

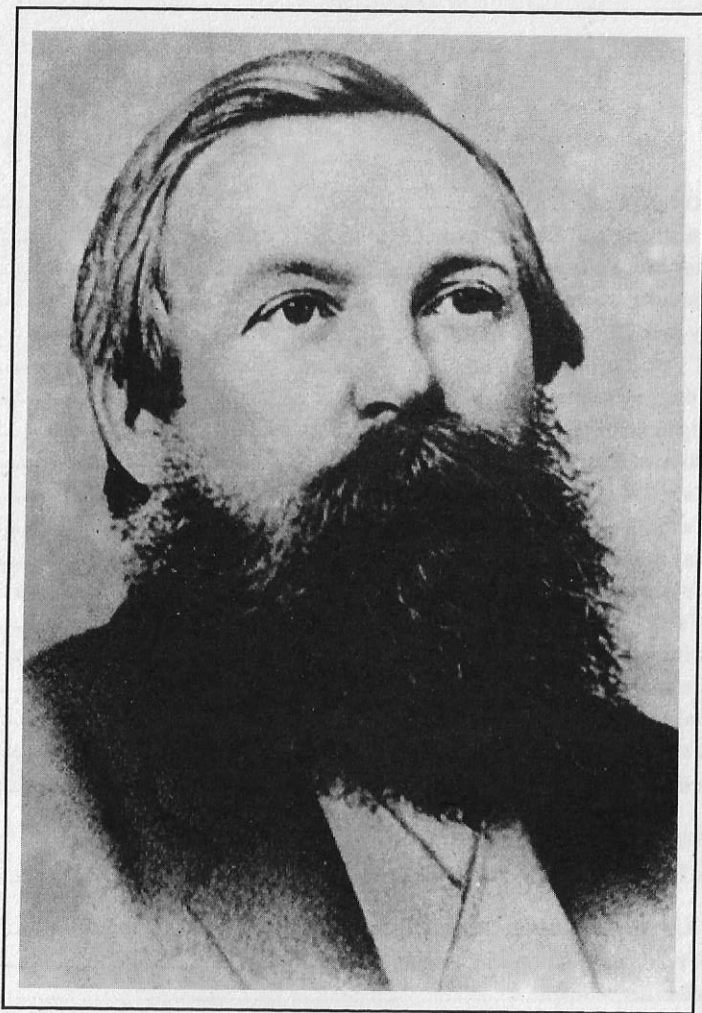
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION by Doug Lorimer	7
1. Polemical origin of Engels' book	7
2. Thomas More's <i>Utopia</i>	8
3. The Enlightenment philosophers	10
4. Mably and Morelly	10
5. Hegel's philosophy	12
6. The Young Hegelians	13
7. Ludwig Feuerbach	14
8. Evolution of Engels' views	16
9. Marx's rejection of utopian socialism	17
10. Marx's turn toward materialism	18
11. Marx's critique of Hegel's idealism	19
12. Marx's identification of the proletariat as the agent of human emancipation	21
13. Engel's turn toward proletarian socialism	23
14. The critique of 'critical criticism'	26
15. Marx's analysis of the revolutionary role of the proletariat	29
16. Engels' Condition of the Working Class in England	31
17. Marx's Theses on Feuerbach	34
18. Historical materialism and revolutionary practice	36
SPECIAL INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION OF 1892 by Frederick Engels	39
SOCIALISM: UTOPIAN AND SCIENTIFIC by Frederick Engels	59
I [The French Revolution and utopian socialism]	59
II [Hegelian dialectics]	72
III [The materialist conception of history and scientific socialism]	79
NOTES	97

© Resistance Books 1999
ISBN 0909196869

Published by Resistance Books
23 Abercrombie St, Chippendale NSW 2008, Australia

Printed by the Education Foundation
40 Abbot Road, Lahore, Pakistan



Frederick Engels (1862)

INTRODUCTION

By Doug Lorimer

1. POLEMICAL ORIGIN OF ENGELS' BOOK

This book by Frederick Engels explains the origins of the modern socialist movement. It is probably the most influential work expounding the basic ideas of Marxism, other than the *Communist Manifesto*.

As Engels himself explains in his introduction to the first English edition, published in 1892, it was drawn from three chapters of his 1878 book *Anti-Dühring*, a polemic against the views of Eugen Dühring, a professor at Berlin University. In his lectures and numerous writings which flooded the book market after 1869, Dühring claimed to be the originator of a "revolution in science" which superseded Marxism.

Dühring's views had a strong influence on many of the university intellectuals who had joined the United Socialist Workers Party of Germany (USAP) in the 1870s. The USAP had been formed as a result of a fusion in May 1875 between the pro-Marxist Socialist Workers Party (SAP) led by Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel — the so-called "Eisenachers" (after the town of Eisenach where the SAP had its founding congress in August 1869) — and the reformist General Association of German Workers (ADAV), founded in 1863 by Ferdinand Lassalle. Among those in the USAP who gave enthusiastic support to Dühring's views was Eduard Bernstein who, after Engels' death in 1895, would emerge as the chief advocate of a reformist "revision" of Marxism.

The vacillation of the USAP leaders in the face of the ideological challenge mounted by Dühring led Engels, at Marx's urging, to provide a popular exposition of their common approach to philosophy, political economy and socialism in opposition to those of Dühring.

In polemicising against Dühring's attempt to create a "new" socialist doctrine out

Doug Lorimer is a member of the National Executive of the Democratic Socialist Party,

of an eclectic mixture of mechanical materialism, vulgar evolutionism and bourgeois positivist sociology, Engels explained the philosophical basis of Marxian socialism and how it differed from the mode of thinking of previous socialist thinkers.

2. THOMAS MORE'S UTOPIA

Spontaneous protest against exploitation of masses of poor people had long ago produced ideal pictures of a more equitable social system. The first and one of the most famous of these had been Thomas More's book *A Fruitful and Pleasant Worke of the Best State of a Publique Weale, and of the Newe Yle Called Utopia*, published in 1516.

Sir Thomas More was the grandson of London artisans, the son of a lawyer and a lawyer himself. In 1529 he became Lord Chancellor under Henry VIII, an insidious and unrestrained autocrat. In defiance of the king, More defended his political and religious convictions, was accused of high treason and beheaded on July 6, 1535.

More lived at a time when capitalist relations and the formation of the basic capitalist classes — the bourgeoisie and the proletariat — were emerging within feudal society. It was a time of primitive accumulation of capital, when feudal economies were being increasingly drawn into market (commodity-money) relations and when rich merchants were becoming businessmen. They subjugated the free-artisans economically and founded the first manufacturing workshops employing wage labour. The peasant masses were losing their land and were being driven from it by the landlords at a rate exceeding that of the development of merchant's and manufacturer's capital which was thus unable to employ all these poverty-stricken and hungry people, deprived of all means of subsistence.

More not only sympathised with these wretched people, but tried to find a way out of the situation. He put forward an ideal model of society in his *Utopia*, which took the form of a travelogue to an unknown land, and which fitted the mood of that time of great geographical discoveries. The book's central character, Raphael Hythloday, an old sailor and philosopher, tells of his many voyages and of the state he visited on "Utopia Island". Naturally, Hythloday expressed More's political and social ideas.

In the first part of *Utopia*, More criticised the social order in England, and Europe more generally. Raphael Hythloday denounced absolute monarchy: sovereigns conduct aggressive foreign policy and wage wars that ruin not only the countries against which they are fighting, but the people of their own country as well. Hythloday detected new social evils stemming from the penetration of merchant's and manufacturer's capital into feudal relations.

The transition of landowners' economic activity from farming to sheep-breeding in pursuit of money-profits ruined peasants and deprived them of land, which went for expanding pastures. Hythloday says: "Your sheep, which are naturally mild and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men, and unpeople, not only villages, but towns ..."

Instead of restraining the arbitrary power of the rich, the state comes down, with the weight of the law, upon the poor, who are deprived of the chance to work and are forced into vagrancy and theft. More was close to realising the state's exploitative and class nature in his description of the state as a body of the conspiracy of the rich against the poor. He regarded the supremacy of private property as the cause of all social evils. According to More, only the complete elimination of private property could pave the way for a just social order.

The economic system of Utopia, Hythloday relates, is based on families of craftsmen engaged in social production. Children who want to join a different trade from their parents, join another family. State officials control the work of the craftsman's family shop; the family hands all the goods it produces to the state for distribution according to needs. There is no private commerce or money. There is no rural population in Utopia, with everyone living in small townships which have their own territory for agriculture. During the agricultural season, the inhabitants of each town work on the farms and later return to the towns to their chief occupation.

The political system in Utopia is based on a federation of towns. The lower category of officials (syphogrants) are elected by the heads of the families, while the higher officials, who constitute the Senate, are elected by the syphogrants. The Senate is the supreme state body. It takes stock of all the goods produced and, in case of need (crop failure in certain regions, etc.), redistributes the products. The land in Utopia is common property and the state conducts foreign trade.

The democratic educational system presented in Utopia by More contrasted sharply with the situation in the 16th century. In Utopia, all children of both sexes receive a public upbringing that includes an education and a practical training in trades and farming.

In his *Utopia* Thomas More bequeathed to future generations the first integrated scheme of a socialist society, with all the inherently limited features reflecting the level of economic development of early 16th century England. He was able, at the inception of bourgeois society, and by observing its very first steps, to view its social evils and to set against them the principles of social equality. The creator of this scheme of "the best possible" society also understood, better than anyone else of his time, that in the

prevailing economic conditions, it could not be put into practice, and that socialism was still a dream.

3. THE ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHERS

The great French bourgeois-democratic revolution which took place at the end of the 18th century was preceded by an ideological revolution, known as the Enlightenment, which saw a revival of materialist philosophy — i.e., the view that thinking is the product of material being — through such thinkers as Jean Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Paul Henri Holbach, and Claude Helvetius. Between 1751 and 1780 these thinkers collaborated in the publication of the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et de métiers*, through which they sought to give a systematic summary of the scientific achievements of the time (and hence they were also known as the Encyclopaedists).

The materialists of the Enlightenment were the most consistent fighters against feudal ideology. They came out against the Catholic Church's interference in science, declaring themselves to be the defenders of social progress, criticised despotism and advocated the emancipation of humanity from political and social oppression.

In their 1845 work *The Holy Family*, Marx and Engels observed that the philosophical ideas of the Enlighteners that all people were equal by nature and that a person's happiness depended on reason and a justly organised society, had a major influence on the development of socialist and communist ideas. Thus, Rousseau, who was against feudal and all other types of big property, stood for the establishment of a social order without rich or poor. He advanced a petty-bourgeois utopian theory of the equal distribution of property among all members of society. He contended that small-scale private property, based on personal labour, would be the foundation of this new social system. He failed to see that it was impossible to do away with social inequality on the basis of private property, no matter in what form it existed.

The views of Rousseau and the other Enlightenmenters did not actually exceed those of bourgeois society. In one ideological form or another they expressed the interests and aspirations of the rising French bourgeoisie. At the same time, their progressive ideas paved the way for the elaboration of and dissemination of utopian socialist and communist ideas, such as those of Mably and Morelly.

4. MABLY AND MORELLY

Gabriel Bonnet de Mably (1709-1785), a priest from an aristocratic family, was greatly influenced by the Enlightenment's theory of the "natural rights of man". The

bourgeois representatives of the Enlightenment used this theory to criticise feudalism and affirm the "naturalness" of the bourgeois system that was to replace it. Mably used the theory to advance his own theory of "natural communism", arguing that even a more just distribution of private property would in time lead to the division of society into rich and poor. He held that nature had intended all people to be equal, that it had provided them with the same organs and needs and bestowed on them the riches of the Earth for common use.

Like More before him, Mably did not see any grounds in the surrounding reality for building his ideal society of "natural communism", since once common property had been divided among them, people could not revert to their "natural" conditions of existence. He thus came to the conclusion that it was impossible to achieve a communistic society and that all that could be accomplished was to try to carry out reforms designed to equalise the distribution of private property.

The dates of birth and death of the French utopian communist Morelly are unknown; indeed, it may be that Morelly was a pen name for the real author. His main work *La Code de la nature* (1755) was a treatise which substantiated the principles of a society where collective ownership dominates. According to Morelly, the history of humanity began with unconscious communism, when people led a natural life, following the "code of nature". This natural communism disintegrated with the invention of private property as a result of people's lack of reason. He formulated the basic principles of a communistic system in the form of three basic laws: (1) the abolition of private property; (2) the right of every person to live and to work; (3) the duty of all citizens to work for the common good and in accordance with their ability.

Morelly viewed the future socialistic society as a centralised economic commune covering the whole country, developing upon the basis of a single economic plan regulating the production and distribution of material wealth. Like Thomas More, he presented distribution according to the individual's needs as the general rule, but his ideal society had laws prohibiting luxury and calling for moderation in consumption. In More's *Utopia* the family, headed by the father, was the production unit, but in Morelly's social utopia it was the workshop, headed by the foreman. These two very different approaches reflected two different stages in the development of production: the artisan and the manufactory stages.

Morelly believed that, sooner or later, the fruits of education would make it possible to bring into being this socialistic society, through reform from above. He was unable to supply a social basis for his theory; his faith in its realisation was based merely on the power of reason.

This was also the fundamental characteristic of the three great utopian socialists of the early 19th century — Claude Henri Saint Simon (1760-1825), Charles Fourier (1772-1837), and Robert Owen (1771-1858). What made them “utopians” was that, like Thomas More, they could not see in the society which surrounded them any inherent motive forces that could effect the change in social conditions they desired. They believed that it could only be introduced by peaceful reforms from above by enlightened rulers or bourgeois philanthropists. All of them were therefore opposed to social change through revolutionary political struggle. To transform socialism from utopian schemes into a practical movement required the development of a scientific theory of social development. This was the great contribution of Marx and Engels to socialist thought.

5. HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY

Marx and Engels did not begin their political lives as socialists, but as revolutionary democrats under the influence of the views of the German philosopher Georg Hegel.

Hegel's philosophy was a reflection of the historical changes that had taken place in Europe at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, namely, the overturning of feudal social relations under the impact of the 1789-93 French Revolution. These social changes, together with rapid advances in the natural sciences, dealt a heavy blow to the old, metaphysical mode of thought which regarded all things as isolated from each other and devoid of internal contradictoriness. Later, Engels wrote:

But precisely therein lay the true significance and revolutionary character of the Hegelian philosophy ... that it once for all dealt the death blow to the finality of all products of human thought and action.¹

Hegel's great achievement was the first systematic elaboration of the dialectical method. His philosophy presented the world as a totality in the process of continuous development, of ascent from the lower to the higher, from the simple to the complex. In Hegel's view, development proceeds through the conflict and resolution of internal contradictions, which result in the transition to a new stage, or the “elimination” (*Aufhebung*) of the old contradictions and the emergence of new ones, intrinsic to the new quality. Development was seen as a unity of continuity and discontinuity, of gradual quantitative changes leading to breaks in gradual development, to abrupt transitions to the new quality. Hegel applied this principle mainly to the history of human society. He saw world history as a law-governed process of development.

However, Hegel's dialectic had an idealist philosophical basis, for he declared that the underlying basis of all things was the “absolute idea” (i.e., ideas existing *prior to*

and *separate from* any thinking material beings), to whose self-development he reduced the whole process of dialectical movement. According to Hegel, Engels wrote later, “the absolute idea ... ‘alienates’, that is, transforms, itself into nature and comes to itself again later in the mind, that is, in thought and in history”.² The development of the absolute idea culminates in Hegel's philosophy in the form of the absolute truth. This enshrinement of his own philosophical *system* as the ultimate development in human thought and in all development in general, was in fundamental *contradiction* with the dialectical *method* he himself propounded, wherein he insisted that all phenomena should be viewed as in continuous movement and unceasing change.

The limitations of Hegel's philosophy were most glaring in his political views, for he declared the summit of society's development to be the constitutional monarchy, whose only task was to make some “improvements” in the Prussian state by adapting it to the needs of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie. This sacrificed the objective revolutionary content of Hegel's dialectical method to the needs of a conservative metaphysical system.

The contradiction between Hegel's dialectical method and his metaphysical system was a reflection of the inconsistent and equivocal outlook of the German capitalists, who strove to escape the fetters of feudal social relations but shunned revolutionary ways of doing this, preferring to compromise with the semi-feudal landowning nobility.

6. THE YOUNG HEGELIANS

In the 1830s a split developed between the adherents of Hegel, who had died in 1831. Some of them began to take a militant stance in defence of religion. These right-wing Hegelians read Christian orthodoxy into Hegel's philosophy — regarding the absolute idea as a philosophical expression for God (which, indeed, it was) — and regarded his philosophical system as a vindication of the existing political order as a whole.

The left-wing group, known as the Young Hegelians — among them David Strauss, the Bauer brothers (Bruno and Edgar), Arnold Ruge and Ludwig Feuerbach — strove to draw radical-democratic conclusions from Hegel's philosophy. The Young Hegelians rejected the conservative-religious interpretation of this philosophy and criticised the dogmas of Christianity, and religion in general. This was first done by David Strauss in his two-volume *Life of Jesus* (published in 1835 and 1836), which treated the Gospels as a collection of spontaneous myths expressing the hopes and aspirations of the early Christian communities. By contrast, Bruno Bauer believed the Gospels to be the product of a deliberate mythogenesis, reflecting a stage in the development of

humanity's self-consciousness, a stage that humanity was bound to overcome in the subsequent development of its consciousness. Bauer carried the critique of religion and the Gospels farther than Strauss, casting doubt not only on the alleged divine origin but the very existence of Jesus Christ, and connecting the origins of Christianity with the psychological-intellectual life and philosophical trends of antiquity.

This controversy between the Young Hegelians and the orthodox champions of religion was theological in form but had a definite political content: one of the main pillars of the Prussian absolutist monarchy was being undermined by the denial of religion as divine revelation, and the insistence that it was a product of the human spirit. By putting forward the principle of transforming reality through criticism, the Young Hegelians had moved away from the critique of religion towards a critique of the politics and ideology of Prussian absolutism, and it is this that made their philosophy the philosophy of the German radical-democratic petty-bourgeoisie.

Idealism was the Young Hegelians' fundamental weakness. In contrast to Hegel, they inclined to subjectivist views of history and underestimated people's practical activity, especially mass action, by pinning their faith in the omnipotence of theoretical criticism and believing that only critical thinking by outstanding personalities could assure the progress of humanity's self-consciousness and, consequently, all progress in general.

Marx came to know the Young Hegelians while he was a student at Berlin University in 1837-1841, and his sympathies were at once aroused by their bold criticism of religious and philosophical dogmas, by the radicalism of the political convictions of many of them, their stand for freedom of conscience, of the press and so on. He soon became one of the intellectual leaders of this club. In 1841, after Marx had received his doctorate of philosophy, Moses Hess, a prominent Young Hegelian, wrote to a friend:

... you can definitely look forward to meeting the greatest, perhaps the *only real* philosopher now living ... Dr. Marx, as my idol is called — he is still a young man (he is at most twenty-four years old) — will give medieval religion and philosophy their last push. He combines the most profound philosophical earnestness with the most biting wit. Think of Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel fused into one — I say *fused*, not just lumped together — and you have Dr. Marx.³

7. LUDWIG FEUERBACH

The year Marx graduated with a doctorate of philosophy, an important event occurred in Germany's ideological life — the publication of Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, which had a powerful liberating effect on the leading minds of the day.

In a sense, Feuerbach was the first philosopher to overcome, within limits, the idealism of the Young Hegelians. His book was a materialist critique of religion and proclaimed that nature existed independently of the human mind, and was the basis on which humans, themselves products of nature, had emerged. He declared that there was nothing outside nature and humanity, and that the supreme beings created by people's religious imagination were merely fantastic reflections of humanity's own essence. The concept of God embodied all the qualities which, while not characteristic of individuals, belonged to human beings as a whole, to humanity as a "species-being", as he himself put it. Consequently, humanity had to repossess its human essence, which it had alienated in the concept of God.

Even at that time some of Feuerbach's ideas conflicted with those the young Marx was working out for himself. Marx could not accept Feuerbach's contemplative approach and saw philosophy as an active factor in the fight for human freedom, while Feuerbach's underestimation of the dialectical method clashed with Marx's profound understanding of its revolutionary role. On the whole, however, Marx welcomed Feuerbach's book as one which helped to widen the cognitive horizons of science. Marx was also attracted to Feuerbach because of his own ideas about the human origins of religion, which had been expressed in his doctoral thesis.

At the time Marx, like many of the Young Hegelians, saw *The Essence of Christianity* chiefly as a manifesto of radical atheism, as a much more consistent refutation of religious superstition than was say, Strauss' book. But being on the whole still an idealist, he was still not aware of its materialist content. He realised, however, that Feuerbach's ideas were a substantial advance in understanding real human relations. They added to Marx's conviction that the critique of religion was a stage in the critical comprehension of the existing world order and a form of struggle for human emancipation from spiritual and other fetters. Subsequently, Marx wrote in this context, having Feuerbach's philosophy chiefly in mind:

The criticism of religion ends with the teaching that *man is the highest being for man*, hence with the *categorical imperative to overthrow all relations* in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being.⁴

Consequently, the young Marx saw Feuerbach as an outstanding representative of advanced philosophy, whose ideas were a concentration of the "most subtle, valuable and invisible juices" of its people and its time.⁵ Open and bold defence of these ideas against the attacks of conservatives and obscurantists, and their further development, became one of the main tasks he set himself.

With his doctoral thesis complete, Marx intended to join Bruno Bauer in teaching

philosophy at Bonn University. However, his hopes of obtaining a professorship did not materialise. King Frederick William IV, whose assent to the Prussian throne in 1840 had given opposition circles hopes of a liberal government policy, soon made it clear that there was not going to be any constitutional reforms. Criticism of the Prussian monarchy, however moderate, was ruthlessly suppressed. Bruno Bauer was dismissed from Bonn University.

The most radically-minded Young Hegelians — with Marx, Bruno Bauer and Arnold Ruge in the lead — had to turn to radical-democratic politics because of the mounting government reprisals and collapse of their illusions about an “enlightened monarch” introducing a liberal-democratic constitution of his own accord. Marx threw himself with youthful fervour into the midst of the struggle for democratic liberties against Prussian absolutism, joining the editorial board of the opposition daily *Rheinische Zeitung*, which started publication in Cologne in January 1842. It was while he was working on this paper that Marx first met Engels.

8. EVOLUTION OF ENGELS' VIEWS

Frederick Engels had been born two years earlier than Marx, also in the Rhine Province of Prussia. His father was a textile manufacturer who had raised his children in accordance with strict bourgeois rules and orthodox Christian beliefs. Young Engels was not allowed to complete his high-school learning and was sent to Bremen to become a businessman. Working as a clerk, he devoted his leisure hours to studying history, philosophy, literature and foreign languages. The progressive ideas of the day, above all the writings of the Young Hegelians, helped him to discard the religious views impressed upon him at home. These ideas, combined with the hard facts of life as he gained knowledge of the working people's exploitation in his family's business, impelled him toward revolutionary-democratic politics. His first journalistic work, entitled “Letter from Wuppertal” and printed in 1839, gave a picture of the harsh oppression of the workers by their capitalist masters, concealed by the guise of sanctimony.

From the latter half of September 1841 to mid-August 1842 Engels did military service as a volunteer in an artillery unit stationed in Berlin, then the capital of Prussia. This gave him an opportunity to attend lectures at Berlin University. He joined the Young Hegelians, whose views he largely shared at the time, and took an active part in the ideological struggle then going on in Germany. Like Marx, he was profoundly influenced by Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*. Later he wrote: “One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it.”⁶

While in Berlin, Engels wrote a number of polemical philosophical works. They

were very popular, and very few of his readers realised that the author was not a trained philosopher but a young army volunteer and a non-matriculated student.

In November 1842 Engels called in at the offices of the *Rheinische Zeitung* on his way to Manchester to work in the office of a company in which his father was a partner. Marx, who had become the paper's editor in October 1842, enlisted him as the journal's correspondent in England.

9. MARX'S REJECTION OF UTOPIAN SOCIALISM

The day after Marx assumed the editorship of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the paper carried his article, “Communism and the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung*”, in which he responded to charges of communist propaganda made against his paper by the reactionary *Allgemeine Zeitung*. Marx wrote that the issue of communism was acquiring tremendous importance for advanced European countries, above all England and France. Moreover, he was beginning to see the close connection between communist ideas and the struggles of the propertyless working people. He wrote:

The estate that today owns nothing *demand*s to share in the wealth of the middle classes is a fact which is ... obvious to anyone in Manchester, Paris and Lyons.⁷

There were good reasons why he mentioned these three cities: Manchester was a centre of the Chartist movement, and Paris and Lyons had been the scenes of proletarian uprisings. In 1831 and 1834, the Lyons weavers had fought on the barricades and inscribed on their banners the motto: “Live working or die fighting!” Marx criticised the existing doctrines of socialism and communism as dogmatic and as efforts to reveal to the world an absolute truth. He wrote:

The *Rheinische Zeitung* ... does not admit that communist ideas in their present form possess even *theoretical clarity*; and therefore can still less desire their *practical realisation*, or even consider it possible.⁸

Throughout his life Marx, true to the dialectical method he had learned from Hegel, refrained from prescribing dogmatic recipes for changing reality, but made a consistent and profound study of its contradictions so as to find ways of resolving them. As the young Marx grappled with the contradictions of both Hegel's philosophy and social conditions in Prussia he began to appreciate the rational elements in the theories of previous socialist thinkers and put them to creative use in working out his own theory of scientific socialism.

Marx rejected the socialist and communist theories that existed at this time because they had nothing to say about the question that most concerned him — the revolutionary political struggle for democracy. The question of a democratic revolution

— its character, its causes and motive forces — was the overriding one for Marx. During this period he was not merely making ardent pronouncements in defence of the common people's interests and against the semi-feudal, absolutist Prussian state oppressing them — as in his October 25-November 3, 1842 article on the Rhine Province Assembly's "Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood". He was gradually coming to realise that the actions of people belonging to social classes were determined by objective factors, and that their private interests depended on their objective position within the economic structure of society. Marx was gaining a clearer view of the main line of his quest, namely, uncovering the nature of the objective relations "which determine the actions of private persons and individual authorities".⁹

10. MARX'S TURN TOWARD MATERIALISM

As an editor of a political newspaper, Marx had been confronted with economic questions and had come to realise not only the inadequacy of his knowledge in this field but also the primary role they had to play in social life and politics. Marx set his mind to discovering the force which was capable of changing the existing political system in Prussia. How true his course was can be seen from a letter to Arnold Ruge which he wrote some six weeks after the closure of the *Rheinische Zeitung* by its bourgeois financiers on March 31, 1843. He wrote:

The system of industry and trade, of ownership and exploitation of the people, however, leads ever more rapidly than the increase in population to a rupture within present-day society, a rupture which the old system is not able to heal.¹⁰

His work on the paper also gave him much experience in another sphere relating to the state. He came to realise that the state was by no means the embodiment of "universal reason", the embodiment of the universal which rose above individual private interests, as Hegel had maintained. Consequently, pending the start of publication of a new revolutionary journal, Marx retired to his study room, as he put it, to make a critical review of Hegel's idealistic conception of society and the state, and the identification of the real motive forces behind the social process and of ways and means to bring about the world's revolutionary transformation in the interests of human emancipation from political and social oppression.

One work which was of great help to Marx in his critique of Hegel's idealism was Ludwig Feuerbach's *Preliminary Theses for a Reformation of Philosophy* which was published in Switzerland in early 1843. In it Feuerbach argued that thinking sprang from being, from material existence and not the other way round as Hegel had asserted. Feuerbach showed Hegel's philosophy to be the last refuge of theology: he applied to

idealistic philosophy the method he had used in his critique of religion, emphasising that one only needed to "turn speculative philosophy upside down" to obtain the real relation between thinking and being.

Marx used this approach in the manuscript of his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*. In a letter to Ruge which he wrote some time after the publication of Feuerbach's critique of Hegelian philosophy, Marx observed:

Feuerbach's aphorism seem to me incorrect only in one respect, that he refers too much to nature and too little to politics. That, however, is the only alliance by which philosophy can become truth.¹¹

Here we find the incipient distinction between their views, which Marx was to spell out in April 1845 in his *Theses on Feuerbach*. Feuerbach saw humanity in the light of an abstract humanism, as a being chiefly natural and instinctive; that was the narrow anthropological principle he applied to philosophical questions. Even at this time Marx saw humanity as above all a social being, a product of historically developed social relations.

It was natural, therefore, that the relationship between the state and "civil society" was the central problem in Marx's manuscript. At the time "civil society" was the term used to designate the sphere of private, chiefly material, interests and their attendant social relations. The widely accepted idea of civil society as a sphere in which individuals confronted each other as closed, hostile entities reflected a characteristic feature of human relations under capitalism. A correct view of the nature of civil society and its relation to the state marked an important step forward in the development of a scientific, materialist view of the existing social order, and gave a clue to the understanding of the main causes behind the historical process as a whole.

11. MARX'S CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S IDEALISM

Hegel had declared that the state was at a higher stage of development than civil society and determined it. Marx took the opposite view, namely, that civil society was a prerequisite of the state. Probing for the connection between the essence of the state and the nature of concrete social relations, Marx came to the conclusion that private property played the definitive role with respect to the political system. He wrote: "The political constitution at its highest point is ... the *constitution of private property*."¹² Although he still saw private ownership of productive resources mainly in legal terms, his line in explaining political institutions was already clearly materialist.

Marx concentrated his criticism on Hegel's political views, especially his apology for the Prussian bureaucracy and the monarchy. As he criticised Hegel, Marx put

forward his own idea of democracy. He saw democracy as the people's self-determination, with the people's interests constituting its fundamental law. He asserted that only in a democracy would the people cease to be a plaything in the hands of forces they had themselves created — the political institutions — and become their masters. Only then would the state cease to stand in opposition to the people and become a "particular form of existence of the people".¹³ Marx referred to the French, who had come to realise "recently ... that in true democracy the *political state is annihilated*".¹⁴ He undoubtedly had in mind the utopian socialist Saint-Simon and his idea of a future society in which the government of people would give way to the administration of things, of goods and services. Consequently, the urge to see democracy as real, instead of nominal, rule of the people made it necessary for Marx to seek a social system under which this could be realised, thus carrying him another step towards socialism.

The materialist elements in Marx's outlook acquired concreteness with his deepening critique of the idealist approach of Hegel, who "does not develop his thinking from the object, but expounds the object in accordance with a thinking that is cut and dried — already formed and fixed in the abstract sphere of logic".¹⁵ Marx cited the evidence of Hegel to draw the conclusion that idealism inevitably led to religion and mysticism. He laid bare the connection between Hegel's idealistic philosophy and his conservative politics, and showed how in his system the Prussian monarchy, a concrete historical fact, was transformed into a stage in the development of the "absolute idea". Hegel similarly wrapped up in mystery the other attributes of the semi-feudal state, among them the system of estates and the bureaucracy.

His work on the critique of Hegel's philosophy of law impelled Marx to look upon history itself for the facts to refute Hegel's idealist constructions. Through the entire manuscript of his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* runs the materialist tendency of starting from an analysis of concrete reality instead of abstract premises, from the "logic of the matter" and not the "matter of logic". He was aware that only a serious study of the history of society could help to decide on the relationship between civil society and the state. Consequently, in the summer (mostly July and August) of 1843, parallel with his work on the manuscript, Marx made a fundamental study of the history of England, France, Germany, the United States, Italy and Sweden and with particular emphasis on the Great French Revolution. In his notebooks he traced the dependence of the bourgeoisie's policies on the economic factor, on property relations. His grouping of extracts from various historians was such that it tended to stress the inability of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to

provide genuine equality, arising not from the establishment of a nominal equality of all before the law but from a radical change in property relations.

As he studied history he also searched for the way to advance to a social system worthy to be called a truly human society. The fact that he had discovered the limited nature of past revolutions likewise carried Marx outside the framework of revolutionary democratism toward socialist conclusions.

In a letter to Ruge in September 1843, Marx outlined his plans for a journal to be published in Paris. Its main line, he held, should be relentless criticism of the existing world order. Marx did not regard criticism as an aim in itself, but as a means of working out a new world outlook to guide revolutionary political practice. He wrote that "nothing prevents us from making criticism of politics, participation in politics, and therefore *real* struggles, the starting point of our criticism, and from identifying our criticism with them".¹⁶ It was here that Marx first formulated the most important idea of the unity of theory and practice.

12. MARX'S IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROLETARIAT AS THE AGENT OF HUMAN EMANCIPATION

The first double issue (Nos. 1 and 2) of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* appeared at the end of February 1844. It carried two articles by Marx — "On the Jewish Question" and "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction", the latter article having been written in Paris in December 1843 and January 1844. In the first article Marx criticised Bruno Bauer, who in his treatises adopted an idealistic approach to the emancipation of the Jews in Germany, who were deprived of political rights. Bauer saw the solution in the emancipation of the Jews from religion. Marx proved this to be untenable. He showed that the problem of Jewish emancipation from oppression was part of the larger problem of humanity's emancipation from the burden of political and *social* oppression.

Marx understood political emancipation as the people's release from feudal fetters and the establishment of formal democratic freedoms in the course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. While attaching much importance to political emancipation, Marx saw its limitations. He wrote: *Political* emancipation is, of course, a big step forward. True, it is not the final form of human emancipation in general, but it is the final form of human emancipation *within* the hitherto existing world order.¹⁷ Its limits sprang from the existence of private property, which the bourgeois revolution tended to safeguard as a sacrosanct social institution.

Marx made a profound materialistic analysis of the basic bourgeois freedoms,

which had been achieved through political emancipation, and which the ideologists of the bourgeoisie had declared to be an expression of humanity's natural rights. He showed these "rights of man" to be above all else the rights of members of "civil society", that is, the rights of the bourgeois citizen. Freedom in bourgeois terms was essentially freedom for the individual bourgeois to dispose of his private property at his own discretion, while the individual's right to security was essentially the right of the bourgeois proprietor to immunity of his person and, above all, his property. Consequently, political emancipation, or political revolution — Marx used both these terms to denote the bourgeois revolution — was humanity's emancipation as a member of civil society, as an "egoistic man ... separated from other men and from the community".¹⁸

In contrast to political emancipation, Marx put forward the idea of human emancipation — people's deliverance from the vices of contemporary civil society, the elimination of real social inequality and the creation of social conditions in which social solidarity would predominate over egoism and mutual hostility between individuals. Still largely employing Feuerbach's terminology, but in a new meaning, Marx wrote that "only when man has recognised and organised his '*forces propres*' [own powers] as *social* powers, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished".¹⁹

This reasoning is essentially the first outline of the idea of socialist revolution which works a radical change in the very foundation of "civil society" and establishes a truly human society. The influence of Feuerbach's anthropologism is still evident here not only in the terminology used but also in the somewhat abstract approach to the question of human emancipation. By contrast, the criticism of political emancipation, of the limitations of bourgeois revolution, is already stated in concrete terms. Nevertheless, Marx's article, "On the Jewish Question", formulated the essence of the distinction between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution, and simultaneously advanced the idea that the latter would historically follow on from the former. Marx's second article gave the answer as to who was to carry out human emancipation, by overcoming the limitations of political emancipation.

Marx's study of earlier revolutions had led him to conclude that in all social revolutions one social class strives to act as the emancipator of all society, while looking to its own specific conditions and pursuing its own goals. However, it may undertake to do so only when objectively "its demands and rights are truly the rights and demands of society itself".²⁰ The class that can carry through the emancipation

of all people must be the class which is in contradiction with the whole of modern society, the class which consequently cannot emancipate itself without liberating the whole of society.

Marx's second article formulated another key thesis: that without the imbuing of the masses with a scientific theory of social revolution there could not be a revolutionary transformation of society. "The weapon of criticism", he wrote, "cannot, of course, replace the criticism of weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses".²¹

Marx saw the proletariat — the class of propertyless wage-workers — as the social force which was to put the conclusions of revolutionary theory to real use and translate them into life. "As philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *spiritual* weapons in philosophy."²²

Marx's idea of the proletarian class's role in world history as the destroyer of capitalist society and the creator of a new, socialist society marked the starting point in the transformation of utopian socialism into scientific socialism. From that point on, the development of Marx's materialist conception of history went hand in hand with the formulation of scientific socialism, with the theory of proletarian revolution.

13. ENGEL'S TURN TOWARD PROLETARIAN SOCIALISM

The names of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels are found together in the contents of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher*, an apparent coincidence which is highly symbolic, for Engels had arrived at similar conclusions as Marx.

During the two years that Engels spent in England, he learned a great deal from studies in his spare time about English political economy and the writings of English socialists, notably Robert Owen. There, too, he found Chartism, Europe's most advanced working-class movement. Many years later he himself recalled that it was in Manchester that he had realised the crucial role in social life of economic relations constituting the basis of class contradictions and the struggle among political parties. Like Marx, Engels had also come to see the proletariat as the social force capable of revolutionising society.

These elements of the new outlook were reflected in Engels' articles of the period, in particular those in the Owenist *New Moral World*. But the strongest evidence of his development of a materialist dialectics and of socialism comes from his articles published in the *Jahrbucher*: "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy" and *The Conditions of England. Past and Present* by Thomas Carlyle".

Many years later, in the preface to his 1859 *Contribution to a Critique of Political*

Economy, Marx described Engels' "Outline" in the *Jahrbucher* as "a brilliant sketch on the criticism of economic categories".²³ Engels started his analysis by recognising the objective economic laws of capitalist production described by Adam Smith and his school of political economy. But this school produced an inadequate and one-sided analysis of these laws because it took them for granted. This kind of science "ought to be called *private* economy, for its public connections exist only for the sake of private property".²⁴ Consequently, without denying the scientific nature of classical political economy, Engels showed its organic connection with the interests of the capitalist class.

The main content of the article was a socialist critique of bourgeois political economy and private property, its actual basis. "The productive power at mankind's disposal is immense", Engels wrote.²⁵ What then hampers the eradication of poverty and hunger? It is private property. The latter has converted the worker into a commodity whose production depends on demand. "All this drives us to the abolition of this degradation of mankind through the abolition of private property, competition and the opposing interests."²⁶

Engels' "Outline of a Critique of Political Economy" made a great impression on Marx, leading him to begin a more serious study of political economy. During the early months of 1844 Marx made a series of extracts from the works of English and French economists. These extracts and Marx's critical notes were later published in the Soviet Union in 1932 under the title *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. While primarily a study of political economy they also contained a fundamental critique of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which Marx reworked Hegel's dialectics along materialist lines.

Engels' second article in the *Jahrbucher* was a review of Thomas Carlyle's 1843 book *Past and Present*, in which Carlyle criticised capitalism from the point of view of defending the "harmony" of social life under feudal social relations. Carlyle accused the capitalists of having plunged England into unprecedented impoverishment, degradation and moral evil. Capitalism has destroyed the religious spirit and the patriarchal relations of the Middle Ages, but what did it give the people in return? The Gospel of Mammon, the making of money. Exposing bourgeois democracy, Carlyle had written that the "notion that a man's liberty consists in giving his vote at election-hustings, and saying, 'Behold, now I too have my twenty-thousandth part of a Talker in our National Palaver [Parliament]; will not all the goods be good to me?' — is one of pleasantest".²⁷ Engels quoted this and other extracts from Carlyle's book and wrote:

This is the condition of England, according to Carlyle. An idle land-owning

aristocracy which "have not yet learned even to sit still and do no mischief", and a working aristocracy submerged in Mammonism, who, when they ought to be collectively leaders of labour, "captains of industry", are just a gang of industrial buccaneers and pirates ... Everywhere chaos, disorder, anarchy, dissolution of the old ties of society, everywhere intellectual insipidity, frivolity, and debility. — That is the condition of England. Thus far, if we discount a few expressions that have derived from Carlyle's particular standpoint, we must allow the truth of all he says.²⁸

Engels found Carlyle's criticism of capitalism valuable because it "strikes a human chord, presents human relations and shows traces of a human point of view".²⁹ But Carlyle's class standpoint made it impossible for him to take a revolutionary and scientific approach to the question of how to do away with capitalist oppression. He held that the social evils produced by the development of capitalism were not rooted in capitalism itself but in atheism and the "materialistic" self-seeking allegedly connected with it. Carlyle's solution — a new religion based on the cult of labour — was a reactionary utopia because, Engels wrote, religion merely sanctifies the social evils engendered by capitalism. Engels wrote:

The question has previously always been: what is God? and German philosophy [i.e., Feuerbach] has answered the question in this sense: God is man. Man has only to understand himself, to take himself as the measure of all aspects of life, to judge according to his being, to organise the world in a truly human manner according to the demands of his own nature, and he will have solved the riddle of our time."³⁰

Had Engels confined himself to this general humanistic approach, he would have, in effect, not gone beyond the framework of Feuerbach's theory. But this article is of outstanding importance precisely because it says that it is up to the emancipation movement of the working class "to organise the world in a truly human manner". Engels castigates the self-seeking and the blind acceptance of prejudices by England's ruling classes who turn their backs on all real progress. Only the workers "are really respectable, for all their roughness and for all their moral degradation. It is from them that England's salvation will come, they still comprise flexible material; they have no education, but no prejudices either, they still have the strength for a great national deed — they still have future".³¹

The working class, wrote Engels, has put forward, through its social leaders, the socialists, the task of destroying capitalism. It is true that the socialists do not yet have a sound theoretical grasp of social life and are inclined to narrow empiricism and practicalism. But they are "the only party in England which has a future, relatively weak though they may be. Democracy, Chartism must soon be victorious, and then

the mass of the English workers will have the choice only between starvation and socialism".³²

Engels concluded his article with a promise to get down soon to a more detailed study of social conditions in England, for "the condition of England is of immense importance for history and for all other countries; for as regards social matters England is of course far in advance of all other countries".³³

14. THE CRITIQUE OF 'CRITICAL CRITICISM'

By the beginning of 1844, both Marx and Engels, working independently of each other and studying the socio-economic situation and literature that were largely different, advanced from dialectical idealism and petty-bourgeois revolutionary-democratism to dialectical materialism and proletarian-socialism. However, they had yet to elaborate the fundamental principles of a dialectical materialist conception of history and thus give a scientific basis for their revolutionary proletarian-socialism.

At the end of August 1844, Marx had a visit in Paris from Engels, who was returning from England to Germany. During his 10-day stay, the two men found that their views were identical in every aspect of theory and practice. They agreed to write a polemical work directed against the Young Hegelians.

There were several considerations behind the need for them to make a public criticism of the Young Hegelians. They realised that they could work out a dialectical materialist theory of history and a scientific socialism only by defining the differences between non-proletarian ideological trends and their own. Meanwhile, the Young Hegelians, especially those in Berlin, who were grouped around the Bauer brothers, had undergone a marked change: they had renounced their democratic convictions, which had made them ideologists of the radical bourgeoisie, and had moved to the right on many issues. They were no longer allies in the fight against the Prussian state, but a group of anarchist-minded intellectuals, who scorned "the mass" as being passive and an obstacle to progress.

In the monthly *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, published by Bruno Bauer in 1843 and 1844, the Young Hegelians publicly repudiated their past revolutionary-democratic attitudes. Its eighth issue carried Bruno Bauer's article, "The Year 1842", in which he renounced the "radicalism of 1842" as "expressed in the *Rheinische Zeitung*". In a clear allusion to Marx and Engels, Bauer spurned the views of those who "believe that they have found something new in socialism". He flaunted his contempt for politics, asserting that "Critical Criticism" had ceased to be political.

Objectively the reactionary social implications of their philosophy lay in their

subjectivist view that the resolution of any contradictions in the mind was identical with their resolution in reality. Marx wrote that they had learned "to convert *real objective* chains that exist *outside me* into *merely me*".³⁴ Marx and Engels were faced with the task of exposing the Young Hegelians' sham radicalism and countering their "Critical Criticism" with their own materialist conceptions and socialist views. The manuscript in which this was accomplished was completed at the end of November 1844. It was published in Frankfurt-am-Main at the end of February 1845 under the title, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Co.*

This was primarily a philosophical work, containing a consistent materialist interpretation of some of the most important philosophical problems, and a militant attack on the philosophical opponents of Marx and Engels' new outlook. A large part of it was a critique of the Young Hegelians' subjective idealism, which in its worse and frequently caricatured form embodied all the defects of classical German idealism from Kant to Hegel, so the critique essential applied to idealism as a whole, to its methods and its distorted dialectics. Ridiculing the Young Hegelians' worship of self-consciousness, Marx and Engels wrote:

The Critical Critic ... cannot by any means entertain the thought that there is a world in which *consciousness* and *being* are distinct; a world which continues to exist when I merely abolish its existence in thought.³⁵

In *The Holy Family* Marx exposed the epistemological roots of idealism, notably the treatment of concrete, individual things as forms in which general concepts exist. The idealist philosopher, Marx wrote ironically, "performs a *miracle* by producing the *real natural objects*, the apple, the pear, etc., out of the unreal *creation of the mind 'the Fruit'*".³⁶ For the idealist philosopher, the cognition of things through an identification in them of the general becomes "an act of creation" of these things by consciousness.

The Holy Family gave the first materialist analysis of the history of philosophy from the 17th to the first half of the 18th century, presented as a struggle between materialism and idealism, the two main trends in philosophy, with special emphasis on the intrinsic connection between materialist ideas and those of utopian socialism, and also between the advance of materialism and the advance of natural science.

While recognising the great progressive importance of materialism in the history of philosophy, Marx and Engels did not identify their own views with those of the earlier materialists, which were metaphysical and mechanistic. *The Holy Family* treated dialectics as an inherent property of the objective processes in the development of

the material world, which was reflected in human thinking. This is why it analysed social phenomena in their dialectical motion, where their intrinsic contradictions are the source, and their resolution the prerequisite for a revolutionary transition to a new quality.

The elaboration of a number of basic propositions of the materialist view of history then being developed by Marx was central to the content of the book. In contrast to the Young Hegelians' presentation of logical categories as something that had an existence of their own and dominated people's acts, Marx clearly said history was nothing but "human activity". He wrote: "'History' is not, as it were, a person agent, using man as a means to achieve *its own* aims; history is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims."³⁷

Marx also gained a more profound understanding of the relation between "civil society" and the state in the process of polemicising against the Young Hegelians' view that the "general state system" was needed to "hold together the individual self-seeking atoms" — a metaphysical conception of society that forms the foundation of bourgeois sociology. Marx wrote:

Speaking exactly and in the prosaic sense, the members of civil society are not *atoms*. The *specific property* of the atom is that it has *no* properties and is therefore not connected with beings outside it by any relationship determined by its own *natural necessity*. The atom *has no needs*, it is *self-sufficient*; the world outside it is an absolute *vacuum*, i.e., is contentless, senseless, meaningless, just because the atom has *all fullness* in itself. The egoistic individual in civil society may in his non-sensuous imagination and lifeless abstraction inflate himself into an *atom*, i.e., into an unrelated, self-sufficient, wantless, *absolutely full*, blessed being. Unblessed *sensuous reality* does not bother about his imagination, each of his senses compels him to believe in the existence of the world and of individuals outside him, and even his *profane* stomach reminds him every day that the world *outside* him is not *empty*, but is what really *fills*. Every activity and property of his being, every one of his vital urges, becomes a *need*, a *necessity*, which his *self-seeking* transforms into seeking for other things and human beings outside him. But since the need of one individual has no self-evident meaning for another egoistic individual capable of satisfying that need, and therefore no direct connection with its satisfaction, each individual has to create this connection; it thus becomes the intermediary between the need of another and the objects of this need. Therefore it is *natural necessity*, the *essential human properties* however estranged they may seem to be, and *interest* that hold the members of civil society together; *civil*, not *political* life is their *real* tie. It is therefore not the *state* that holds the *atoms* of civil society together,

but the fact that they are *atoms* only in *imagination*, in the *heaven* of their fancy, but in *reality* being tremendously different from atoms, in other words, not *divine egoists*, but *egoistic human beings*. Only *political superstition* still imagines today that civil life must be held together by the state, whereas in reality, on the contrary, the state is held together by civil life.³⁸

In order to make the vague concept of "civil society" more specific Marx sought to define the main factor determining society as a whole. He already perceived it to be the production of material goods, and saw production relations as the social relations between individuals which take shape in the process of production. These relations express both "the *objective being of man*" and "at the same time the *existence of man for other men*, his *human relation to other men*, the *social behaviour of man to man*".³⁹

Marx saw material production as the basis of humanity's history, which was a step forward from his 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. No historical period could be understood, he wrote in *The Holy Family*, "without knowing, for example, the industry of that period, the immediate mode of production of life itself".⁴⁰

15. MARX'S ANALYSIS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF THE PROLETARIAT

In the *Holy Family* Marx applied Hegel's dialectical conception of the unity and conflict of opposites to the antagonistic contradiction between poverty and wealth in capitalist society to refute the Bauer brothers' claim that Hegel's dialectical method required the recognition that these two concepts formed a "single whole" which could not be separated because it could not be ascertained which was the negative and which the positive pole of this antithesis. He did this by shifting the whole argument from the realm of the abstract idea of "poverty" as "non-wealth" to the concrete social embodiment of "non-wealth" in bourgeois society: the proletariat. Marx wrote:

Proletariat and wealth are opposites: as such they form a single whole. They are both creations of the world of private property. The question of exactly what place each occupies in the antithesis. It is not sufficient to declare them two sides of a single whole.

Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to maintain *itself*, and thereby its opposite, the proletariat, in *existence*. That is the *positive* side of the antithesis, self-satisfied private property.

The proletariat, on the contrary, is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself and

thereby its opposite, private property, which determines its existence, and which makes it proletariat. It is the *negative* side of the antithesis, its restlessness within its very self, dissolved and self-dissolving private property.

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement. But the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognises estrangement as *its own power* and has in it the *semblance* of a human existence. The latter feels annihilated in estrangement; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence. It is, to use an expression of Hegel, in its abasement the *indignation* at that abasement, an indignation to which it is necessarily driven by the contradiction between its human *nature* and its condition of life, which is the outright, resolute and comprehensive negation of that nature.

Within this antithesis the private property-owner is therefore the *conservative* side, the proletarian the *destructive* side. From the former arises the action of preserving the antithesis, from the latter the action of annihilating it ...

When the proletariat is victorious, it by no means becomes the absolute side of society, for it is victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite. Then the proletariat disappears as well as its opposite which determines it, private property.

When socialist writers ascribe this world-historic role to the proletariat, it is not at all, as Critical Criticism pretends to believe, because they regard the proletarians as *gods*. Rather the contrary. Since in the fully-formed proletariat the abstraction of all humanity, even of the *semblance* of humanity, is practically complete; since the conditions of life of the proletariat sum up all the conditions of life of society today in their most inhuman form; since man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet at the same time has not only gained theoretical consciousness of that loss, but through urgent, no longer removable, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative *need* — the practical expression of *necessity* — is driven directly to revolt against this inhumanity, it follows that the proletariat can and must emancipate itself. But it cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing *all* the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation. Not in vain does it go through the stern but steeling school of *labour*. It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment *regards* as its aim. It is a question of *what the proletariat is*, and what, in accordance with this *being*, it will historically be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is visibly and irrevocably foreshadowed in its own life situation as well as in the whole organisation of bourgeois society today.⁴¹

This passage is one of the most pregnant in whole of the writings of Marx. Most

notable is that in it Marx formulates a conception of the coming into being of socialism that transcended all previous concepts: socialism is the outcome of the proletariat's class struggle against capitalism. But this class struggle does not arise from the *statistical average* of all its individual empirical relations to *the capitalists*, but from the proletariat's *objective*, dynamical relation to the *organisation* of bourgeois society. Here Marx emphasises and contrasts the dialectical distinction between what the proletariat *is*, and what it will be *compelled to do* if it is to emancipate itself, and what the proletariat at any given moment *thinks* itself to be, at that moment *wants* to do.

The old, metaphysical, materialism that formed the philosophical world outlook of the utopian socialists sought to explain society from the *individual* and find a personal, and a subjective, origin for class conflicts. The utopian socialists shared the 18th century materialists' conception of society as a mere *aggregation* of individuals, of unit-atoms. Hence they believed that the social order could be rearranged by *reason* acting from *above* — by some powerful ruler using his governmental authority to reorganise his kingdom on the lines of a preconceived new plan, or by some wealthy philanthropist advancing the wealth to permit a sample social utopia to be set going, or by sufficient people of "good will" compelling the proletarians to set up such utopias. Marx's new, dialectical, materialism explained the *individual* and the *class* from society as an *objective*, dialectically developing, historical *fact* based on an *antagonistic unity* of oppressor and oppressed classes. From this conception of bourgeois society he explained that the classless socialist society could only be brought into being by the coming to power of the *self-emancipation movement* of the *oppressed class*.

Lenin later wrote that *The Holy Family* contained "Marx's view — already almost fully developed — concerning the revolutionary role of the proletariat".⁴²

16. ENGELS' CONDITION OF THE WORKING CLASS IN ENGLAND

The Holy Family appeared in print the same month that the French government, under pressure from the Prussian authorities, forced Marx to leave Paris. He arrived in Brussels in early February 1845. At the time, Belgium was one of most economically developed countries in Europe. Manufactory had given way to large-scale machine production. The conditions of the Belgian proletariat — the working day was up to 14 hours and wages were a pittance — provided a wealth of facts for analysis of the social contradictions inherent in capitalism. In early April 1845 Engels arrived in Brussels from Barmen. A month later Engels' book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* was published in Leipzig.

Present-day bourgeois ideologists claim that the principles of Marxian socialism are based on a speculative construction of world history. Engels' book refutes all such claims. It shows that Marx and Engels developed their theoretical conclusions on the basis of an analysis and summing up of concrete social facts. When working on his book, Engels made a study of a vast array of data brought together by other researchers and visited the homes of English workers to learn at first hand about their living conditions, attended workers' meetings to find out about their working conditions, and took part in the Chartist movement.

His concrete social study was not, of course, confined to a description and systematisation of the facts. He drew important theoretical conclusions, whose significance went well beyond the conjunctural historical situation which provided the factual basis for his study. His main conclusion was that the working class was capable not only of destroying the capitalist system, but also of building a classless, socialist society.

In his book Engels refuted the naive utopian socialist idea that the bourgeoisie could be persuaded to support the socialist transformation of social relations. Socialism, Engels demonstrated, was incompatible with the interests of the capitalists. He regarded the working-class movement as a necessary expression of the antagonistic contradiction between the main classes of capitalist society, and emphasised the proletarian character of the Chartist movement, but added that the Chartists were as yet unaware of the need for a social revolution — confining their aims to achieving universal manhood suffrage.

In England, Engels explained, socialism was virtually unconnected with the working-class movement, and those who advocated socialism did not advocate an implacable class struggle:

English Socialism arose with Owen, a manufacturer, and proceeds therefore with great consideration toward the bourgeoisie and great injustice toward the proletariat in its methods, although it culminates in demanding the abolition of the class antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat.

The Socialists are thoroughly tame and peaceable, accept our existing order, bad as it is, so far as to reject all other methods but that of winning public opinion.⁴³

This was the reason that at this time both Marx and Engels did not call themselves socialists, but communists. The latter term was generally associated with those who advocated the achievement of a classless society through revolutionary means.

The English socialists, Engels explained, lacked the historical approach to social life, which is why they did not connect the transition to socialism with definite,

historically formed social conditions. They complained of the hatred of the workers for the capitalists, and failed to understand that this hatred for those who exploited and oppressed them impelled the workers to advance.

The English socialists, Engels wrote "acknowledge only a psychological development, a development of man in the abstract, out of all relation to the Past, whereas the whole world rests upon the Past, the individual man included".⁴⁴ How could English socialism overcome its limitations? To do this it would have to purge itself of its bourgeois elements and merge with the working-class movement. This process, Engels stated, had already begun, with many of the Chartist leaders having become socialists. Further development of this process will produce *proletarian socialism*, whose historical necessity is determined by the antagonistic character of capitalist social relations and the advance of philosophical and social thought. Only proletarian socialism, Engels argued, would make the English working class master of its own country.

Engels showed the development of the objective conditions for the proletariat's class organisation and demonstrated how the progress of capitalist production induced the proletariat to unite into a single powerful army, which once imbued with proletarian socialism, would carry out a socialist revolution. He argued that "the war of the poor against the rich now carried on in detail and indirectly will become direct and universal. It is too late for a peaceful solution. The classes are divided more and more sharply, the spirit of resistance penetrates the workers, the bitterness intensifies, the guerilla skirmishes become concentrated in more important battles, and soon a slight impulse will suffice to set the avalanche in motion".⁴⁵

Such are the basic ideas of Engels' book. It is not free of imprecise and incorrect propositions, which were mainly due to the fact that Marxian economic theory was still embryonic. Engels, like Marx before the early 1850s, assumed that capitalism had already worked out its potentialities, as the cyclical crises of over-production of commodities seemed to indicate, while the growing impoverishment of the proletariat appeared to be a certain sign that the bourgeoisie was losing its footing.

Engels noted correctly that socialist theory had nothing to do with the cult of violence, and regarded the revolutionary use of armed force only as a means which the proletariat was forced to use against the violence resorted to by the ruling bourgeoisie. But he asserted that the doctrine of communism rose above the struggle between capital and wage-labour, and defended the interests of humanity as a whole — a conclusion that contradicted the whole thrust of his book. In a preface to the book which he wrote in 1892 for the first British edition, Engels repudiated this view:

... the dictum that Communism is not a mere party doctrine of the working-class, but a theory compassing the emancipation of society at large, including the capitalist class, from its present narrow conditions ... is true enough in the abstract, but absolutely useless, and sometimes worse, in practice. So long as the wealthy classes not only do not feel the want of any emancipation, but strenuously oppose the self-emancipation of the working class, so long the social revolution will have to be prepared and fought out by the working class alone. The French bourgeois of 1789, too, declared the emancipation of the bourgeoisie to be the emancipation of the whole human race; but the nobility and clergy would not see it; the proposition — though for the time being, with respect to feudalism, an abstract historical truth — soon became a mere sentimentalism, and disappeared from view altogether in the fire of the revolutionary struggle. And today, the very people who, from the "impartiality" of their superior standpoint, preach to the workers a Socialism soaring high above their class interests and class struggles, and tending to reconcile in a higher humanity the interests of both the contending classes — these people are either neophytes, who have still to learn a great deal, or they are the worst enemies of the workers — wolves in sheep's clothing.⁴⁶

17. MARX'S 'THESES ON FEUERBACH'

Shortly before Engels' book was printed, Marx had come to the conclusion that the two of them needed to develop in detail the philosophical foundation for scientific socialism. When Engels came to Brussels in April 1845, Marx was able to give him a general outline of his new, materialist conception of history set out in the form of eleven short "Theses on Feuerbach". They were, Engels later wrote, "the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of the new world outlook".⁴⁷

Their central idea is the decisive role of revolutionising material practice in the life of society. Marx affirmed that practice is the point of departure, the basis, the criterion and the purpose of any cognition, including consequently philosophical cognition.

Some philosophers before Marx had sensed and even declared that practice was the criterion and purpose of knowledge, but the real role of practice in social life and the process of cognition and its importance as a category of philosophy could be truly understood only from the standpoint of the interests of the working class, the consistently revolutionary class standpoint. The introduction of the category of practice into the theory of knowledge marked a real revolution in epistemology, and one of the main elements behind the revolution in philosophy effected by Marx.

Proceeding from the new outlook, Marx criticised the old materialism for being contemplative, and idealism for reducing practice to purely theoretical activity. This is

not to say that Marx strove to rise above both materialism and idealism, but he firmly declared his outlook to be a new materialism.

In contrast to idealist philosophers, Marx emphasised that purely theoretical criticism is not enough to change reality; it is essential to have practical-critical, revolutionary, activity; it is essential to change not only thinking but also being. Only in the process of revolutionary practice do people change both the surrounding reality and themselves.

In contrast to Feuerbach's metaphysical and unhistorical concepts of the human being as an abstract, isolated individual, Marx formulated another key principle of dialectical materialism, namely, that the essence of the human being is the ensemble of all the social relations. Human beings exist in society, are a product of society, and not just of society in the abstract, but in every instance, a definite form of society.

Marx saw consistent materialism, materialism applied to society, as the way to overcome religion. Pre-Marxian materialists, Feuerbach in particular, had reduced religion to its secular basis and had subjected it to profound criticism. Therein lay their historical achievement. But it was Marx who showed that religion sprang from the contradictions of this secular basis, from social antagonisms, and that in order to eliminate religion it was necessary to revolutionise existing society.

Marx had already formulated this view a year earlier in his *Jahrbucher* article "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction". In that article, he had written:

The basis of irreligious criticism is: *Man makes religion*, religion does not make man. In other words, religion is the self-consciousness and self-feeling of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again. But *man* is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is *the world of man*, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion, *an inverted world-consciousness*, because they are an *inverted world*. Religion is the general theory of that world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in a popular form, its spiritualistic *point d'honneur*, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn completion, its universal ground for consolation and justification. It is *the fantastic realisation* of the human essence because the *human essence* has no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore mediately the fight against *the world*, of which religion is the spiritual *aroma*.

Religious distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the *opium* of the people.

The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is required for their *real* happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about the existing state of affairs is the *demand to give up a state of affairs which needs illusions*.⁴⁸

The earlier materialism had been contemplative and metaphysical, seeing people as passive recipients of information from the external world and as essentially units, isolated from nature and society. In his "Theses on Feuerbach" Marx contrasted contemplation with revolutionary practice, and the old materialism with the new, dialectical, materialism as the philosophical foundation of scientific socialism. The final thesis contained the classic formulation of the principle of the new outlook: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."⁴⁹

18. HISTORICAL MATERIALISM AND REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE

The new outlook, whose fundamental principles Marx had formulated with such brevity in the eleven "Theses on Feuerbach", was elaborated by Marx and Engels in a new work, *The German Ideology*, which they jointly wrote between November 1845 and April 1846.

Before they began writing this work, however, the two men travelled to England to make a study of English writings, mainly economic, which were not available in Brussels, and of the socio-economic conditions of this, the most developed capitalist country of the time.

By the autumn of 1845, Marx and Engels had evolved a concrete plan for publishing a new philosophical work. This was to be a two-volume critique of German ideology — German philosophy as represented by Feuerbach (who had earlier that summer declared himself to be a "communist"), Bauer and other exponents of vulgarised subjectivist interpretations of Hegel, as well as the exponents of "true socialism" — a petty-bourgeois utopian socialist doctrine then becoming popular among German intellectuals.

The most important section of *The German Ideology* from the theoretical point of view was the first, introductory chapter ("I. Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks"). Here Marx and Engels elaborated their views directly, whereas in the other chapters this was done mostly by criticising their opponents. The preface, which remained uncompleted, gave a more or less systematic exposition of the dialectical materialist conception of history and of the theory of scientific socialism. It presented these in three parts: the premises, the concept and the conclusions.

In contrast to the German idealists, who followed Hegel in claiming that their

philosophy made do without premises, for all premises were supposedly dogmatic, Marx and Engels gave a consistently materialist and dialectical answer to the cardinal question of philosophy: what should be the point of departure in constructing a scientific theory of history? They admitted that they started from definite premises — in no sense dogmatic and speculative, but real — and went on to state them. These premises were the existence of real individual human beings, their activity and the material conditions of their activity, which are simultaneously the premises of history itself.

Overcoming the inconsistency of earlier materialism, which took the metaphysical view that nature was immutable, Marx and Engels showed that the natural conditions in which human beings lived and acted were also historical, and drew a distinction between the natural conditions which humans find in existence and those which are created by humans' own productive activity. In existing society the material environment itself becomes the product of human historical activity.

A definite natural environment is the objective material condition for the existence and development of human society, and human beings' own physical make-up determines their attitude to the natural environment. However, Marx and Engels did not concentrate on these two prerequisites of history but on human activity as the decisive factor behind the historical process.

There are two sides to this activity: production (humans' active relation to nature, their influence on it) and social intercourse (humans' relations to one another, principally in the process of production). While production and intercourse react upon each other, production is the decisive factor. This is because the first premise of all human history is that humans must be in a position to live, which means that they need food, water, clothes and dwellings. This is why the first historical act is the production of the means to satisfy these needs. The whole of life in a given society is dependent on and determined by production and by the ways in which the individuals in that society relate to each other to carry out production, with the latter being determined by the productive forces (the instruments, raw materials, sources of motive power and the working people, with their knowledge and skills) that are employed in production. The materialist conception of history was summed up in these words:

This conception of history thus relies on expounding the real process of production — starting from the material production of life itself — and comprehending the form of intercourse connected with and created by this mode of production, i.e., civil society in its various stage, as the basis of all history; describing in its action as the state, and also explaining how all the different theoretical products and forms of consciousness, religion,

philosophy, morality, etc., etc., arise from it, and tracing the process of their formation from that basis; thus the whole thing can, of course, be depicted in its totality (and therefore, too, the reciprocal action of these various sides to one another). It has not, like the idealist view of history, to look for a category in every period, but remains constantly on the real *ground* of history; it does not explain practice from the idea but explains the formation of ideas from material practice, and accordingly it comes to the conclusion ... that not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history, also of religion, of philosophy and all other kinds of theory.⁵⁰

The main conclusion from the materialist view of history was that the proletarian-socialist revolution is historically necessary. In *The German Ideology* the theory of scientific socialism appears as a corollary of historical materialism, of a scientific theory of social development.

In contrast to the utopians, who saw socialism as an abstract plan for a future social idyll, Marx and Engels saw it as a law-governed result of objective historical development. "Communism", they declared in *The German Ideology*, "is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things".⁵¹

Less than two years after this was written, Marx and Engels produced the first work in which scientific socialism — *Marxism* — constituted itself as an organised revolutionary movement — the *Communist Manifesto*.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH EDITION OF 1892

The present little book is, originally, part of a larger whole. About 1875, Dr. E. Dühring, *privatdocent** at Berlin University, suddenly and rather clamorously announced his conversion to socialism, and presented the German public not only with an elaborate socialist theory, but also with a complete practical plan for the reorganisation of society. As a matter of course, he fell foul of his predecessors; above all, he honoured Marx by pouring out upon him the full vials of his wrath.

This took place about the same time when the two sections of the Socialist Party in Germany — Eisenachers and Lasselleans — had just effected their fusion, and thus obtained not only an immense increase of strength, but, was what more, the faculty of employing the whole of this strength against the common enemy. The Socialist Party in Germany was fast becoming a power. But, to make it a power, the first condition was that the newly-conquered unity should not be imperilled. And Dr. Dühring openly proceeded to form around himself a sect, the nucleus of a future separate party. It thus became necessary to take up the gauntlet thrown down to us, and to fight out the struggle, whether we liked it or not.

This, however, though it might not be an over-difficult, was evidently a long-winded business. As is well-known, we Germans are of a terribly ponderous *Grundlichkeit*,[†] radical profundity or profound radicality, whatever you may like to call it. Whenever anyone of us expounds what he considers a new doctrine, he has first to elaborate it into an all-comprising system. He has to prove that both the first principles of logic and the fundamental laws of the universe had existed from all eternity for no other purpose than to ultimately lead to this newly-discovered, crowning theory. And Dr. Dühring, in this respect, was quite up to the national mark. Nothing

* Lecturer.

† Literally, fundamental-ness.