would be quite irrelevant. It is unquestionable that Marx—and everyone else, including Jones and Mill—*usually* referred to the political power by speaking of the sovereign, the Crown, and the like. It is likewise unquestionable that he usually did this not only in connection with Oriental society but in connection with the Prussian state and any other absolutism. Wittfogel's statement plays a crucial role in the argument only insofar as it is misleading.

We have seen in our last three chapters that Marx referred plentifully (more so than Jones and Mill) to the officialdom of the Oriental despotisms, when there was a reason for so doing. Wittfogel himself mentions that, in the fourth volume of *Capital*, Marx cites precisely the passage in Jones about the state and its officers, as well as a long passage by Bernier in his correspondence.¹⁶ Does Marx get points for this? It is only another reason for denouncing him: with Wittfogel, it's Heads I win, tails you lose. About these two citations by Marx, Wittfogel complains they prove that Marx *did* "know of . . . persons who, in Asiatic society, shared the surplus with the sovereign"—and therefore presumably "should have had no difficulty." Then any officials who *share the surplus* with the sovereign power are thereby constituted as the ruling class? This foolishness is the only argument made on the subject.

In another place, a summary statement, Wittfogel asserts that Marx "crippled" the concept of an Asiatic society "by dropping the idea of a bureaucratic ruling class."¹⁷ Whose idea was *dropped*? Not Marx's own, for Wittfogel denies he ever put it forward. Not that of Jones or Mill, for Wittfogel admits they never had it.

It remains now to emphasize that there *was* a special contribution made by Jones and Mill to the understanding of Oriental society, one that Marx repeatedly praised. It did not pertain to the political structure (state or bureaucracy), nor to innovating the concept of an Asiatic or Oriental society. Their positive contribution was to the economic analysis of these societies. This service is alluded to in Marx's remark in 1857, in praise of the classical economists, that "only when the self-criticism of bourgeois society had begun was bourgeois political economy able to understand the feudal, ancient, and Oriental economies." In this field Marx gave the palm to Jones, on the ground of his "sense of the *historical* differences in modes of production," and considered

Mill inferior in this respect as well as a mediocrity in general.¹⁸ Both Jones and Mill were experts on India particularly, rather than China, for both were involved with the British administration of India in their working lives.*

4. THE DREAM OF ENLIGHTENED DESPOTISM

The real career of the Oriental-despotism concept dates back two centuries and more before Jones and Mill.

The European discovery of the wonders of Chinese society began with the merchant adventurers of the sixteenth century, and the first knowledgeable reports were brought by the missionaries who followed, especially the Jesuits. The latter, "the greatest trading company of Europe," were especially influential in arousing the interest and admiration of the European public. The praise heaped on Chinese society by Jesuit missionaries mounted up through the eighteenth century.²⁰

The European intellectual and social world echoed this admiration (contrary to Wittfogel's assertion)²¹ with few exceptions. There is a considerable literature on the wave of Sinophilism that gathered strength by the seventeenth century; and "It was in the following century—the Age of Enlightenment—that the spirit of Chinese culture reigned supreme. . . . Thus by the middle of the eighteenth century Sinomania had become one of the chief cults of the time." . . . "In religious, philosophical, political, and economic fields France turned to the East for enlightenment." The much-publicized portrait of Chinese institutions "afforded a rallying point for many advocates of reform" as the "*rêve chinois*" was popularized.²²

This Chinese Dream had more than one source, but let us concentrate on its roots in an important sociopolitical development.

* Jones succeeded Malthus in the chair of political economy and history at the East India College at Haileybury, a training school for the Indian bureaucracy. Mill was a kingpin in that British Indian bureaucracy which Marx riddled with derisive denunciation. He became Chief Examiner at India House (head of the bureaucracy, in effect) shortly before dissolution was proposed in 1857, in time to take on the job of theorizing and composing the argument for the defense of the East India Company (as his father had done in 1833). In both cases, writes biographer Packe, "they were convinced that in India, as in primitive communities of the ancient world, despotism was the only possible system for the time, and in this sense they believed the Company to be unrivalled." Called radicals in England, "for India they were more tory than the Tories."¹⁹

The rise of the absolutist state out of polycentric feudalism established the idea that the general welfare could best be furthered by a firm state power based on a centralized bureaucracy, which subordinated the warring elements of civil society to overall control. But in practice, this new state power was accompanied by arbitrary injustice, harsh oppressions, corruption, and incompetence. If only the absolutist welfare state could be purged of its bad side! The notion of an idealized absolutism is familiar to us as the yearning for an enlightened despotism that filled the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment.

As H. Jacoby has pointed out, "These ideas were not at all put forward simply by apologists and propagandists for royal power, but no less by utopian visionaries, who were out to project the image of a better state." If for Hobbes the state (the absolute state) was an artificial contrivance to protect and benefit the people, then it was inevitable that advanced thinkers should look forward to an ideal Leviathan where the contrivance of society's welfare through a perfected bureaucracy was pushed to its furthest thinkable point. This represents the real root of the early (pre-1789) utopianism of Thomas More, Campanella, Morelly, and others.²³

The conceptions of an enlightened despotism and the social idealism of the original utopianism were, then, of a piece. If Richelieu, the political engineer of the absolutist state, already put forward the essential concept of monolithism in his "*un roi, une foi, une loi*," it is also true, as Tocqueville remarked in an analysis that should be read in its entirety, that "The modern [1856] idea of a single class of citizens on an equal footing would certainly have pleased Richelieu, since equality of this kind facilitates the exercise of power."²⁴ Or more generally: bureaucratic despotism tended to press in the direction of reducing everybody to the state of a mass of administered atoms, which it then celebrated as equality and fraternity.*

* The point is underlined by the fact that Tocqueville himself, who sees this clearly in 1856, is still imprisoned within the same conception. He writes of the French people that by 1789 "They had come to regard the ideal social system as one whose aristocracy consisted exclusively of government officials and in which an all-powerful bureaucracy not only took charge of affairs of state but controlled men's private lives." But he admits that his own objection is only to the plebeian cast of this development. He sighs for an autocratic revolution from above, rather than a destructive rebellion from below:

An absolute monarch would have been a far less dangerous innovator. Personally . . . I cannot help feeling that had this revolution, instead of being carried out by the masses on behalf of the sovereignty of the people, been the work of an enlightened autocrat, it might well have left us better fitted to develop in due course into a free nation.²⁵

This is why the characteristic political attitude of the Enlightenment, as is well known, was a yearning for a *good* despotism (*enlightened* despotism)—whether in China, Egypt, Inca Peru, Jesuit Paraguay, or Catherine's Russia. This attitude was well known to Marx, of course, who mentions the phenomenon in connection with the Russophile cult of the period, which went hand in hand with the Sinophile dream. Of the Bonapartist Karl Vogt, who was also an admirer of Russian czarism, Marx wrote:

Crying up phrases about Russia as the lord protector of liberalism and national aspirations is not new. Catharine II was celebrated as the banner-bearer of progress by a whole host of French and German Enlighteners. The "noble" Alexander I . . . in his time played the role of the hero of liberalism in all of Europe. Didn't he rejoice Finland with the blessings of Russian civilization? [And so on, until] Nicholas too was greeted before 1830 as a hero liberating nationalities, in every language with or without the help of rhyme.²⁶

And just as we have interpreted More's Utopia as an idealized extrapolation of absolute despotism, so also Marx interpreted Plato's Republic (whose institutions were traditionally regarded as communistic) as an idealization of the Egyptian system as it appeared to Greek eyes:

Plato's Republic, insofar as division of labor is treated in it as the formative principle of the state, is merely the Athenian idealization of the Egyptian system of castes, Egypt having served as the model of an industrial country to many of his contemporaries also. . . .²⁷

It was the vogue of enlightened despotism among the Enlighteners that provided the real context for the career of Oriental despotism that flourished in the European intellectual and political world right up to Marx's day, in one form or another.

5. SINOMANIA IN GERMANY

The Sinophile cult of the Enlightenment meant that Oriental despotism was cried up as a model state and society. Two things must be kept clear that are blurred by Wittfogel: (1) This admiration was felt not *in spite of* the despotism of the regime but because it was viewed as a good despotism, the right kind of despotism; and (2) what was admired even more than the paternal beneficence of the emperor was the

competence, efficiency, and effectiveness of the administrative apparatus, the mandarin bureaucracy. One of the odd notions in Wittfogel is that the existence of the Oriental bureaucracy had to be discovered in the nineteenth century. On the contrary, from close to the beginning of the European infatuation with China, it was the performance of the state bureaucracy that was in the forefront.

The first great name in the Sinophile movement was, as it happens, a German, though the French later assumed leadership. Leibniz's *Novissima Sinica* ("Latest News from China") of 1697, based on the Jesuits' reports, called for Chinese missionaries to teach Europe the good life. It was Leibniz who gave the first strong impulse to both the French and German Enlighteners in presenting the Chinese despotism as a model.²⁸ Scholar, mathematician, and philosopher, Leibniz was also deeply concerned with politics and economic development. His Protestantism did not get in the way of his strong support of the Jesuit operation in China, which was in line with "the Leibnizian formula for missionary penetration through cultural and commercial exchange." The China cult was important in influencing the introduction of the merit system of civil-service examination for the state bureaucracies of France and Britain, perhaps also of Prussia, which began this system first in Europe. Leibniz may have stimulated this, as he did the establishment of at least one economic monopoly as a Prussian state enterprise.²⁹

The positive value of Chinese despotism was very clear to Leibniz:

For to win the mind of a single man, such as the czar or the monarch of China, and to turn it to good ends, by inspiring in him a zeal for the glory of God and for the perfection of mankind, this is more than winning a hundred battles, because on the will of such men several million others depend.

On the other hand, the Chinese system was equally effective in keeping the masses quiet while their "perfection" was being effected:

Indeed, it is difficult to describe how beautifully all the laws of the Chinese, in contrast to those of other peoples, are directed to the achievement of public tranquillity and the establishment of social order, so that men shall be disrupted in their relations as little as possible.³⁰

The autocrat, converted to "progress," octroys his reforms from above, while the people obey in silence and business is not disrupted: a real utopia.

Leibniz established the pattern for admiring this Oriental despotism, followed by other influential Germans including Christian Wolff and A. H. Francke. (Grimm was one of the exceptions in Germany as

Fénelon, Montesquieu, and Rousseau were in France.) Von Justi was a worthy successor among the Enlighteners. He "counterposed the European states, governed irrationally by their rulers and the latter's henchmen, to the well-ordered bureaucratic administration of China. In China there was not only one or two ministers with government authority but a whole administrative apparatus." In China, wrote von Justi, "a great mass of state servants" were organized into working ranks, their numbers running to 13,600:

It is the special advantage of the Chinese monarchy that its principles, motives, conceptions, and ways have the aim of getting the state servants, or the mandarins who are so designated, to regard themselves in all matters as fathers of the people. . . .

He saw the despotic regime as an approach to a real welfare state, which would be perfected in proportion to the advance in *Polizeiwissenschaft* (the seventeenth-century term for social administration).³¹

Herder, while not uncritical of Asiatic despotism, recognized that the emperor of China was not simply an absolute despot but himself subordinate to the yoke of tradition—that is, the system. He was entirely aware of the mandarin state and officialdom in general, and spoke of the people's "slavish service" to the "state machine."³²

6. FRANCE: VOLTAIRE TO QUESNAY

The China cult reached its zenith in intensity and influence in the land of Voltaire, who became the leading encomiast of the Oriental despotism. In a play, in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, and particularly in his *Essai sur les Mœurs*, he portrayed China with uncritical enthusiasm as a social and political Eden of state wisdom and tolerance which put European institutions in an unflattering light. Previously, Voltaire had thought to find the ideal enlightened despot in Frederick the Great (that "inventor of patriarchal despotism," as Marx called him),³³ but he was disillusioned in Berlin; he did not make the mistake of trying to visit Peking.³⁴ Other *philosophes* and their admirers were no less involved in the apotheosis of the *rêve chinois*, such as Helvetius and Madame Pompadour.

In mid-eighteenth century, three series of "Chinese letters" with wide popular appeal reinforced the Sinomania. Alongside the Marquis d'Argens' *Lettres Chinoises* and Goldsmith's *A Citizen of the World*, it was Etienne de Silhouette's *La Balance Chinoise* that was most interest-

ing. Silhouette's emphasis was on the perfection of the bureaucracy (which was the "balance" of the title, countervailing the sovereign power). The Chinese "recognize . . . no rank but that appertaining to a man's office"; promotion in government service is for virtue and ability only; the efficiency of the governmental machinery is lauded, the "perfect mandarin" being the ideal state official; hence the emperor, though a despot, cannot abuse his despotic power. "The state has regulated all things, even the most minute. . . ." ³⁵

Although, as mentioned, there was a minority among the Enlighteners who viewed the China cult with dubiety or reserve, it was the spokesmen for the old feudal aristocracy whose power had been curtailed by absolutism who strongly attacked the centralized bureaucratic state perfected by Richelieu and, in works published abroad, "pressed the similarity of the bureaucratic absolute monarchy with the bureaucratic despots of Oriental society." ³⁶

Bernier—whose *Travels*, read by Marx in 1853, was important in concretizing the latter's analysis of Oriental society—is chock-full of discussions and descriptions of the Mogul bureaucracies in India, including a long section detailing their numbers, varieties, hierarchical grades, and so on, as well as the great burden on the land and the people to satisfy their exactions. The French traveler, whose power of observation Marx lauded, notes more than once that the "tyranny" of the top bureaucrats is *stronger* than the sovereign power, and that the "reins of government" are often in the hands of viziers while the emperor remains "profoundly ignorant of the domestic and political condition of his empire." In another work, published 1688, Bernier took the usual contemporaneous view of China as a humane and enlightened despotism based not on force but on virtue, persuasion, and love. ³⁷

In all this adulatory literature, as well as in the writings of holdouts like Montesquieu, ³⁸ the Chinese and Indian (Mogul) empires were freely and uninhibitedly labeled Oriental or Eastern *despotisms*, the word implying no necessary disapproval. Chronologically speaking, the apogee of the glorification of the Oriental despotisms as such came with that school of economists who first represented the bourgeois spirit in the absolutist state: the Physiocrats. Their head was Quesnay, a writer whose works Marx studied intensively. What has been called Quesnay's "political testament" ³⁹ was his propaganda pamphlet *Le Despotisme de la Chine* (1767), unmatched in its eulogy of the Chinese despotism on the basis of the Jesuits' testimonials.

The eminent "Confucius of Europe" (so called by his admirers) begins his work with a straightforward defense of the term *despotism*,

explaining that China is the good kind of despotism. Again and again, repetitiously, the bureaucratic machinery of the officialdom is described, for this emphasis on the countervailing power of the bureaucracy is part of his polemic against Montesquieu. Quesnay explains in some detail that the (formally) absolute power of the emperor is really tempered by the de facto power of the officialdom, and argues that an emperor who persisted in disregarding "remonstrances" by the mandarins would eventually have to yield. The hierarchical organization of the bureaucracy is described in detail. A host and multitude of mandarins carry on administration, and "stamp out sects and errors at their inception, in order to preserve the true and solid doctrine in all its purity." (The last words of the booklet celebrate China's "inherently stable order.") Quesnay explains that the "nobility" is "no hereditary nobility," for he is using this European term to mean the actual ruling class: "Only two classes may be distinguished among the Chinese people, the nobility and the people; the first include the princes of the blood, those with titles, the mandarins, and the scholars; the second, the husbandmen, merchants, artisans, etc." He describes the various "classes of scholars," who are also the administrators, below the mandarin, while the war mandarins "are divided into nine classes," and so on.⁴⁰

Tocqueville, quite rightly if superficially, emphasized that the Physiocrats were not only principled supporters of enlightened despotism, but more, tended toward what we might today call totalitarianism: that is, they wished to destroy all centers of countervailing influence other than the central state power and to reduce all elements of the population to equally atomized individual fragments dependent on the beneficence of the bureaucratic state. Since Tocqueville's definition of *democracy* was equality of status, he accepted the contemporary label of democratic despotism for this political ideal of Quesnay's comrades.⁴¹

"The state . . . should be all-powerful," was the opinion of the Physiocrat Mercier de la Rivière. "We must see to it that the state rightly understands its duty and then give it a free hand," said another Physiocrat.

Indeed, all thinkers of the period [continued Tocqueville], from Quesnay to the Abbé Baudeau, were of the same opinion . . . the new form of government contemplated by them was to be modeled to some extent on the monarchical government then in force, which bulked large in their vision of the ideal regime.

According to the Economists [Physiocrats] the function of the state was not merely one of ruling the nation, but also that of

recasting it in a given mold, of shaping the mentality of the population as a whole in accordance with a predetermined model. . . . In short, they set no limit to its rights and powers; its duty was not merely to reform but to transform the French nation—a task of which the central power alone was capable. “The state makes men exactly what it wishes them to be.” This remark of Baudeau’s sums up the Economists’ approach to the subject. . . .

Being unable to find anything in contemporary Europe corresponding to this ideal state they dreamed of, our Economists turned their eyes to the Far East, and it is no exaggeration to say that not one of them fails, in some part of his writings, to voice an immense enthusiasm for China and all things Chinese.⁴²

Tocqueville then links this Sinocultist movement with “the subversive theories of what today [1856] is known as socialism,” referring to Morelly.⁴³ He is only half right, for he ignores the fact that the other prominent precursor of French socialism, Mably, was one of the few who publicly attacked the pro-Chinese views of Quesnay and Mercier de la Rivière.⁴⁴

In his economic notebooks on the Physiocrats, Marx digressed to take passing cognizance of their political views too. He notes Quesnay’s advocacy of absolutism and of the existence of “only one supreme power” in government. He quotes Mercier de la Rivière’s saying that by nature man “is intended to live under a despotism.” Yet, says Marx—

It was precisely this school, with its *laissez faire, laissez aller*, that overthrew Colbertism and all forms of government interference in the activities of bourgeois society. . . . The glorification of landed property [in Physiocratic theory] in practice turns into the demand that taxes should be put exclusively on ground rent . . . [and this implies] the virtual confiscation of landed property by the state. . . . For all their sham feudal pretences the Physiocrats were working hand in hand with the Encyclopedists!⁴⁵

Surely there has scarcely been a more mind-boggling contradiction, formally speaking, than the fact that the inventors of the very phrase *laissez faire* were also the first principled theoreticians of the all-encompassing despotic state in modern times. Coming in the dawn years of capitalism, this historical fact prefigures the combination, in its twilight period, of enthusiasm for authoritarian state controls in the name of free enterprise. The formal contradiction is easily resolved in terms of class interests: Let alone, to be sure, but let *whom* alone?

Marx analyzed the dawning contradiction with his thesis that the Physiocrats were the “first systematic spokesmen of capital” in real-

ity,⁴⁶ while operating within the power context of the absolute monarchy. Intellectually, Quesnay's school heaped praise on an Oriental despotism which subordinated the rights of private property to the state, but in fact they had no desire to import *this* feature into Europe. The growing bourgeois system needed a bureaucratic despotism that could combine efficiency and virtue, for the purpose of "recasting [the nation] in a given mold," as required by the new class whose interests also molded the ideas of the Physiocratic school.

In short, a formal, scholastic case could be made out that the Sinocultist wave preceding the French Revolution was a movement for a social system and type of state basically different from the bourgeois as well as the feudal—one that we might anachronistically call bureaucratic collectivist of a sort; but this superficial case would be historically misleading in mistaking intellectual foreplay for social reality. The play of freefloating ideas, as always, revealed potentialities, but it was going to take the unwinding of a whole historical epoch before the intellectual potential was bodied forth.

It is also significant that the cult of Oriental despotism was relatively weak in bourgeoisified England, where it was mainly a literary echo from the Continent. One need only compare Goldsmith's use of the Chinese exemplar with Voltaire's to measure the great difference. In France and Germany, Sinomania started to fade soon after Quesnay's paean of praise, that is, after the 1760s, though its place was partly taken by a new faddist enthusiasm for Hindu marvels.⁴⁷ By 1789 it was no longer a popular cult or uncritical furor, to be sure, but the conception of Oriental despotism remained altogether familiar to the intellectual world.

7. HEGEL AND ORIENTAL DESPOTISM

It is therefore not surprising (except to readers of Wittfogel) that Hegel dealt with Oriental despotism time and again, using this term and similar ones. We are told that "preoccupation with the Orient was one of the most intensive, if not *the* most intensive, preoccupation of Hegel's in Berlin." He came to Berlin in the year Marx was born, and his interest in the Orient was at its height in 1826–1827.⁴⁸

In his lectures on *The Philosophy of the Spirit* Hegel sought to differentiate "true monarchy" from Oriental despotism, since both seemed superficially to be cases where "the will of a single individual stands at the summit of the state." The difference he finds is in the

"principles of right" on which the state power is based, namely "freedom of property ownership, at any rate personal freedom, freedom of civil society, its industry and the municipalities," plus the subordination of the authorities to law.⁴⁹ He thus assumed his readers understood that Oriental despotism was inimical to European (bourgeois) conceptions of property rights.

In China, noted Hegel's encyclopedic survey in the *Philosophy of History*, the soil came to be regarded as state property at some unspecified late epoch, after which time "it was established that a ninth part of what is produced goes to the emperor." Here he also mentions the existence of forms of slavery and serfdom as well as private property in land in certain times and circumstances, but stresses that these forms are all subordinate to the overall domination of the central power: "It is necessarily true in China that the difference between slavery and freedom is not great, since all are equal before the emperor, that is, all are equally degraded." In India, he mentions, the pre-British society was "organized in nearly feudal fashion," with various princes at the head of small realms,⁵⁰ but he is definitely not claiming that the society was feudal in some European sense. The remark is descriptive, not analytical, and the rest of the description is plainly alien to European feudalism.

In short, although Hegel does not pose the modern question of spotting social systems in time and space, he not only makes no effort to assimilate the Orient to familiar European forms, but, on the contrary, wishes to emphasize that Oriental social and political forms are fossil representatives of a first stage of human history that is long behind Europe.

For Hegel, of course, the stages of world history go hand in hand with corresponding steps in man's ascent to freedom, marked also by an ascent in political forms. "History begins" in China, and despotism in the Orient marks "the childhood of history." It is an inconvenience for his schema that, while despotism comes first in man's development, followed by the classical duo of aristocracy and democracy, it is monarchy that represents the culmination of progress;⁵¹ yet he must admit that despotism is one variety of monarchy! The embarrassment is solved by dividing monarchy into despotism and monarchy proper, or "true monarchy," which is the blessed state of affairs that obtains when one-man rule is used only to effectuate whatever has become "necessary" in civil society and the state through the impact of Reason in history.⁵² Unlike despotism, true monarchy does not atomize individuals into depersonalized fragments by the crushing force of the state but encourages individuality to flower (this being freedom). Hegel,

therefore, is exercised to demonstrate the basic gulf between Oriental despotism, which represents political childhood, and the absolute monarchy of his day, which represents maturity. Far from wanting to assimilate Oriental society to European forms, Hegel's constant unspoken premise is that Oriental despotism must be shown to be as alien to modern Europe as a Manchu to a Hohenzollern.

Hegel has to distinguish despotism in general from the sovereign power which wields force, for state sovereignty is not *merely* a matter of force. "But despotism denotes in general the condition of lawlessness where a particular will as such—whether of a monarch or a people (ochlocracy [mob rule])—counts as law, or rather counts instead of law. . . ." Despotism is like "the purely feudal monarchies that formerly existed" in Europe and which were marked by constant revolts, wars, and outrages, "because under such conditions the division of the state's business is merely mechanical, since its sectors are handed over to vassals, pashas, etc." Despotism reduces the scene to a polarization of "the princes and the people" in which "the latter have an effect, if at all, merely as a destructive mass versus the organized structure." Given an organic role in the state system by the true monarchy, the masses will pursue their interests in a legal, orderly way; otherwise they run wild. "In despotic states, therefore, the despot goes easy on the people," who even pay little taxes!⁵³ It is clear that Hegel's criticism of despotism is not that this system oppresses the masses particularly: his objections focus on what despotism does to the upper strata who have to grovel before the emperor like everybody else. The ascent to freedom will be a boon mainly for the propertied magnates whom despotism represses. From this new direction it is implicit that there is a gulf between despotism and modern monarchy.

Hegel is also concerned about the way in which different societies determine division into classes (*Stände*).^{*} If in modern Europe "free

^{*} In fact, Hegel went further: he was quite aware of the origin of the state in class divisions and property relations. This is indicated twice in the *Philosophy of History*, first in connection with the river-valley plains that saw the rise of the Oriental states:

In these lands great empires arise and great states begin to be established. For agriculture, which predominates here as the prime principle of individuals' subsistence, is oriented around the regularity of the seasons and the operations so regulated: landed property begins, and the juridical relations connected with it; that is, the bases and foundations of the state, which becomes possible only under these conditions.

The second case concerns the United States and anticipates a slice of Turner's frontier thesis. The United States is "the land of the future" but its political present has not yet jelled, because the pressure of population is constantly relieved by the westward movement to open lands, which thereby provides a

dom" means that the arbitrary power of the sovereign is used to effectuate only what is Necessary and Rational, then by contrast, in the Orient as in the ancient world, the division into classes "was left to the governing class, as in the Platonic state [Plato's Republic] . . . or was simply a matter of *birth*, as in the Indian castes."⁵⁵ Or worse, class divisions may be virtually atomized as in China. Thus Hegel shows that the class system of Europe is not simply an arbitrary imposition from above as in the past, but the exercise of mature sovereignty within the framework of necessity and reason.

This conditions his class analyses of the despotisms. In Oriental society, "there is only a class of lords and thralls, it is the sphere of despotism," he remarks in his *History of Philosophy*,⁵⁶ and when he goes on to explain that "fear is the ruling category" there (a clear echo of Montesquieu's basic indictment) it is plain whose fear is meant concretely. His complaint is that despotism breaks up the class system in a bad way: "The [class] distinctions that develop in accordance with the various aspects of mores, government, and state, become . . . stodgy, complicated, and superstitious rituals, accidents of personal power and arbitrary domineering, and the arrangement into classes undergoes a natural rigidification into castes."⁵⁷ In this "patriarchal despotism" where the emperor's "fatherly solicitude" runs everything, even his upper-class subjects are legally minors, and "No independent categories or classes have interests to protect for themselves, as in India, for everything is managed and superintended from above." Thus "In China the people are dependent on the laws and moral will of the emperor without distinction of classes," but this is bad, for "this very equality is not a triumphant testimonial to a person's inner worth but to a low level of self-esteem that has not yet attained to recognizing distinctions."⁵⁸

To put it somewhat anachronistically, Hegel seems to be complaining that this Oriental despotism is a classless society of equals: "Outside

outlet for the chief source of discontent and maintains the status quo in civil society. (The frontier thesis is also applied to Europe: "Had the old Teutonic forests still existed, then surely the French Revolution would not have taken place.") Hence no state is yet required in the United States, for besides the absence of internal pressure, there is no danger from the neighboring states. A "firm cohesion" is not yet needed,

for a real state and a real government develop only if there is already a distinction in classes [*Stände*], if wealth and poverty have become very great and the situation arises where a big mass of the people can no longer satisfy their needs in the way they are used to.

Needless to say, Hegel does not conclude that the state comes in as a repressive or class force.⁵⁴

of the emperor there is among the Chinese no specially distinguished class [or rank, *Stand*], no nobility. Only the princes of the imperial house and the sons of ministers enjoy any superior rank, more by their position than by their birth. Otherwise, all count as equals. Since in China equality rules, yet without freedom, despotism is necessarily the mode of government."⁵⁹ The point is very like the one that Tocqueville is going to make later. (But we shall have to mention that this passage is followed without a pause by his account of the wonderful Oriental bureaucracy.)

8. HEGEL TO MARX

Also like Tocqueville later, Hegel turns this criticism of Oriental despotism into a criticism of what we might nowadays call something like totalitarianism, that is, a society so rigidified by constraints from above that there is no allowance for the play of countervailing forces even in the upper strata, at least formally. He has to make do without the modern term. In his lectures on aesthetics, he remarks that the "unfree Oriental Unity"—that is, the monolithism of state power in the Oriental system—"results in religious and political despotism" because the individual has no rights as a person and therefore no footing of his own. Elsewhere: "Under the Asian despots, individuality is allowed no validity as such," whereas it is respected in modern Europe. "The Oriental knew, and still knows, only that *One* is free," for all the freedom allocated by history to this toddler-society is concentrated in the one-man ruler who singly represented the Unity of society through the Fatherhood of all. "For outside the One Power, before which nothing can take independent form, there exists nothing but gruesome arbitrariness ranging at large to no one's good."⁶⁰

In a comparison with the situation in India, he remarks that "China is all state" (as one would say an object is all steel); and in another comparison, that "the substantive totality [*Ganze*]" seen in China is not found in Persia. (Incidentally, for Hegel it is China that is "quite characteristically Oriental," while India and Persia compare with Greece and Rome.)⁶¹

It is instructive that it is as easy for Hegel to show that China is "all state" as that it is "no state," and that he does both, though not in the same book. In his *Philosophy of History*: "if China is all state, the Indian political system is only a people, not a state," since in Indi-

there is no principle of freedom located anywhere, not even in a monarch; it is merely the most arbitrary and evil despotism, not a true state. But in his *Philosophy of Right*, he wants to take a fall out of the advocates of church-state unity, and so argues: "Under Oriental despotism is found that oft-desired unity of church and state—but thereby the state does not exist: not the self-conscious formation based on lawfulness, free ethicality, and organic development which is alone worthy of the spirit." This elimination of the state's existence in Oriental despotism does not stop Hegel from writing (elsewhere) voluminously about the state in China, and even of its "perfected machinery" for "the unity of the state organization."⁶²

This ambivalence, displayed over the question whether China is all state or no state, crops up also in Hegel's account of the Chinese bureaucracy. Here the realities of Prussian statism preserve the remnants of the Chinese Dream. The existence of a pervasive bureaucracy in this childhood-society can hardly be considered an infantile trait when it is found also in the state which crowns the ages, Prussia. To continue a passage already begun:

. . . all count as equals, and only those take part in government administration who possess skill in it. Offices are thus filled by those most highly educated in a scholarly way [*wissenschaftlich*]. Therefore the Chinese state has often been put forward as an ideal that should serve as a model even for us.⁶³

The praise is put forward secondhand but not negated, except for the caveats previously mentioned: equality minus freedom equals despotism. Explaining that "the government proceeds exclusively from the emperor, who carries it on as a hierarchy of officials or mandarins," Hegel lays in pages of detailed description of the bureaucracy: its numbers, varieties, gradations, classifications, and checks.⁶⁴ "The whole of this administration is thus covered with a network of officials. . . . Everything is arranged with the minutest precision. . . ."

This hierarchy of officials or mandarins—is it aristocracy? We have seen why Hegel denied that China had an aristocracy or nobility at least in the European sense. If modern jargon had existed, he would have been able to explain that it was a meritocracy, for he does explain it is "by the merit that anyone may acquire" that one attains to any high position in the state.⁶⁵ But, he would have to add, it is a meritocracy which is unfortunately lacking all autonomy with respect to the One Power above.

From all this it is clear that the emperor is the central point around which everything revolves and to which everything refers

back, and it is on the emperor that thereby depends the welfare of the land and the people. The whole hierarchy of the administration works more or less according to a routine that becomes a convenient habit when things are quiet. It goes its own way first, last and always, with the uniformity and regularity of nature's course; only, the Emperor is supposed to be its alert, ever vigilant, and self-active soul.⁶⁶

Now the importance to us of Hegel's portrayal of Oriental despotism does not depend on its accuracy in the light of later knowledge, which generally downgraded the emperor's unitary power and gave more emphasis to the power- or property-holding classes, which Hegel represented as thoroughly atomized under the thumb of the Imperial One. Its importance lies in the fact (1) that Hegel, who early absorbed the literature of the Enlightenment, takes his place in the long line of European thinkers and writers who since 1585 had published copious descriptions and analyses of Oriental despotism, its hierarchy, its bureaucracy, and its form of society; and (2) that Marx early absorbed, not only the literature of the Enlightenment like any other intelligent student of the 1830s, but in particular these writings of Hegel.

It would be supererogatory to explain that Marx absorbed Hegel, but it may be worth mentioning that most of our references to the *Philosophy of Right* come from the same part of that book that Marx dissected minutely in 1843; and that in *The German Ideology*, Marx refers repeatedly to Hegel's views on China as he ridicules Stirner for clumsily parroting Hegel's opinion of Chinese virtues, as expressed in the *Philosophy of History*.⁶⁷ In the discussion of precapitalist economic formations in the *Grundrisse* notes, Marx frequently makes use of Hegel's concept of Unity (*Einheit*) as underlining the role of the Oriental despot. While departing basically from Hegel's historical analysis, of course, Marx retains a number of other concepts, notably that of the Orient's static historical nature, so prominent in Hegel.⁶⁸

9. HESS AND CUSTINE

Perhaps we can now appreciate the enormity of Wittfogel's claim that it took some incidental words in Jones and Mill to enlighten Marx (or any other well-informed literatus of the time) about the existence of a concept of Oriental society and its officialdom, so that he aban-

doned party politics in despair as the discovery pierced his soul. This after Hegel!*

Hegel was not the only one from whom Marx heard about Oriental despotism in his student days. The pioneer of comparative geography Karl Ritter was one of the live eminences at the University of Berlin in those days, and Marx took his course in General Geography in 1838.⁷⁰ Ritter gave considerable attention to Oriental society—with stress on material and social factors, too—in his works and doubtless in his lectures.

Then there was Moses Hess, whose collaboration with the young Marx has been noted in Part I. In a couple of articles in 1845 Hess made some revealing references to Oriental despotism. In one article, he charged that Weitling's type of communism would inevitably lead to "the destruction of all freedom, reversion to an Oriental despotism or some other already obsolete condition of lordship and servitude." In another essay he argued that if communism were really a system of forced labor, as painted by the bourgeoisie, it would run afoul of the sense of freedom of the Western peoples "who would not stand for any Oriental despotism."⁷¹

In these popular propaganda articles, Hess assumed general familiarity on the part of the educated public with the authoritarian features of Oriental despotism which already made it a bogey if regarded as the threatened outcome of communism. A similar reference to Oriental despotism as a bogey may be found in an early article by the young Engels.⁷²

This familiar use of Oriental despotism by the German left was no doubt encouraged by the copious material on the Russian variety that pervaded the general press and the columns of the Paris *Vorwärts* in 1844. The *Vorwärts* was a semiweekly published for the German emigrants in France during that year; in the spring Marx and his friends began to collaborate with it closely and influence its politics in a radical direction.⁷³ Marx and Engels published material in fourteen issues of

* Of course Wittfogel knows Hegel's writings on China; in 1931 he published an article entitled "Hegel über China" in the Comintern's theoretical journal. A footnote in *Oriental Despotism* mentions cryptically that in 1931 he "pointed . . . to Hegel as possibly [!] having influenced Marx," adding: "but I did not then realize the fundamental dependence of Marx on the classical economists." That is all. Two pages before, Hegel had been listed as one of "the unilinealists of the nineteenth century" who "disregarded hydraulic society." This, the only statement made in the book about Hegel's views, is quite false, as Wittfogel's 1931 article made clear.⁶⁹

the paper. The *Vorwärts* carried copious excerpts from a book just published by Marc Fournier in collaboration with the German radical Bornstedt, *Russie, Allemagne et France*. This in turn followed the sensational impact made about the same time by the book *La Russie en 1839*, by the Marquis de Custine, published in 1843 and immediately translated into German and English. Custine's book was of great importance in this period, and M. Rubel is probably right in claiming that Marx was much influenced by its formulations.⁷⁴

The Marquis de Custine was a class-conscious feudal aristocrat whose travels not only made books but took him away from a France that alienated him. He was as hostile to absolutism as to democracy, hence sensitive to a despotism that made bondsmen out of the Russian nobility. During his sojourn in St. Petersburg he was dazzled by the czar's personal attentions though repelled by the regime, and at first his letters reflect the illusion that the Crown is the all-in-all of the state. Only after a sojourn in Moscow and the provinces does his realization come that the bureaucracy wields a collective power standing even above the czar's.

Nicholas himself tells him that the regime is a despotism: "it is the essence of my government." Custine adds that it is an *Oriental* despotism. Especially after Moscow, he repeats that the land lies between the Occident and the Orient, that Moscow is "between London and Peking."⁷⁵

Custine's early view of the czar as the One Power resembles Hegel's of the Chinese emperor: "The empire is the emperor." It is his will "which alone animates the country," like "the patriarchal tyranny of the Asiatic governments." Acute observer in the tradition of Bernier, he early notes the shadowy background figures of the officialdom who seem to be saying, "Make way, I am one of the members of the grand machine of state." Yet in Petersburg he snorts at the ornate ministry buildings, "Temples erected to clerks!" In his first sketch of the "class of men" constituting the bureaucracy, he sees them only as instruments of the throne and a danger to the state.⁷⁶

After traveling in the interior, he abandons his original notion that the czar's absolutism really means that equality reigns below him; he vaguely sees castes and mutually antagonistic secondary powers. The nobles can do what they please on their own estates "but the country is not governed by them." Where then is the power? He finally writes down, and elaborates, the thesis that it is the bureaucracy that really rules the vast state:

Russia is governed by a class of subaltern employés, transferred direct from the public schools to the public administration. . . . By virtue of their offices, these despots oppress the country with impunity, and incommode even the Emperor; who perceives, with astonishment, that he is not so powerful as he imagined, though he dares not complain or even confess it to himself. This is the bureaucracy, a power terrible everywhere, because its abuses are always made in the name of order, but more terrible in Russia than anywhere else. When we see administrative tyranny acting under Imperial despotism, we may tremble for a land. . . .⁷⁷

Soon he concludes of this "class of subaltern employés, or secondary nobility":

This, indeed, is the class which, in spite of the Emperor, governs the empire. . . . These new men . . . are also masters of the supreme master; and are the preparers likewise of a revolution in Russia. . . .

These are old enemies created by the emperors themselves, in their distrust of the old nobility . . . a host of commissioners and deputies, the greater number of foreign origin. . . .⁷⁸

10. THE IMAGE OF THE ORIENTAL BUREAUCRACY

The contemporaneous brouhaha over Custine's portrait of Russia was due to its exposé of the progressive pretensions of this despotism. It was not the notion of a bureaucratic ruling class that disturbed the readers.

An investigation of this corner of intellectual history would be interesting, though beyond the call of duty here. A couple of examples specially pertaining to Marx may be useful, with focus on the midpoint of the nineteenth century as Marx started writing about the subject.

1. We know that one of the important books Marx used and often quoted in his writings on India was George Campbell's knowledgeable *Modern India*, 1852. Campbell, an old India hand, shows constant interest in the varieties of social systems there. He notes areas of slavery, feudal forms, and so on, while stressing that these forms are not predominant. He describes the nature of the village organization as a stateless community (not his term). And as for the "centralized despotism" of the Mogul imperial power, he classifies it directly as an

Oriental despotism. Moreover, unlike Jones or Mill or Wittfogel's other stick-figures, Campbell takes up and answers the question of the ruling social power in this state: The "only aristocracy," he writes, is the officialdom, which is headed by the sovereign. There is "nothing feudal" in the composition of this empire, he avers. Naturally, he devotes detailed attention to the organization of the administrative cadres that make up the governing bureaucracy.⁷⁹

None of these observations is made by Campbell as a discovery or revelation, nor even as a fresh or original thought.

2. Major encyclopedias of a period usually reflect thought about a decade behind. In all the leading encyclopedias at mid-century, it goes without saying, detailed attention was paid to the Oriental bureaucracies such as cannot be found in Jones or Mill. It was standard fare in such works as the *Britannica* or *Brockhaus*. Two others are especially interesting.

In the great *Larousse du XIX^e Siècle* the article on China tells us quite matter-of-factly that, while the government is absolute, "As with all despotic governments, it is a eunuch . . . who, from behind the curtain, works the imperial puppet; hence one does not complain about the sovereign. . . . The imperial palace . . . is a veritable city, with its government and its people."⁸⁰

In the *New American Cyclopaedia*, the leftish Dana-Ripley enterprise for which Marx and Engels ground out articles, one reads that the Chinese monarchy is *not* despotic, "since the emperor is bound by ancient laws and customs, and could scarcely without danger, if he would, disregard the advice or remonstrances of his ministers or the boards of administration." There is the usual devotion of great space to what is called "the most stupendous bureaucracy in existence." Indeed, of ancient Egypt we are told outright that "The priests were the ruling class," the monarchy being limited by "the powerful hereditary privileged classes of priests and soldiers." This was an interpretation very like what Hegel had written down.⁸¹

There is no awareness in these sober encyclopedia articles, any more than in Campbell, that one should be startled by these opinions, right or wrong. The idea that some states were, or could be, ruled by bureaucracies was perfectly conventional, if not downright platitudinous. The notion that this concept was ipso facto scandalous, sacrilegious, or sinful is a distinctly modern invention, which Marx never heard of.

SPECIAL NOTE | ORIENTAL DESPOTISM
AND ENGELS

F | A Note to Chapter 22, page 535

The statement has frequently been made that Engels eventually discarded or abandoned the concepts of the Asiatic mode of production and Oriental despotism.* The kernel of fact behind this claim is that neither term appears in Engels' writings after the death of Marx. More specifically, the main exhibit is Engels' *Origin of the Family*, written in 1884, only a year after Marx's death: not only does neither term appear, but it has been argued that some statements in that book exclude the concepts by making slavery, and only slavery, the first type of class society.

Certainly Engels never mentioned, or even hinted at, any change of view in this regard. There is not the slightest evidence that *he* was aware of it. The speculation about it, in my opinion, arises from a misunderstanding of Engels' relation to the question.

THE MISAPPREHENSION ABOUT ENGELS

The difference between Engels' relation to this issue before and after Marx's death is not as great as is made out. One must be struck by the relatively minor part that Engels played with respect to this question from the beginning, ever since 1853 when Marx first raised it. His part was even less than would be indicated by the few times that he has been quoted as using the terms under discussion.

In the original correspondence of June 1853, when Marx brought up the matter with his reference to Bernier's book, Engels duly made a

* The same claim is sometimes made with respect to Marx; in fact, this extended claim is part of the official Moscow line proscribing the concept. (See Special Note E, page 631.) But there is no case made for it that requires discussion.

useful suggestion in his reply¹—and then immediately returned to the historical problem *he* had been working on (Arab and Middle East history) and his plans to learn Arabic or Persian. He never did comment on the interesting material that Marx included in his follow-up letter.² In fact, neither then nor at any subsequent time did Engels show much interest or initiative in studying or working out Asiatic social and economic history.

This was by no means an unusual facet of the division of labor, or division of interest, between the two men: on his part, Marx did not get involved in a number of the special enthusiasms developed by Engels, who pursued more than any one man could follow. Engels' attitude plainly was: "Marx is working up India and China, and that takes care of *that*." His own journalistic articles on Indian and Asian events (mainly military, to be sure) never mentioned Oriental despotism.

In fact, for the thirty years before Marx's death in 1883, there was not one occasion on which Engels independently brought up or wrote on this subject—with a questionable exception in the 1870s. The exception, of course, is *Anti-Dühring*; what is questionable about the exception is whether Engels brought it up independently. We know that Marx closely reviewed the manuscript and wrote a part of it as explained in the foreword. It is difficult to ignore the coincidence that the only substantial references to these concepts ever made by Engels occurred in the work which was written in the closest collaboration with Marx.*

In short: with a prominent exception, Engels "failed" to mention Oriental despotism or the Asiatic mode of production for three decades *before* 1883. That hardly warrants much to-do over the fact that he did not mention it after 1883. But we know that this "failure" had nothing whatever to do with disagreement or doubt about Marx's views. It simply was not his bailiwick.

ENGELS' LINE OF INTEREST

On the positive side: if Engels never showed any initiative for independent work on Asian society, which Marx was covering, he was

* There is a minor exception of the same sort that was mentioned on p. 555 above: the reference to Oriental despotism in Engels' polemic against the Russian Tkachov in 1875.³ This was exactly the sort of piece in which Marx would take detailed interest, and at Engels' behest. To be sure, Engels also used terms like "the despotic East" in referring to Russia.⁴

all the more involved in the early history of Europe. Unpublished manuscripts on the development of precapitalist society among the German tribes show his intensive work; he started on a history of Ireland; his letters show that he had done wide reading at various times on early history in a number of Scandinavian and Balkan countries—to mention a few of his projects.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that, after Marx had made him aware of Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society*, Engels rounded out Morgan's material for his own purposes with the material that he knew best and could handle with some expertise. This is sufficient to explain why his *Origin of the Family* specifically restricted itself to filling out, or illustrating, the general thesis with material from Greek, Roman, and German history, remarks about other parts of the world being incidental.

In *The Origin of the Family* itself, Engels stated in so many words that he was leaving out consideration of Asia:

Space prevents us from going into the gentile institutions still found in a more or less pure form among the most diverse savage and barbarian peoples of the present day; or into the traces of such institutions found in the ancient history of civilized nations in Asia. One or the other is met with everywhere.⁵

One may suspect that he exempted Asia from discussion not only because of space but also because it was not his field of knowledge. In any case, it is difficult to understand why this plain statement is ignored by those who make out a case for "abandonment" simply on the basis of what is *not* in the book.

When, therefore, Engels writes in his summary that "Slavery is the first form of exploitation, characteristic of the ancient [classical] world,"⁶ he is summarizing the *European* material. It is not intended as a universal recipe, not only in view of what preceded it, but in the context of the qualification contained in the statement itself. Yet it is suggested that Engels wrote this sentence as a sort of secret repudiation of the form of exploitation which *Capital* called the tributary relationship: a manner of proceeding frequent in the academic world but not in Engels.

In any case, we have here another example of the marxologists' propensity for turning passing remarks, taken in one context, into theories about something else. The term *slavery* is an especially risky subject for this enterprise, for Marx's and Engels' writings are full of examples of the very common use of the word for any intensive or despotic exploitation, or for the whole range of master-subordinate

relation in history. This broad use is not always signaled by a modifier, as in *wage-slavery*, and not confined to popular writings. For example, in the *Grundrisse* notebooks we find Marx writing, after a reference to capitalism: "All earlier forms of property condemn the greater part of humanity, the slaves, to be pure instruments of labor."⁷ This "proves" that Marx saw slavery as the content of "all" social forms earlier than capitalism. . . .

Finally, we can point out that, in a real sense, the Asiatic mode of production is not absent from *The Origin of the Family*, though the term is not used. It depends on whether the term bears Karl Marx's meaning or someone else's. Marx's Asiatic mode of production, we have explained, is identical with the general social form of primitive tribal communalism which he termed the archaic formation in his 1881 letter drafts—a form which went through changes in time, and which took different aspects in Europe and Asia. In *The Origin of the Family* there are numerous mentions of the European exemplars of this social form: the village community, the German Mark, the *naturwüchsiges Gemeinwesen*,⁸ and many others.

In this book a point which Engels had explained in detail in *Anti-Dühring* now appears mainly as background: this is the process of class and state formation out of the proto-political institutions. For example, he writes about the outcome of the Athenian development:

The class antagonism on which the social and political institutions rested was no longer that between the nobles and the common people, but that between slaves and freemen, dependents and citizens.⁹

It turns out, after all, that there *was* a kind of class antagonism which preceded slavery, even here. It is typical of this book's focus of concentration that the very existence of this primitive aristocracy (which arises out of the archaic formation, as we have seen) is referred to only in passing, though often enough.¹⁰

What this points to is a weak side of *The Origin of the Family*; the content derived from Morgan and other anthropologists, and filled out by Engels, is not well integrated with the approach taken in (say) *Anti-Dühring*. But this has nothing to do with the alleged rejection of Oriental despotism.

OTHER LATE WRITINGS BY ENGELS

As in *The Origin of the Family*, the primitive-communal mode of production gets mentioned in Engels' later writings under various designations, when he is writing about Europe. It would be rather wrongheaded to fault him for declining to pin the Asiatic or Oriental label on these European forms, to the confusion of readers.

Thus, *before* Marx's death, Engels had published a considerable essay on this early mode of production in "The Mark," without once using "Asiatic" terms or even linking this German form with other variations, as Marx might conceivably have done. Engels continued to approach the question this way after Marx's death, without any significant change in either his viewpoint or his terminological strategy. Take, for example, a letter to Sorge in his last year:

The war in China has given the death-blow to the old China. Isolation has become impossible. . . . But with it the old economic system of small peasant agriculture, where the family also made its industrial products itself, falls to pieces too, and with it the whole old system which made relatively dense population possible.¹¹

The description of this "old system" gets along without a label of any kind; there is none really available—none that even Marx stuck to in his private papers and notes. But by the same token this old system without a name is not any of the old systems that friend Sorge would recognize by name.

We have mentioned Engels' letters in 1884 about Java's "old communistic village communities." In line with our present point, we must be struck by the fact that, although dealing with an Asian primitive communism, Engels' mind made the operative connection with something going on in *Europe*—in this case Bismarck's state-socialism.

Finally, in 1894 Engels very clearly identified the Asian village-community system with the European, in his last polemic against the Russian Tkachov. Here he refers to "what soon [after Haxthausen] became common knowledge," and proceeds to summarize the views of Marx which are detailed in Chapter 21, sections 9-10.

Namely, that communal ownership of land was a form of tenure which in the primitive epoch had been prevalent among the Germans, the Celts, and the Indians, in short, among all the

Indo-European peoples, which still exists in India, which was only recently forcibly destroyed in Ireland and Scotland and still occurs here and there in Germany even today, and that it is a disappearing form of tenure which is, in fact, a phenomenon common to all peoples at a definite stage of development.¹²

This is a general statement of Marx's view of the archaic formation.

It remains to be pointed out that in this last period there is one important work in which Engels continued to publish the view of Asiatic social formations and Oriental state forms as before: his editions of Marx's *Capital*. This bears on the English translation of Volume 1 as well as his construction of Volume 3 out of Marx's notes. Especially in the case of the third volume, where there was considerable room for choice in editing and arrangement, there is no indication that, after allegedly turning against and discarding Marx's views on this subject, he sought to save Marx's honor by leaving this erroneous material out. On the contrary, the material on this subject in Volume 3 is, if anything, more effective than in Volume 1.

KAUTSKY'S ARTICLE OF 1887

It is risky and speculative to cite anybody else's writings as a reflection of Marx's and Engels' views; certainly no firm conclusion can be founded on such evidence alone. With this warning, however, there is good reason to call attention to an article published by Karl Kautsky, editor of the party's theoretical organ *Die Neue Zeit* in 1887—the time of his closest collaboration with Engels, both being resident in London.

Entitled "Die moderne Nationalität," the article attempts to sketch the historical development of nationhood from the earliest times. A long section is devoted to the prehistoric crystallization of nations around economic needs, the first such formation discussed being that of the river-valley cultures of the Orient. The suggestions in Marx on the relation between water control (irrigation and so on) and the rise of the Oriental empires are developed here. The references to Marx's writings are only implicit but quite clear; for example, to the failure of the British to keep up Indian water works. Like Marx, Kautsky links the disconnected autonomies of the village communities with the anarchist ideal, and comments: "This ideal is not one of the future but of the hoariest past, as we have just seen. Its result, however, was not unbounded personal freedom but Oriental despotism."¹³

Kautsky evinces no paralysis about the ruling power in this Oriental despotism. He writes about the ruling aristocracies, "the holders of the central power—often with only a nominally personal head—the soldier and priest castes (as they have been called, not always very happily) . . ."

In fact, he digresses to polemize against the shallow historians who explain "the origin of class differences" purely and simply by conquest; and offers his own explanation for the origin of the ruling class (the aforementioned aristocracy). To be sure, he agrees, "There can be no doubt that the ruling aristocracy of the Oriental despotisms was and is often a foreign conquering tribe." But such a conquering tribe "could take over the central power only if it was already in existence."

If it took over this central power and its functions, then the people would let it rule in peace, since actually nothing would be essentially changed. Both the rulers and the ruled class then blended into one nation, because both parts constituted a single economic organism.¹⁴

Further, of these conquerors-turned-rulers he adds:

Far from feeling themselves to be foreigners, these aristocracies together with their retinue became, in the civilized states of the Orient, the bearers of all national life insofar as it developed at all. . . . But these beginnings of national life confined themselves always to a small fraction of the whole people, to the aristocracy, to the possessors of seats in the central power, to the free urban population.¹⁵

The article, it is true, is vague about the mode of production behind this national state development (although, on the other hand, this was not the subject). Clearly neither slavery nor feudalism is represented as dominant; the reference to the military and the priesthood as the ruling powers is not developed further, but certainly no private-property-holding class is on the scene. The term *aristocracy* is, as often, simply a generic term for a ruling stratum.

What is significant is that the concept of Oriental despotism as a historical state form is prominently put forward, and the class rulers are represented without visible inhibition in terms of those who held the central state power. In fact, one of the reasons for the lack of further detail along these lines appears to be the assumption that there is no great need for explanation.

Two queries:

1. Where did Kautsky get these concepts in 1887? It may safely be assumed that they did not arise in his own skull by spontaneous

generation. Certainly there were the suggestions in the first volume of *Capital* and in *Anti-Dühring*, already published. But the important third volume of *Capital* was not yet in being, nor were the *Grundrisse* notebooks known. If Kautsky read the seminal discussion in Marx's 1853 articles (not to speak of the letters) it was only because Marx or Engels made them specially available. Indeed, it is hardly conjectural that this was precisely the kind of historical subject that Kautsky would be eager to discuss with Marx in London before his death; no doubt also with Engels after that. In any case, the least doubtful proposition is that Kautsky wrote this in the belief he was giving currency to Marx's views.

2. What about his relations with Engels, who allegedly had now discarded the concept of Oriental despotism? If that allegation has any truth at all, we have a mystery. If it is baseless, all is clear.

For in this period Kautsky's intellectual association with Engels was close and dependent. That does not exclude disagreement, but it makes it overwhelmingly probable that such a disagreement would have left some traces.

As it happens, it was in just this year that we get the most far-reaching statement by Engels on his relations with Kautsky. A rumor was received—from America!—that Kautsky was becoming reserved in his association with Engels. Engels replied with a round denunciation of the rumor as a complete fiction.

I rely on Kautsky as on myself; like most of the young people he can do something precocious at times, but if he had any doubts he would first let me know. In any case I'll ask him tonight what, if anything at all, the report may refer to.¹⁶

The close personal relations between Engels and Kautsky, indicated by this letter and abundant other testimony,¹⁷ plus the nature of the subject on which Kautsky was writing, make it likely that Kautsky at least showed the article to Engels before publication.

REFERENCE NOTES

Titles are given in abbreviated form; full titles and publication data are provided in the Bibliography. Book and article titles are not distinguished in form. Page numbers apply to the edition cited in the Bibliography. Volume and page are usually separated by a colon: for example, 3:148 means Volume 3, page 148.

Some frequently used abbreviations are:

E = Engels

Ltr = Letter

M = Marx

ME = Marx and Engels

M/E = Marx or Engels

MEGA = Marx and Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*

ME:SC = Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (2nd ed., 1965)

ME:SW = Marx and Engels, *Selected Works in Three Volumes* (1969-1970)

MEW = Marx and Engels, *Werke*

NRZ = *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*

NRZ Revue = *Neue Rheinische Zeitung, Politisch-Ökonomische Revue*

Rev. after = Revised after the original text

Rev. from = Revised from an extant translation

RZ = *Rheinische Zeitung*

Tr. = Translation, translated in

The first source cited is the actual source of the quotation or statement; it is sometimes followed by a [bracketed] reference that cites an extant translation if the first reference is to the original, or vice versa. This second reference is given for the reader's convenience only; when it is to "Tr." with no title, it refers to the translation cited in the Bibliography.

FOREWORD

1. There are extensive bibliographies on this subject in several places, e.g., McLellan: *M Bef. Mxism.*; Mészáros: *M's Tb. Alien*. A book that should not be overlooked is Lowy: *Tb. Rev. Jeune M.*
2. Ltr, M to Ruge, 13 Mar. 1843, MEW 27:417.
3. E: Sp. Graveside, in ME:SW 3:162-163 [MEW 19:336].
4. Ltr, M to J. P. Becker, 26 Feb. 1862, in ME:SC, 125.
5. M: Grundrisse, 204.
6. Ch. 20, p. 507.
7. M: Pov. Philo., 154; compare also the point made on 41-42.
8. Bukharin: *Hist. Mat.*, 278, also 276. This type of definition was repeated in e.g., Hook: *Twds. Und. K. M.*, 229.
9. For ex., Bendix & Lipset: *K. M. Theor. Soc. Cl.*, 28.
10. More or less in order: M: Theor. S. V., 1:171 [MEW 26.1:146]; M: Grundrisse, 175; M: Cap. 1:446 [MEW 23:470, 471]; M: Grundrisse, 304-305 fn; M: Afterword/Cap./Ger., in M: Cap. 1:13 [MEW 23:19]; ME: Rev./Conspirators, MEW 7:272; M: Duchess of Suth., in ME: Art. Brit., 148; M: Grundrisse, 734-736 passim; and see Ch. 23, p. 579 fn.
11. ME: Ger. Ideol., 208; cf. MEW 3:178.
12. For ex., see the material and references in Ch. 22, §2.
13. Guizot: *De la Dém. en Fr.*, 9-10.
14. For "God protect me . . ." see qu., Ch. 1, p. 40. For 1850, ME: G. Kinkel, MEW 7:299.
15. Lenin: *State & Rev.*, in his *Coll. Wks.*, 25:431.
16. See Acton: *What M Really Said*, 112, for his closest approach, but he has Lenin in view.
17. Lenin: *State & Rev.*, in his *Coll. Wks.*, 25:386.
18. Ltr, E to Hourwich, 27 May 1893, in ME: Ltrs. Amer., 254.
19. A. Voden, in *Reminisc. ME*, 329.
20. For E's specific report on the division of labor, see E: Hous. Qu./Pref. 2d ed., in ME:SW 2:297.
21. M: Herr Vogt, MEW 14:472.
22. M: Fwd./Soc. Utop. Sci., in M: Ltrs et Doc., 207 [MEW 19:185]. Also cf. M's ref. to Anti-Dühring in ltr, M to Bloß, 10 Nov. 1877, in ME:SC, 310 [MEW 34:311].
23. An example of this feat is Hodges: *E's Contrib.*
24. Ltr, M to Lassalle, 28 Apr. 1862, MEW 30:622; ltr, E to M, 3 Apr. 1851, MEW 27:233f.

1. THE DEMOCRATIC EXTREMIST

1. On Hegel's use of *real*, cf. E: L. Feuerbach, first two pages.
2. M: Lead. Art. K. Z., MEW 1:103, 95, 104.
3. Cf. Dupré: *Phil. Fdns. Mism.*, 4-5.
4. See Ch. 11, p. 237 fn.

5. As claimed in McGovern: *Yg. M on State*, 440-441, 443-444, 465. The opposite exaggeration is conveyed by Marcuse: *Reason & Rev.*, 173, 213: "the state is separate from society" *tout court*.
6. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 47-48, rev. after MEW 3:36. For the same point, see M's intro. to the Grundrisse, first two pages; the translation in M: Contrib. Pol. Econ. (70), 189-190, loses this point by replacing *civil society* with *bourgeois society*.
7. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 217.
8. M: Crit. Pol. Ec./Pref., in ME:SW 1:503.
9. M: Banning of L.A.Z., MEW 1:162.
10. E: Third Member of Alliance, NRZ 4 May 1849, MEW 6:470.
11. For this period, see Ch. 22.
12. M: Local Elec., MEW Eb.1:426-430.
13. Dorn: *Pruss. Bureaucr.*, 407.
14. For ex., cf. Tocqueville: *Old Regime & Fr. Rev.*, 232.
15. E: Role of Force, MEW 21:445 (cf. ME:SW 3:412). See also ME:SW 3:385. For the pro-French sentiment in Cologne in Mar. 1848, see ltr, E to M, 9 Mar. 1848, MEW 27:116.
16. *Reminisc. ME* (Kovalevsky), 289; Cornu: *K.M. et F.E.*, 1:19, 26, 88. The law professor, Eduard Gans, had published a book in 1836 which discussed Saint-Simonism at some length; see Gans: *Rückblicke*, 91-103; Marx became a student in his department in October of the same year.
17. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 1:279-280; Mehring: *K. M.*, 61.
18. Cf. quotation from Johann Jacoby in Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 1:167 fn.
19. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:70.
20. *Ibid.*, 36-37, 64.
21. M: Comments Lat. Pruss. Cens., MEW 1:5, 9-10.
22. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:33.
23. *Ibid.*, 34.
24. *Ibid.*, 38.
25. *Ibid.*, 41.
26. *Ibid.*, 77.
27. M: Comments Lat. Pruss. Cens., MEW 1:4.
28. *Ibid.*, 25.
29. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:32-33.
30. [This ref. note deleted.]
31. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:33.
32. *Ibid.*, 68.
33. *Ibid.*, 75.
34. *Ibid.*, 75.
35. M: Lib. Opp. Han., MEW Eb. 1:388.
36. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:76.
37. *Ibid.*, 63.
38. *Ibid.*, 65-66.
39. *Ibid.*, 66.
40. *Ibid.*, 67.
41. *Ibid.*, 70.
42. *Ibid.*, 57-58.
43. M: Notes on Charges, MEW Eb. 1:423; these are notes Marx made to argue against banning the RZ.

44. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:62.
45. Ibid., 63.
46. Ibid., 64.
47. M: Comments Lat. Pruss. Cens., MEW 1:4, 6.
48. Ibid., 14. Marx reiterated this position—the state can concern itself only with actions, not opinions—in a later article also, M: Banning of L.A.Z., MEW 1:157, 168.
49. Ibid., 24.
50. Ibid., 8, 7.
51. Ibid., 7.
52. Ibid., 15.
53. Ibid., 17.
54. Ibid., 24.
55. M: Divorce Bill, MEW 1:150.
56. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:42.
57. Ibid., 43-44.
58. M: On Divorce Bill, MEW Eb. 1:389.
59. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:46-47.
60. Ibid., 48-49.
61. Ibid., 46.
62. Ibid., 49.
63. Mill: *On Liberty*, in Mill: *Pref. Lib.*, 251.
64. Mill: *Civilization—Signs of the Times*, in Mill: *Pref. Lib.*, 174.
65. Kant: *Religion within Lim. Reason Alone*, 176 (in a long footnote).
66. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:74-75.
67. Ibid., 63-64.
68. Ibid., 74-75.
69. Ibid., 51.
70. Ibid., 73.
71. M: Comments Lat. Pruss. Cens., MEW 1:17.
72. Ibid., 4-5.
73. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:65.
74. M: Lead. Art. K.Z., MEW 1:95, 104.
75. M: Banning of L.A.Z., MEW 1:154; the argument constitutes the whole first installment of the series, 152-154.
76. Ibid., 157 (4th installment).
77. Ibid., 168 (6th installment).
78. M: Comments Lat. Pruss. Cens., MEW 1:7.
79. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:57.
80. Ibid., 59-60.
81. Ibid., 60.
82. Ibid.
83. M: Grundrisse, 155f.
84. For an expansion of this thought, see an article published by M at the end of the year, M: Supp. on Estates Comm., MEW Eb. 1:405.
85. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:60-61. For an echo of this passage, see ME: First Press. Prosec., MEW 6:231.
86. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 219.
87. ME: Great Men, in ME: Col. Com. Trial, 176.
88. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:55.
89. Ibid., 54.

90. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Intro., MEW 1:380.
91. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:55.
92. Ibid., 74.
93. Ibid., 75.
94. M: Comments Lat. Pruss. Cens., MEW 1:25.
95. M: Debates Freed. Press, MEW 1:77.
96. Cornu: *K. M. und F. E.*, 1:350 fn.
97. Ltr, M to Oppenheim, c. 25 Aug. 1842, MEW 27:409-410.
98. Ibid., 409.
99. M: Divorce Bill, MEW 1:150.
100. For an elaboration of this theme, see my *Two Souls of Socialism*, which considers the question both before and after Marx.
101. For the book, see M: Ges. Aufsätze in Bibliography. For the prospectus, see *Neue Zeit*, 21 Jg., 1 Heft, 1903, p. 707. Also see MEW 27:646 (note 170), 680; and Rubel: *Bibliog.*, 11-12, 91.

2. THE POLITICAL APPRENTICE

1. Ltr, M to Ruge, 30 Nov. 1842, MEW 27:413.
2. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 2:79, 99.
3. From Heine's sonnet "Friedrike," which was published in 1844 though written in 1824.
4. M: Com. & Augs. Allg. Ztg., MEW 1:105.
5. Ibid., 108.
6. Ibid., 107.
7. Ibid., 108; the rest of this paragraph comes from 106-108.
8. Bestor: *Evol. Soc. Vocab.*, 278, 281; the word *Sozialist* had appeared in 1840.
9. Figures based on Stein: *K. M. & Rhein. Paup.*, 131 (for 1830-1836), 132 (for Prussia), 133 (for 1848).
10. M: On Prot. Tariffs, MEW Eb. 1:398.
11. Stein: *K. M. & Rhein. Paup.*, 145.
12. M: Vindication Moselle Corr., MEW 1:172.
13. Ibid., 189.
14. Ibid., 185.
15. M: Local Elec., MEW Eb. 1:428-430. The claim made for this article in Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 2:100, is not supported by its content.
16. M: Debates Wood-Theft, MEW 1:109-110.
17. Ibid., 111.
18. Ibid., 113.
19. E: Mark, in E: Peas. War Ger. (56), 169.
20. M: Debates Wood-Theft, MEW 1:115.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 116-117.
23. Ibid., 117.
24. Ibid., 118.
25. Ibid., 119-120.
26. Ibid., 122-123.
27. Ibid., 124.

28. *Ibid.*, 110.
29. *Ibid.*, 126.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, 130.
32. *Ibid.*, 132.
33. *Ibid.*, 134.
34. *Ibid.*, 137.
35. *Ibid.*, 120-121.
36. *Ibid.*, 140.
37. *Ibid.*, 141.
38. *Ibid.*, 143-144.
39. *Ibid.*, 147.
40. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 2:91.
41. M: Supp. on Estates Comm., MEW Eb. 1:406-408, 416.
42. *Ibid.*, 407-410, 416-417.
43. *Ibid.*, 418-419.
44. *Ibid.*, 419.
45. M: Crit. Pol. Ec./Pref., in ME:SW 1:502, rev. after MEW 13:7-8.
46. Ltr, E to R. Fischer, 15 Apr. 1895, MEW 39:466.
47. M: Crit. Pol. Ec./Pref., in ME:SW 1:503.
48. Ltr, M to Ruge, 25 Jan. 1843, MEW 27:415.
49. Ltr, M to Ruge, 13 Mar. 1843, MEW 27:418.

3. EMANCIPATION FROM HEGEL

1. M: Crit. Pol. Ec./Pref., in ME:SW 1:503.
2. Ltr, M to Ruge, 5 Mar. 1842, MEW 27:397; ltr, M to Ruge, 20 Mar. 1842, MEW 27:401. For a summary of the dating question, see O'Malley's introduction to M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt. (O'Malley).
3. M: Cap. 1:20.
4. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:242.
5. *Ibid.*, 266.
6. *Ibid.*, 257, 216. (Also see Marx's observation on this point in his "Kreuznach notebooks," quoted in MEGA I, 1.1, page LXXIV f.)
7. *Ibid.*, 303.
8. *Ibid.*, 304.
9. *Ibid.*, 304-305.
10. *Ibid.*, 312.
11. *Ibid.*, 313-314.
12. *Ibid.*, 222.
13. *Ibid.*, 248-249.
14. Hegel: *Philo. Hist.*, 428.
15. M: Civ. War Fr., 2d Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 200.
16. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:249.
17. *Ibid.*, 250, 253.
18. *Ibid.*, 268.
19. *Ibid.*, 255.
20. *Ibid.*
21. M: Civ. War Fr., 2d Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 196; 1st Draft, *ibid.*, 149-150 (less explicitly). Compare the final version, *ibid.*, 70-72, or in ME:SW 2:217-220.

22. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:256.
23. There are few serious studies in "political lexicography"; Bestor: *Evol. Soc. Vocab.* mainly discusses new words; in Williams: *Cult. & Soc.*, the author's introduction discusses certain terms; Christophersen: *Meaning Dem.* has a useful collection of usages and passages on *democracy* and gives a list of related works.
24. Cf. the word *dictatorship* for one stemming from Roman usage; cf. Draper: *Marx & D.P.*, 6-8.
25. On this see Marcuse: *Reason & Rev.*, 85, 242; Lowy: *Th. Jeune M.*, 55; Avineri: *Soc. Polit. Th.*, 34-35.
26. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:233.
27. *Ibid.*, 225-230.
28. Ltr. M to Oppenheim, ca. 25 Aug. 1842, MEW 27:410; M to Ruge, 5 Mar. 1842, *ibid.*, 397.
29. *Ibid.*, 229-230.
30. M: Kreuznach Excerpts 1843, in MEGA I, 1.2:130.
31. E: Cond. Eng./Engl. Const., in ME: Art. Brit., 42.
32. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:230-231.
33. *Ibid.*, 231.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, 232-233.
38. *Ibid.*, 218.
39. *Ibid.*, 259.
40. *Ibid.*, 260.
41. *Ibid.*, 279.
42. *Ibid.*, 297; similarly, 294.
43. *Ibid.*, 321; the emphasis is by Marx, not Hegel.
44. *Ibid.*, 322-323.
45. *Ibid.*, 324.
46. *Ibid.*, 326-327.
47. *Ibid.*, 301.
48. *Ibid.*, 329.
49. *Ibid.*, 330.
50. *Ibid.*, 331.
51. *Ibid.*, 332.
52. *Ibid.*, 333.

4. THE NEW DIRECTION

1. E: Pref./Com. Manif./1888, in ME: Sel. Wks. 55, 1:27-28; a similar passage appeared in his 1890 German preface (ME:SW 1:103-104). For the early "crude" communism, see also E: On Hist. C. L., in ME:SW 3:174-178.
2. E: Cond. Eng./18th Cent., in ME: Art. Brit., 20.
3. E: Rapid Prog. Com., in MEGA I, 4:340-341; ME: Holy Fam. (56), 17.
4. Laveleye: *Soc. of Today*, xv.
5. *Gazette des Tribunaux* (Paris), 14 & 13 Nov. 1850 (report on trial of Jeanne Deroin et al.).
6. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:315. See also Marx's remarks in M: Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:280-281. The same report was made by Moses Hess in an 1847 article; see Hess: *Phil. Soz. Schrift.*, 429.

7. For these competing terms, see Bestor: *Evol. Soc. Vocab.*
8. Cuvillier: *Hommes & Ideol.*, 130. For the Blanquist movement, see the books by Spitzer and Dommanget.
9. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:283.
10. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 1 (Mar. 1843), MEW 1:339.
11. Ibid., 341.
12. Ibid., 343.
13. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:343-344.
14. Spitzer: *Rev. Th. Blanqui*, 105.
15. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:344.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 346.
18. M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 132-135.
19. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:344.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 345.
23. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 2 (May 1843), MEW 1:343.
24. E: E. M. Arndt, MEW Eb. 2:127.
25. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:345.
26. M: Centraliz. Qu., MEW Eb. 1:379 [cf. M: Wr. Yg. M., 106-107].
27. Ltr, M to Oppenheim, ca. Aug. 1842, MEW 27:409.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE NEW DIRECTION

1. For the Jewish-emancipation movement in the Rhineland, see Sterling: *Judenbass*, 78-79; Elbogen: *Gesch. Jud. Deutsch.*, 221-227.
2. Elbogen: *Gesch. Jud. Deutsch.*, 223.
3. Bauer: *Jewish Prob.* [Eng. tr.], 1, 61, 63.
4. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 2:253 n.
5. See Chap. 1, p. 51.
6. M: Lead. Art. K. Z., in ME: On Relig., 33-39, esp. 36 for the last point.
7. For Hermes's viewpoint, see Sterling: *Kampf Emanz. Jud.*, 298; Hirsch: *K. M. & Bittschr.*, 232.
8. Ltr, M to Oppenheim, ca. 25 Aug. 1842, MEW 27:409.
9. Hirsch: *Marx Jud.*, 48, and his *K. M. & Bittschr.*, 232-233.
10. Ltr, M to Ruge, 13 Mar. 1843, MEW 27:418.
11. For the petitions, see Hirsch: *Marx Jud.*, 43-44, and his *K. M. & Bittschr.*, 234ff (petition texts on 241-245).
12. Sterling: *Kampf Emanz. Jud.*, 298; if the date given here is correct, Marx was the paper's editor at the time; he made the same point in his *Holy Family* later—see p. 126 below.
13. Brazill: *Yg. Heg.*, 180, 204-205; and see Ch. 10, p. 221-226 for Bauer's elitism. Rotenstreich: *For & Against Emanc.*, 32-36.
14. Bauer: *Jewish Prob.*, 101, 64, 77.
15. Ibid., 92; cf. also 97.
16. Ibid., 59-60 on Hermes.
17. Ibid., 29, 32 (for Bauer). For the general pattern, see Dubnov: *Hist. Jews*, 4:643 (for Fichte); Silberner: *Ch. Fourier*, 262-266, or Szajkowski: *Jewish St.-Simonians*, 46 (for Fourier).

18. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:350.
19. Ibid., 351.
20. Ibid., 352.
21. Ibid., 353-354.
22. Ibid., 354-355.
23. Ibid., 355.
24. Ibid., 355-356.
25. Ibid., 356.
26. Ibid., 361.
27. Ibid., 358.
28. Ibid., 357, 360, 361.
29. Ibid., 362.
30. Ibid., 363.
31. Ibid., 366; the preceding paragraph refers to 364-366.
32. Ibid., 366.
33. Ibid., 367-368.
34. Ibid., 368.
35. Ibid., 369.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 370.
38. Bauer: *Jewish Prob.*, 2.
39. Bauer: *Fähigkeit*, 61.
40. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:371.
41. Ibid., 372.
42. Ibid., 372-376 passim.
43. Ibid., 372-373.
44. Ruppin: *Jews Mod. World*, 110.
45. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:373.
46. Ibid., 373-374.
47. Ibid., 376.
48. Ibid., 377.
49. Ibid., 374.
50. Ibid., 375.
51. M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 165-169, esp. 166-167.
52. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:372.
53. Bauer's articles were published in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (Charlottenburg), which he edited. The first two, Dec. 1843 and March 1844, were entitled "Latest Writings on the Jewish Question"; the third, July 1844, "What Is Now the Object of Criticism?" Cf. MEW 2:657 (ns. 32, 35, 36).
54. These three sections are in Ch. 6 of *The Holy Family*; each section takes up one of Bauer's articles. The most specific repetition of Marx's D. F. J. essay is in the third section; see ME: Holy Fam. (56), 143-153.
55. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 121, 145ff; and in other sections, 122-123, 138.
56. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:117.
57. Ibid., 121; more on same lines on next page.
58. Ibid., 123.
59. For Riesser, see for ex. Graupe: *Entstehung Mod. Jud.*, 234-237. For the politics of the Jewish bourgeois liberals in general, see Sterling: *Judenbass*, 42-43, 45.
60. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 118.
61. Bauer: *Jewish Prob.*, 59-60.

62. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 119, 147-148.
63. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:100.
64. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 129.
65. Ibid., 130; cf. MEW 2:102.
66. Ibid., 153.
67. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:119.
68. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 153.
69. Ibid., 150.

6. ORIENTATION TOWARD THE PROLETARIAT

1. Ltr, Ruge to M, Mar. 1843, in MEGA I, 1.1:558, 560.
2. M: Ltrs from D. F. J.; no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:343.
3. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Intro., MEW 1:381.
4. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 1 (Mar. 1843), MEW 1:337, 338.
5. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 2 (May 1843), MEW 1:342-343; there is still a third invocation to the suffering at the end of the letter.
6. M: Ltrs from D. F. J., no. 3 (Sept. 1843), MEW 1:343.
7. Briefs: *Prole.*, 3-11, 52-55; Conze: *Vom Pöbel*, 334-341; Zaniewski: *Orig. du Prol.*, Ch. 1.
8. Spitzer: *Rev. Th. Blanqui*, 96-98, 102. Iggers, ed.: *Doctrine of S-S*, 83-84, 129; on Saint-Simon himself, see Gurvitch: *Fondateurs—I. S-Simon*, 39; there is interesting added information in Ladendorf: *Hist. Schlagw.*, 254-255.
9. Sismondi: *Etudes Ec. Pol.*, on which see discussion in Leroy: *Hist. Id. Soc.*, 2:307-308; Gide & Rist: *Hist. Econ. Doct.*, 186-187.
10. Leroy: *Hist. Id. Soc.*, 2:305.
11. Stein: *Gesch. Soz. Beweg.*, 2:57-99; in the Eng. abridgment, 256-269, also Intro., 20; for the implication mentioned, see 2:96, 98 (in the Eng. abridgment, 268).
12. E: Cond. Wkg. Cl. Eng., MEW 2:234, 237-238; cf. tr. in ME: On Brit., 5, 35-36.
13. For the persistence of the old meaning, see the discussion of *lumpenproletariat* in Draper: *Concept of Lumpenprole.*, p. 2286-2289.
14. ME: Com. Manif., in ME:SW 1:134.
15. For Weitling's article, see Ch. 2, p. 62. Talk of a new 1789 was not uncommon; e.g., see the end of an Oct. 1842 article by Engels, E: Friedr. Wilh. IV, MEW 1:453.
16. For the possible relation between Stein's book and Marx's later orientation, see Avineri: *Soc. Polit. Th.*, 53-57. Note that a favorable review (anonymous) of Stein's book appeared in the *Rheinische Zeitung* of 16 Mar. 1843, while Marx was still editor; cf. Silberner: *M. Hess*, 136.
17. Hess, "Sozialismus und Kommunismus," in Herwegh, ed.: *Einundzwanzig Bogen*.
18. In the Preface to M: Econ. Phil. Mss. (64), 63.
19. MEGA I, 1.2: 128, 129.
20. Ibid., 136.
21. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:284.
22. M: Econ. Ph. Mss., MEW Eb. 1:467.
23. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 2:6 fn.

24. M: Econ. Ph. Mss., MEW Eb. 1:553-554.
25. Ltr, M to Feuerbach, 11 Aug. 1844, MEW 27:426.
26. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 113, rev. after MEW 2:89.
27. M: Herr Vogt, MEW 14:439.
28. Cornu: *K. M. und F. E.*, 2:19 fn.
29. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Intro., MEW 1:379.
30. Ibid., 385.
31. Ibid., 382.
32. Ibid., 383.
33. Ibid., 384.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 385.
36. Ibid., 386.
37. Ibid., 387.
38. Ibid., 386.
39. Ibid., 388.
40. Ibid., 389.
41. Ibid., 390.
42. Ibid.
43. Cf. M: Pov. Philo. (FLPH), 121, 122; for the correction, which refers to the latter locus, see MEW 4:141 fn.
44. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Intro., MEW 1:391.
45. E: Com. in Ger./II, MEGA I, 4:344.

7. TOWARD A THEORY OF THE PROLETARIAT

1. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 180.
2. E: Ltrs fr. Wupper., MEW 1:432.
3. Ibid., 417-418.
4. Ibid., 418.
5. Ltr, E to F. Graeber, July or Aug. 1839, MEW Eb. 2:410-411.
- 5a. For a sidelight on this, cf. E: M & NRZ, in ME:SW 3:164; also ltr, M to Freiligrath, 29 Feb. 1860, *passim*, MEW 36:489f.
6. Ltr, E to Schoenlank, 29 Aug. 1887, MEW 36:697.
7. E: Eng. View, MEW 1:454.
8. E: Internal Crises, MEW 1:459.
9. E: Pos. of Polit. Party, MEW 1:461.
10. E: Ltrs fr. London—IV, in ME: Ire. & Ir. Qu., 33.
11. E: Ltrs fr. London—I, MEW 1:468, 469.
12. E: Progress Soc. Reform, in MEGA I, 2:435.
13. Ibid., 444.
14. Ibid., 449.
15. Cf. Silberner: *M. Hess*, 227; Hess: *Phil. Soz. Schrift.*, 306.
16. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 25; this section is by Engels.
17. E: On Hist. C. L., in ME:SW 3:174-175.
18. Cf. Engels in the RZ series of Dec. 1842, e.g. E: Pos. of Polit. Party, MEW 1:461.
19. E: Cond. Eng./Past & Pres., MEW 1:526.
20. Ibid., 537-538, 527.
21. Ibid., 538.

22. Ibid., 531, 549.
23. E: Outlines Crit. Pol. Ec., in M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 211.
24. Ibid., 226.
25. M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 63. E's article is also cited on p. 128.
26. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 46.
27. In MEW 1:504.
28. M: Cap. 1:75, 151, 164, 634.
29. M: Exc. Notes on J. Mill, MEW Eb. 1:450.
30. Ibid., 454.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 463.
33. M: Econ. Ph. Mss., MEW Eb. 1:467-468.
34. Ibid., 533.
35. Ibid., 471; tr. in M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 65.
36. Ibid., 533 (written as a comment on a previous passage which is not extant).
37. Ibid., 533.
38. Ibid., 552.
39. Ibid., 473.
40. Ibid., 499.
41. Ibid., 505; likewise 510.
42. Ibid., 510.
43. Ibid., 536.
44. Cf. Silberner: *M. Hess*, 134, 186.
45. M: Econ. Ph. Mss., MEW Eb. 1:514-515; cf. tr., M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 110-111.
46. Ibid., 513-514.
47. Ibid., 514.
48. Ibid., 515, also 512.
49. Ibid., 511, and more of the same on 512.
50. Ibid., 518-519.
51. Ibid., 519-520.
52. Ibid., 112-113.
53. Ibid., 521.

8. TOWARD A CLASS THEORY OF THE STATE

1. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:355, 356.
2. Ibid., 357.
3. Ibid., 358.
4. Ibid., 357-358; cf. also 368 on how the French Revolution made the state a "real state."
5. M: Holy Fam., MEW 2:124; see also the reference to anarchy as a label for bourgeois society on 129.
6. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:374.
7. See the more detailed discussion of this point in Chapter 5, p. 118f; and compare the meaning of the phrase *democracy of unfreedom* as explained in Chapter 3, p. 87.
8. For the passage in which this occurs, see above, Chapter 5, p. 120.
9. *Hector Servadac*, Ch. 22.
10. M: Econ. Ph. Mss., MEW Eb. 1:573.
11. Ibid., 536 (previously quoted above in Ch. 7, p. 164).

12. Ibid., 537.
13. E: Rapid Prog. Com., MEGA I, 4:342; and see plate facing MEW 2:512. The *Northern Star* articles are published for the first time in the new ME: Collected Works, 3:530-534.
14. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 70; E: Cond. Wkg. Cl. Eng., in ME: On Brit., 35-38.
15. This account follows Mehring: *Gesch. Deut. Soz.-Dem.*, 1:225-230.
16. M: Crit. Notes King of Pruss., MEW 1:392.
17. Ibid., 393.
18. Mehring: *Gesch. Deut. Soz.-Dem.*, 1:227-228 has the German text.
19. M: Crit. Notes King of Pruss., MEW 1:404.
20. Ibid., 395.
21. Ibid., 397-400.
22. Ibid., 400-401.
23. Ibid., 401.
24. Ibid., 393.
25. Ibid., 393-394.
26. Ibid., 401-402.
27. Ibid., 402.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 408.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 409.
32. Ibid.
33. Ltr, Jenny Marx to M, bef. 10 Aug. 1844, MEW Eb. 1:651.
34. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:130.
35. Ibid., 131; cf. tr. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 167.
36. Besides the passage cited, see also MEW 2:120, 123, 128; in tr., 152, 156-157, 163.
37. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:100; cf. tr., 127.
38. Schoyen: *Chart. Chall.*, 130.
39. E: Cond. Wkg. Cl. Eng., in ME: On Brit., 249, 51, 144.
40. Ibid., 247.
41. Ibid., 314-315.
42. Ibid., 318-319.
43. Ltr, E to M, 19 Nov. 1844, in ME:SC, 24.
44. The articles may be found in English in MEGA I, 4:337-348; the letters in MEW 27:5-28. We will return to this material in Ch. 10.
45. Ltr, E to M, beginning of Oct. 1844, in ME:SC, 20.
46. E: Two Speeches in Elb., MEW 2:542.
47. Ibid., 542-543.
48. Ibid., 547-548.
49. Ibid., 555-556.
50. Hirsch: *Denker & Kämpfer*, 105.
51. M: State & Polit. Prob., MEW 3:537.
52. M: Crit. Pol. Ec./Pref., MEW 13:10.
53. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 475.
54. Ibid., 36.
55. Ibid., 44.
56. Ibid., 211 n.
57. M: On Jewish Qu., MEW 1:362-370, or tr. in M: Wr. Yg. M., 233-241; for our discussion, see Ch. 5, pp. 117-120.
58. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 45.

59. *Ibid.*, 64, for example.
60. *Ibid.*, 78.
61. *Ibid.*, 85.
62. *Ibid.*, 216.
63. *Ibid.*, 357.
64. *Ibid.*, 358.
65. *Ibid.*, 388, rev. after MEW 3:340.
66. *Ibid.*, 389.
67. *Ibid.*, 528.

9. CHARACTER AND REVOLUTION

1. Ltr, M to Philips, 29 Nov. 1864, MEW 31:432.
2. For sources, see M: Confessions in Ref. List. The last two of these three questions were left blank in Jenny's copy.
3. Ltr, H. Marx to Karl, 2 Mar. 1837, MEW Eb. 1:626-627.
4. MEGA I, 1.2:41-45, or MEW Eb. 1:626-627.
5. Quoted in Mehring: *Aus lit. Nachlass*, 1:28.
6. Ltr, M to his father, 10 Nov. 1837, MEW Eb. 1:3ff. Tr. in M: Wr. Yg. M, 40ff; M: Early Texts (McLellan), 1ff; Delfgaauw: *Yg. M*, 101ff.
7. Quoted in Lehning: *Intl. Assoc.*
8. Ltr, M. Hess to B. Auerbach, 2 Sept, 1841, in MEGA I, 1.2:261.
9. E: Triumph of Faith, MEW Eb. 2:301; further on, 303-304, there is a rather pointless dialogue between "Bauer" and the "Marx" character.
10. M: Econ. Ph. Mss., MEW Eb. 1:579.
11. Ltr, M to Feuerbach, 11 Aug. 1844, MEW 27:426-427.
12. Hegel: *Philo. Hist.*, 23; the whole passage on pp. 23-24 is important for Marx.
13. Ltr, F. Engels Sr. to his wife, 27 Aug. 1835, in MEGA I, 2:463.
14. MEW Eb. 2:507-508; the accompanying facsimile shows no apparent stanza breaks between the quatrains.
15. This poetic drama is contained in ltr, E to F. Graeber, 23 Apr.-1 May 1839, MEW Eb. 2:373-383; the quotation is from p. 375.
16. E: Siegfr. Home, MEW Eb. 2:108.
17. Ltr, E to F. Graeber, 8-9 Apr. 1839, MEW Eb. 2:365-366.
18. Ltr, E to W. Graeber, ca. 28-30 Apr. 1839, MEW Eb. 2:389.
19. Nicolaievsky & M-H., 43; Mehring: *Lessing Leg.*, 29; Mehring: *K. M.*, 50; Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 1:165; also McLellan: *Yg. Heg. & K. M.*, 16, for a later comment by Bauer.
20. Mehring: *K. M.*, 51; Nicolaievsky & M-H., 44, 45-46.
21. On Köppen and Marx in general, see Hirsch: *K. F. Köppen*.
22. Nicolaievsky & M-H., 39; cf. also McLellan: *Yg. Heg. & K. M.*, 16.
23. Mehring: *K. M.*, 47.
24. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 1:175; Mehring: *K. M.*, 49; Nicolaievsky & M-H., 39.
25. M: Doct. Diss./Fwd., in ME: On Relig., 14. For the pretext provided by Köppen's book, see MEW Eb. 1:665 (n. 35).
26. Same, in MEW Eb. 1:262 or ME: On Relig., 14; the passage from Hume is in his *Treat. of Hum. Nat.*, 250 (Bk. I, sec. V).
27. M: Doct. Diss./Fwd., MEW Eb. 1:263.
28. M: Doct. Diss./Notebks., MEW Eb. 1:215.

29. For the only significant reference, see M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 148; all others are passing mentions of no present interest.
30. M: Doct. Diss./Notes, MEW Eb. 1:327.
31. Ibid., 329.
32. Ibid., 369-370; the emphasis is by Marx except for *better*.
33. M: Doct. Diss./Dedic., MEW Eb. 1:260.
34. Ltr, B. Bauer to M, 12 Apr. 1841, in MEGA I, 1.2:252; cf. Mehring: *K. M.*, 59.
35. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:312. (See also E's earlier description of the student protest movement against the king, in a *Northern Star* article now published in the new ME: Collected Works, 3:515f.)
36. See Ch. 7, p. 151f.
37. Ltr, E to F. Graeber, 9 Dec. 1839 to 5 Feb. 1840, MEW Eb. 2:443.
38. E: Friedr. Wilh. IV, MEW 1:453.
39. This point is made by Ullrich: *Junge Engels*, 1:110. The poem by Engels is his "Florida," in Ltr, E to F. Graeber, 20 Jan. 1839, MEW Eb. 2:350-353.
40. E: Cola di Rienzi, esp. 7-8, 15-16, 42.
41. Cf. E: Ger. Chapbks., MEW Eb. 2:19; cf. also his illustration for a letter, *ibid.*, 399.
42. Ch. 3, p. 87; see M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:225-230, or tr. in M: Wr. Yg. M., 166-173.
43. M: Aff. in Prussia, in N. Y. Tribune, 1 Feb. 1859.
44. M: Ltrs from D. F. J.; no. 2 (May 1843), MEW 1:341-342, or tr. in M: Wr. Yg. M., 209-210.
45. Ibid., MEW 1:341, or tr., 208.
46. Ibid., MEW 1:342, or tr., 210.
47. Ibid., MEW 1:338-339, or tr., 206.
48. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:312. See also the comment on 1840 as "a turning point in the history of Germany" in ME: Great Men, in ME: Col. Com. Trial, 152.
49. The cartoon may be seen in MEW 1: facing 200; or in Mehring: *K. M.*, facing 296 (lacking in the later paperback ed.), with a detailed explanation on the verso.
50. For the German text, Cornu: *K. M. und F. E.*, 1:350, or Nicolaievsky & M-H., 60, with slight differences.
51. The quotations are from the Paul Elmer More translation of *Prometheus Bound*, in W. J. Oates & E. O'Neill Jr., *Complete Greek Drama*, 1:127ff., except for the first (Hephaestus) which is a paraphrase.
52. Ltr, Jenny Marx to M, after 20 June 1844, MEW Eb. 1:650.
53. Annenkov: *Extraord. Decade*, 167-168.
54. M: Brit. Army, in N. Y. Tribune, 14 Apr. 1855.
55. Brisbane: *Mental Biog.*, 273.
56. Landor: *Curtain Raised*.

10. TOWARD THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-EMANCIPATION

1. Morton: *Life R. Owen*, 171.
2. Ltr, M to E, 27 Feb. 1861, MEW 30:160; see also M: Confessions, in which Spartacus and Kepler are listed under favorite "hero."

3. See Aristotle: *Politics*, 217-221 (Book V, Ch. 6).
- 3a. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:456.
4. M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Dr., in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 119.
5. From the *Aeneid*, VII, 312; Juno speaking.
6. Brandes: *F. Lassalle*, 108.
7. Ltr, E. to P. Lafargue, 16 Feb. 1886, in E & Lafargue: Corr., 1:338-339.
8. M: Prov. Rules, in *G.C.F.I.* 64-66 [1], 288; this remained the same in the later revised versions (see M: Gen. Rules & Admin. Reg., in Bibliography).
9. E: Pref./Com. Manif./1888, in ME: Sel. Wks. (55), 1:28; the formulation has a small variation from the original, as is true also in M: Crit. Gotha Prog., in ME:SW 3:20.
10. E: Progress Soc. Reform, in MEGA I, 2:442.
11. Ibid., 436.
12. Ibid., 435.
13. Ibid., 449; previously cited in Ch. 7, p. 156f.
14. E: On Hist. C. L., in ME:SW 3:175.
15. E: Times on Ger. Com., in MEGA I, 2:452.
16. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:253.
17. Ltrs, E to M, 22 Feb. 1845, MEW 27:20; and 17 Mar. 1845, MEW 27:28. E's change can be followed through the English-language articles reproduced in MEGA I, 4:337-348.
18. E: Late Butchery, in MEGA I, 4:477.
19. See Ch. 6, p. 148.
20. M: Crit. Notes King of Pruss., MEW 1:405, 405-406.
21. Cf. McLellan: *Yg. Heg. & K. M.*, 47.
22. M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 171; see also the passage which Marx crossed out of the preface, p. 236 in this edition.
23. M: Econ. Ph. Mss., MEW Eb. 1:572.
24. For example, see M: Econ. Ph. Mss. (64), 172, 174.
25. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 17, 21, 24 [MEW 2:9, 12, 14].
26. Cf. Hook: *From Heg. to M*, 103-105; the whole of Ch. 3, on Bauer, should be read in connection with this subject.
27. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 29 [MEW 2:19].
28. Ibid., 106, 108-109, rev. after MEW 2:82, 84-85.
29. Ibid., 109, rev. after MEW 2:85.
30. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:85-86.
31. Ibid., 86.
32. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 112, 117; rev. after MEW 2:87, 91.
33. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:87.
34. Ibid., 88-89.
35. See Ch. 6, p. 138.
36. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:89.
37. Ibid., 90.
38. Ibid., 90-91.
39. Ibid., 91.
40. Ibid., 143.
41. Ibid., 152.
42. E: Contin. Movemts., in MEGA I, 2:455.
43. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:57.
44. This account is based on Chaunu: *E. Sue*, 5-60.
45. Sue: *Myst. of Paris*, 420-421.

46. Ibid., 1110, 10, 44.
47. Ibid., 429-430, 160.
48. Ibid., 530, 957.
49. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:58.
50. Ibid., 172, 176.
51. Sue: *Myst. of Paris*, 411, 1298, 910.
52. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 266-268 [MEW 2:214-215].
53. Sue: *Myst. of Paris*, 140, 902, 181.
54. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 235, 239, 243, 271, 274 [MEW 2:188, 191, 194, 218, 220-221].
55. Ibid., 275, rev. after MEW 2:221.
56. Ibid., 265, rev. after MEW 2:213.
57. Sue: *Myst. of Paris*, 411-412.
58. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 256-257, rev. after MEW 2:205-206.
59. Ibid., 268, rev. after MEW 2:215.
60. Sue: *Myst. of Paris*, 1257, 219.
61. ME: Holy Fam. (56), 270, rev. after MEW 2:217.
62. Cf. Marx's polemics against True-Socialism in 1847.
63. See Ch. 1, § 5.
64. For the two versions in English, see ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 646, 651-652; for the two in German, see MEW 3:5-6, 533-534. We have omitted entirely two changes introduced by Engels in the second paragraph: he deleted the words *or self-changing* and altered *revolutionary practice* (*revolutionäre Praxis*) to *transformatory* (or *revolutionizing*) *practice* (*umwälzende Praxis*).

11. THE STATE AND SOCIETY

1. Easton: *Polit. Sci.*, in *Intl. Encyc. Soc. Sci.*, 12:295.
2. Southall: *Stateless Soc.*, in *Intl. Encyc. Soc. Sci.*, 15:158.
3. E: Orig. Fam. (Pref.), in ME:SW 3:191-192.
4. M: Notebk. on Maine, 329.
5. Paul: *State*, 7; Nock: *Our Enemy*, 41-42.
6. M: Grundrisse, 111.
7. M: Cap. 3:775.
8. M: Grundrisse, 484.
9. Ibid., 845.
10. E: Mark, in E: Peas. War Ger. (56), 170-171.
11. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:325.
12. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 204.
13. Ibid., 205.
14. Ltr, E to C. Schmidt, 27 Oct. 1890, in ME:SC, 421.
15. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 247.
16. This is the title of an interesting book by V. Gordon Childe (London, 1936; N. Y., 1951).
17. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 247-248.
18. Ibid., 248.
19. Ibid., 252.
20. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:277.
21. E: Intro./Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:187.

22. E: L. Feuerbach, in ME:SW 3:371.
23. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 388.
24. Ibid., 251.
25. Fried: *State*, in *Intl. Encyc. Soc. Sci.*, 14:145.
26. Heller: *Polit. Sci.*, in *Encyc. Soc. Sci.*, 12:207, also 208-209. An accompanying article by Lindsey Rogers (ibid., 12:224-227) defines *politics* lexicographically only, by means of the word *government*.
27. Easton: *Polit. Sci.*, in *Intl. Encyc. Soc. Sci.*, 12:283-284.
28. E: Cond. Eng./18th Cent., in ME: Art. Brit., 16.
29. Ltr, E to Span. Fed. Council of the Intl., 13 Feb. 1871, in ME:SC, 260.
30. E: Orig. Fam. (Pref.), in ME:SW 3:192.
31. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:326-327.
32. M: Cap. 1:751; M: Grundrisse/Intro., 28-29.
33. M: Notebk. on Maine, 329.
34. E: L. Feuerbach, in ME:SW 3:370.
35. M: Mazzini & Nap., in N. Y. Tribune, 11 May 1858.
36. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 48, rev. after MEW 3:36.
37. E: L. Feuerbach, in ME:SW 3:369.
38. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:280-283.
39. M: Grundrisse, 383.
40. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:327, rev. after MEW 21:165-166.
41. M: Prep. for War, in N. Y. Tribune, 8 Nov. 1860.
42. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:328.
43. Ibid.
44. E: Cond. Wkg. Cl. Eng., MEW 2:443-444; cf. tr. in ME: On Brit., 263.
45. M: Nationalization of Land, in *Labour Monthly* reprint, 415.
46. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:332.
47. Ibid., 328.
48. ME: Com. Manif., in ME:SW 1:110-111.
49. For the Ger. original, see MEW 4:464.
50. ME: Com. Manif., in ME:SW 1:127, rev. after MEW 4:482.
51. For example, E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:347; M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:218; also in 1st Dr., in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 150, and 2d Dr., ibid., 210-211.
52. M: Report at 23 May 1871 session of Gen. Council, in *G.C.F.I.* 70-71 [4] 201.
53. M: Notebk. Par. Com./Apr.-May, 150. Along the same lines: for 1849, see M: Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:264; for the Commune, M: Civ. War Fr. 1st Dr. in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 104; for the Franco-Prussian war period, see E Notes on W., 61, 129; also ltr, Jenny Marx (daughter) to Mrs. Kugelmann, 15 Nov. 1870, in *Labour Monthly*, Mar. 1956, 140.
54. M: Eng. Prosp., in N. Y. Tribune, 1 July 1853. Cf. also the discussion in M Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:218-219.
55. M: Cap. 1:658.
56. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:324.
57. M: Cap. 1:657.
58. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:350.
59. E: L. Feuerbach, in ME:SW 3:369-370.

12. THE STATE IN PRACTICE: METHODS AND FORMS

1. E: L. Feuerbach, in ME:SW 3:371.
2. E: Intro./Soc. Utop. Sci., in ME:SW 3:112-113.
3. E: On Cert. Pecul., in ME: On Brit., 529.
4. Ltr, M to Kugelmann, 27 July 1871, MEW 33:252; cf. M: Ltrs. Kugel., 128.
5. Ltr, E to M, 18 Dec. 1868, MEW 32:235.
6. M: Polit. Movements, in N. Y. Tribune, 30 Sept. 1853.
7. M: Eng. Prosp., in N. Y. Tribune, 1 July 1853.
8. Ltr, E to Bernstein, 17 Aug. 1881, MEW 35:214.
9. Massing: *Rehearsal f. Destr.*, Ch. 2-3, pp. 21-32, 37-47 (summary on 47).
10. Ltr, M to Lafargues, 5 Mar. 1870. MEW 32:657 (facsim.).
11. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 146.
12. M: Cap. 3:587.
13. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:329.
14. E: Intro./Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:188.
15. E.g. see p. 306.
16. M: Electoral Corrupt., N. Y. Tribune, 4 Nov. 1859.
17. M: Corruption at Elec., N. Y. Tribune, 4 Sept. 1852, in ME: On Brit., 373.
The whole article is relevant here.
18. E: On Ital. Panama, MEW 22:364.
19. M: Grundrisse, 80, 133-134.
- 19a. Ltr, M. to Freiligrath, 29 Feb. 1860, MEW 30:492.
20. M: Cap. 1:168.
21. Ibid., 169, 714. (Cf. also M: Grundrisse, 406.)
22. M: Grundrisse, 199-200.
23. M: Cap. 1:85.
24. Ibid., 176.
25. Ltr, M to E, 2 Apr. 1858, in ME:SC, 107.
26. M: Grundrisse, 368.
27. Ibid., 916, 160 (the argument runs through pp. 155-160).
28. Ibid., 543-545.
29. Ibid., 545.
30. M: Speech on Qu. Free Trade, in M: Pov. Philo. (FLPH), 221-222.
31. M: Cap. 1:271.
32. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 145.
33. Ibid., 146, 147, 147-148.
34. M: Cap. 1:60.
35. See Ch. 9, § 3.
36. E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:397.
37. E: Workingmen of Eur., Art. 5.
38. E: article (untitled) in N. Y. Tribune, 23 Dec. 1858.
39. M: Elections T. & W., in ME: On Brit., 352-357.
40. M: Morning Post, in M: Surveys fr. Exile, 286.
41. M: Debates Wood-Theft, MEW 1:128.
42. M: Speech on Qu. Free Trade, in MEGA I, 6:447.

13. THE STATE AND DEMOCRATIC FORMS

1. Lindsay: *K. M.'s Cap.*, 105.
2. See Ch. 3, §5.
3. See the reference to this in Ch. 1, p. 58; it will come up again in another part in connection with feudal socialism.
4. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 362.
5. M: Assoc. Adm. Ref., in ME: Art. Brit., 236-237.
6. Ltr, E to M, 9 Mär. 1847, MEW 27:78.
7. E: Frankf. Assy., MEW 5:14.
8. Ibid., 15-17.
9. For Ruge's political devolution, see Brazill: *Yg. Heg.*, 256-259.
10. E: Debate on Pol. in Fr., NRZ, 3 Sept. 1848, MEW 5:358.
11. M/E: Fall of Camph. Min., NRZ, 23 June 1848, MEW 5:97.
12. E: Supress. Clubs, NRZ, 20 July 1848, MEW 5:238.
13. M: Militia Bill, NRZ, 21 July 1848, MEW 5:244-245.
14. M/E: Prog. Rad.-Dem. Party, NRZ, 7 June 1848, MEW 5:39; M: Dem. Party, NRZ, 2 June 1848, MEW 5:23; M/E: Life-and-Death Qu., NRZ., 4 June 1848, MEW 5:30.
15. M/E: Freed. Delib. Berlin, NRZ, 17 Sept. 1848, MEW 5:406-407.
16. M: Three New Bills, MEW 6:339-342.
17. Ibid., 343.
18. For the first number, see M/E: Hüser, MEW 5:18; besides the passages quoted further along, there was constant emphasis on the issue: e.g., E: Supress. Clubs, NRZ, 20 July 1848, MEW 5:238.
19. M: France, in N. Y. Tribune, 30 Apr. 1858.
20. M: Judic. Inquest, NRZ, 11 July 1848, MEW 5:200.
21. E: Pref./M Bef. Cologne Jury, MEW 21:201.
22. E: Berlin Deb. Rev., NRZ, 15 June 1848, MEW 5:68-69.
23. M: Pruss. Press Bill, NRZ, 20 July 1848, MEW 5:241.
24. E: Debate on Poster Law, MEW 6:441.
25. Ibid., 440.
26. M: Militia Bill, NRZ, 21 July 1848, MEW 5:251.
27. E: Debate on Jac. Motion, NRZ, 22 July 1848, MEW 5:229.
28. E: Dissol. Dem. Assoc., NRZ, 28 July 1848, MEW 5:276.
29. Ibid., 276-277.
30. E: Berlin Deb. Rev., NRZ, 14 June 1848, MEW 5:64-65.
31. E: Debate on Jac. Motion, NRZ, 18 June 1848, MEW 5:222-223.
32. M/E: Prog. Rad.-Dem. Party, NRZ, 7 June 1848, MEW 5:39-40.
33. Ibid., 40.
34. E.g., in E: Concil. Debates, MEW 5:49, 52.
35. M/E: Addr. Ques., NRZ, 8 June 1848, MEW 5:53.
36. M/E: Valdenaire's Arrest, NRZ, 19 June 1848, MEW 5:83; M/E: Stupp Amendment, NRZ, 21 June 1848, MEW 5:90-93.
37. M: Militia Bill, NRZ, 21 July 1848, MEW 5:245.
38. M: Cl. Str. Fr., in MEW:SW 1:233-236.
39. M: Constit. Fr. Repub., 125.
40. Ibid., 126.
41. Ibid., 129.

42. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:409.
43. M: Constit. Fr. Repub., 129.
44. M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 134.
45. M: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune, 5 Nov. 1853.
46. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 8 Nov. 1858.
47. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 3 Nov. 1858.
48. M: Trouble in Ger., N. Y. Tribune, 2 Dec. 1859.
49. M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Dr., in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 152, and 2d Dr., *ibid.*, 200. For final version, see M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:220.
50. M: Const. Fr. Repub., 126.
51. *Ibid.*, 127, 128. See also M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:408.
52. M: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune, 5 Nov. 1853.
53. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 8 Nov. 1858.
54. *Ibid.*
55. M: Trouble in Ger., N. Y. Tribune, 2 Dec. 1859.
56. E: Irish Intlists., in ME: Art. Brit., 364.
57. M: Attack on Fr. Jos., N. Y. Tribune, 8 Mar. 1853.
58. M: Ltr to Daily News, Jan. 1871, in ME:SC, 254-255.
59. *Ibid.*, 255.
60. M: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune, 12 June 1854.
61. Ltr, M to E, 7 Sept. 1864, in ME: Civ. War U.S., 271.
62. M: First Addr. of G. C., in ME:SW 2:192.
63. M: Moral. Crit., MEW 4:348.
64. M: Chartists, N. Y. Tribune 25 Aug. 1852, in ME: On Brit., 359-360.
65. E: Manif. Lamartine, in MEGA I, 6:339.
66. *Ibid.*, 340.
67. Ltr, Harney to E, 30 Mar. 1846, in *Harney Papers*, 245.
68. See Ch. 10, pp. 216-218.
69. E: Cond. Eng./Engl. Const., in ME: Art. Brit., 32, 33, 34, 41.
70. *Ibid.*, 38, 57.
71. *Ibid.*, 57-58, rev. after MEW 1:592.
72. M: Crit. Gotha Prog., in ME:SW 3:25.

14. THE TENDENCY TOWARD STATE AUTONOMY

1. See Ch. 11, pp. 247f.
2. E: L. Feuerbach, in ME:SW 3:371.
3. M: Turk. War Qu., N. Y. Tribune, 20 July 1853, in ME: On Colon., 61.
4. *Ibid.*, 62, 63, 63-64.
5. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 60-61.
6. E: Concil.-Session, NRZ, 11 July 1848, MEW 5:194.
7. *Ibid.*, 195.
8. M: Constit. Fr. Repub., 126.
9. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW, 1:410-411.
10. M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:220.
11. See Ch. 13, §5.
12. M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:220-221.
13. ME: First Press Prosec., MEW 6:227. In this connection cf. also Engels on military discipline, in E: Oath of Eng. Sold., MEW 6:332 f.

14. M: Com. Manif., MEW 4:464; for the tr., ME:SW 1:110-111.
15. M: Crit. Notes King of Pruss., in M: Wr. Yg. M., 348.
16. Hofstadter: *Progressive Hist.*, 119-120, 225.
17. *The Tempest*, I, ii, and II, ii.
18. This is the passage, in Ch. 11, § 3, ending: "the state is in being."
19. *The Tempest*, I, ii.
20. Esp. a passage, numbered 2a, in the ltr, E to Borgius (or Starkenburg), 25 Jan. 1894, in ME:SW 3:502-503.
21. Ltr, E to C. Schmidt, 27 Oct. 1890, in ME:SW 3:491.
22. See Ch. 3, p. 86, and Ch. 5, § 4.
23. M: Cap. 3:379-380.
24. M: Result Elecs., N. Y. Tribune, 11 Sept. 1852.
25. E: Role of Force, in ME:SW 3:420.
26. *Ibid.*, 421.
27. Ltr, E to Bebel, 19 Feb. 1892, MEW 38:281; the whole passage here is of interest in this connection.
28. Ltr, M to E, 24 Apr. 1867, MEW 31:290.
29. Ltr, E to M, 27 Apr. 1867, MEW 31:294.
30. E: Movemts. 1847, MEW 4:500; tr. in ME: Com. Manif./Ryazanoff, 281.
31. M: Elections T. & W., N. Y. Tribune, 21 Aug. 1852, in ME: On Brit., 355.
32. *Ibid.*, 356.
33. *Ibid.*
34. M: Superann. Admin., N. Y. Tribune, 28 Jan. 1853.
35. M: Crisis in Eng., N. Y. Tribune, 24 Mar. 1855, in ME: On Brit., 423-424.
36. M: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune, 24 June 1858.
37. For the Peelites as electoral clique, see e.g., M: Result Elec., N. Y. Tribune, 22 Apr. 1857; M: Elections T. & W., in ME: On Brit., 357; for the French Republicans, see M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:407. For party cliques in England, see also M: Parties & Cliques, in M: Surveys fr. Exile, 280 [MEW 11:45].
38. M: Superann. Admin., N. Y. Tribune, 28 Jan. 1853.
39. E: Abdic. Bourg., in ME: Art. Brit., 397-398.
40. *Ibid.*, 398, 399.
41. M: Cap. 1:239.
42. M: Brit. Const., in ME: Art. Brit., 222.
43. E: Pref./Peas. War Ger., in ME:SW 2:169.
44. *Ibid.*, 162; the italicized quotation is from the last page of the work itself, E: Peas. War Ger. (56), 157.
45. ME: British Politics, N. Y. Tribune, 7 Apr. 1853.
46. Ltr, E to M, 13 Apr. 1866, MEW 31:208 [tr. ME:SC, 177]; the context is discussed below, p. 257f.
47. For this, see M: Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:268-269.
48. Ltr, E to L. Lafargue, 8 Oct. 1889, in E & Lafargue: Corr., 2:327.
49. Ltr, E to L. Lafargue, 29 Oct. 1889, in *ibid.*, 332.
50. E: Intro./Soc. Utop. Sci., in ME:SW 3:110-112.

15. THE BONAPARTE MODEL

1. See Ch. 14, p. 224.
2. Ltr, E to M, 3 Dec. 1851, in ME:SC, 60-63.
3. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:404.
4. Quoted in Cobban: *Hist. Mod. France*, 2:141.
5. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:404.
6. *Ibid.*, 405.
7. *Ibid.*, 406.
8. *Ibid.*, 407.
9. *Ibid.*, 408.
10. See Ch. 13, § 4, and Ch. 14, § 2.
11. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:412.
12. See Part II of M: Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:239-256.
13. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:413-414.
14. *Ibid.*, 414.
15. M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:219.
16. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:417-418.
17. *Ibid.*, 418-419.
18. *Ibid.*, 421.
19. *Ibid.*, 422.
20. *Ibid.*, 422-423.
21. *Ibid.*, 423-431, 438-440.
22. M: Cl. Str. Fr. in ME:SW 1:253-261.
23. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:432-433.
24. *Ibid.*, 433.
25. *Ibid.*, 434.
26. *Ibid.*, 435.
27. *Ibid.*, 436.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, 446-447, 449.
30. *Ibid.*, 452.
31. *Ibid.*, 454.
32. *Ibid.*, 455-456.
33. *Ibid.*, 464.
34. *Ibid.*, 466; also 480.
35. *Ibid.*, 468-469.
36. *Ibid.*, 476-477.
37. Tocqueville: *Old Regime & Fr. Rev.* (III, 7), 202.
38. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:477.
39. *Ibid.*, 478.
40. M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 151; cf. also 156.
41. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:479.
42. E: Notes on W., 46.
43. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:482-483.
44. *Ibid.*, 484.
45. *Ibid.*, 485.
46. E: Intro./Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:181.
47. Ltr, E to M, 3 Dec. 1851, in ME:SC, 60-63.

48. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:398.
49. See ltr, M to Weydemeyer, 19 Dec. 1851, in ME: Ltrs Amer., 30 [MEW 27:594]. Ltr, M to E, 24 Jan. and 27 Feb. 1852, MEW 28:12 and 30, including the notes giving the editors' interpretation.
50. Ltr, M to E, 9 Dec. 1851, in ME: Sel. Corr. (55), 77. This letter is not included in ME:SC.
51. M: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 22 Feb. 1858; E: Prosecution of Mont., N. Y. Tribune, 24 Nov. 1858.
52. M: French Cred. Mob. (Art. II), N. Y. Tribune, 24 June 1856.
53. E: Pruss. Mil. Qu., MEW 16:71-72.
54. E: Real Causes (Art. I), *Notes to the People*, 21 Feb. 1852.
55. Ibid. (Art. II), 27 Mar. 1852.
56. Ibid. (Art. III), 10 Apr. 1852.
57. ME: Com. Manif., in ME:SW 1:109.
58. ME: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune, 23 Dec. 1858. (Ascribed in MEW to E only.)
59. M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:219.
60. M: Historic Par., N. Y. Tribune, 31 Mar. 1859.

16. BONAPARTISM: THE BISMARCKIAN EXTENSION

1. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:328-329, rev. after MEW 21:167.
2. Ibid., 332.
3. M: Echoes of Erfurt, MEW 13:414.
4. Ltr, M to E, 17 Nov. 1862, MEW 30:301.
5. ME: Ltr to Brunswick Comm., in ME:SC, 247.
6. Ltr, E to Bernstein, 27 Aug. 1883, in ME:SC, 363; see also E: Pref./Peas. War Ger. (1874), in ME:SW 2:166.
7. E: Soc. Bismarck, II (*Egalité*, 24 Mar. 1880); cf. MEW 19:175.
8. M: Report of G. C. Hague Congr., in G.C.F.I. 71-72 [5], 457. M: Civ. War Fr., 2d Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 203.
9. Ltr, E to M, 29 Apr. 1864, MEW 30:393.
10. E: Pruss. Mil. Qu., MEW 16:71-73.
11. Ltr, E to M, 13 Apr. 1866, MEW 31:208 [tr. ME:SC, 177]; this passage previously quoted on p. 336.
12. Ltr, E to M, 11 June 1866, MEW 31:227.
13. Ltr, E to M, 9 July 1866, MEW 31:235.
14. Ltr, E to M, 25 July 1866, MEW 31:240-241.
15. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:348, rev. after MEW 18:258.
16. Ltr, E to Pauli, 30 July 1878, MEW 34:335.
17. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:348.
18. Ibid., 349.
19. Ibid., 350.
20. E: Crisis in Pruss., MEW 18:293.
21. Ibid., 294-295.
22. E: Pref./Peas. War Ger. (1874), in ME:SW 2:166, rev. after MEW 18:513.
23. Ibid., 166-167.
24. Ibid., 167.

25. This phrase is taken from E's outline for the chapter as a whole, MEW 21:463.
26. E: Role of Force, MEW 21:452-453 (cf. tr. in ME:SW 3:419).
27. Ibid., 453 (cf. tr., 420).
28. Ibid., 454 (cf. tr., 420-421).
29. Ltr, E to Bebel, 7 Mar. 1883, MEW 35:450.
30. E: Role of Force, in ME:SW 3:378, 380.
31. E: Role of Force, MEW 21:428, 431 [tr. 396, 398].
32. H.: *Karl Marx/Interview* (Dec. 1878), 22.
33. E: Role of Force, MEW 21:431 [tr. 398].
34. Ibid., 428 (cf. tr., 395-396).
35. Ibid., 428-429 (cf. tr., 396).
36. Ibid., 453 (cf. tr., 420).
37. Ibid., 460 (cf. tr., 426-427).
38. E: Ger. Soc. Dem., in Newcastle Daily Chronicle, 3 Mar. 1890 [MEW 22:5].
39. E: On Hist. Pruss. Peas., in E: Peas. War Ger., 191 [MEW 21:244f.].
40. E: Role of Force, MEW 21:426 (cf. tr., 394).
41. Ibid., 427 (cf. tr., 394).
42. Ibid., 428 (cf. tr., 395).
43. Ibid., 431 (cf. tr. 398-399).
44. For a comment on this point, see ltr, E to Bebel, 7 Mar. 1883, MEW 35:450.
45. Ltr, E to Bernstein, 27 Aug. 1883, MEW 36:54; cf. ME:SC, 363.
46. E: Role of Force, MEW 21:454 (cf. tr., 421).
47. Ibid., 456 (cf. tr., 423).
48. E: Role of Force—Outline of concluding section, MEW 21:464; my bracketed interpolations try to spell out the sense.
49. Ibid., 465.
50. This is from the last point in E's outline for the chapter as a whole, MEW 21:463.
51. E: Intro./Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:193.
52. Ladendorf: *Hist. Schlagw.*, 271-272.
53. E: Debate on Poster Law, NRZ, 27 Apr. 1849, MEW 6:441.
54. E: Role of Force, MEW 21:433 (cf. tr., 400).
55. E: Intro./Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:193.

17. BONAPARTISM AND THE "PROGRESSIVE DESPOT"

1. Ltr, H. Marx to Karl, 2 Mar. 1837, MEW Eb. 1:629.
2. M: Scorpion & Felix, in MEGA I, 1.2:85-86.
3. M: Ltrs from D. F. J.; no. 2 (May 1843), MEW 1:340; cf. tr., M: Early Texts, 76.
4. Esp. frequently in M: 18th Brum.; for another context, see e.g. ltr, M to Schweitzer, 24 Jan. 1865, in ME:SC, 158.
5. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 209.
6. M: Pruss. Press Bill, MEW 5:241; M: Bourgeois Doc., MEW 6:152; also cf. Marx's contrast of Napoleonic despotism with Prussian despotism, in ME: First Press Prosec., MEW 6:226.
7. ME: Holy Farn., MEW 2:130; cf. tr., 165.
8. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:399.

9. ME: Holy Fam., MEW 2:130-131; cf. tr., 166.
10. Ibid., 86; cf. tr., 110.
11. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:477-478.
12. E: Savoy, Nice & Rhine, MEW 13:598.
13. Ltr, E to L. Lafargue, 4 Feb. 1889, in E & Lafargue: Corr. 2:193.
14. Ltr, E to L. Lafargue, 16 Apr. 1890, in *ibid.*, 371.
15. M: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 13 Mar. 1854; repr. in M: East. Qu., 269; ltr, M to Lassalle, 23 Feb. 1852, MEW 28:498.
16. See Proudhon: *Carnets*, 1:286-288, 356-357; 2:333; 3:124, 134—these especially, among other passages. Disillusionment seems to set in with 3:200.
17. M: Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:238; M: Pref./18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:395; M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:207, 226; and 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 157, 115.
18. Franzisca Kugelmann, in *Reminisc. ME*, 280-281; ltr, M to E, 10 Feb. 1870, MEW 32:436.
19. M: French Trials, N. Y. Tribune, 27 Apr. 1858.
20. Ltr, M to E, 14 Feb. 1858, MEW 29:281.
21. M: Ms. Poln. Fr., 187-188; see 181-188 for the whole case on Napoleon. For Marx's speeches on this question at the G.C. of the International, see G.C.F.I. 64-66 [1], 56, 61-62, 380 (n. 28); also Collins & Abramsky, 107-108. For Engels on Napoleon's betrayal of Poland, see E: Pref./On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME: Russ. Men., 204, or MEW 18:585.
22. M: Herr Vogt, MEW 14:519-520 fn.
23. M: Revol. Spain, I (N. Y. Tribune, 9 Sept. 1854) and VI (24 Nov. 1854), in ME: Rev. in Spain, 27, 67.
24. M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 148-149; and final version of same, in ME:SW 2:218. The latter formulation already appeared in the 2nd Draft, for which see ME: Wr. Par. Com., 197.
25. Ltr, E to F. Graeber, Dec.-Feb. 1840, MEW Eb. 2:442; E: Immermann's Mem., MEW Eb. 2:146-147; E: E. M. Arndt, MEW Eb. 2:120, 122.
26. E: Imperial Cortege, MEW Eb. 2:139-140.
27. For the first side, cf. E: Progress Soc. Ref., MEGA I, 2:436; E: Cond. Eng./18th Cent., MEW 1:554 or ME: Art. Brit., 13. For the second, cf. esp. E: State of Ger./I, in MEGA I, 4:484-486; E: Ger. Socialism, MEW 4:233.
28. E: Status Quo in Ger., MEW 4:45.
29. E: Notes on Ger./Intro., in E: Peas. War Ger. (56), 231.
30. E: Mark, in E: Peas. War Ger. (56), 179; ltr, E to P. Lafargue, 19 Mar. 1888, in E & Lafargue: Corr. 2:107; E: Peas. Qu., in ME:SW 3:457.
31. E: To Span. Workers, MEW 22:405 (retranslated).
32. E: Intro./Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:187; M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 149.
33. E: For. Pol. Russ. Cz./Time, Part III, 525. (This refers to the English translation overseen by Engels; for tr. from German, see ME: Russ. Men., 39.) The preceding citation came from the same, Part II, 365-369 (in ME: Russ. Men., 35-39).
34. Ltr, E to M, 25 July 1866, MEW 31:240; cf. ME:SC, 181-182.
35. Ltr, M to E, 27 July 1866, MEW 31:242.
36. M: Bolivar (see Bibliography).
37. Ltr, M to E, 14 Feb. 1858, MEW 29:280; see also Draper: *K. Marx & Bolívar*, 69.
38. M: Herr Vogt, MEW 14:685; see also 575 fn. for the equation of Bolívar with another shady Hungarian, Bangya.

18. BONAPARTISM IN EXTREMIS

1. Thompson: *L. Napoleon*, 227-254; for specific references, 227, 232-233, 236-241, 253.
2. M: Kossuth & L. Nap., *N. Y. Tribune*, 24 Sept. 1859.
3. For Proudhon's *La Révolution Sociale Démontrée par le Coup d'Etat du 2 Décembre* (Paris, 1852), see e.g., Schapiro: *Proudhon*, in his *Lib. & Challenge*, Ch. 14. (Woodcock's *Proudhon*, as usual whitewashes this episode; cf. 181-182.)
4. See ME: *Alleged Schisms*, in ME:SW 2:283-285.
5. M: Herr Vogt, MEW 14:548.
6. Leroy: *Hist. Id. Soc.* 3:262-268.
7. Quoted by Marx in ltr, M to Lassalle, 23 Feb. 1852, MEW 28:497, and then incorporated in M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:476.
8. Ltr, E to M, 18 Mar. 1852, MEW 28:41.
9. Ltr, M to Cluss, bef. 26 June 1852, MEW 28:534.
10. Ltr, M to E, 2 June 1860, MEW 30:61; Silberner: *M. Hess*, 358ff., 377, 451, 463, 503f, 515, 520f, 537f; Hirsch: *Denker & Kämpfer*, 91-97.
11. M: French Cred. Mob.—I, *N. Y. Tribune*, 21 June 1856.
12. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:486; ltr, M to E, 7 Aug. 1855, MEW 28:455.
13. M: French Cred. Mob.—II, *N. Y. Tribune*, 24 June 1856.
14. M: New Treaty, *N. Y. Tribune*, 14 Feb. 1860.
15. M: French Cred. Mob.—II, *N. Y. Tribune*, 24 June 1856.
16. M: French Cred. Mob.—III, *N. Y. Tribune*, 11 July 1856.
17. Fourier: *Design f. Utop.*, 51 and (for mercantile feudalism) 100; also see Gide's introduction to this volume. Pankhurst: *Fourierism*, 427; Gurvitch: *Proudhon*, 51; Wilshire: *Socialism Inev.*, 149. Cuvillier: *Proudhon*, 10; for Ghent, see Bibliography.
18. E: Köln. Ztg. on Eng. Cond., MEW 5:287; cf. also E: True Soc., in ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 609 (for feudalism of money).
19. Berle: *20th Cent. Cap. Rev.*, esp. Ch. 3, but it is the thesis of the whole book.
20. M: Brit. Com. & Fin., in *N. Y. Tribune*, 4 Oct. 1858.
21. M: article (no title) in *N. Y. Tribune*, 9 Oct. 1856.
22. Ltr, M to E, 11 Apr. 1868, MEW 32:58.
23. M: Monet. Crisis, *N. Y. Tribune*, 15 Oct. 1856.
24. Ltr, E to M, 17 Nov. 1856, MEW 29:86; M to E, 10 Jan. 1857, *ibid.*, 93.
25. Ltr, M to E, 8 Dec. 1857, MEW 29:224.
26. Ltr, M to E, 25 Dec. 1857, MEW 29:238; E to M, 17 Mar. 1858, *ibid.*, 303.
27. M: article (no title) in *N. Y. Tribune*, 15 Dec. 1858. Cf. also ltr, M to E, 29 Nov. 1858, MEW 29:371; M. to Lassalle, 4 Feb. 1859, *ibid.*, 575.
28. Ltr, M to E, 18 Dec. 1857, MEW 29:233.
29. Ltr, E to M, 17 Mar. 1858, MEW 29:304.
30. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:339f; E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 383 fn. (or Soc. Utop. Sci., in ME:SW 3:144 fn).
31. M: Grundrisse, 73.
32. M: Cap. 3:592.
33. *Ibid.*, 594.

34. Ibid., 593-594.
35. See ltr, M to E, 2 Mar. 1858, MEW 29:291; Lassalle to Marx, 10 Feb. 1858, in Lassalle: *Nachgel. Br. & Schr.* 3:114.
36. E: Pruss. Mil. Qu., MEW 16:72; E: Intro./Cl. Str. Fr., in ME:SW 1:193.
37. M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:219.
38. ME: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 23 Dec. 1858 (ascribed in MEW to Engels only but I feel Marx's hand shows plainly).
39. M: Russ. Victory, N. Y. Tribune, 27 Dec. 1853; also M: Polit. Movements, *ibid.*, 30 Sept. 1853.
40. Ltr, M to E, 29 Jan. 1858, MEW 29:269.
41. M: article (no title), N. Y. Tribune 22 Feb. 1858.
42. M: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 12 Mar. 1858, pub. as a leading article.
43. M: Rule of the Pretorians, N. Y. Tribune, 12 Mar. 1858. (Not to be confused with the untitled article published on the same date, referred to in preceding note.)
44. See §6, p. 451.
45. M: Herr Vogt, MEW 14:472, 573.
46. M: Bonaparte's Pres. Pos., N. Y. Tribune, 1 Apr. 1858.
47. Ltr, M to Lassalle, 4 Feb. 1859, MEW 29:576.
48. M: Historic Par., N. Y. Tribune, 31 Mar. 1859.
49. E: Prosecution of Mont., N. Y. Tribune, 24 Nov. 1858.
50. M: France, in N. Y. Tribune, 30 Apr. 1858; datelined 13 Apr.
51. From ltr, M to E, 31 May 1858, MEW 29:329.
52. M: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 11 June 1858; datelined 27 May.
53. M: Bonaparte's Pres. Pos., N. Y. Tribune, 1 Apr. 1858.
54. M: Pelissier's Mission, N. Y. Tribune, 15 Apr. 1858.
55. M: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 24 June 1858; written 11 June.
56. M: Peace or War, N. Y. Tribune, 25 Mar. 1859.
57. Rubel: *K. M. Devant le Bonap.*, 49-51; more generally all of Ch. 3-4.
58. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:478 [MEW 8:197].
59. M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 149-50.
60. *Ibid.*, 150-151.
61. Same, 2d Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 196.
62. M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:219.

19. STATE AUTONOMY IN PRECAPITALIST SOCIETY

1. Ltr, E to Bebel, 12 Apr. 1888, MEW 37:51.
2. ME: Com. Manif., in ME:SW 1:108-109.
3. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 228.
4. *Ibid.*, 386, or E: Soc. Utop. Sci., in ME:SW 3:146.
5. M: Pref./18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:395.
6. Ladendorf: *Hist. Schlagw.*, 40-41.
7. M: Aff. in Prussia, N. Y. Tribune, 14 June 1860, E: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 23 Dec. 1858 (drafted by E but M sent the article in); M: War Prospect, N. Y. Tribune, 31 Jan. 1859.
8. Ltr, E to M, 3 Dec. 1851, in ME:SC, 62.

9. For ex., brief references in *Capital* and elsewhere, traceable through the subject or geographic index of most MEW volumes (but not 1-8, 26), most being to economic or military history only, in a technical connection. E: Orig. Fam., Ch. 6, which deals with Rome, focuses on the origin, not decline, of the state. Likewise M: Grundrisse, for ex. 378-82 (tr. 71-77); cf. also Hobsbawm intro to M: Pre-Cap. Ec. Form., 38-41.
10. Ltr. M. to Zasulich/1st Draft (final draft dated 8 Mar. 1881), in ME:SW 3:159.
11. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:327-28.
12. M: Cap. 3:325.
13. M: Cap. 2, in MEW 24:113 (trans. *state enterprise* in M: Cap. 2:110).
14. M: Debates Wood-Theft, MEW 1:118.
15. See Ch. 3, §4, p. 87.
16. See Ch. 1, §1.
17. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Law/Ms., MEW 1:233.
18. See Ch. 3, §3.
19. See Ch. 1, §3, p. 36 fn.
20. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Law/Ms., MEW 1:275.
21. Ibid., 276, and more for another page.
22. See Ch. 5, §4, p. 118f.
23. M: Econ. Ph. Ms., MEW Eb. 1:505-506.
24. Ibid., 506.
25. Ibid., 507. Note also the passage quoted from Adam Smith, *ibid.*, 484 (cf. tr. 78).
26. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 452.
27. Ibid., 90.
28. Ibid., 35.
29. E: Army, in ME: Art. N.A.C., 72.
30. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 77, 78, 79.
31. M: Cap. 1:332.
32. M: Cap. 3:603-604 rev. after MEW 25:631.
33. M: Grundrisse, 628.
34. E: Princ. Com., in ME:SW 1:88; E: Peas. War. Ger. (56), 40, and see also 41-42 in this connection; E: Rev. & C.R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:302.
35. M: Cap. 1:718; ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 207.
36. Cf. E: Intro./Soc. Utop. Sci., in ME:SW 3:105; E: Notes on Ger./Intro., in E: Peas. War. Ger. (56), 224.
37. E: Status Quo in Ger., MEW 4:47.
38. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 458.
39. E: For 'Peas. War,' MEW 21:402; cf. tr. E: Peas. War Ger. (56), 222.
40. E: Decay of Feud., in E: Peas. War Ger. (56), 216-217.
41. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 78.
42. Ibid., 208-209 rev. after MEW 3:178. The basic idea is repeated *ibid.*, 393-394 [MEW 3:345].
43. E: Pruss. Const., in MEGA I, 6:253-254.
44. ME: Com. Manif., in ME:SW 1:110.
45. E: Begin. End Austria, MEW 4:505.
46. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:321.
47. E: Hung. Strug., NRZ 13 Jan. 1849, MEW 6:167-168; cf. tr. in ME: Russ. Men., 58-59.
48. M: Cap. 1:718.

49. Ltr, E. to Kautsky, 20 Feb. 1889, in ME: Sel. Corr. (55), 481, rev. after MEW 37:154.
50. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 252.
51. Ibid., 227.
52. M: Moral. Crit., MEW 4:339-340.
53. Ibid., 347.
54. Ibid., 353.
55. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:348.
56. E. Bernstein: unsigned article "Zur Naturgeschichte der Volkspartei," in *Der Sozialdemokrat* (Zurich), 20 Mar. 1884. For E's comment, see his ltr, E to Bernstein, 24 Mar. 1884, in ME:SC, 371.
57. Ltr, E to Bernstein, 27 Aug. 1883, in ME:SC, 363.
58. E: Pref./Peas. War Ger./1874, in ME:SW 2:166.
59. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:348-349. In this connection, E: Prussian *Schnaps*, MEW 19:37ff, is a spirited note on the bourgeoisification of Junkerdom.
60. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:348.

20. STATE BUREAUCRACY AND CLASS

1. Ltr, E to C. Schmidt, 27 Oct. 1890, in ME:SC, 421; cited in Ch. 11, p. 246.
2. For this passage by Engels, see Ch. 11, p. 252.
3. M: Lassalle, in NRZ, 4 Mar. 1849, MEW 6:321.
4. Jacoby: *Bürok. d. Welt*, 251.
5. So says Dulaure: *Hist. Paris*, 438.
6. M: Notebk. on Maine, 329.
7. Albrow: *Bureaucracy*, intro., 13-15; on Marx, 68-72.
8. Ibid., 18f; this work, esp. Ch. 1, is also the source of other references to the early history of the term not otherwise ascribed. For the German press, see Schulz: *Deut. Fremdwb.*, 1:102.
9. For Marx in 1842-1843, see MEW 1:101, MEW Eb. 1:424. For Engels in 1839-1840, see MEW Eb. 2 name index.
10. Emge: *Bürokratisierung*, 179; Schulz: *Deut. Fremdwb.*, 1:102.
11. Mill: *Rev./A. Carrel*, 72.
12. Mohl: *Ueber Bur.*, 99-100; cf. also 101-102.
13. Blackie, in *Westminster Review*, v. 37, 1842, p. 134ff; edit. note on p. 170-171; most important passage is at p. 158-163; similarity with China invoked p. 156. Perhaps first use of the term in English was in *Popular Encyclopaedia* of 1837, based on Brockhaus. Albrow's ref. to *Blackwood's* for 1836 is misleading, the term occurring there as a purely French word.
14. Ch. 1, p. 36, incl. fn.
15. See Ch. 3, §3, esp. p. 82f; cf. also Ch. 6, p. 143, and Ch. 8, p. 169f.
16. See Ch. 1, p. 34.
17. See Ch. 1, p. 45f.
18. See Ch. 2, p. 72.
19. M: Vindication Moselle Corr., MEW 1:185; cited in Ch. 2, p. 65.
20. Ibid., 189.
21. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:248-249; cited in Ch. 3, p. 81.
22. Ibid., 284.
23. For this, see Ch. 19, §2.

24. M: Crit. Heg. Ph. Rt./Ms., MEW 1:249-255; cited in Ch. 3, pp. 81-84.
25. ME: Ger. Ideol., MEW 3:46, rev. from ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 60-61.
26. This refers to the distinction made in Ch. 14, p. 312 fn.
27. These passages have already been cited in Ch. 19, pp. 477-478; see the references given there.
28. E: State of Ger./III, in MEGA I, 4:494-495.
29. E: Pruss. Const., in MEGA I, 6:253; this passage was quoted more fully in Ch. 19, p. 478.
30. M: Moral. Crit., MEW 4:353; this whole passage was quoted and discussed in Ch. 19, p. 481f.
31. M: Com. of Rh. B., MEW 4:193.
32. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:477; the whole passage was quoted and discussed in Ch. 15, p. 401.
33. M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:217.
34. Same, 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Comm., 148.
35. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:477-478; this passage was referred to in Ch. 17, p. 431 fn.
36. See Ch. 9, p. 207f and its fn.; also Ch. 1, p. 36.
37. M: Ltrs from D.F.J., no. 2 (May 1843), MEW 1:341-342 [tr. M: Wr. Yg. M., 209-210]. *Dienerstaat* was trans. as *servile state* in Ch. 9, p. 208, where this passage was given in full.
38. M/E: Speech fr. Throne, NRZ, 2 Mar. 1849, MEW 6:319.
39. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:308, 310, 311.
40. This passage was given in Ch. 9, p. 208 fn., from M: Aff. in Prussia, N. Y. Tribune, 1 Feb. 1859.
41. From the same Tribune article.
42. M: K. M. bef. Cologne Jury, MEW 6:244 [tr. ME: Rev. 48-49, 232].
43. Ibid., 253 [tr. *ibid.*, 241-242].
44. Ibid., 254 [tr. *ibid.*, 243].
45. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 1 Feb. 1859.
46. M: Grundrisse, 844.
47. M: K. M. bef. Cologne Jury, MEW 6:253 [tr. ME: Rev. 48-49, 242-243].
48. This passage was cited above, p. 493.
49. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:478. The larger context of this passage was given in Ch. 15, p. 401.
50. For context, see Ch. 16, p. 415; for source, ref. 15 in that chapter.
51. See Ch. 23, § 5, esp. ltr, E to Danielson, 18 June 1892, there quoted.
52. MEW 26.1:145, rev. from M: Theor. S. V., 1:170.
53. M: Theor. S. V., 1:171 [MEW 26.1:145-146].
54. MEW 26.1:273-274, rev. from M: Theor. S. V., 1:291-292. Cf. also M: Grundrisse, 372.
55. Cited in Ch. 14, pp. 313-314, from a Tribune article by Marx (ME: On Colon. (68), 62-64).
56. M: Brit. Incomes, N. Y. Tribune, 21 Sept. 1857, in ME: On Colon. (68), 168-172.
57. E: Status Quo in Ger., MEW 4:44.
58. Ibid., 45.
59. Ibid., 50.
60. Ibid., 51.
61. Ibid., 53.
62. Ibid., 54.
63. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:322.

64. For ex., cf. "race of lawyers" in the same work, *ibid.*, 308.
65. M: Morning Post, in M: Surveys fr. Exile, 286.
66. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 3 Dec. 1858.
67. Ladendorf: *Hist. Schlagw.*, 162-163.
68. Footnote by E in M: Pov. Philo. (FLPH), 174; the whole passage illuminates this point. For M in 1849, see above, p. 498.
69. M: Wage-Lab. & Cap., in ME:SW 1:159.
70. M: Montesquieu LVI, in NRZ, 21 Jan. 1849, MEW 6:187-188.
71. E: Rev. & C. R. Ger., in ME:SW 1:311; passage cited above, p. 494.
72. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 244, and MEW 20:164.
73. See esp. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:275 (a summary); also *ibid.*, 208, 237, 272.
74. Bukharin: *Hist. Mat.*, 279-281.
75. *Ibid.*, 152.
76. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 51 [MEW 3:39]; M: Pov. Philo. (FLPH), 127, 131, 135 [M: Misère, 135, 138, 143] —this passage being anticipated in ltr, M to Annenkov, 28 Dec. 1846, in ME:SC, 37; M: Cap. 1:339-340, 366; M: Grundrisse, 381, or M: Pre-Cap. Econ. Form., 76-77. Minor locus in ltr, M to E, 14 June 1853, in ME:SC, 86.
77. See "Caste," *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th ed., 5:468-469.
78. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:482-483; for context, see Ch. 15, p. 402.
79. E: Ger. Camp. Const., MEW 7:133.
80. E: Hous. Qu., in ME:SW 2:348; context given in Ch. 16, p. 415. (For a similar use of *caste* by Marx in 1871, see M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 153.)
81. E: M. & NRZ, in ME:SW 3:165.
82. Albrow: *Bureaucracy*, 16, 127.
83. E: War in East, N. Y. Tribune, 30 Nov. 1854.
84. E: Brit. Disaster, N. Y. Tribune, 22 Jan. 1855, in M: East. Qu., 506.
85. M: Brit. Army, N. Y. Tribune, 14 Apr. 1855.
86. *Ibid.*
87. Schiller: *F. E. & Schiller-Anstalt*, 486-489.
88. Ltr, E to Ex. Com. of Schiller Institute, ca. 3 May 1861, MEW 30:596-597.
89. See Ch. 15, pp. 312-314, and in this chapter p. 501.
90. M: Aff. in Pruss., N. Y. Tribune, 8 Nov. 1858.
91. M: Paper Tax, N. Y. Tribune, 22 Aug. 1860.
92. M/E: New Charter, NRZ 17 May 1849, MEW 6:497; ME: First Press Prosec., MEW 6:223.

21. ORIENTAL DESPOTISM: THE SOCIAL BASIS

1. The phrase is from the contemporary *New American Cyclopaedia*; see Special Note E, p. 656.
2. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 80 fn; the break is more accurately shown at MEW 3:65.
3. The explicit statement is made at ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 77.
4. ME: Ger. Ideol., in MEW 3:22 [tr. 33].
5. ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 77 [MEW 3:61].
6. *Ibid.*, 33, rev. after MEW 3:22-23.

7. Ibid., 77 [MEW 3:62].
8. The ref. to three centuries is in M: Chinese Aff., MEW 15:514.
9. ME: Review/Jan.-Feb., in ME: On Colon., 18, 17.
10. Ibid., 18.
11. Same, in MEW 7:220-221.
12. M: Duchess of Sutherland, in ME: Art. Brit., 145.
13. M: Cap. 1:729-730.
14. Mill: *Hist. Brit. India*, 1:314.
15. M: Rev. in China, in ME: On Colon., 19
16. Ibid., 24.
17. Ibid., 25.
18. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:85 fn; the Eng. tr. omitted the ref. to "dancing tables," which would have needed explanation. (For the explanation, see "Tischrücken" in Ladendorf: *Hist. Schlagw.*, 314; cf. M: Chinese Aff., MEW 15:514.)
19. M: Aff. in Holland, in ME: On Colon., 29.
20. For M's later years, see his painstaking work in M: Notes on Ind. Hist. For his and E's reading in Oriental history, see Hobsbawm's intro to M: Pre-Cap. Econ. Form., 21-22.
21. For the passages in which Bernier stresses this, see Bernier: *Travels*, 5, 204, 220, 226, 232.
22. Ltr, M to E, 2 June 1853, MEW 28:252-254 [ME:SC, 80-81].
23. Ltr, E to M, 6 June 1853, MEW 28:259 [ME:SC, 82].
24. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:379 [tr. 1:358]; M: Chinese Aff., MEW 15:514, 516; E: Persia-China, N. Y. Tribune, 5 June 1857, in ME: On Colon. (68), 120; M: Opium Trade/I, N. Y. Tribune, 20 Sept. 1858, *ibid.*, 216.
25. M: Future Res. Brit. Rule, N. Y. Tribune, 8 Aug. 1853, in ME:SW 1:494.
26. M: Grundrisse, 30.
27. M: Brit. Rule in Ind., N. Y. Tribune, 25 June 1853, in ME:SW 1:490. For Munro, see M: Notes on Ind. Hist., 138.
28. M: Chinese Aff., MEW 15:514.
29. *Ex Lib. K. M.*, 103.
30. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:379 [tr. 1:358].
31. M: Cap. 1:79 [MEW 23:93-94]; M: Brit. Rule in India, N. Y. Tribune, 25 June 1853, in ME:SW 1:488; M: Chinese Aff., MEW 15:514; E: B. Bauer & Early Chr., in ME: On Relig., 201-203, and his On Hist. Early Chr., *ibid.*, 314-315; ME: Ger. Ideol. (64), 51; Thalheimer: *Intro. Dial. Mat.*, Ch. 14-15 (cf. also Ch. 1-2).
32. Ltr, E to M, 6 June 1853, MEW 28:259 [ME:SC, 82].
33. Brit. Rule in Ind., N. Y. Tribune, 25 June 1853, in ME:SW 1:489.
34. M: Cap. 1:513-514, 514 fn.
35. Ltr, M to E, 14 June 1853, MEW 28:267 [ME:SC, 85].
36. Same ltr, *ibid.*; M: Brit. Rule in Ind., in ME:SW 1:491f; M: Cap. 1:358 fn; in all three cases Marx is quoting from Raffles, not Campbell.
37. This passage is given here, punctuation and all, as it appears in the original report, not as transcribed by Raffles (from whom Marx cites it) or others. Source: *Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Affairs*, 1812. Part II, Presidency of Fort St. George, section on the "Northern Circars." In: *I.U.P. Series of Brit. Parl. Papers*, Colonies-East India, 3. East India Co. Affairs, 1812 (377) vol. VIII, p. 85.
38. Ltr, M to E, 14 June 1853, MEW 28:268 [ME:SC, 86].

39. M: Brit. Rule in Ind., in ME:SW 1:492.
40. Re slavery: e.g., same article, *ibid.*; re domestic slavery as a subordinate form, see E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 480. M: Lord Canning's Proc., N. Y. Tribune, 7 June 1858, in ME: On Colon., 192; ME: Russo-Turk. Difficulty, N. Y. Tribune, 25 July 1853, in *ibid.*, 70-73.
41. For ex., see M: Notebk. on Phear, 256, 283.
42. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:93 [tr. 79]. Ltr, M to E, 14 June 1853, in ME:SC, 86. M: Lord Canning's Proc., in ME: On Colon., 190ff.
43. M: Notebk. on Lubbock, 340.
44. M: Brit. Rule in Ind., in ME:SW 1:492.
45. M: Cap. 3:328.
46. M: Future Results Brit. Rule, in ME:SW 1:496.
47. M: Cap. 3:583-584.
48. M: Grundrisse, 742.
49. M: Cap. 1:334.
50. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:102 [tr. 1:87].
51. *Ex Lib. K. M.*, 103.
52. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:378-379 [tr. 1:357-358]; the continuation of this passage was quoted on p. 524.
53. M: Grundrisse, 375-376 [tr. 68-69].
54. *Ibid.* (These ideas are repeated in other contexts later: p. 380, 383, 385 [tr. 75, 79, 82].)
55. *Ibid.*, 377 [tr. 69-70]; cf. also 383 [tr. 79].
56. *Ibid.*, 390 [tr. 88].
57. *Ibid.*, 377 [tr. 70-71].
58. *Ibid.*, 371.
59. *Ibid.*, 742, 382.
60. *Ibid.*, 386 [tr. 83].
61. *Ibid.*, 423-424.
62. *Ibid.*, 392-393 [tr. 91]; cf. also a brief repetition in 394 [tr. 93].
63. *Ibid.*, 394 [tr. 94].
64. Cf. Marx's discussion of Linguet's "Asiatic slavery" in M. Theor. S. V., 1:335, 339.
65. E: Cond. Wkg. Cl. Eng./Pref. 87, in ME: On Brit., 10.
66. M: Grundrisse, 393 [tr. 91-92]; the preceding exposition began on 392.
67. *Ibid.*, 395. (Tr. in M: Pre-Cap. Ec. Form., 95, garbles this.)
68. M: Theor. S. V. 3, in MEW 26.3:414 [tr. 3:422-423]; the first set of parentheses stand for brackets in Marx's ms.
69. M: Ltr to Zasulich, 8 Mar. 1881/2d Draft, in ME Archiv, 1:332; 1st Draft, *ibid.*, 1:320 [ME:SW 3:154].
70. See § 3, p. 520.
71. M: Grundrisse, 375, 377 [tr. 67, 70-71].
72. *Ibid.*, 377 [tr. 70].
73. *Ibid.*, 376, 378, 386 [tr. 68, 72, 82]; 377 [tr. 70]; 396-397 [tr. 97]. These four subdivisions are also listed at *ibid.*, 395 [tr. 95]; 377 [tr. 70]; 380 [tr. 75].
74. In these drafts, see *passim*, 1st Draft, in ME Archiv, 1:318-322 [ME:SW 3:152-156]; 2d Draft, *ibid.*, 332-333; 3d Draft, *ibid.*, 335-338.
75. M: Crit. Pol. Ec./Pref., in ME:SW 1:504 [MEW 13:9].

76. M: Grundrisse, 9 (from Intro.; the corrected reading in MEW 13:619 is used here), 850-851 (from the earliest part), 764 (end); in addition cf. 628. See also 429-430 about governmental public works in Europe as well as Asia.
77. M: Crit. Pol. Ec., MEW 13:21 [tr. 33].
78. M: Cap. 1:77-78.
79. Ltr, M to E, 14 Mar. 1868, MEW 32:42.
80. Ltr, M to E, 25 Mar. 1868, in ME:SC, 201, rev. after MEW 32:51-52. For the same point, see M: Ltr to Zasulich, 8 Mar. 1881/1st Draft, in ME Archiv, 1:320 [ME:SW 3:154] and 3d Draft, *ibid.*, 1:336. Re other survivals in Germany, see E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:392, 393 [MEW 18:562, 563].
81. Ltr, M to Kugelmann, 17 Feb. 1870, MEW 32:650.
82. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:354 fn; cf. the editorial change in M: Cap. 1:334 fn; the difference was pointed out by R. Rosdolsky quoted in Thorner: *M on India*, 60 fn.
83. M: Ltr to Zasulich, 8 Mar. 1881/1st Draft, in ME Archiv, 1:320 [ME:SW 3:154].
84. Same, 3d Draft, *ibid.*, 1:335; similar statement in 1st Draft, *ibid.*, 1:318 [ME:SW 3:152].
85. Same, 1st Draft, *ibid.*, 1:321, 322 [ME:SW 3:155, 156]; 2d Draft, *ibid.*, 1:332; 3d Draft, *ibid.*, 1:335, 336.
86. Same, 3d Draft, *ibid.*, 1:337-338.
87. Same, 1st Draft, *ibid.*, 1:318 [ME:SW 3:152].
88. Same, 3d Draft, *ibid.*, 1:335, 336-337; 1st Draft, *ibid.*, 1:321 [ME:SW 3:155].
89. Same, 3d Draft, *ibid.*, 1:337-338; similar statement in 1st Draft, *ibid.*, 1:322 [ME:SW 3:156].
90. E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:393 [MEW 18:563].

22. ORIENTAL DESPOTISM: STATE AND BUREAUCRACY

1. The citations are from Eccarius' German version of this work, *Eines Arbeiters Widerlegung*, pp. 4-5. The translation is based on that in the *Labor Standard*, 20 Jan. 1877, p. 2 ("A Workingman's Refutation . . ."); the italicization does not appear in the German. For Engels on Eccarius' book, see ltr, E to Schlüter, 7 Dec. 1885, MEW 36:408. The quote from M: Crit. Pol. Ec./Pref. is the one given on p. 539, n. 75.
2. M: Grundrisse, 484.
3. E: Anti-Dühr./Prep. Writ., in Anti-Dühr. (59), 486.
4. On this use of *state*, see the fn, Ch. 11, p. 245.
5. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 205.
6. *Ibid.*, 224.
7. For ex., see M: Notebk. on Maine, 294 and *passim* in the following pages.
8. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 247, 248.
9. *Ibid.*, 248-249.
10. Tökei: *Sur M. P. A.*, esp. 61-63.
11. M: War Qu., N. Y. Tribune, 5 Aug. 1853, in ME: On Colon., 79. M: Cap. 3:619. M: Theor. S. V. 3:412 [MEW 26.3:420]. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 243-244.

12. M: Cap. 3 in MEW 25:338 [tr. 3:321].
13. M: Cap. 3:325, rev. after MEW 25:343.
14. M: Cap. 3 in MEW 25:798; this passage is quoted below, p. 569.
15. M: Grundrisse, 18; there are unimportant references to tribute on 9, 26.
16. M: Future Res. Brit. Rule, in ME:SW 1:494.
17. See esp. Ch. 19, pp. 468-475; also Ch. 5, p. 118f, with mentions at Ch. 3, p. 86f; Ch. 8, p. 171; Ch. 14, p. 321f.
18. This letter was cited on p. 527.
19. M: Brit. Rule in Ind., in ME:SW 1:492-493.
20. M: Ltr to Zasulich, 8 Mar. 1881/1st Draft, in ME Archiv, 1:325; not included in tr. in ME:SW 3:158 because it occurs in a stricken passage; similar formulation repeated in 3d Draft, *ibid.*, 1:338-339.
21. Same/1st Draft, in ME Archiv, 1:323-324 [tr. ME:SW 3:157].
22. E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:394.
23. E: Anti-Dühr./Prep. Writ., in Anti-Dühr. (59), 483.
24. E: Anti-Dühr. (59), 250.
25. M: Revol. Spain/I, in ME: Rev. in Spain, 25.
26. *Ibid.*, 26.
27. M: Cap. 1:514.
28. M: Revol. Spain/I, in ME: Rev. in Spain, 21-23.
29. Ltr, E to Bebel, 18 Jan. 1884, MEW 36:88 [ME: On Colon., 309].
30. Ltr, E to Kautsky, 16 Feb. 1884, MEW 36:109 [ME:SC, 368, makes a bad error].
31. See particularly §5, p. 425f.
32. M: Opium Trade/II, N. Y. Tribune, 25 Sept. 1858, in ME: On Colon., 217; cf. also 218-219.
33. M: Chinese Aff., MEW 15:514ff.
34. See Ch. 20, p. 485 fn.
35. Wittfogel: *Oriental Desp.*, 380.
36. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:93 [tr. 79].
37. M: Grundrisse, 25.
38. See Ch. 22, p. 549.
39. M: Cap. 1:598; cf. MEW 23:625.
40. See Ch. 21, p. 520.
41. M: Civ. War Fr./1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 165-166.
42. E: Frankish Age, MEW 19:477; cf. also 478.
43. M: Theor. S. V. 3:416 [MEW 26.3:408, 581].
44. *Ibid.*, 435 [MEW 26.3:428, 587].
45. M: Theor. S. V. 3 in MEW 26.3:391 [tr. 400].
46. See p. 553 (point 3).
47. M: Theor. S. V. 3:412 [MEW 26.3:420].
48. M: Cap. 3 in MEW 25:802-803, 804 [tr. 775, 776].
49. Cited above, § 3, p. 552.
50. M: Grundrisse, 75; the preceding exposition begins on 73. Cf. also 81.
51. M: Cap. 1:333-334, or MEW 23:353; the passage from Jones's *Text-Book of Lectures*, quoted by Marx from the 1852 ed., appeared in his *Literary Remains*, pp. 451-452.
52. M: Cap. 1:334 rev. after MEW 23:353.
53. M: Grundrisse, 337; cf. also 427.
54. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:537 fn [tr. 514 fn].
55. Wittfogel: *Oriental Desp.*, 382.

56. M: Cap. 3 in MEW 25:798 [tr. 771].
57. M: Cap. 1 in MEW 23:93 [tr. 79].
58. M: Cap. 3 in MEW 25:799 [tr. 771-772].
59. Ibid., 799-800 [tr. 772].
60. Ibid., 800 [tr. 772].

23. RUSSIAN CZARISM: STATE AND BUREAUCRACY

1. Ltr, E to Zasulich, 23 Apr. 1885, ME:SC, 385.
2. Ltr, M to E, 14 Mar. 1868, MEW 32:42; also cited above, Ch. 21, p. 541. For the Narodnik boast, see e.g. E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:393 [MEW 18:562-563].
3. Ltr, M to E, 7 Nov. 1868, ME:SC, 217, rev. after MEW 32:197.
4. See Ch. 21, p. 555f.
5. M: Cap. 3:329.
6. M: Pol. Eur. Mission, in *Le Socialisme*, 4, 5; E: Turk. Qu., N. Y. Tribune, 19 Apr. 1853, in ME: Russ. Men., 134; M: War Qu., N. Y. Tribune, 5 Aug. 1853, in M: East. Qu., 75; M: Financial Fail., N. Y. Tribune, 12 Aug. 1853, in ME: Russ. Men., 167 (cf. also 169); ltr, M to Kugelmann, 17 Feb. 1870, MEW 32:650; M: Secr. Dip. Hist., 111, 121, 125, 126.
7. E: Afterword/On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:408 [MEW 22:433].
8. M: Ltr to Zasulich, 8 Mar. 1881/2d Draft, in ME Archiv, 332 [tr. ME: Russ. Men., 222].
9. Ltr, E to Danielson, 22 Sept. 1892, in ME: Corr. (35), 498-499.
10. Ltr, E to Faerber, 22 Oct. 1885, MEW 36:375.
11. Ltr, E to M, 25 Aug. 1877, MEW 34:73-74.
12. E: Infantry, 180.
13. E: For. Pol. Russ. Cz./Time, Part III, 540.
14. Ltr, E to Danielson, 18 June 1892, ME:SC, 445.
15. E: Afterword/On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:407, rev. after MEW 22:432-433.
16. Ltr, E to Danielson, 18 June 1892, retrans. from MEW 38:364 (orig. in Eng.).
17. M: Grundrisse, 406-407 [tr. 111]; cf. also 655.
18. E: For. Po. Russ. Cz./Time, Part III, 533-34.—On breeding capitalists, see also ltr, E to Bebel, 1 Oct. 1891, MEW 38:160 ("The Russian bourgeoisie . . . is what it is through the state," etc.).
19. ME: Russo-Turk. Difficulty, N. Y. Tribune, 25 July 1853, in ME: On Colon., 73.
20. M: War Qu., N. Y. Tribune, 5 Aug. 1853, in ME: On Colon., 78; M: Future Res. Brit. Rule, N. Y. Tribune, 8 Aug. 1853, in ME:SW 1:495.
21. M: Ltr to Zasulich, 8 Mar. 1881/1st Draft, in ME Archiv, 327 [tr. 159-160].
22. Ibid., 328 [tr. 160].
23. Same, 2d Draft, in ME Archiv, 334.
24. E: Afterword/On Soc. Rel. Russ., MEW 22:433 [ME:SW 2:408].
25. M: Pol. Eur. Mission, in *Le Socialisme*, 4.
26. M: Notebk. on Maine, 330.
27. M: Secr. Dip. Hist., 125.
28. E: Afterword/On Soc. Rel. Russ., MEW 22:434-435 [ME:SW 2:409].

29. E: What Is to Become of Turk., N. Y. Tribune, 21 Apr. 1853.
30. Ibid.
31. E: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 23 Dec. 1858.
32. E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:388 [MEW 18:557].
33. Ibid., 390 [MEW 18:559].
34. See Ch. 20, §6.
35. Ltr, E to Danielson, 18 June 1892, in ME:SC, 446.
36. E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:394, rev. after MEW 18:563 f.
37. See Ch. 20, p. 499 and fn; Ch. 16, p. 415.
38. See Ch. 14, p. 328f.

Special Note A. MARX AND
THE ECONOMIC JEW STEREOTYPE

1. See Dagobert Runes, ed.: *A World Without Jews*, by Karl Marx, an alleged translation; the reader is not told that the title is Runes's invention; there are other distortions in the text.
2. For the *usurer* definition, see any good German-English dictionary (e.g., Muret-Sanders, 1920, or Wildhagen-Héraucourt, 1970) as well as, say, the 1843 edition of Flügel's, under *Jude*, *Judelei*, *judeln*, etc. Cf. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Berlin, 1932—pre-Hitler), v. 9, p. 530. English was no different: in the Oxford English Dictionary, under *Jew* and its forms, see the examples cited from writers like Byron, Coleridge, Cobbett, Washington Irving, D. G. Rossetti, going back to Chaucer. (In 1973 this dictionary was sued on the demand that it should suppress this corner of philology.) For the German Jews' tendency to abandon *Jude* as a dirty word by the beginning of the 19th century, see Graupe: *Entstehung Mod. Jud.*, 235; also the comment in Waldman: *Goethe*, 255.
3. Bauer: *Jewish Probl.*, 10, 114, 123; Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, 117; Sterling: *Judenbass*, 101.
4. Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, 117; Sterling: *Judenbass*, 101.
5. Stirner: *Ego*, 20-21, 48, 135.
6. Massing: *Rehearsal*, 253, n. 15; Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, 126; Diamond: *Marx's First Thesis*, 544; Mehring: *Gesch. Deut. Soz.-Dem.*, 1:121-122.
7. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 2:273, 330 fn. 1; Silberner: *M. Hess*, 191-192; McLellan: *Yg. Heg. & K. M.*, 153-154.
8. Hess: *Phil. Soz. Schrift.*, 345-346; Silberner: *M. Hess*, 188-189, also partly quoted in his *Soz. z. Jud.*, 184-185, in both without the least comment. Cf. also Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 2:273-274, 323-330.
9. Silberner: *M. Hess*, 130; and his *Soz. z. Jud.*, 184.
10. Silberner: *M. Hess*, 26-28, 48, 85.
11. Sterling: *Jewish Reac. to Jew-Hatred*, 110-112.
12. Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, Ch. 10; Footman: *F. Lassalle*, 119-120.
13. Heine: *Works* (Leland), 8:75, 78; cf. also 510-511.
14. Rose: *H. Heine*, 132; cf. also 101.
15. Sterling: *Judenbass*, 101.
16. Lowenthal: *Jews Ger.*, 239; Reissner: *Rebel. Dilemma*, 179; Meyer: *Orig. Mod. Jew*, 181.

17. Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, 127; cf. 167. Avineri: *Heg. Tb. Mod. State*, 17-19, 55.
18. Krieger: *Ger. Idea Freed.*, 181; Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, 170-172.
19. Sterling: *Judenbass*, 100-101.
20. Silberner: *M. Hess*, 86.
21. Mayer: *Early Ger. Soc.*, 410. Cf. also the example of W. Menzel mentioned incidentally in Silberner: *M. Hess*, 34.
22. Glickson: *Jewish Compl.*, 29.
23. Waldman: *Goethe*, 246-268, esp. 249.
24. Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, 126-127.
25. Rosdolsky: *NRZ & Juifs*, 61.
26. Szajkowski: *Jewish St.-Simonians*, 60. For Fourierism, *ibid.*, 46-50 esp.; Silberner: *Ch. Fourier* (all); also his *Att. of Fourierist School* (all), and his *Soz. z. Jud.*, 16-43. On Voltaire, Gay: *Party of Hum.*, 97-108, esp. 102. A good account on France is contained in Hertzberg: *French Enlight. & Jews*.
27. On Proudhon, Schapiro: *Lib. & Challenge*, 358-359; Draper: *Note on Father of Anarch.*, 80. On Bakunin, Carr: *M. Bakunin*, 145, 369, 371, 459; Pyziur: *Doctr. Anarch. Bak.*, 38 n.; Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, Ch. 18. For James Guillaume, Bakunin's chief lieutenant, see his book *Karl Marx Pangermaniste*, which throughout carefully identifies as Jews all the possible enemies of humanity; also cf. Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, 276.
28. See e.g. Harney's *Democratic Review*, editorial, v. 1, p. 352; Ernest Jones's *Notes to the People*, article on "The Jews in Poland" (probably not by Jones himself), v. 1, 1851, no. 11; for Bronterre O'Brien, see Collins & Abramsky, 253 and fn; about an O'Brienite, see Plummer: *Bronterre*, 268; Silberner: *Soz. z. Jud.*, Ch. 15.
29. Avineri: *M. & Jewish Emanc.*, 447.
30. Symons: *T. Carlyle*, 232; Wilson: *T. Carlyle*, 3:405, 409; 4:162-163, 373, 379, 451-452.
31. Quoted in Rocker: *London Yrs.*, 117, 119.
32. Summations of this economic-historical research may be found in: Ruppin: *Jews in Mod. World*, Part III, esp. 109-115, 122-123, 130-135; Reich: *Econ. Struc.*; Hertzler: *Sociol. Anti-Sem.*, 86-91; Graupe: *Entstehung Mod. Jud.*, 239-241; Cohen: *Jewish Life*, 182-213; Léon: *Jewish Qu.*
33. Sterling: *Judenbass*, 29-30; re the last sentence, see also Elbogen: *Gesch. Jud. Deutsch.*, 196-197, 222.
34. *Ibid.*, 79.
35. For insight into lower-class anti-Jewish feeling, see Sterling: *Anti-Jewish Riots* (on 1819). Bloom: *K. M. & Jews*, 8. Mayer: *Early Ger. Soc.*, 417.
36. For one silly example of this trend, see Miriam Beard: *Anti-Sem.*, which is anthologized under the rubric "The Mirage of the Economic Jew."
37. Namier, in Ruppin: *Jews in Mod. World*, xvi; see also the presentation of the question in Graupe: *Entsteh. Mod. Jud.*, 239-241. For "others," Cohen: *Jewish Life*, 188 ff; Engelman: *Rise of Jew*, 93 ff.
38. Léon: *Jewish Qu.*, 219.
39. *Ibid.*, 129-135.
40. M: *Grundrisse*, 134, 165, 167.
41. Greenberg: *Myth Jewish Paras.*, 223, 229; 223-234, 224-225.
42. *Ibid.*, 225.
43. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Berlin, 1929), v. 4, pp. 974-975. On Syrkin, see e.g., Syrkin: *Ess. Soc. Zion.*, 23; or *Labor Zionist Handbk.*, 6.

44. McLellan: *M. bef. Mxism*, 141-142; also his ed. of *M: Early Texts*, 112; Tucker: *Phil. & Myth.*, 111.
45. Ruppin: *Jews Mod. World*, 133. Mayer: *Early Ger. Soc.*, 420; see also his explanation on 419-420. Sterling: *Judenbass*, 33; cf. use of *Schacherjuden* by young Engels in his Cond. Wkg. Cl. Eng., in MEW 2:487 [ME: On Brit., 314]. See also Meyer: *Orig. Mod. Jew*, 69.
46. Dühring: *Ueberschätz. Lessing's*, esp. but not only Ch. 3.
47. Lessing: *Nathan der Weise*, Act II, sc. 3; III, 4; IV, 4; III, 6; II, 9.
48. Quoted in Sterling: *Kampf Emanz. Jud.*, 285.
49. Lessing: *Sämt. Schrift.*, 6:160-161.
50. Gay: *Party of Hum.*, 97ff. "Voltaire's Anti-Semitism" is the chapter title.
51. Locke: *Ltr on Toler.*, 145 (for all quotations given).
52. Preface by Prof. Raymond Klibansky, in *ibid.*, xxx.
53. Gay: *Party of Hum.*, 99-100.
54. *Ibid.*, 103.
55. Engels' praise of Börne is so constant that one need simply look up Börne in the name index to MEW Eb. 2; some typical examples are at p. 395, 413, 420-421, 426, 430, 434. Later Engels qualified the relationship of Börne to Young Germany; cf. E: Rev./A. Jung, MEW 1:437.
56. E.g. E: Hungary, NRZ 19 May 1849, MEW 6:507, 514.
57. Ltr, E to W. Graeber, 30 July 1839, MEW Eb. 2:414-415; the same, 8 Oct. and 15 Nov. 1839, in *ibid.*, 419, 432; the same, 15 Nov. 1839, *ibid.*, 431; cf. E: Ger. Chapbks, MEW Eb. 2:16; also see his ref. to an essay "The Jews in Bremen" following month, *ibid.*, 437 (not extant). E: E. M. Arndt, MEW Eb. 2:122.

Special Note B. RHYME AND REASON:
THE CONTENT OF MARX'S JUVENILE VERSE

1. Mehring: *K. M.*, 38-39; Mehring, ed.: *Aus lit. Nachlass*, 1:25-28.
2. Ltr, M to his father, 10 Nov. 1837, in M: Wr. Yg. M., 41-42, 46, 48. For Laura Marx Lafargue's letter on how her parents laughed about "this youthful foolishness," see Mehring, ed.: *Aus lit. Nachlass*, 1:25-26.
3. Cf. Ollivier: *ME Poètes* (the most ambitious effort); Johnston: *K. M.'s Verse*; Demetz: *ME & Poets*, 47-56; Ryazanov: intro. to MEGA I, 1.2:xiv-xv. Not counted is the gutter school of marxology (R. Payne, Künzli).
4. Mehring, ed.: *Aus lit. Nachlass*, 1:26.
5. MEW Eb. 1:676, n. 136. In the new English ME: Collected Works, see 1:756-7 (n. 191-194).
6. MEGA I, 1.2:3-89.
7. MEGA I, 1.2:51.
8. Published in a Berlin Young Hegelian weekly, *Athenäum*, for 23 Jan. 1841.
9. The *Athenäum* version (followed here) is in MEW Eb. 1:604-605 and MEGA I, 1.1:147. The original (notebook) version is in MEGA I, 1.2:57-58.
10. The *Athenäum* version is followed here; it is in MEW Eb. 1:605 and MEGA I, 1.1:148. The original version is in MEGA I, 1.2:9-10.
11. Johnston: *K. M.'s Verse*, 267.
12. Mehring: *Aus lit. Nachlass*, 1:28.
13. MEGA I, 1.2:81.

14. Ibid., 16.
15. MEW Eb. 1:608, or MEGA I, 1.2:42.
16. Ltr, M to Lassalle, 19 Apr. 1859, in ME:SC, 117.
17. MEW Eb. 1:609, or MEGA I, 1.2:43.
18. MEW Eb. 1:610-611, or MEGA I, 1.2:43-45.
19. MEW Eb. 1:607-608, or MEGA I, 1.2:41-42.
20. Ryazanov: intro. to MEGA I, 1.2:xiv.

Special Note C. THE STATE AS POLITICAL
SUPERSTRUCTURE: MARX ON MAZZINI

1. In the form of a pamphlet: Joseph Mazzini, *To Louis Napoleon*, published in London.
2. A. J. C. A. Dureau de la Malle: *Economie Politique des Romains*, 2v., Paris, 1840.
3. Montesquieu: *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de Leur Décadence*, Amsterdam, 1734.
4. Joachim Lelewel: *Considérations sur l'Etat Politique de l'Ancienne Pologne et sur l'Histoire de Son Peuple*, Paris, 1844.
5. M: Mazzini's New Manif., N. Y. Tribune, 13 Oct. 1858; written 21 Sept.
6. M: Mazzini's Manif., N. Y. Tribune, 17 June 1859.

Special Note D. THE "STATE PARASITE"
AND THE "CAPITALIST VERMIN"

1. Sanderson: *Interp. Pol. Ideas*, 55, 64, 68; also his *ME on State*, 951-953.
2. M: 18th Brum., in ME:SW 1:477.
3. M: article (no title) in N. Y. Tribune, 22 Feb. 1858.
4. M: Civ. War Fr., 2d Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 200.
5. Draper: *Death of State*, 293ff.
6. M: Civ. War Fr., 2d Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 196-197; see also 212, and for vampire image, 201.
7. M: Civ. War Fr., in ME:SW 2:221-222.
8. Ibid., 225.
9. Cf. the expletives bowdlerized (replaced by dashes) by the Russian editors, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 106 (following the original publication), likewise in all available editions, e.g. MEW 17:496.
10. ME: Wr. Par. Com., 126, 129, 149, 153, 154. Other phrases of interest are on 124, 140, 146, 158, 160; for near cases, also 156, 166.
11. Ibid., 148.
12. Ibid., 149, 154, 156.
13. M: Notebk. on Maine, 329.
14. ME: Wr. Par. Com., 154.
15. See Ch. 20, p. 500.
16. M: Theor. S. V., 1:170.
17. From Jefferson's letter to William Ludlow, 1824.
18. M: Theor. S. V., 1:171 rev. after MEW 26.1:145.

19. Lenin: *Coll. Wks.*, 25:407; see also 430-431.
20. M: Theor. S. V., 2:16 [MEW 26.2:8].
21. See M: Cap. 3:583, 596; also compare p. 325 vs. 585; on 580, trade and usury are called twin brothers.
22. Ch. 23, p. 580.
23. M: Cond. Fact. Lab., N. Y. Tribune, 22 Apr. 1857.
24. M: Civ. War Fr., 1st Draft, in ME: Wr. Par. Com., 149.
25. E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:390.
26. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:323 rev. after MEW 21:161.
27. M: Grundrisse, 539; cf. also 643 on France.

Special Note E. ORIENTAL DESPOTISM
BEFORE MARX: THE WITTFOGEL FABLE

1. For the Comintern program, see Degras: *Com. Int. Docs.*, 2:506.
2. For the history of this question under Stalin, see Chesneaux: *Mode Prod. Asiat.*, 37-39. In *Recherches Int.* #57-58, see Suret-Canale, 10-11; Pecirka, 60 ff; other articles in this collection illustrate the pattern. A fuller account is in Sofri: *Über asiat. Prod.*, 99-127.
3. For this part of the story, see Parain: *Mode Prod. Asiat.*, 3-5; Chesneaux: *Mode Prod. Asiat.*, 34-35. The account in Encausse & Schram, 92-96, is worthless. For Tökei's work, see Bibliography.
4. Nikiforov: *Discussion*, 242.
5. Kautsky: *Labour Rev.*, 89.
6. Wittfogel: *Ruling Bur.*, 353.
7. *Ibid.*, 350.
8. Wittfogel: *Oriental Desp.*, 5-6, 372.
9. *Ibid.*, 373.
10. Wittfogel: *Ruling Bur.*, 350.
11. *Ibid.*, 352.
12. Mill: *Rep. Govt.*, 274; 244, 245, 247.
13. Wittfogel: *Oriental Desp.*, 4.
14. *Ibid.*, 6.
15. *Ibid.*, 380; see also his *Ruling Bur.*, 352.
16. Wittfogel: *Oriental Desp.*, 381; likewise, for Bernier, in his *Ruling Bur.*, 354.
17. Wittfogel: *Oriental Desp.*, 380.
18. M: Grundrisse/Intro., in M: Crit. Pol. Ec., 211. M: Theor. S. V., 3:399, also 402; cf. also M: Cap. 1:598. Derogation of J. S. Mill runs through *Capital*: see M: Cap. 3:856, also 1:15-16, 518; also M: Grundrisse, 510, 644.
19. Packe: *Life of J. S. Mill*, 388-389; cf. also whole section, 387-391.
20. On Jesuits, Kautsky: *T. More*, 72. Lach: *China & Era Enlight.*, 209-211; Reichwein: *China & Eur.*, 78; Maverick: *China*, Ch. 1.
21. Wittfogel: *Oriental Desp.*, 1.
22. Rowbotham: *Missionary*, 277, 278; Rowbotham: *China*, 201. Maverick: *China*, 60.
23. Jacoby: *Bürokr. d. Welt*, 69-70; the valuable discussion here owes much to Tocqueville (see next note).
24. Tocqueville: *Old Regime & Fr. Rev.*, 8; highlights of the analysis will be found on 68, 146, 158-167, 189 esp.

25. Ibid., 167.
26. M: Herr Vogt, MEW 14:499-500.
27. M: Cap. 1:366. Cf. Hegel: *Philo. Hist.*, 206.
28. Maverick: *China*, 12-13, 18-19, 112; Lach: *China & Era Enlight.*, 215; Rowbotham: *China*, 183.
29. Lach: *Pref. to Leibniz*, 8-9, 31, 37-38, 65, 72 fn; the quotation is from 61.
30. Ibid., 49 (from a letter by Leibniz, tr. revised); Leibniz: *Nov. Sinica*, 70.
31. Jacoby: *Bürokr. d. Welt*, 71-74. For E's ref. to *policé*, see E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:283.
32. Herder: *Ideen z. Philo.*, 39, 12, 13; see also 7, 33, 86, 89.
33. M: Deeds of H. of Hohenzollern, MEW 6:477.
34. Rowbotham: *Voltaire* (all); also his *Missionary*, 282-284; Lach: *China & Era Enlight.*, 219-220.
35. Maverick: *China*, 27-33.
36. Jacoby: *Bürokr. d. Welt*, 78.
37. Bernier: *Travels*, 145 (qu.), also 195, 226; for description of the hierarchy, see esp. 205 ff, also 10, 204, 225-236. For 1688 work, Maverick: *China*, 16-17.
38. For Montesquieu, see e.g., Carcassonne: *Chine*, passim.
39. By Reichwein: *China & Eur.*, 105.
40. Quesnay: *Despotism in China*, 141; description of bureaucracy, 239-254; 215; administration, 235-237, 228, 219; 197; 172; classes, 200ff, 175. ("Confucius of Europe": Rowbotham: *Missionary*, 285.)
41. Tocqueville: *Old Regime & Fr. Rev.*, 161-163.
42. Ibid., 162-163.
43. Ibid., 164.
44. Rowbotham: *China*, 199 fn.
45. M: Theor. S. V. 1:65.
46. M: Cap. 3:765; cf. also Grundrisse, 235. On Physiocrats' combination of laissez faire and despotism, see Gide & Rist.: *Hist. Econ. Doct.*, 35-37.
47. On England, Rowbotham: *China*, 201 fn; Lach: *Pref. to Leibniz*, 57 fn. Rowbotham: *Missionary*, 288.
48. Schulin: *Weltg. Erf. Orients*, 42, 41.
49. Hegel: *Sämt. Werke*, 10:420-421.
50. Hegel: SW 11:181-182, 224 [tr. *Philo. Hist.*, 130-131, 165].
51. Ibid., 159 and cf. also 163 [tr. 112, 116]; 151 f, 150 [tr. 105, 104].
52. Hegel: SW 7:284 [tr. *Philo. Right*, 133].
53. Ibid., 380, 394, 412 [tr. 180, 188, 292 f].
54. Hegel: SW 11:133, 129-129 [tr. *Philo. Hist.*, 89, 85-86].
55. Hegel: SW 7:284 [tr. *Philo. Right*, 133].
56. Hegel: SW 17:130.
57. Hegel: SW 7:453 [tr. *Philo. Right*, 220].
58. Hegel: SW 11:182, 170, 178 [tr. *Philo. Hist.*, 131, 121, 127 f]; 201, 191 [tr. 147, 138].
59. Ibid., 174 [tr. 124].
60. Hegel: SW 13:15. SW 7:341 [tr. *Philo. Right*, 280]. SW 11:150 [tr. *Philo. Hist.*, 104], 152 [tr. 105].
61. Hegel: SW 11:219, 251, 161 [tr. *Philo. Hist.*, 161, 188, 113].
62. Ibid., 219 [tr. 161]. SW 7:362 [tr. *Philo. Right*, 173]. SW 11:160 [tr. *Philo. Hist.*, 113].
63. Hegel: SW 11:174 [tr. *Philo. Hist.*, 124].

64. Ibid., 174-178 [tr. 124-127].
65. Ibid., 174 [tr. 124].
66. Ibid., 177 [tr. 127].
67. ME: Ger. Ideol., 174, 176, 180.
68. For Hegel, see *Sämt. Werke*, 11:162-163, 191, 234 [tr. *Philo. Hist.*, 115-116, 142, 173]; *ibid.*, 7:453 [tr. *Philo. Right*, 220].
69. *Unter dem Banner des Marxismus*, Dec. 1931, Jg 5, p. 346ff. (Wittfogel's own ref. is only to p. 354, apparently a mistake.) Wittfogel: *Oriental Desp.*, 372 fn, 370.
70. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 1:133 (Ger. ed., 1:124).
71. Hess: *Phil. Soz. Schrift.*, 325; Silberger: *M. Hess*, 226.
72. E: Cond. Eng./Engl. Const., in ME: Art. Brit., 35.
73. Cornu: *K. M. et F. E.*, 3:64-68 (Ger. ed., 2:86-92); MEW 2:664, n. 115.
74. Rubel, in edit. notes in ME: Russ. Komm., 288-289; Grandjonc: *Vorwärts 1844*, 20, 25 n; Groh: *Russland & Selb. Eur.*, 184-191.
75. Custine: *Russia*, 1:271, 2:294 (cf. 2:6), 3:65, and elsewhere.
76. Ibid., 1:183, 228, 2:258. On officialdom: 1:121, 214, 2:15.
77. Ibid., 3:91, 150; last qu. from 3:150-151.
78. Ibid., 3:224-225.
79. Campbell: *Mod. Ind.*, 75-76; administration, 77 ff.
80. *Larousse du XIX^e Siècle* (1869), 4:127.
81. *New American Cyclopaedia* (1859), 5:101-102, 7:39. Hegel: *Philo. Hist.*, 204.

Special Note F. ORIENTAL DESPOTISM AND ENGELS

1. See pp. 522-527 above; for E's letter of 6 June 1853, MEW 28:259-261 (part tr. in ME:SC, 82-83).
2. For M's follow-up letter of 14 June 1853, see pp. 526-527 above; E's silence is indicated in ltr, M to E, 8 July 1853, MEW 28:272.
3. E: On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:394.
4. E: Revol. Upris., MEW 6:525.
5. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:293.
6. E: Orig. Fam., in MEW 21:170 [ME:SW 3:332].
7. M: Grundrisse, 484.
8. For this term, see E: Orig. Fam., MEW 21:97, for example.
9. E: Orig. Fam., in ME:SW 3:284 [MEW 21:116].
10. See *ibid.*, 272 [MEW 21:102] for the case of Athens, for example.
11. Ltr, E to Sorge, 10 Nov. 1894, in ME:SC, 476 [MEW 39:310].
12. E: Afterwd./On Soc. Rel. Russ., in ME:SW 2:398-399 [MEW 22:421].
13. Kautsky: *Mod. Nat.*, 396.
14. Ibid., 397.
15. Ibid., 398.
16. Ltr, E to Sorge, 6 Apr. 1887, MEW 36:635 [ME: Ltrs. Amer., 180].
17. E.g., Mayer: F. Engels, 2:470-471.

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